

Christian Worldview Development

Without doubt, greater knowledge of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism is needed in order to understand their worldviews and be able to evangelize the unreached effectively. However, what is even more important is that the Church in general and Missions in particular develop a solid Christian worldview, one that is thoroughly supernatural, that provides a complete cosmology, that answers the ultimate questions of reality in God's way based on His revelation. Without it nothing of real significance will likely happen—nor can it. Without it the unreached will remain unreached.

by Hans M. Weerstra

The introduction to a famous mission training course begins as follows: “The message of John 3:16 is simple enough for a child to understand, yet so profound that theologians will continue to probe its implications throughout time. Though most of us have individually experienced the salvation God offers through His Son, have we really begun to fathom the Father’s love for lost mankind? What does “God so loved the world” really mean?” (From *World Mission: An Analysis of the World Christian Movement*, by Jonathan Lewis, editor, Part 1, page 1-1)

Not just theologians, but missionaries and Christians in general, need to deeply understand the love of God on the fundamental level that *God is love*. This truth, when seen correctly, is the law of the universe, which needs to be known deeply before we can begin to appreciate the Father’s love for the world.

This article is designed to help us “fathom” the deep things of God. Specifically, its purpose is to “fathom” the foundations of the Christian faith, to explore the qualities of our foundations, and with God’s help build them stronger on a deep worldview level. Although the term “worldview” does not appear in the Bible, the concept with its important meaning for Christian faith and life is taught everywhere in all of Scripture. It is much like the term “Trinity” which does not appear in Scripture yet is a foundational teaching of the entire Bible.

We will begin by looking at a key Scripture passage on the parable of

the wise and foolish man. It will become clear that this passage is talking about building firm foundations on a deep worldview level. It will also help us identify the currents of our times that are eroding biblical foundations, that have the potential to destroy Christian faith and life.

Second, we want to define worldview and make the case that not just missionaries but Christians in general need to develop a solid Christian biblical worldview. We will see how crucial this is for our Christian faith and life and service unto the Lord in today’s world.

Third, we will look at a biblical case study where the Lord changes hearts and opens minds and literally develops a worldview in His disciples. What is important about this case study is that it show us how we can develop a biblical worldview in our lives today. What happened to the disciples then can happen to us today!

Fourth, we will conclude by looking at the power of the inspired Scriptures which are able to make us complete and equip us for every good work, especially the good work to declare the Gospel of salvation in Christ to the ends of the earth.

Building Firm Foundations

Therefore whoever hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. (Matt. 7:25, 26)

Building firm foundations is

absolutely essential for Christian faith and life. There is little doubt that God’s people everywhere can greatly benefit from such an endeavor. Many Christians have had little or no deep discipleship training. All of us to some degree have been affected by the currents of our time (see what follows) that like flood waters erode our foundations. To some degree, we all stand in need to rebuild our foundations, to shore them up, and build them stronger.

Looking at this parable, we see that building foundations on a deep level is what this passage really teaches. In so many ways it says we need to make sure that our houses (lives) will stand the winds and the floods that will inevitably come trying to destroy us. We need solid foundations for life, the kind that can withstand the tests of time and the attacks of destruction. This becomes even clearer in the Lukan parallel passage where the wise man “dug deep” while the foolish man simply built his house “on the ground without a foundation.” (See Luke 6:46-49)

Building solid foundations applies to individuals, as well as to families and churches, and even applies to whole societies and cultures. The context of this passage is the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus taught His disciples. But the passage also makes it clear that He was teaching the crowds that had gathered around who were listening. (See Matt. 5:1) Jesus would say that individuals need good foundations, that His disciples need to have good foundations, but in a wider sense whole

Christian Worldview Development

societies and cultures, like the whole Jewish nation represented by the crowds, also need foundations for life which will help them survive the destructive forces that inevitable come.

The Rock

The rock in the parable represents good foundations while the sand represents poor ones. Most Evangelical Christians would identify the rock with the person of Jesus. Undoubtedly this is related to what the apostle Paul affirmed, “For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 3:11)

Although this is true, we want to explore it further and deeper and have Jesus Himself tell us the identify the rock. If asked, would Jesus say that He Himself is the rock? The parable leads us to think that the rock represents the solid foundation which one can get if he/she hears Jesus’ words and puts them into practise. What differentiates the wise man from the foolish man is not hearing Jesus’ words but the actual doing of them. Both men hear the His words, but only one does them. Jesus would say that the rock represents foundations for life which men have when they both hear and do His words. Jesus would say that such a man (or woman) is likened to the wise man who had solid foundations for his life, while the foolish man, who just heard the words of Jesus, had poor foundations (sand, or no foundations at all) which was the reason for the great destruction of his life.

