



*A Study in Western Philosophy,
Literature, & Culture*

Worldviews *in* Conflict

Kevin Swanson

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Because a study of history contains both documented facts pertaining to dates, conversations, and events in the past, as well as opposing and controversial interpretations of the significance of those events, people, and ideas, some educational content can be subjective in nature or reflective of an author's own worldview.

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This course introduces the student to the thinkers, the writers, and the ideas that formed our modern world.

Teacher, student, and reader beware: most of these men were not Bible-believing Christians. Basic to this course is the presupposition that all ideas are not equal in truthfulness or merit. Some ideas are downright dangerous and destructive.

Preface

One may ask, if these ideas are so hurtful, why should our students study these authors? I readily concede that this material is not for every student, but only for those that are mature enough to understand the differences between truth and error, good and evil (Heb. 5:14). Nonetheless, those young people whom God shall call into leadership in academia, media, politics, or church will need to familiarize themselves with the ideas that run counter to a biblical world and life view. They need to understand the lay of the land on the battlefield in the war of the worldviews.

We hope that Christian parents and Christian teachers have not subjected their young children to the literature and philosophies of the pagans. This is in keeping with the wisdom of the Church Fathers and the clear instructions of Moses and Paul (Deut. 6:7, Eph. 6:4).¹ The mass apostasy of the last six generations is largely due to secular education, where children have been set at the feet of the “great” pagan philosophers and literary giants for a dozen years or more. Instead of providing a rich education in Scripture and Christian authors, students are subjected to a confused mixture of writings from pagan and Christian and expected to sort it all out. Many parents and teachers do not understand the potency of the

pagan thought contained in the “Great Books,” as they subject children to Greek philosophy, the transcendentalists, and the humanists of various stripes. Over the last two centuries, millions of Christian parents have been cruelly disappointed by the outcome of their children’s education after giving them over to Christian schools and colleges that gave undue, uncritical support for the “classics.” Generation after successive generation, children have apostatized from the faith in droves; and this form of education is a major cause.

How to Use This Curriculum

We recommend the following method of liberal arts education for children raised in Christian homes:

First, our children should learn the Scriptures, inside and out, cover to cover (Deut. 6:7).

Secondly, our children should sit at the feet of the greatest Trinitarian Christian thinkers and writers. The Christian Curriculum Project has produced several curriculum resources on the Christian Classics to aid families with this.

Finally, in their later teen years the students may or may not be prepared to take on the antithesis in its most potent form. If they engage these studies, they must not be trained to passively receive the content and form of the “great” writers. Discernment is the key. There must be strong thesis-antithesis contrasts in these studies, lest the students be “robbed by philosophies and vain deceit” (Col. 2:8). The purpose of this course is to present that strong antithetical edge.

Our first interest is the spiritual well-being of the students. Our concern is to equip them, not to destroy them. Thus, we have carefully laid out the content of this course to this end.

1. We describe the personal lives and character of the great philosophers, and point out with the words of Christ, “By their fruits ye shall know them.”
2. We present their ideas in as pedestrian a manner as possible, such that the average seventeen year old student can understand.
3. We challenge the student to read short portions of the writings of these men who became the philosophical leaders of our age. Be aware that their writings can be difficult to follow, circuitous, full of obfuscations, and self-contradictory. Lack of clarity can be a deceptive technique.
4. We embolden certain portions of the original writings which are more critical to the content of the course. This gives the student a sense of priority in the readings.
5. We provide extensive study questions for all of the readings with answers in the back of the textbook.
6. We highly recommend that the student be well familiar with all of the biblical verses (God’s truth) used in the text to counter the false ideas conveyed in the material.
7. We highly recommend that the student pray before he or she engages in the battle of ideas (with each chapter). Sample prayers are provided, and the student should read these over.

If at all possible, we recommend that the student do the assigned readings (in the philosophy and literature sections), orally with the teacher or parent. Then, the teacher or parent should orally present the study questions to the student, who will respond with an oral answer. These may be compared with the answers in the Teacher's Guide. The Teacher's Guide available for this course includes words to know, worksheets, and quizzes.

We also recommend that the teacher or parent read the answer provided in the answer key out loud. In this way, the teacher may ascertain that the student has comprehended the material,

Notes

1. reference Kevin Swanson, *Keep the Faith: On Education* (Parker: Generations with Vision, 2014).

and can properly address the material from a distinctively biblical viewpoint. After completing the oral review of the lesson, the student may complete the study questions in written form.

Our desire is that the Kingdom of Christ be advanced, and that the Kingdom of Satan may be thwarted by this study course. May God give the teacher/parent and the student a special wisdom as they engage in the War of the Worldviews!

For Christ and His Kingdom,

Kevin Swanson

In the year of our Lord, May 2015

Introduction
Their Parents Named
Them “John”

John Locke.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

John Stuart Mill.

Jean-Paul Sartre.

John Dewey.

John Steinbeck.

John Lennon.

Each of these should be a familiar name. They were all “men of renown,” among the most celebrated men of their age. They were men of towering importance in the unfolding—or rather, unraveling—of Western civilization, and together they defined the modern world. John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau set the trajectory for modern political philosophy. Jean-Paul Sartre influenced culture and entertainment, and John Dewey was the father of modern secular education. John Lennon and his band sold more albums than any other musical group in the history of mass media. However, of more significance for this book is their given name. All were born into Christian families in Europe or America, and their parents named them John after the apostle who wrote the fourth Gospel.

Between AD 400 and 1400, the Christian gospel penetrated the entire Western world. To this day, Christianity’s early influence is recognizable around us. The Christian faith has made an indelible impact on language, art, architecture, music, education, hospitals and healthcare, charity, science, political freedoms, the treatment of women, respect for human life, names given to children,

and the elimination of pagan practices like widow burning, child sacrifice, and chattel slavery. For over a thousand years, it would have been hard to find the pagan practices of cannibalism, homosexuality, body mutilation, and tattoos in European nations, all of which were mostly absent from Christian societies. Then everything began to change.

Because history often seems to play out in slow motion, it's not difficult to trace the large trends. After the fifteenth century another religion called "humanism" worked its way into the perspectives of the Western world. The powerful ideas of humanist philosophers began to shape the minds of the most brilliant writers, educators, musicians, and artists. In succeeding generations, these ideas formed the course content for the liberal arts universities. Finally, after another hundred years or so, these ideas filtered into the mass culture. Today, this new humanist religion is highly organized, complete with institutions, buildings, ethical systems, social theories, and cultural products.

Cultural conquest is a three-step process, and this is how the West has been lost. First, a few philosophers developed revolutionary humanist ideas that they incorporated into their own lives. Next, writers and artists incarnated these philosophical ideas in literary and art forms, which were then taught in liberal arts universities. There is no better way to infiltrate a culture with new ideas than through its educational systems. How else would one reverse all of Western civilization without changing each successive generation of pastors, priests, political leaders, and teachers by way of universities and seminaries? This is how we have gone from the New England Primer's first lesson, "In Adam's fall, we

sinned all" to *Heather Has Two Mommies*, a pro-homosexual curriculum for first-grade children used in public schools in the latter twentieth century. Profound cultural changes take a civilization from Johann Sebastian Bach's soaring Christian chorales in 1700 to Eminem's popular "rape rap" in 2000.

