

Countering Culture: LESSON ONE

ENGAGING OUR POST-CHRISTIAN CULTURE

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT

Biblical discipleship involves engaging the culture in order to maintain a moral and free society.

KEY QUOTE

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

—Benjamin Wiker

KEY VERSE

Colossians 2:8

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

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, your child should:

- 1) Be motivated to learn about non-Christian worldviews.
- 2) Give two biblical reasons for engaging the false philosophies of our day.
- 3) Explain one effective way to free the minds of those who have been captured by deceptive worldviews.

LESSON PREPARATION

READ the chapter in the text and PREVIEW the *Countering Culture* video for this lesson (running time about 2.5 minutes).

PREPARE THE FOLLOWING TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND HANDOUTS:

- Make copies of the student handout and “Worldview Assessment Survey” located at the end of the lesson outline.
- Cue the *Countering Culture* VIDEO to the beginning of the segment for this lesson. (NOTE: For ease in finding your place on the tape for this and future lessons, counter should be set to 00:00 at the opening title).

NOTE: The Lesson Outline follows the content of the text and includes suggestions for class discussion and interaction.

¹ Benjamin Wiker. *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) p. 301, 314.

LESSON OUTLINE

NOTE: Be sure to allow about 10 minutes in class for taking and scoring the “Worldview Assessment Survey” (see IV.C.).

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A CHRISTIAN STUDENT’S EXPERIENCE

1. READ THE FOLLOWING:

A mother’s tear-stained letter describes what happened when her daughter went off to college: “Our daughter was raised in Christian schools and in a Christian home where we taught her Christian values and morals and she learned that Jesus Christ is the way of salvation. Two years out of high school, at 20 years old, she enrolled at the University.... We did not know that this is one of the most liberal universities in the nation. Unfortunately she was overwhelmed by the professors and began to believe their philosophies. She graduated two years ago with a political science and English degree and has turned her back on all that she believed in. We are trusting God to bring our girl back. The wait is sometimes difficult, but we are on bended knee.”²

- a. SAY: This girl’s experience in college is not unusual. According to a UCLA survey, between 34 and 51 percent of college students who claim to be “born again” as freshmen no longer place themselves in that category by their senior year.
- b. DISCUSS: What do you think causes so many Christians to turn their backs on the religious faith they had been taught to believe for 18 to 20 years? (The centerpiece of the conflict is the inability of Christians to defend their faith when confronted with competing worldviews.)

2. DISCUSS: Use the “Key Quote” at the beginning of this lesson and ASK: What does Wiker mean by “The culture wars are cosmological wars.” (The battle for whose ideas will dominate society are ultimately about worldview issues, i.e., specifically the questions of theology and philosophy.)

B. SHOW AND DISCUSS THE *Countering Culture* VIDEO SEGMENT FOR LESSON ONE: Tell your child to pay particular attention to what the students say. See the TEACHER VIDEO GUIDELINE at the end of this lesson for discussion questions.

² This is an excerpt from an actual letter sent to Dr. Ron Nash, a Christian author, professor, and summer faculty for Summit Ministries.

II. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

- A. READ or show the following quote: “The basic problem of the Christians in this country [referring to the United States of America in the mid-1980’s] in the last eighty years or so... is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.”
- B. ASK: What do you think are some of the consequences for individual Christians who have the “bit and piece” focus? (Allow interaction as you guide the discussion by weaving in the following.)
1. READ MATTHEW 22:37-38. (First, we have failed to understand the scriptural principle of developing a total Christian mind. Recall that Jesus’ Great Commandment includes loving God with our minds as well as our hearts.)
 2. SAY: Second, a “bit and piece” focus causes many Christians to make a distinction between what is “sacred” (e.g., Bible study, prayer, church attendance, witnessing) and other areas of life that are “secular”(vocation, political involvement, education, psychology, etc.).
- C. ASK: What are the results in society when Christians withdraw from shaping the culture? (The demise of both public and private morals, a debasement of law and politics, an undermining of educational values, and the corruption of media and popular culture.)

III. A BIBLICAL VIEW OF CULTURE

- A. READ GENESIS 1:28 AND ASK: For what purpose did God create man? (After creating Adam and Eve, God instructs them to have dominion over all living creatures, to carry on where he leaves off. The implication is that, from then on, the development of the creation will be primarily social and cultural, including not only the animals, but also the human community. This is called the Cultural Commission.)
- B. EXAMPLE: Read Daniel 1:4, 17-20 and ask how DANIEL exemplifies a man living out the Cultural Commission in the midst of a pagan culture. (Daniel was trained in the “language and literature of the Babylonians,” excelled in a high government position, and yet maintained a strict devotion to God.)
- C. READ MATTHEW 5:13-16.
1. ASK: What did Jesus say was our role in society? (Jesus taught that his followers ought to have a preserving and enlightening influence on society.)
 2. DISCUSS: What kinds of actions would be included in “good works”? (Probe your child to go beyond the usual responses, such as “help the

sick,” to see that it is a good work when a congressman passes a law to protect citizens from evil doers, or when a group of citizens establish and work at a crisis pregnancy center to counsel women considering abortion.)