How does this relate to worldview development? As Christians we should build firm foundations on a deep level which is more than just believing in Jesus even though He is central to Christian foundations. It has to do with hearing and doing His words (not just believing in Jesus), which includes the words that He taught in the Sermon on the Mount, as well as well as everything else He taught. In fact in will become clear, that it should include every-

thing we call the Gospel, as well as what the New Testament calls the Scriptures, i.e., the Old Testament.

Doing the Word of God

But notice that just hearing and knowing do not suffice. The crux of the matter is doing Jesus’ words, or doing the Word of God. Lest we go astray at this point, we need to ask what exactly does it mean to do the words of Jesus or do the Word of God? Looking at the passage in its context we should see that Jesus is not endorsing work righteousness. The context of the Matthew 7 parable, as well as the Lukan parallel, gives us a very important clue on this matter.

Apparently, there were some who called Jesus “Lord, Lord” a term that indicates lordship and linking it with Yahweh, who were seemingly doing good works. They were prophesying in Jesus’ name, casting out demons in His name, and doing many mighty works in His name. Yet the Lord declares to them “I never knew you, depart from me, you evildoers.”

The passage is saying that good works in themselves will not suffice, even when done in Jesus’ name. This implies that doing good works or being good to one’s neighbors, or just staying out of trouble, will not give anyone good foundations. Something radically different is needed!

In this passage Jesus is coming down hard against an unbiblical system of thought and belief, i.e., worldview, one prevalent in Judaism in Jesus’ day, by which people believed that they could save themselves by doing good works—by obeying the law of God. Here Jesus is saying that good works, even mighty ones done in His name will not save from destruction. Jesus is clearly rejecting a work righteousness system where by people can save themselves by their own good works and righteous deeds.

What then does it mean to do Jesus’ words? The passage indicates that

there is a big difference between hearing and really hearing. The wise man really heard deep enough that he acted on what he heard. In other words he became a *doer* of the Word of God and not a *hearer only*. (See James 1:22-25) The foolish man just heard the words of Jesus, maybe thinking they were interesting stories or good entertainment. He heard what Jesus said, but not deep enough to affect him or change him to the degree that he would put them into practise.

The Bible calls the action of the wise man faith—true authentic faith and trust in God and His words, the kind of faith that results in a corresponding change in action and behavior. It is the kind of faith that actually produces the kind of behavior based on what was heard. The apostle Paul and the other apostles called this the “obedience of faith” or “the obedience that comes from faith” also called “the works of faith.” This they understood to be the goal of their ministry. Paul saw his calling to bring the nations (the Gentiles) to the obedience of faith, obedience to the Word of God, or doing the words of Jesus, that flow out of and rests on faith in God and His Word. (See Acts 6:7, Romans 1:5, and 16:26, 1 Thess. 1:3 and 2 Thess. 1:11.)

The Currents of our Time

What do the winds and the rains and the floods represent? The text makes it clear that these are forces in life that have the potential to destroy life completely and totally. The destruction of the house of the foolish man was great—it was total. These forces represent more than the normal crises in life, more than the setbacks and the disappointments that everyone experiences. They represent forces that are able to destroy completely. What forces in life (theirs and ours) have that kind of destructive potential?

Upon textual evidence, the winds rains and floods in the parable represent the currents of culture (their and

ours) that the Bible calls worldliness, that are systems of thought and beliefs that are contrary to God's will and revelation and undermine it. It is like the self-righteous belief system in Judaism, that was an enemy of the Gospel because it totally undermined the Gospel. In culture we can identify the winds and floods as ungodly systems of non-Christian worldviews which undermine the Gospel and Christian faith. In our Western culture we can identify these systems as secularism, humanism, materialism, relativism and pluralism. These systems need to be seen as worldview systems that answer and make up and form the underlying assumptions of life that act as foundations for all of reality—how we perceive it to be. But since contrary to God and His revelation, these act as winds and rains that relentlessly beat on our lives, that when accompanied by floods erode the foundations of our lives, that when left unabated have the potential to destroy Christian faith and life totally.