Still, there is hope. Western civilization as it once was has all but disappeared, and it's hard to reassemble what is gone. Perhaps the best historical comparison available to our present day is the fall of Rome in AD 475. After the fall of the centralized government of the Roman Empire, smaller governments that were friendly to Christianity sprang up in medieval Europe. Today we are seeing the decentralization of information and media sources. At the same time, we are witnessing the gradual collapse of the monopoly that brick-and-mortar universities have had over Western thought and economics. The time has come to reform and rebuild the ideas and educational systems that make up the Western world.

By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them

As we trace the challenges of Western civilization, we will look at the ideas and the lives of the great civilization changers of the last three hundred years. Generally, their philosophies are difficult to understand for young students. However, Jesus Christ provided a useful test for identifying false teachers, one that doesn't necessarily require philosophical training: "By their fruits ye shall know them," He said (Matthew 7:20, KJV). This is helpful, because most people reading the great philosophers find it hard to follow the thread of their ideas.

Sometimes they will say one thing, and then contradict themselves more or less in the next paragraph. They will purposefully obscure their true philosophical framework and only hint at their real agenda. In the end, the truth is lost in their complicated arguments. Even if you can't always follow the arguments a philosopher is making, you can look at the fruit of his life and his work. This is why it is important to know that Karl Marx's daughters committed suicide, that Jean-Jacques Rousseau abandoned his five children on the steps of an orphanage, and that Ernest Hemingway took his own life.

If the major universities in America led the nation's slide away from the Christian faith, then it's important that we examine the content of their educational programs. From the beginning, colleges such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Bowdoin, and William and Mary incorporated a thoroughly Greek and Roman education. At first, there were men like Increase Mather—the last of the Puritans and an early president of Harvard—who fought hard to establish a Christian education at his school. In 1685, Mather complained that the pastors trained at the college knew more of Cicero and Aristotle than they did of Paul and Moses. He did what he could to purge Aristotle's *Ethics* from the school and replace it with biblical ethics, but to no avail. By 1705, Harvard was controlled by a humanist, enlightenment philosophy.¹

The modern humanists revived the thinking of the Greeks and Romans in the new universities in the West. These new philosophers, men like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and John Dewey set a new direction for the

world. They drank deeply from the humanist wells of ancient writers and developed their own brand of humanism for the Christian West. Whereas Christian thought overcame pagan thinking from AD 475 through AD 1200, humanist thought would overwhelm the Christian worldview in the West during the subsequent eight hundred years.

The literary giants took their cues from the philosophical giants and weaned the American liberal arts curriculum away from a Christian world and life view. It was a gradual process, but by the end of the nineteenth century, John Calvin and John Bunyan were far less important in America's high school literature courses than transcendentalists and humanists like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, William Shakespeare, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Mark Twain.

As American high schools of the twentieth century set a definitive humanist direction, a new set of core books emerged as the curriculum. Typically, the assigned reading would include classics such as Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, and Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*.² Universities provided an even more complete immersion in the humanist ideas of philosophers, writers, and artists.

Most high schools and colleges in the twentieth century no longer used Augustine's *Confessions* or John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* in literature classes. These Christian classics were abandoned for works by Unitarians, transcendentalists, atheists, deists, and Greek philosophers. Humanist

authors and their works became the “great” literature, and they have shaped the thinking of hundreds of millions of American school children for generations.

Ideas have consequences, which is why it’s so important to think them through carefully. As we think about ideas in this course, we will focus on the foundational humanist thinkers, those philosophers who challenged the Christian faith in the Western world and replaced it with humanist ideas and institutions. We will see how humanist philosophies have led to misery, emptiness, and mass death and destruction. Humanism simply does not have the strength of beliefs built on God’s Word, and it will not endure. We will see how humanist worldviews contain inherent problems that provide the seeds for their own destruction.

The War of Ideas

If humanism will not endure, then why spend any time grappling with the philosophies of those thinkers who led the Western world to its present state of corruption and moral decay? The answer should be obvious because it is contained within the question. If these ideas have been widely incorporated into modern life, then certainly every Christian should know something about these destructive and dangerous influences.

As Christians we are called to do battle in the realm of ideas. Paul delivers these marching orders in 2 Corinthians 10:4–5. It is our duty to cast down “arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” in Christ. It is not for us to fear evil. It is for us to fear God and tear down the unfruitful works of darkness.

For the love of our families and our fellow man, we need to be aware of the influence of the exceedingly powerful humanist philosophers and the dangers that come with the outworking of their ideas. Dr. Benjamin Wiker, in his book *Ten Books That Screwed up the World and Five Others That Didn’t Help*, tells the story of Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish essayist. Carlyle “was once scolded at a dinner party for endlessly chattering about books: ‘Ideas, Mr. Carlyle, ideas, nothing but ideas!’ To which he replied, ‘There once was a man called Rousseau who wrote a book containing nothing but ideas. The second edition was bound in the skins of those who laughed at the first.’” Carlyle was speaking of the bloody French Revolution that followed the ideas of Rousseau.

The battle of ideas is difficult and sometimes dangerous. At first it may be hard for you to understand the writings of the philosophers we will be studying or the risks presented by their worldviews. I want to invite you into the battle of ideas, but I freely admit that the battle is not for everybody. It is neither for the faint of heart nor the faithless, nor is it for the immature student. We must understand what we’re up against.

Writers such as Karl Marx and Mark Twain were incredibly talented, but they used their talent toward wrong ends. These men openly opposed a biblical view of truth and ethics. Yet for some reason, even Christian academics are reticent to criticize the major humanist thinkers. One philosophy professor from a Christian college even attempts a soft sell on Karl Marx, claiming that, “Marx, at least philosophically, must be credited with good intentions, but his ideas have been applied badly. Any great idea can be perverted.”³ This analysis of

Marx fails to recognize the fruit of his work—the deaths of hundreds of millions of people. As we shall demonstrate in this course, Marx’s ideas stand in stark opposition to the biblical view of history, ethics, sociology, politics, and economics.

Another professor at a well-known Christian college goes to great lengths to defend Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter* as a “Christian classic.” This professor says that it portrays “the heart of the Christian gospel.”⁴ Clearly, Hawthorne would have disagreed with the good professor. Many Christian liberal arts professors emphasize natural law or Aristotelian law or Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism instead of God’s law. Thus, these Christian intellectuals render themselves ineffectual in the battle of ideas and less able to defend the faith.

Some of those who read the great humanist writers wish to separate the content of their writings from their method. But can one really approve of the story while rejecting the meaning of the story? American author Flannery O’Connor would never separate the story itself from the meaning of the story. She explains, “The whole story is the meaning, because it is an experience, not an abstraction.”⁵ Would Paul have appreciated the artistry of the idol sculptors of Athens, while at the same time condemning the idolatry of it? The business of remaining “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27) is not easy to achieve. As Christians praise the artistry of humanist writers, they run the risk of imbibing deeply of humanism itself. They may wish to borrow a turn of phrase

from humanist authors, or they may admire their use of satire. In so doing, they find themselves absorbing the academic pride of the Greeks, the skepticism and cynicism of Mark Twain, and the tortured, doubting mind-set of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The method of the writer is always informed by the worldview itself, so the Christian liberal arts student must be ever vigilant.

This is not to say that one can learn nothing from humanist writers. The Christian must distinguish carefully between truth and error while reading their works. We are in the midst of a war of ideas, and Christians must be extremely careful not to fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Regrettably, this has often happened in Christian seminaries, colleges, and schools for several hundred years.