Because of the great fall of the house in the parable, indicating complete destruction of life, we need to see that this is no ordinary fall nor is it ordinary destruction. The text leads us to link the destruction with ultimate destruction that points to the final destruction in the "lake of fire" prepared for Satan and the fallen angels. (See Rev. 19:20, 20:10, 14, 15, and 21:8)

All of this points to the great and urgent need of building firm foundations for faith and life—for developing a solid biblical worldview. The same parable would also point us toward getting an adequate understanding of the prevailing winds and currents of our time. Understanding these modern-day systems of thought and belief and action based on them will indeed help us to identify worldliness in our day as well as unmask the strongholds of evil that are bent on our destruction.

Secularism

Secularism is a system of thought and actions, i.e., worldview, that sees life and the world as non-religious, as being divorced from God and spiritual reality. It sees existence as worldly and temporal as contrasted with the spiritual and eternal, which for Christians represents God, His Word and His Kingdom. A secularist is a person who essentially rejects religious faith and worship because he/she essentially believes, and lives life accordingly, as if there is no God, or if there is a God, that He has nothing basic to do with life here as we know it. A secularist holds

The modern day systems of thought are truly enemies of the Gospel, having a radically different view of reality, and as such have the potential to destroy Christian faith and life at its foundations.

to a worldview that is closed to the divine and the spiritual and the supernatural. It means living in a closed universe which sees reality as such—there is nothing beyond the universe as we know it. There maybe UFOs, and life on other planets and galaxies may exist, but that does not imply the existence of God, nor the reality of the heaven of heavens, nor the Kingdom of heaven as the Bible reveals it. The existence of extraterrestrial beings does not deny the belief in a universe that is fundamentally closed. Other than human beings may exist but these would still be part of a closed universe. Secularists live life accordingly, as if there is no God, as if there is no supernatural existence beyond this universe. It also implies that secularists are not pleased when others believe and behave contrariwise, especially when it contradicts this system.

Humanism

Essentially humanism is a way of

thinking and acting that centers upon distinctively human interests and ideals usually at the expense or exclusion of God and the spiritual and supernatural, which are seen as pertaining to the non-human world of thought and ideals. Francis Schaeffer defines humanism as follows:

There is a real unity in non-Christian thought... The unifying factor can be called rationalism or if you prefer humanism... (which in its larger inclusive sense) is the system whereby men and women, beginning absolutely by themselves, try rationally (rationalism) to build out from themselves, having only Man as their integration point, to find all knowledge, meaning and value... So rationalism or humanism is the unity within non-Christian thought. Yet if Christians are going to be able to understand and talk to people in their generation, they must take account of the form rationalism (humanism) is currently taking. In one way it is always the same—people trying to build from themselves alone. (From *The Complete Words of Francis A. Schaeffer, A Christian Worldview*,

Volume 1, "A Christian View of Philosophy and Culture" page 9.)

It should be obvious that both humanism and secularism are enemies of the Gospel and undermine and threaten Christian faith and life on a worldview level, and indeed have the potential to destroy it. They are formidable enemies of the Gospel, having a radically different view of life, and as such have the potential to destroy Christian faith and life where it counts—at its roots and foundations. Because of this they cannot be our friends. What Jesus said about money He would say today about secularism and humanism, "you cannot serve God and unrighteous Mammon." (See Matt. 6:24 and Luke 16:9-13.) What James and John warned about worldliness is directly related to the currents of our time. (See James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15-23)

Modern-day worldviews have their roots in the kingdom of darkness, act

Christian Worldview Development

as strongholds of evil in our lives, and have the potential to totally destroy. They have the potential to divorce us from God who is the only source of light and life in the universe and in the process end up destroying us.

Materialism

Materialism is a kissing cousin of humanism and secularism. This system of thought considers the facts of the universe to be sufficiently explained by the existence of nature and matter itself—by itself. Materialist usually believe that matter is eternal, and that if there is a God, matter also is god. In Eastern cultures, which is now invading Western cultures, this view of reality is the basis of pantheism, a belief that sees everything to be divine. It sees the universe or cosmos to be extension of divinity. It is the doctrine that holds that the forces and laws that exist and operate in the world and the universe are divine, are God. In Western popular culture, materialism leads to the attitude that material well-being, especially on the individual level, should rule and control our conduct as to how we live and what we do. This gives rise to the importance of material accumulation and possession of material goods. Materialism in essence becomes one's god (idol) since the love of money and the accumulation of material goods becomes the main passion of life which takes the place of God and robs Him of His glory. This is why love of the world, and love for the things of the world, makes one an enemy of God. (See James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15)

Relativism

Relativism as a system of thought that holds knowledge to be relative, limited and biased. It is limited to the nature of the mind and the human condition of knowing, which implies that knowledge is not true to independent reality—reality as it truly is. Truth and knowledge are therefore relative to one's subjective interpretation and human condition. This means that truth

may be true for one but not for another since everyone has different interpretations based on different human conditions. Since all knowing is subjective, in the final analysis this means that there is no absolute truth, or if there is, it cannot be known. We cannot know it because everything that we know is relative. This means that we cannot be dogmatic or sure about anything, including our knowledge of God and His Word, since knowledge is always tainted (conditioned) by one's own subjective experience (bias).