Certainly, Christians belong in the battle of ideas, but we must *do battle*. Liberal arts instruction in most Christian and secular colleges is more toxic to the faith than any other teaching coming out of these schools.⁶ As far as the Christian liberal arts programs fail to engage the challenges to Christianity in the battle of ideas, they play a part in the continuing decline of the faith in the Western world.

Liberal arts schools like to tell their students to “join in the great conversation with the great thinkers and writers in Western civilization.”⁷ Perhaps instead they should be saying, “Welcome to the great confrontation!”

Notes

1. Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan—The Life of Increase Mather* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 199-321.
2. “Top 10 Most Taught Books in High School,” *The Literary Pursuit*, November 28, 2008. <http://nylusmilk.wordpress.com/2008/11/28/top-10-most-taught-books-in-high-school/>

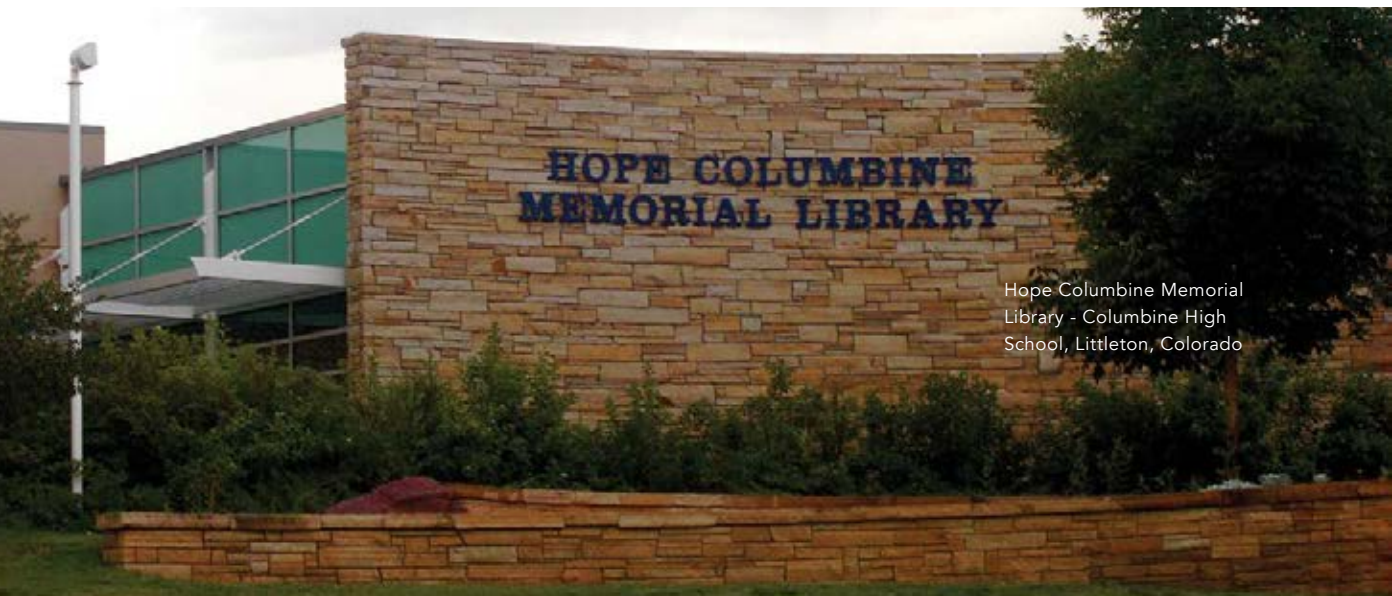
“Popular High School Literature Books,” *Goodreads*. <http://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/high-school-literature>
3. John Mark Reynolds, General Editor, *The Great Books Reader* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2011), 513.
4. Leland Ryken, *Realms of Gold*, (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1991), 153.
5. Flannery O’Connor, *Mystery and Manners*, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1961), 73.
6. Unbelievably, nearly twice as many Religion Department Heads in Christian Colleges hold to evolutionary naturalism in origins than Science Department Heads; and it is not because the Religion Department heads are better trained in science. The liberal arts students and professors are almost always more likely to compromise with humanism than others. Source: Ken Ham, *Already Compromised* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Publishing Group/Master Books, 2011).
7. Reynolds, *Great Books Reader*, 12.

Chapter 1

The War of the Worldviews

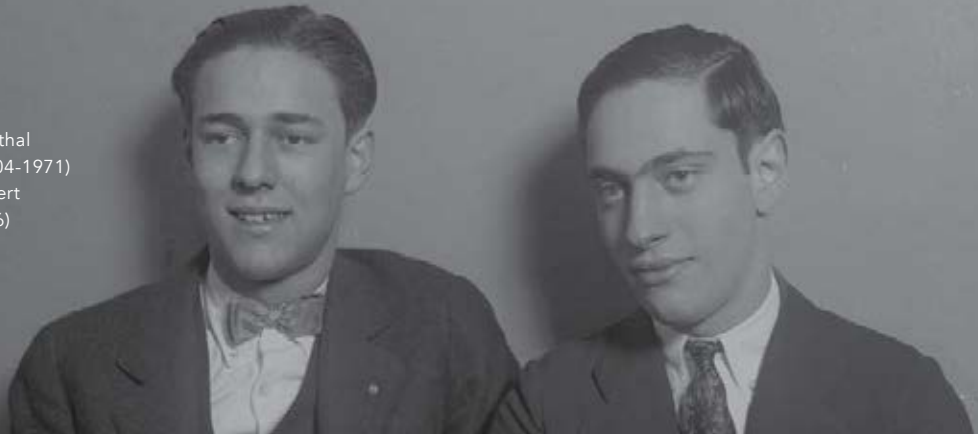
On Wednesday, May 21, 1924, a shocking murder took place in Chicago, Illinois. The murder petrified a nation, and all eyes and ears turned to the trial proceedings. The victim was a fourteen-year-old boy, described as a little stout and short for his age. Two law students were arrested, charged, and convicted of the murder. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb came from wealthy families and they were highly intelligent, both boasting IQs well over 160. Their fathers were well-known and well-to-do businessmen in the Chicago area. For months, the case of Leopold and Loeb dominated the papers during the investigation and trial proceedings. The killers had not murdered for money, jealousy, or any of the usual motives. As it came out in the trial, they were Darwinists, both well trained in a popular new worldview. They killed a boy because they had completely abandoned any conscious recognition of a Creator and His transcendent law.

Leopold and Loeb were originals, but they were not the last to kill for such reasons. They served as prototypes for others, including the Columbine killers, Eric Harris



Hope Columbine Memorial Library - Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado

Nathan Freudenthal
Leopold, Jr. (1904-1971)
and Richard Albert
Loeb (1905-1936)



and Dylan Klebold, who killed seventeen students at a high school in Littleton, Colorado in April, 1999. Their commitment to a naturalistic evolutionary outlook was spelled out clearly in their writings and video recordings. During the execution of the massacre, they wore T-shirts referencing Darwin's "Natural Selection."¹ Leopold and Loeb also claimed to have acted the part of true evolutionary scientists in a closed universe, without God. They considered themselves to be the brightest and the fittest, and they took it their charge to eliminate the less fit in a godless, materialist universe. One of the murderers told a reporter: "Why, we even rehearsed the kidnapping at least three times, carrying it through in all details, lacking only the boy we were to kidnap and kill. . . . It was just an experiment. It is as easy for us to justify as an entomologist in impaling a beetle on a pin."²

Leopold and Loeb selected the famed anti-Christian lawyer Clarence Darrow for their defense. This made perfect sense. Darrow's worldview was purely naturalistic and deterministic, as was later confirmed in his most famous case, the Scopes Trial. In the Leopold-Loeb case, Darrow argued that his clients were products of environmental conditioning that produced anti-social behavior. He

reasoned that these men were not responsible for their actions and therefore should not be required to pay for their crimes.