Along with humanism and secularism, we should see that relativism is another great enemy of the Gospel and Christian life. Why? Because as Christians we know and believe for sure. What God says and does is not relative. God's revelation to us is truly true regardless of biased interpretations of men. This fundamental truth rest on the deeper reality of God's objectivity and personality, which makes His Word totally reliable, trustworthy and absolutely true. Relativism as a system totally undermines the heart of the Christian faith and life, truly attacking it at its roots and foundations. It denies and undermines God's existence, as well as the truth revealed to us by Him and about all of existence and reality all of which are based on His person, character and purpose. When Christianity loose these foundations it really ceases to be, and its followers cannot survive. For that reason relativism is so devastating and dangerous to everything that Christians believe in, stand for and do for God's glory in the world.

Pluralism

Pluralism is perhaps the most subtle wind that pervades our culture and times. It is the doctrine or view of the world that maintains there is more than one kind of ultimate reality, contrasted with theism which states that there is only one, namely the one that is given by God. Pluralism believes that there are many ways to explain the world

and the universe and its purpose including our existence. It also would maintain that there are many roads leading to "heaven" all equally valid, good, and true. Whereas relativism holds that no truth is sure or can be known, pluralism holds that all are equally valid and true.

The favorite word in pluralism is "tolerance" being "tolerant," and being "broad-minded." It gets a new twist in church circles: Those who contend for the faith, who hold to the non-negotiable reality of the Christian faith, are seen as intolerant, they are "narrow-minded" and "dogmatic" and worse "bigoted." This then is interpreted as displaying unloving non-Christian attitudes, fruit born of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

As can be seen, pluralism is a close kin to relativism. It works hand in glove with secularism and humanism and like the others deeply undermine the ultimate truth of the Gospel and the Christian faith. Because of its more subtle nature, pluralism is perhaps the most dangerous and sinister. As the other systems, pluralism comes from the kingdom of darkness, is a modern-day example of worldliness, and is a stronghold of evil that needs to be broken in our lives as disciples of the Lord. Maintaining any of its tenets in our hearts will erode our Christian foundation and ultimately destroy us in the process.

Naturalism

To the five modern-day currents above we must add one more and then contrast it with its opposite. Naturalism as a philosophical system is "the doctrine denying that anything in reality has supernatural significance; specifically, the doctrine that scientific laws account for all phenomena, and that teleological conceptions of nature are invalid; loosely, materialism and positivism. Theologically (it is) the denial of the miraculous and supernatural in religion, and is the rejection of revelation as a means of attaining truth." (*Web-*

ster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1956)

In comparison with the other systems of thought and belief, naturalism is the real culprit and forms the core for the others. Webster's definition alludes to this when it associates naturalism loosely with materialism and positivism. The latter is defined by Webster as "a system of philosophy originated by Auguste Comte which excludes everything but the natural phenomena or properties of knowable things, together with their relations of coexistence and succession." Positivism and naturalism are closely related since both explain reality in terms of "natural phenomena." Both worldviews would deny supernatural significance because the universe can be sufficiently explained by "scientific laws" which can account for everything.

According to naturalism "teleological conceptions of nature are invalid." Teleology (not to be confused with theology) means that life has an end (Greek *telos*), or that it has purpose. Again following Webster, "teleology (refers to) the fact or the character of being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose—said especially of natural processes, or of nature as a whole. (It is) the doctrine or belief that design is apparent, or ends are immanent in nature; especially the vitalist doctrine that the processes of life are not exclusively determined by mechanical causes, but are directed to the realization of certain normal wholes—opposed to mechanism."

Naturalism (loosely positivism), like the other "-isms" of our time, is radically opposed to the message of the Gospel and the Word of God. We should see naturalism as the arch-enemy which lies at the root of all the other currents of our time. Naturalism as a philosophy of life is the denial (theologically speaking) "of the miraculous and supernatural

in religion, and the rejection of revelation as a means of attaining truth." Revelation here means God's Word, i.e., the Scriptures, which according to naturalism and its followers is an invalid means of attaining truth. This means that on a worldview level, naturalism is radically opposed to the Christian faith and life. It totally undermines God's Word as well as His person. It also undermines any real purpose for creation and for our existence as human beings. For naturalism and the other

blood and as such are not supernatural, yet everything that exists, including humankind, has its origin and life in God, who in every way is supernatural. In the deepest and truest sense our lives as people and nations receive and maintain the state and quality and purpose of life from God and is determined in relation to Him. As supernaturalists we also would assert with full confidence the "control and guidance of nature and men by an invisible power and powers" This means that God and His King-

dom is what controls and guides life generally, corporately and individually. As supernaturalists we also would acknowledge the existence and forces of Satan and the kingdom of darkness that would "kill, steal and destroy." (John 10:10)

To help us become biblically grounded supernaturalists we need to look at the meaning of worldview and how it functions in culture generally

and in our lives. Afterwards we need to apply this knowledge to the dynamics of developing a Christian worldview and thereby become biblical supernaturalists.

Worldview in Culture

One of the best way to get a basic understanding of worldview is to see Dr. Lloyd Kwast's description of culture and worldview. Dr. Kwast talks about worldview in a classic article he wrote on the subject called "Understanding Culture." (See *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* edited Ralph D. Winter and Steve Hawthorne, and in *World Mission Part 3* by Jonathan Lewis, pages 11-12 through 11-15.)

Worldview as Kwast sees it is the core element of culture, of any and all cultures, including our own. Kwast maintains, and for good reasons, that no real change of any significance will or can occur in the lives and hearts of people until it (whatever the change) has deeply

All Christians stand in need to develop a biblical worldview. This is most urgent in our day since Christian beliefs and values, and questions concerning Christian truth and ultimate reality, are under relentless attack.

"isms" there is no real design to life nor any real purpose as directed by God the Creator who is above and greater than the whole.

Supernaturalism

What is crucially significant is that we need to contrast naturalism with supernaturalism and see how radically different each is from the other. Webster defines supernaturalism as "as a quality or state of being supernatural. (It is) a belief in the supernatural order of existence; specifically, any doctrine that asserts the control and guidance of nature and men by an invisible power or powers."

Filling it with biblical content and meaning, supernaturalism is a perfect description of a Christian worldview and our existence and purpose as a human beings. We could assert that as Christians we all need to become thoroughgoing biblically grounded supernaturalists. Although human beings are flesh and

Christian Worldview Development

touched peoples' worldview which is the core of their cultures. This is true for missionaries as they evangelize cross-culturally but also is true for every Christian even if they never become missionaries in the strict sense of the word.

In fact, in the pluralistic multicultural world in which we now live, understanding culture, has become a great need and is no longer an optional luxury. Life for missionaries is never simple, but neither is it for life at home. We no longer can rest on our laurels and just assume that we will be understood, that life will go on as we had expected, and that radical changes will not affect us. Understanding of culture and worldview, including our own, has become an indispensable need for modern-day life!

As we consider culture, we want to reduce it to its most basic elements that can help us readily grasp the "big picture." Dr. Lloyd Kwast's model provides us with such a tool:

There is probably no more comprehensive word in the English language than "culture" or no more complex a field of study than cultural anthropology. Yet a thorough understanding of the meaning of culture is prerequisite to any effective communication of God's good news to a different people group.

The most basic procedure in a study of culture is to become a master of one's own. Everyone has a culture. No one can ever divorce himself from his own culture. While it is true that anyone can grow to appreciate various different cultures and even to communicate effectively in more than one, one can never rise above his own or other cultures to gain a truly supracultural perspective. For this reason even the study of one's own culture is a difficult task. And to look objectively at something that is part of oneself so completely is nearly impossible. (From *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (revised ed. pp. C3-C6)

Worldview is "nearly impossible" to comprehend even though it is a "prerequisite" for effective mission work. Kwast suggest that we view culture,

any culture, including our own, as having "several successive layers of understanding, as one moves into the real heart of the culture."

Using the "man from Mars" technique, Kwast helps us see how an alien or a foreigner from outside of a given culture would perceive culture. The first layer of culture that the "man from Mars" would observe is called *behavior*, which is "the outer and most obvious layer of what would be observed by an alien." It answers the question of what is done, what do people of a given culture do in any given situation. It tells us how they behave and conduct themselves.