This case perfectly illustrated the profound change that had occurred in Western ideals. This sort of murder would not have been committed in 1650. Darrow's arguments would never have been heard in 1850. By 1924, a new scientific empiricism controlled psychology and law in America. The common law tradition as derived from the transcendent, eternal law of God had been essentially abandoned. This worldview shift did not happen overnight. The worldview war had been raging for centuries before Clarence Darrow defended the young murderers in a Chicago courtroom. This trial marked a defining turning point for Western civilization. Now, almost a century later we are approaching an even more momentous developments in the West. As we will see in this chapter, we are witnessing the unraveling of entire socio-economic systems in the Western world.

A Brief History of the War of the Worldviews

A worldview is a collection of the most basic ideas relating to God, life, origins, ethics,

knowledge, and reality. To understand the *why* of events that unfold in time, you need only to study the basic ideas developed in recent history. The pen is mightier than the sword, and the greatest wars of all are fought in the realm of ideas. They are intense, drawn-out conflicts that in the end define the world in which we live.

The present state of affairs did not appear suddenly or accidentally on the stage of human action. A victor has emerged out of a worldview conflict that has raged for almost 500 years. Two opposing worldviews emerged in the sixteenth century, during the time of the Protestant Reformation. For the reformers, the Bible (as opposed to human reason and the traditions of men) was the authoritative source of truth. But for the humanist, reason alone became the authoritative source of truth for man.


The Ideas

Reformations are times in which key doctrines of the church are defined in the face of heretical ideas that creep into the church. Two major issues constituted the central thrust of the first great reformation. The first was *sola Scriptura* (“by Scripture alone”), meaning the Bible contains all knowledge necessary for faith and life. The second, *sola fide* (“by faith alone”),

presented the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Each of the reformers recognized the absolute authority of the Word of God, over the traditions of the church. These men had a profound respect for God’s law, applying it in relevant ways to restrain tyrannical civil governments and to define the spheres of family and church government. Each of the major reformers recognized the absolute sovereignty of God, and defended the doctrine vigorously. The work of the reformers was enough to frame the rudiments of a biblical worldview that further established the Christian faith in the West and throughout the world.

The Consequences

The Reformation brought sweeping, powerful changes to the Western World and to the church. It gave birth to the Dutch Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and England, the Lutherans of Germany and Scandinavia, and somewhat more indirectly, to the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, and others. The United States of America was formed out of Europe’s religious refugees, with the Puritans, Presbyterians, and Baptists forming its strongest religious base at the beginning. The effects of the Reformation were extraordinary, extending to social structures and the institutions of family,

A profile portrait of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, showing him from the chest up. He is wearing a dark, patterned cap and a dark, textured garment. The background is dark with a subtle floral pattern.

Desiderius Erasmus of
Rotterdam (1466-1536)

church, and state. Following the Protestant Reformation and the establishment of John Winthrop's "City on a Hill" on the shores of New England, a Christian missionary movement exploded on the continents of South America, Africa, and Asia. The world-changing effects of the Reformation played an important part in Christian history.

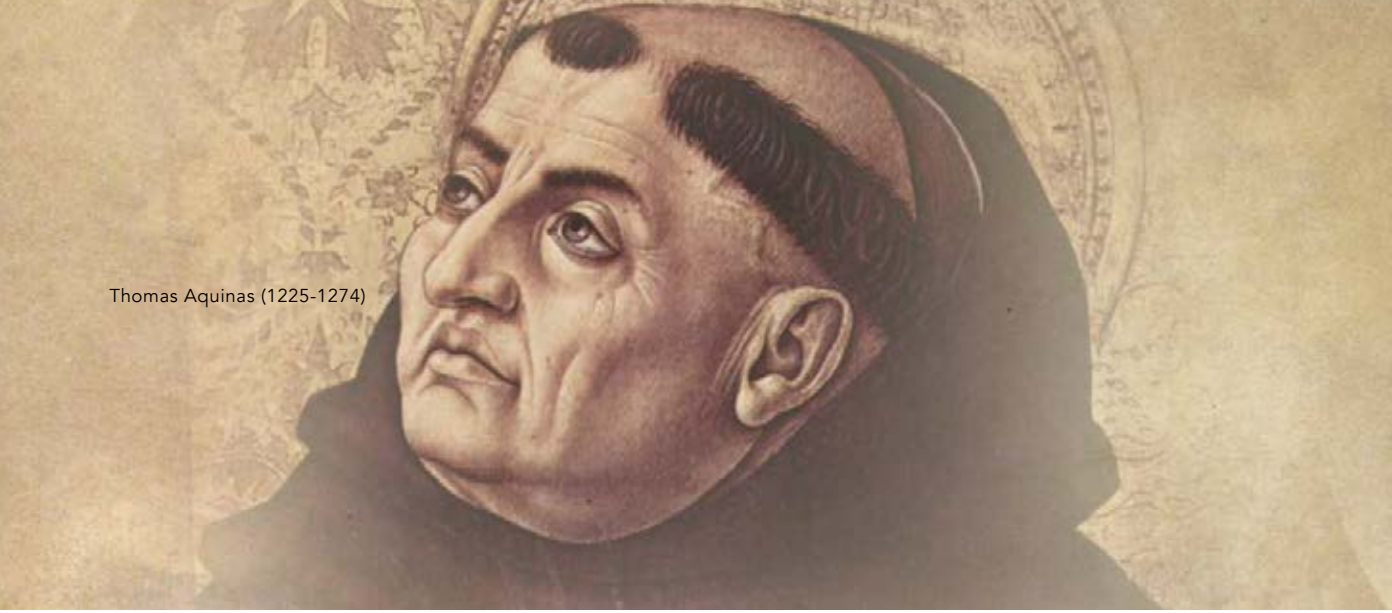
Humanism Counters

Just as the Reformation swept across Europe in the 1520s, another movement was birthed. Described as "Humanism," this new ideal formed under the leadership of a literary man from Rotterdam, named Desiderius Erasmus. In the form presented by Erasmus, the movement appeared as innocent as its label. But the eventual effect that this humanism would have on Western civilization would be devastating.

The reformer Luther and the humanist Erasmus disagreed on the centrality of God in man's reality. Luther answered Erasmus's challenge in his famous treatise *The Bondage of the Will*. The difference between Luther and Erasmus appeared slight at the beginning, but over the ensuing centuries the gap widened. The Reformation continued to have significant influence upon church and society for almost 300 years. But the fledgling movement of humanism grew in its own self-awareness and consistency, as well as in its influence. By the turn of the nineteenth century, humanism had made noticeable progress in promoting its ideas at the expense of the Christian influence. First, humanism introduced an influential philosophical shift in the universities and seminaries of the West. Then it began to introduce more



Martin Luther (1483-1546)

A detailed portrait of Thomas Aquinas, a medieval philosopher and theologian. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a dark habit with a white collar. His face is aged, with deep wrinkles and a serious expression. He is looking slightly to the left of the viewer. The background is a textured, golden-brown color.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

blatant, anti-Christian notions into K-12 education. The outright rejection of a biblical worldview was still more common in books of philosophy than in the general culture until the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, by the latter half of the twentieth century, the humanist revolution fully expressed itself in the lives of the masses, corrupting morality, undermining the nuclear family, and infiltrating the mass culture. Today humanism virtually rules Western thought and life.

The Humanist Offensive Begins (1600–1800)

The humanist offensive began with an insidious attack on the foundational presuppositions of a Christian worldview. The attack was largely philosophical and for some students may be a bit difficult to understand. But it's critical to recognize the nature of these initial assaults, if the student will be prepared to engage the worldview war in the present day. The foundations of a biblical worldview were undermined hundreds of years ago, and these are the foundations that we must lay once more in the minds of Christian students.

Every human being holds to certain presuppositions that make up his view of the world around him, basic assumptions or beliefs about what is real, what is true, and what is good. Unbelievers have searched for the defining point of human knowledge for 2,500 years of philosophy. Over the past few centuries, modern thinkers have primarily looked for the central point of reference for man within man's own experience, and the reality of God has taken second place to the reality of self in modern theories of knowledge.

Initially, a Dominican priest named Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) created a defense for humanist Greek philosophy. He did this by developing two categories of human thought—philosophical knowledge and theological knowledge. This enabled secular universities to develop a system of human knowledge apart from God's Word. Aquinas separated a philosophical knowledge (that would deal with important matters relating to truth, reality, and ethics) from theological knowledge found in special, divine revelation.

The trouble with this approach is that theological doctrines *do* answer philosophical

questions. For instance, the doctrine of the Trinity explains a Christian theory of reality, and the biblical doctrine of God's sovereignty addresses the problem of determinism, a well-known philosophical conundrum. Thomas thought that theological knowledge and philosophical (or Greek) knowledge could coexist in the same university or seminary as long as they were kept separate. But alas, this is never the case. Humanists will always reject the doctrines of the Trinity and God's sovereignty because they're impossible to comprehend on merely human terms. These biblical doctrines will "blow the mind."

As universities gave more recognition to philosophical knowledge (independent of biblical truths), major institutions of study began turning towards humanist philosophies. And it wasn't long before those trained in humanist seminaries and universities ceased to believe in the doctrines of the Trinity and God's sovereignty. These doctrines didn't make sense to them. How can God be one and three at the same time? And how can God predestine the free actions of men, while still maintaining human responsibility for moral failures? Such doctrines are an affront to human wisdom based in Greek philosophy.

In the end, what Aquinas called *philosophical knowledge* would contradict and consume every important element of *theological knowledge*. Whatever the Bible had to say about truth, reality, and ethics was replaced with humanist philosophies in the Western world. Aquinas's first mistake was to allow for a separate form of knowledge built on man's independent reasoning, because mankind was never

meant to operate independently of God's thoughts revealed to us in Scripture.

Almost a hundred years after Martin Luther attached his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church, René Descartes spent an entire winter developing the first proposition for his system of thought: *cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"). The fundamental problem with this theory of knowledge was that rationalist man had made himself the first defining point in his thinking. This was a departure from a Christian view of knowledge summed up by Augustine in the words, "I believe in order to understand." This is foundational Christian philosophy: Belief in God is the necessary beginning to all rational thought. It is God's existence, not man's existence, that is the original defining point in human thought.

After the rationalists came the empiricists led by John Locke, who claimed that the human mind begins as a *tabula rasa* (a blank slate). Locke thought that the human mind is the starting point of all knowledge, that the mind gains this knowledge by receiving data from the senses and by "collecting" the facts. Another empiricist, Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626), is sometimes seen as the father of the scientific method. He abandoned the Bible as the fundamental building block for truth (science included). Though still a professing Christian, he wrote in his *Novum Organum*, "Some of the moderns have indulged this folly with such consummate inconsiderateness, that they have endeavored to build a system of natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, the book of Job, and other parts of Scripture; seeking thus the dead amongst the living." Nothing, says Bacon, can possibly "set up a throne or chair of estate" over scientific



Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

knowledge. This trust in man's scientific knowledge, research, and analysis quickly replaced a biblical approach to knowledge.³

Increasingly, men rejected the old Source of truth—God and His Word. They gave up on the Psalm 36:9 theory of knowledge: “For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.” According to this passage, the human mind cannot properly see any light or truth apart from the light of God. It is the reality of God and the truth of God that enable us to find truth and comprehend it. The Christian cannot even consider the nonexistence of God as being in the realm of possibility, because it is only in God's light that he sees any light of knowledge at all.

For Christians, there is only one foundation of all education:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” (Proverbs 1:7)

Before we even begin to think about anything, we must fear God and acknowledge His existence. Certainly, any humanist thinker would consider Psalm 36:9 or Proverbs 1:7 troubling. But it's when God is recognized and feared that true knowledge begins to pour in upon the human soul. On the other hand, the destruction of knowledge

occurs when man ceases to recognize God as He really is—the source of truth and reality.

What had been the fundamental basis for all education was now abandoned in the teaching colleges in America. The book of Proverbs held little meaning for those already captured by the philosophies of rationalism (Descartes), empiricism (Locke), and the combination of the two developed by the philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Humanism's Triumph in the Realm of Ideas

This powerful shift in the theory of knowledge swept over the intellectual world like a hurricane, beginning with the universities and seminaries, eventually seeping into every area of Western culture and life.

But it was the theology in the seminaries and the churches that took the first major hit in the war of the worldviews. Man's reason was king. If a theological dogma did not fit exactly with “what made sense” to rational man or empiricist man, or if a theological doctrine could not be thoroughly understood by the minds of men, then that doctrine was rejected. So by the 1750s, radical Unitarians

rejected outright the doctrine of the Trinity, a belief that had defined orthodox Christianity for more than a thousand years. This doctrine is an apparent paradox and simply has no parallel to anything in man's experience. An empiricist could not receive a doctrine that held no parallel in nature, and it certainly didn't fit within the logical system of thought held by the rationalist. The distinction between Creator and creature is especially bothersome to a man who has set himself in the place of God.

Another disturbing doctrine relating to God's wholly unique nature was the doctrine of God's sovereignty over the free will of man. This doctrine also came under unrelenting attack by the humanists, with even more success. By 1900, the church had moved significantly towards deism and away from God's providential, sovereign involvement in the reality of man's universe.

Few thinkers were immune to these attacks on the biblical worldview. Conservative theologians gave in to "natural law" and "common sense," assuming somehow that man on his own can spontaneously produce and recognize truth independently of the Word of God. These theories appeared to hold some water in a day when culture still retained some memory of biblical ethics and a Christian conscience. But as Western culture pulled further away from a Christian worldview in education, politics, and life in general, "natural law" could be used to justify just about anything. It may have been difficult for these theologians to see the end result of their philosophical meandering in the nineteenth century. Today it is evident that they have eroded their own foundation by abandoning God's Word as the authoritative voice in the realm of ethics.

1800–1930: Humanism's Triumph in the West

Ideas produce consequences, and today the consequences of modern humanism are everywhere around us. But long before these consequences came about, somebody had to distribute the ideas through social institutions. This occurred between 1800 and 1930 by way of churches, schools, and civil governments. After the 1930s, the media became a fourth important means by which ideas were propagated. The media was quickly captured and controlled by the humanists, with the exception of a few Christian media outlets that were not very influential in the mainstream culture.