Next is a deeper layer of culture. "In observing the inhabitants, our alien begins to realize that many of the behaviors observed are apparently dictated by similar choices that people in the society have made. These choices inevitably reflect the issues of *cultural values*..." This layer of culture answers the questions of what is good, what is best, what is beneficial and what ought to be done. It tells us how people ought to behave and live in a given culture.

Going still deeper into culture, Kwast takes us to a more fundamental layer called *cultural beliefs*: "Values in culture are not selected arbitrarily, but invariably reflect an underlying system of beliefs." Kwast reminds us of the important distinction of beliefs. Some beliefs are "operating beliefs (beliefs that affect values and behavior)" while others are simple "theoretical beliefs (stated creeds which have little practical impact on values and behavior)." The belief system that affects values and behavior of the people. This layer tells us what really matters to people. It answers the basic question of what is true about life in that culture.

But what is the heart of culture, of any culture, including our own? What is at the core of every culture?

At the very heart of any culture is its worldview, answering the most basic

question: "What is real?" This area of culture concerns itself with the great "ultimate" questions of reality, questions which are seldom asked, but to which culture provides its most important answers. Few of the people our man from Mars questions have ever thought seriously about the deepest assumptions about life... Who are they? Where did they come from? Is there anything or anyone else occupying reality that should be taken into consideration? Is what they see really all there is, or is there something else or something more? Is right now the only time that is important? Or do events in the past and the future significantly impact their present experience? Every culture assumes specific answers to these questions, and those answers control and integrate every function, aspect, and component of the culture. This understanding of worldview as the core of every culture explains the confusion many experience at the level of beliefs. One's own worldview provides a system of beliefs which are reflected in his actual values and behavior. Sometimes a new or competing system of beliefs is introduced, but the worldview remains unchallenged and unchanged, so values and behavior reflect the old system. Sometimes people who share the gospel cross-culturally fail to take the problem of worldview into account and are therefore disappointed by the lack of genuine change their efforts produce. (ibid.)

Upon a moments reflection, it should be very obvious that understanding worldview is immensely important to our personal, family, and community life. It also is of crucial significance to Christian life and faith and our service unto God as His people. We can also unequivocally say that all Christians need to have a deep Christian biblically based worldview. Worldview issues with the great questions of ultimate reality need to be answered by God's Word, according to His reality, so that the values and beliefs we hold as His people would be thoroughly Christian. When this happens our actions (our attitudes and behavior) as God's People would be in line with God's Word. This implies that we would have firm foundation since both the hearing of God's Word plus

the doing or acting on them is involved. In other words, we would be thinking, speaking and acting as the Lord's disciples, because our values and beliefs, which rest on a Christian worldview are all in line with God's will and Word.

To some degree, all Christians stand in need to develop a biblical worldview. As we have seen this is most urgent in our day since Christian beliefs and values, and questions concerning Christian truth and ultimate reality are under relentless attack and are being eroded at every hand.

Christian Worldview Development

How can and should Christians go about forming a Christian worldview?

This is the all important questions that remains. From what has been said so far it should be very clear that the "questions of ultimate reality" which provide the most important answers to life, *must be answered for Christians by God's revelation, i.e., by the Scriptures.* We cannot leave secular humanistic systems and the currents of our times answer the great questions of life. God wants our lives to be thoroughly Christian, He wants our foundations to be based squarely on His words, because He knows that out of this fundamental reality, i.e., our worldview, flow all the issue of life. When our foundations and worldview are biblical, we *will* have right beliefs, which *will* produce right values, (the kind that God would have us value), which like the obedience of faith *will* result in doing His words and works. Indeed we will be like good trees who are "planted by the streams of water, that yield its fruit in its seasons, and its leaves do not wither. Everything that this man (tree) does will prosper" (See Psalm 1:3 and compare it with Luke 6:43-45 which talks about being a good tree. Notice that this passage is the immediate context of the Lukan version of the parable of the wide and foolish mens houses.)

What follows is a biblical case study

in which Jesus develops in His disciples a biblical worldview that gives them sure foundations. Notice the dynamics of this process which show us how modern-day disciples are to develop their worldview today. Also notice that Jesus developed it quickly in them. What He did and how He did it He can do for us today!

The Emmaus Road Seminar

Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us? (Luke 24:32)

This verse is based on a very significant event in the lives of two of

Then as well as now Jesus is still opening the Scriptures. He still wants to open up the meaning and truth of the Scriptures to all who follow Him, who have eyes to see and ears to hear!

Jesus' disciples, who were walking from Jerusalem to a nearby village called Emmaus. Jesus appeared to them, and caught up with them as they walked on their way. Upon careful reading of this story, we have every reason to call this a "seminar" because Jesus personally taught these two disciples the deep things about God and the Word of God with the result that their worldview changed—they received a new way of seeing reality.