The philosophies of the eighteenth century introduced a new faith, and that faith eventually centered on the field of science. Where science produced advanced technology, genetic engineering, and automation, man felt that he could engineer his way to gain complete control over himself, his economies, and his world. An unholy alliance between social technicians, government bureaucrats, and research scientists began to take shape. A recent *Time* magazine cover suggested that man would reach immortality by 2045. This false faith was rooted in the hypotheses and writings of Charles Darwin, and it wasn't long before the Christian church compromised with the new religion of science. Teachers and pastors worked hard to reinterpret the Bible to accommodate the new and ever-changing pseudo-scientific theories.

This faith in science and the presuppositions of biological evolution brought about profound changes in education,

psychology, law, and civil government. The transformation may be traced by key events along the way, including the Leopold-Loeb trial, the Scopes trial, the removal of the Ten Commandments from government facilities and courtrooms, the legislative mandate to teach about homosexuality in California schools, and dozens of Supreme Court decisions since 1900. Obviously, the twentieth century brought about dramatic changes in scientific technology, but the changes were far deeper than that. Postmodern man now lives in a brave new world of social programming, isolated existence, generational distance, and emotional, sexual, and spiritual instability. Technology changed, but more so, it was man and his ideas that had changed.

The Humanist Rout of Education

But this was not the way it always was in this country. American education was Christian through and through for the first 200 years of her history. The first primer in New England, published in 1652, began

with the words “A—In Adam’s Fall, we sinned all.” The primer was fitly entitled *Spiritual Milk for American Babes*. In 1777, the primer was revised, and pictures were added. Other common textbooks included a Psalm book and a hornbook containing the Lord’s Prayer and Christian doctrine. President Thomas Jefferson, not necessarily known for his orthodox Christian beliefs, saw to it that the first curriculum used in the District of Columbia schools included the Bible and Watt’s Hymnal.

But the subsequent 150 years brought massive changes to the American system of education. Men like Horace Mann and John Dewey worked hard to incorporate humanism into a newly secularized and government-funded education. By 1920, almost all remnants of Christianity had been removed from the curriculum. It took another eighty years to complete the job and remove the superficial decor of Christianity, such as prayer and plaques bearing the Ten Commandments from American classrooms. Instead public schools teach homosexuality, transvestism, Islam, multiculturalism, new age ideologies and every other false religion.



Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Curriculum professing either a polytheistic religion (“all gods in the classroom are equal”) or atheism (“there is no god in this classroom”) or a mix of both has won the day. Today, Bible stories and biblical doctrines are simply not a part of the *paideia*, or training of a child, in the government school system. The idea of a sacred-secular distinction opened the door for polytheism and atheism to reign in American public life.

A quick survey of primary school curriculum today reveals a studied avoidance of the biblical God. Instead, the new religions of evolution, egalitarianism, socialism, environmentalism, new age beliefs, and ethical relativism are offered to a hundred million students. A fifth-grade reader presents the Shinto ancestor worship of the Japanese and informs the student that this is the way that a Japanese boy expresses his values. Then the text asks the student, “How do you express your values?”


All gods are allowed into the pantheon, except the One who commands, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Humanism and Civil Government

Humanist attempts to centralize power in the state began with the Holy Roman Empire as early as the 1100s, around the same time as the development of humanist universities. In the mad rush to centralize power into empires, that power flowed from the *pope* (1100–1550) to the *prince* (1400–1820) to the *people* (1800–present). In the end, neither the pope nor the prince was as successful at centralizing power and creating massive socialist systems as modern democracies.

Humanist man wants to be god, and he will often use the state as his surrogate to attempt this feat. Nothing served this vision better than the modern democratic form of government, when the people discovered that they could vote to redistribute the wealth of the rich and spend other people’s money on themselves. Thinking they could trade their freedom for security and prosperity, the people approved the centralizations of huge pools of power and money in large governments. What they did not realize was that at some point socialist governments always run out of other people’s money. The promise of security and prosperity is only a pretense. Power still corrupts, and absolute power still corrupts absolutely. They failed to reckon with a biblical anthropology. They failed to reckon with man’s sinful nature. They made the fatal mistake of trusting government with huge deposits of centralized power. They ignored a biblical view of economics, law, government, and salvation, all to their detriment.

America, however was the crowning achievement of the Protestant Reformation. The persecuted masses from England, Scotland, Holland, and France flocked to America for freedom and opportunity between 1620 and 1776. No other country contained such a high concentration of committed Christians. The American experiment helped to slow the decline of Western civilization, as the country maintained a biblical vision for a while. The beginnings of the civil state in America were consciously centered on God. State compacts were thought of as covenants between men under God. An abstract of the laws of New England, published in 1641 in London, carried more Bible verses than the

A black and white portrait of Karl Marx, showing him from the chest up. He has a very full, long white beard and mustache, and his hair is also white and somewhat wild. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and indistinct.

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

average evangelistic tract published today. The first civil polity in Connecticut in the 1630s established God's Word as "the only rule in public affairs." Before a murderer was executed, judges in the colonies would call a pastor into the courtroom to preach a gospel sermon for the convicted. A strong, biblically based civil government continued for almost 160 years of American history.

However, political documents of the latter part of the eighteenth century gradually eliminated any mention of divine revelation, preferring more ambivalent references to "natural law" or "the law of providence." References to Jesus Christ were studiously avoided in the U.S. Constitution, assembled in 1787. Politics had strayed from the Bible as a source of law by which government should function. Power began to flow steadily into a centralized federal government.

Progressives like newspaper editor Horace Greeley (1811-1872) had fought and won an almost total turnover of welfare to the state. Greeley was an egalitarian humanist who saw private charity as a threat to socialism and the redistribution of wealth.

In 1848, Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* rolled off the printing presses in Germany. Eight decades later, at least half of Marx's socialist agenda had been accomplished in America.

By 1930, a humanist socialism, or statism, had secured control of American politics. The people surrendered more power and money to the centralized state. Meanwhile, the state increasingly sought control over the sphere of the family. Government at all levels steadily increased its take of the people's income—from 10 percent in the first part of the twentieth century to closer to 50 percent in the latter part of the century.

Many of these changes promoted the state as savior and sovereign. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society, and other government welfare programs have communicated one central message: to the citizenry, trust the state to take care of you. Slowly but surely, the people traded their liberty for the hollow promise of security.

Throughout the world, the twentieth century will always be known as the century of government tyranny. Death by disease and war is nothing new to this world, but the twentieth century brought about another lethal threat to man—the omnipotent state. Governments killed as many as 200 million of their own people in the twentieth century, mostly at the hands of communist and socialist leaders. Philosophies of humanism formed public policy and developed into brutal tyranny under dictators such as Vladimir Lenin, Adolf Hitler, and Pol Pot.

Humanism in the Church

Perhaps the most significant shift in the area of ideas has occurred in the church. The shift is significant for several reasons. First of all, the church long continued as the center of religious thought. Well into the first half of the twentieth century, the church remained a powerful influence on the hearts and minds of Western culture. Second, the shift towards a man-centered theology in the church was significant because it happened subtly. Most Christians in the West are largely unaware of the theological shifts that took place and would be shocked to find that both Catholic and Protestant churches have become progressively more humanistic. Over the centuries, humanism of various shades has crept into the church, weakening biblical, God-centered doctrine and tearing down the distinctive nature of Christian thought. By 1850, the hearty Reformation teaching of John Knox, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and William Tyndale had virtually disappeared in the major denominations in the United States. Their teaching was replaced by modernism, Unitarianism, antinomianism, Pelagianism, experientialism, and universalism.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the humanist worldview corrupted much of the Christian church in Europe and North America, as man slowly evolved into a godlike form in the Western mind. At the same time, the Christian God gradually appeared to be something less than God. He began to look like just “one of the guys.” Man stripped God of his “god-ness” and put it on himself, as characteristics once attributed only to God were increasingly attributed to man. Sovereignty once

understood to have belonged to God alone was turned over to man. The salvation once attributed to God was increasingly attributed to corporations or the state. The right to determine law was wrenched from God, and given over to man. When it came to who had the right to determine what is true, man moved himself into the judge’s bench, shoving God into the defendant’s box. The Reformation catechism had taught children that man’s chief purpose was to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But with the humanistic corruption of the Western worldview, man became the chief end of man in life and worship.

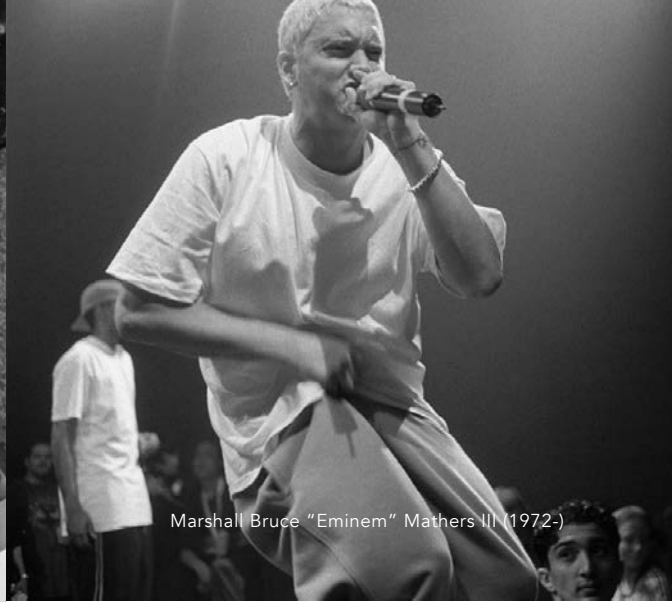
1930 to the Present: Humanism’s Devastating Consequences

By 1973, even the self-conscious humanists—those who called themselves the “religious humanists”—were a little dismayed at the consequences brought about by their own doctrine. In the words of the second *Humanist Manifesto*:

It is forty years since *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) appeared. Events since then make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can be made in the name of peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses



Nat King Cole (1919-1965)



Marshall Bruce "Eminem" Mathers III (1972-)

of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social outlook.⁴

Mankind's experiments with humanism have yielded increasingly disappointing results. As it turns out, man makes a really poor god. Even the humanists are disappointed, as evidenced by the above quote. It has been more than ninety years since God was expelled from the classroom—or at least from the public school textbooks—for good behavior. Socialism (one form of humanist philosophy) has come to dominate politics, with government consuming over half of the gross national income in most Western countries. The ideas of left-wing and right-wing humanism have given birth, and the results are less than encouraging.

Effects on Culture

We live in a day where art and entertainment celebrate the worst forms of decadence. Suicide is lauded in popular art, nihilism characterizes much of our musical expression, and pornographic displays are

funded by tax dollars. The most popular song in this nation in the 1880s by sheet music sales was "My Grandfather's Clock," a song that honored grandfathers. Pop stars today degrade their own mothers with the worst profanity. Some encourage young girls to embrace the lesbian lifestyle, while others promote suicide, purposelessness, cannibalism, and cop killing. It was only sixty years ago that Nat King Cole was singing "On the Sunny Side of the Street." Popular music today is saturated with loud references to rape, murder, and mayhem. The wildly-popular rapper of the 2000s, Eminem was known for his harsh references to his mother as a "female dog" and constant streams of the grossest profanities. We live in dangerous times.

Effects on Family

The effects of humanism on the family are extensive. In 1940 only 3.8 percent of children were born fatherless. Seventy years later, the illegitimacy rate has increased to 42%.⁵ Over 50 percent of births to women aged thirty or younger are illegitimate. As of several years ago, households with

both a father and mother now make up less than half of American families. Dysfunctionality is the norm in modern society. The morality of Western nations is in shambles. In this country, 95 percent of Americans getting married confess to having already committed fornication.

Effects on Economies

What used to be free economies were transformed over a period of a hundred years. United States spending on government as a percentage of the Gross National Income has increased fivefold since 1900. Fractional banking systems and powerful governments have encouraged and promoted debt as a way of life. At the time of this writing, the American people retain a total debt in excess of \$60 trillion. The European economy is crumbling. Japan, the third-largest economy in the world, is in long-term economic decline. In November of 2014, after a 140 year reign as the strongest economy in the world, America gave up its place to China.

The year 2011 represented an important date in the collapse of the American experiment. This was the year the Baby Boom generation hit age sixty-five, and for the first time since its inception, the Social Security fund paid out more than it received in taxes. This Baby Boom generation has killed 80 million children by abortion and the abortifacient birth control pill. They are also in twice as much debt per capita as the Silent Generation (people born during the Great Depression and World War II) even as they prepare for retirement. Thanks to the shrinking birth rate in this country, the worker to retiree ratio will be $\frac{1}{2}$ of

what it was fifty years ago in the year 2030. Moreover, the character of succeeding generations and the solidarity of family life is weaker than ever. This amounts to a socio-economic catastrophe of the highest order. The effects of humanism will be devastating.

What happens to a national economy when the retirees are playing golf and the thirty-somethings are playing computer games? The Romans were still watching the games at the Colosseum while the hordes were burning the city to the ground. What will happen to our great empires?

The Problem

Such circumstances do not materialize in a vacuum. Let us be very clear about this. The breakdown of our civilization is a direct result of humanist ideologies that have swept through the church, the state, the schools, and the wider culture. History is an unfolding of a long sequence of worldview wars. The ideas that dominate are the ideas that produce the consequences in human history.

Even the humanists cannot deny the fact that these problems exist. It's interesting that the second Humanist Manifesto placed blame for the problems of the twentieth century on the tyrannical inclinations of collective man. But these humanists still place faith in individual man and his ability to work out his problems independently of God and God's Word.

Christians offer a host of other possible explanations for the decline of faith and culture. Some attribute the drift of Western Civilization to a lack of Christian involvement in the culture. Although this may be *a* factor in the decline, it

can hardly be seen as the only factor. Professing Christians were involved in politics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while a steady flow of Christians have taken left and right positions in politics since the birth of the country. Almost every one of the congressmen and senators serving in Washington, DC align themselves with either the Protestant or Roman Catholic churches. Christians have been involved in their culture from the Reformation to this point, so this would hardly seem to be the essential problem with the West, especially the United States.

Others would attribute the problems with Western Civilization to a lack of revivals and church attendance. But according to a recent study conducted by pollster George Barna, 43 percent of Americans had attended church within the last week. That number was 41 percent in 1937.⁶ America has not lacked for revivals, religious campaigns, and church-growth programs. The significant changes seen in the Christian church over the last two centuries are found in doctrine and life. Despite the fact that church attendance remains as strong as ever, the culture continues to decline, and the divorce rate in the church more or less matches that of the world around it. The modern church is having little impact on the world; in fact, quite the reverse seems to be the case.