The first amazing thing about this Easter story is that the disciples did not recognize Jesus. The Bible says that their eyes were held from recognizing Him. We might speculate about that and ask why that was so? The passage seems to indicate that this happened for a reason and purpose. It seems that the Lord actually blinded their eyes so that (purpose) they would not recognize Him. We might ask why the Lord would do that? The text seems to lead us in

the direction that Jesus wanted to make a more wonderful point, or at least He wanted to accomplish a prior objective, more wonderful than revealing to His disciples His glorious resurrection.

This was resurrection Sunday. Three days prior Jesus had been crucified and buried, and these disciples were saddened by all that had transpired over the weekend in Jerusalem. Here are two disciples who had heard rumors about what had happened on that Easter morning, but who had not personally seen the Lord, who were still walking in ignorance, doubt and darkness, coupled with sadness concerning the death of Jesus in whom they had pinned all their

hopes. What a revelation of immense proportion would it have been to reveal to these needy disciples the knowledge of His resurrection.

This is how we would see it from our perspective. If we had had it our way we would quickly have concluded that Jesus' first order of business should be to reveal Himself.

And notice they really were His disciples, not just ordinary curious followers from the crowd. Why was it that Jesus did not open their eyes? In fact, why did He close their eyes to begin with, which is exactly what the text seems to indicate?

A Greater and Prior Work

It seems pretty clear that Jesus had a greater and prior work to accomplish in the hearts of these two disciples. After Cleopas and the other disciple tell the companion, whose identity is not disclosed, the sad story of the events that transpired on that Easter Sunday the visitor surprisingly rebukes them. He says, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" Then "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:25-27)

Christian Worldview Development

It is hard to believe, but we need to see that Jesus really *rebuked* them. It is no small matter. He does not comfort them, nor minister to their sadness and need, nor does He compliment them. It was like adding insult to injury. At the same time we need to see that Jesus would not have rebuked them without a good reason. He would not have rebuked them for simple ignorance. Looking at the passage we get the idea that Jesus called them foolish because they should have known better. They are foolish because they should have known something they did not know. Jesus rebuked them for that reason.

What should they have known? Jesus wanted to take them out of their foolishness, out of their dull and senseless existence and lead them into truth that would set them. How? By opening unto them the Scriptures: “And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted the things concerning Himself.” This was the greater and prior work that Jesus wanted to do before revealing to His disciples the great reality of His resurrection.

Opening the Scriptures

Jesus used the Word of God, i.e., the Old Testaments Scriptures, to bring them to understanding, taking them to a new and deeper plane of life and existence—in effect giving them a biblical Christian worldview. We come to that conclusion because when it is all said and done, the two disciples react to what had transpired. Although they were very glad that they finally recognized the Lord and know that He was alive and risen, they were especially excited about what Jesus had done prior on the Emmaus road. This prior work was their great excitement. They are really excited about what occurred to them during the “seminar” as He explained to them Moses and the prophets, prior to having revealed to them the great reality of His resurrection. They said to each other, “did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the

road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32)

Then as well as now Jesus is still opening the Scriptures. He still wants to open up the truth of the Scriptures on a deep level to all who follow Him and serve Him. Today like then, Jesus wants all His disciples to clearly understand how all of the Scriptures speak of Him. He would want this to burn in our hearts like it burned in the hearts of His first disciples.

Reading beyond this passage we notice that Jesus accomplished the same great work with the rest of His disciples later on during that same first Easter Sunday. Jesus appeared to the whole group consisting of the eleven disciples, plus the two disciples from Emmaus, plus others who accompanied the eleven disciples that day. This is what we read:

These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms (i.e., the Old Testament Scripture) must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them. Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city (in Jerusalem), until you are clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:44-49)

What happened to the first disciples should happen to every Christian, and in the same way. The Lord “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” and so must He open ours. As in the case of the first disciples, this work must be the prior and greater work the Lord needs to do in order for us to fully understand the enormous significance of His resurrection, as well as all His other supernatural works, including His great purpose and plan for world redemption and our place and part in it as His disciples.

This indeed was the Lord’s plan and purpose, as it continues for us, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47) For them then, and for us now, it should be perfectly clear that development of a biblical worldview, one based on Scripture, especially on the Old Testament, is absolutely essential and prerequisite to firm foundations and Christian worldview development. As the Lord opens the Scriptures to us, as He did to His first disciples, we will become biblical supernaturalists, who have a Christian worldview.