One of the biggest mistakes we as Christians make in analyzing movies, music, and literature is a failure to look for fundamental flaws in the ideas being promoted. Christian movie reviewers count the curse words and sex scenes, but they often fail to identify the real problems underlying the stories. While we admire the structure and style of the great authors and literary masters,

we often fail to identify the foundational problems with the work. This is just as true of the widespread Christian approval of Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* trilogy and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series as it is of traditional acceptance of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. We applaud the great and powerful structures above the ground, but we fail to notice that the foundation underneath is rotten. We forget to examine the foundation, and we fail to see how the foundation can corrupt the rest of the building.

Granted, most modern conservatives and Christians have a problem with Marxism. They are bothered by its economic and political consequences. But this is not the essential problem with Marxism. It's not just a bad economic theory. The problem with Marxism is that it's based on the wrong worldview foundation. If we make superficial changes to our thoughts and lives without making a radical readjustment to our foundational worldview, we are doing nothing more than rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking ship.

It's at the foundations where the battle rages most fiercely between competing worldviews. Together, we will dig under the surface to identify the real issues, the foundational considerations in the war of the worldviews. And we will do our best to clarify and define the most important battles going on in our world today.

This is a battle of monumental significance. The casualties in this war are real. The devastation is already seen across entire civilizations. The terrible consequences of false ideas on billions

of people has yet to be fully realized in human history and in eternity.

If the foundations be destroyed, what will the righteous do? (Psalm 11:3)

Conclusion

Culture is religion externalized. It is the outward expression of the faith of men. If there's a problem with the culture of the land, there's a problem with its religion. Therefore, we must go to the theological roots of the culture and examine it closely before we can discover the real basis for the social and cultural decline.

American religion is hardly Christian anymore if judged by its worldview, and yet

the majority of Americans still claim to be Christian and church attendance is as high as ever. The other Western nations have seen church attendance fall to a small percentage of the population. If American Christianity fails to regain and embrace a distinctively Christian worldview, it will follow in the footsteps of the European nations. Something has happened to the Christian religion in this country. The same thing can be said for the Netherlands, Germany, Scotland, England, and the rest of the West. *The Christian faith has been corrupted by an alien worldview.* If we fail to build our ministries, church, families, and schools on a solid foundation of a biblical worldview, Christ and His Word, we will have nothing when the fire burns—Nothing more than wood, hay, and stubble. (1 Corinthians 3:12–13).

Engaging the Weapon of Prayer

You are encouraged now to take up the Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) and pray to God with sincerity and faith. You can use these words or your own, but remember, you are engaged in a war of ideas, and you stand in the very thick of the battle.

Our Father in heaven, You are our Creator, but our age has long forgotten You. Even while You provide men with life and breath, they live their lives in constant ingratitude. The powers of this earth have removed You from the schoolbooks. Your Word is forbidden in the courtrooms of our land. Our leaders ignore Your Word and Your counsel. They despise Your prophets and trample upon Your law. We plead for Your mercy. Visit us with Your judgment and Your mercy. Awaken in our land the fear of God that would permeate all of thought and life. May this nation reject self-sufficiency and trust You alone for truth, salvation, and life. Bring Your church back into the battle of ideas. Equip us with Your Word and Your Spirit. For the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, I pray. Amen.

Chapter 1: Assignments

Vocabulary

Definitions in this workbook are generally based on Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, eleventh edition; and occasionally Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary. Students should read each vocabulary entry before completing the other assignments.

Analysis | Separation of a whole into its component parts. Taking an idea down to component parts in order to understand it more fully

Centralization | The consolidation of power and authority in a center or central organization

Cynicism | Pessimism, contemptuous distrustfulness.

Empiricism | **1**: the practice of relying on observation and experiment, especially in the natural sciences **2**: a theory that all knowledge originates in experience

Foundational | Basic or fundamental, serving as the foundation of a set of beliefs, ideas, or practices

Humanism | **1a**: a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; esp: a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason **1b**: a system of thought teaching man as the source of truth and ethics

Incarnate, adjective | **1a**: invested with bodily and especially human nature and form **1b**: made manifest or comprehensible: embodied

Incarnate, verb | to make incarnate: as a: to give bodily form and substance to **b (1)**: to give

a concrete or actual form to: actualize **(2)**: to constitute an embodiment or type of

Materialism | **1a**: a theory that physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of matter **1b**: a doctrine that the only or the highest values or objectives lie in material well-being and in the furtherance of material progress **1c**: a doctrine that economic or social change is materially caused **2**: a preoccupation with or stress upon material rather than intellectual or spiritual things

Presupposition | The underlying assumptions on which a philosophical system is built.

Reform | **1a**: to change into an improved form or condition **1b**: to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses **2**: to put an end to (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action **3**: to induce or cause to abandon evil ways

Skepticism | **1**: an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a particular object **2a**: the doctrine that true knowledge or knowledge in a particular area is uncertain **2b**: the method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt, or criticism characteristic of skeptics **3**: doubt concerning basic religious principles (as immortality, providence, and revelation)

Study Questions

1. How were Klebold and Harris (the Columbine killers) similar to Leopold and Loeb who murdered a young schoolboy seventy-five years earlier?

2. What two major cultural movements emerged from of the period spanning the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries?
3. What are the two worldviews that have battled for the hearts and minds of the Western world? Which one has won the most ground since 1400?
4. What two forms of knowledge did Thomas Aquinas identify?
5. In the end, which of these two forms of knowledge consumed the other in Western thinking?
6. What was René Descartes' first proposition?
7. What is the basic difference between the humanist worldview and biblical Christianity?
8. What kind of worldview was taught in American schools in the seventeenth century? What did the children study?
9. When were Christian doctrines expunged from schoolbooks? When were The Ten Commandments finally removed from school walls?
10. Why were humanists so disappointed with their own accomplishments by the time of the writing of the second *Humanist Manifesto*?
11. Why do you think the church should be careful not to accept and integrate a man-centered view in doctrine and worship?
12. How might we preserve a remnant through the aftermath of the collapse of Western civilization? How can we preserve strong families and churches?

Notes

1. Denver attorney Barry Arrington represented the families who lost children in the Columbine Massacre. Upon his review of the evidence, here are his conclusions: "I read through every single page of Eric Harris's journals; I listened to all of the audio tapes and watched the videotapes ... It became evident to me that Harris consciously saw his actions as logically arising from what he had learnt about evolution. Darwinism served as his personal intellectual rationale for what he did. There cannot be the slightest doubt that Harris was a worshipper of Darwin and saw himself as acting on Darwinian principles."

Qtd. in Lawrence Auster, "From Hitler to Columbine: William Jennings Bryan Was Right," *View from the Right*, November 11, 2009. <http://www.amnation.com/vfr/archives/014745.html>
2. Peter J. Spalding, "The Strange Case of Leopold and Loeb: Part 1," *The Chicago History Journal*, March 11, 2011. <http://www.chicagohistoryjournal.com/2011/03/strange-case-of-leopold-and-loeb-part-1.html>
3. Francis Bacon, "Novum Organum," Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., Chicago, 1952, 114, published in *Great Books of the Western World*, Hutchins, R.M., ed. in chief, No. 30, Francis Bacon.
4. Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson, "Humanist Manifesto II," *American Humanist Association*, 1973. http://americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II
5. Barbara Kantrowitz and Pat Wingert, "Unmarried, with Children," *Newsweek*, May 28, 2001, 46.
6. George Barna, "Press Release," July 12, 2000 (Barna Research Group Ltd.).