In this light the words of the apostle Paul get their full meaning. Speaking of the inspired Scripture (i.e., the Old Testaments Scriptures, which was the only Scriptures available at the time) Paul claimed that these are profitable for teaching and reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness (in doing right and good) so that “the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17).

As a final point in this article we want to consider these all important words concerning the profitability, purpose, and function of the inspired Scriptures. Truly the Scriptures as God’s inspired Word are designed to make us complete and whole in a deep way so that we will be equipped for every good work, especially to preach the forgiveness of sins to all the nations.

The Inspired Scriptures

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction, in righteousness (justice), that the man of God may be complete (fitted), thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

As previously alluded to, we deeply need to underscore the question concerning the source of our knowledge and the answers to our worldview

questions. In a pluralistic and relativistic society this is no small matter. Someone will ask: Is it even possible to get a reliable objective and trustworthy source, and one that can be known? Is there something true for everyone? Who or what will give us “true truth” to use Francis and Edith Schaeffer’s words, (See *The God Who is There* by Francis Schaeffer and *A Way of Seeing* by Edith Schaeffer).

From a biblical perspective, (and no one comes to any task with out one), truly hearing the words of Scriptures, we come to see that there is but one Being in the whole universe who is qualified and objective, who sees and knows reality as it truly is, who at the same time is totally trustworthy because He is totally benevolent. That person as Scriptures reveal Him is God—the One True Living Eternal Personal Triune God, the All Knowing and All Wise God, who has revealed Himself, in His Son, and in His Word, who has given us the true answers to the ultimate questions of life. God has revealed the essential truths concerning the universe, the cosmos, all of life, including human life, including all things, both visible and invisible reality. (See Colossians 1:15-17)

The Bible declares that God at no time has left Himself without witness but that from the beginning, and throughout history, and continuing to the present, He has clearly revealed who He is. God also revealed what He has done in creating and sustaining the universe, as well as of His control over the same—reigning according to His purpose and end (*telos*). (See especially Romans 1: 20, 21, Acts 14:16-18 and Acts 17:24-28)

What we find revealed in Scriptures originated in the mind and will of God Himself, who is the ultimate source of life and light for all reality. For that reason the Bible is called the Word of God. (See Deuteronomy 4:1, 8:1-3, 30:15 and 30:19, 20; also Proverbs 11:19 and 12:28 and Matthew 4:4 and John 5:39-40, 10:10;and 20:30, 31)

The inspired Scriptures need to be the source of our life and light (knowledge and understanding) in order to give us the answers to the ultimate questions of life. In the Scriptures we find the building blocks for faith and life and our service unto God. By His word and Spirit God needs to develop in us a worldview that is true and consistent with the objective reality as it truly is.

The word translated “inspired” or “given by inspiration” in the original Greek means “God-breathed.” This implies that the Scriptures are the breath of God which denotes two basic truths: 1) It has come from God, specifically from the Holy Spirit who is portrayed in the Bible as the breath of God. It also implies 2) That the Bible gives life and light to those who listen to it deeply,—God gives life to those who believe it and act on what it reveals.

For that basic reason the apostle Paul is able to say that the Bible is useful and profitable, able to teach and correct, able to make us mature and complete (fitted) men and women equipped for every good work.

In Conclusion

We have explored the meaning and importance of developing a solid biblical worldview. We have noted that as Christians we cannot survive without it nor be productive. Of greatest importance, we have learned that the only way Christians can build firm foundations is by both hearing and doing the words of God, that include the Old Testament Scriptures, as Jesus Himself modeled with His disciples. The obedience of faith (or the works coming from faith) is the key dynamic whereby the Lord’s disciples build firm foundations for life and develop a solid Christian worldview whereby they become true biblical supernaturalists. We have noted that a Christian worldview is a central prerequisite to Christian life that makes us complete, mature, and equipped for every good work. As we have seen this is focused on the good work that “repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.” Truly may we become equipped and skilled workers that would preach the Gospel in His name to all the nations. As the Lord’s disciples “we are witnesses of these things.”

Dr. Hans Weerstra is the editor of the IJFM (International Journal of Frontier Missions). For more than twenty years he was a missionary in Southern Mexico planting the Church among unreached tribes. With his wife Judy he currently directs the Southwest Center for World

Ad here by
Leadership Ministries
Worldwide
on the
Teacher’s Outline
and
Study Bible

Full page Ad here
by
Baker Book House