IV. FULFILLING THE CULTURAL COMMISSION

- A. First, we are warned not to be taken captive by the deceptive philosophies pervading our culture. READ COLOSSIANS 2:8 and ASK: What makes a philosophy deceptive? (A deceptive philosophy looks good on the surface, but in fact does not conform to the way things actually are.)
1. ILLUSTRATION. PLASTIC FRUIT: You spot a bowl of fruit as you enter a friend's home and your mouth waters as you go over to take a bit out of a juicy apple. But when you pick up the apple, on closer inspection, it turns out to be plastic!
 2. SAY: To not be captured by a deception, you must *discern* the difference between the real and the fake.
 3. CULTURAL EXAMPLE. ASK: What aspects are real and what parts are fake about how sexuality is portrayed on most television programs, such as *Friends* or *Will and Grace* (you may want to substitute other current popular shows)? (What's real is that people have the desire for sexual intimacy. The deception is that the characters seek this intimacy outside of marriage, and psychological studies reveal that those who are most satisfied with their sex lives are in committed marriages. In reality, the kind of promiscuity show on television leads to sexually transmitted diseases, something that is never mentioned on the shows. We're presented with a fake worldview that does not portray the real world in which we live.)
- B. Second, we are instructed to set free those who have been captured by deceptive philosophies. READ 2 TIMOTHY 2:24–26 to make the point.
1. READ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5
 - a. ASK: There are four points about this passage. First, what are the weapons of the world? (Conventional warfare is fought with bombs, guns, and bullets.)
 - b. ASK: Second, in this context, what kind of battle are we fighting? (One involved with “arguments” and “high-minded thing[s] raised up against the knowledge of God.” In other words, a battle over ideas!)
 - c. ASK: Third, in light of the kind of battle Paul is envisioning here, what weapons do Christians have to fight with? (Demolish their arguments!)
 - d. ASK: In what ways can we do that? (An effective way to demolish an argument is to point out its inconsistencies and offer a better argument in its place. All non-biblical worldviews have distinctive weaknesses because they are out of sync with the real world. Once these weaknesses are brought to light, they can be contrasted with the strength of the biblical position.)

2. EXAMPLE: Paul in Acts 17 (Discuss the points from the text regarding Paul's use of the worldview of his day to engage non-Christians in understanding the gospel.)
3. EXAMPLE: What is a "family"?
 - a. EXPLAIN: Both Secular and Cosmic Humanists insist that people should have the freedom to establish any kind of marriage they desire—two men living together, two women living together, single parent families, or any other combination of their choice.
 - b. ASK: Does the biblical view offer individuals and society a better answer to the question, "What is a family"? (Yes. Numerous social, psychological, and demographic studies reveal that husbands, wives, and children are all better off emotionally, physically, spiritually, economically, and academically when the traditional family unit is maintained. Below are just 2 statistics from dozens that could be mentioned.) Note: this is used to illustrate the point, not go into depth on this issue, which will be covered in more detail in a later chapter.
 - i. First, married mothers are half as likely to experience domestic violence as are never-married mothers.
 - ii. Second, teenagers from intact, two-parent families have a 20 percent lower rate of sexual activity than their counterparts living with a single, divorced, remarried, or cohabitating parent.

C. WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS SURVEY

1. INTRODUCE the survey by explaining that in order to be most effective at being "salt and light" in society, we need to understand our biblical worldview. Allow time for your child to complete their answers, and score the survey.
2. SCORING. Add the number of times you selected each letter and place the total in the box beside the same letter below. The higher the score for "D" (12 = highest possible) the more consistent is the person's thinking with biblical Christian worldview. Any answers marked with "A", "B", or "C" reflects the corresponding worldview: A = Postmodern Marxism, B = Secular Humanism, C = Cosmic Humanism, D = Biblical Christianity.
3. NOTE: The point here is to get your child thinking about the range of issues involved in a total worldview, and to assess their initial approach to several areas that will be discussed more in-depth during the upcoming lessons. If your child scored high in the biblical Christian area, the challenge you can give is this, "It's one thing to know something yourself, but quite another thing to discuss it with someone else. Our task as Christians is to persuade others of the truth of God's plan for every area of life. This study will help do that."

V. CONCLUSION

SAY: As the Apostle Paul countered the religious worldviews of his day in Acts 17, so faithful and aware Christians must, if they are truly to follow Christ, counter the false philosophies of our day. In the West this means facing humanism and postmodernism in all its aspects. Over the next 11 weeks we will be learning about Secular Humanist, Postmodern Marxist, and Cosmic Humanist worldviews while presenting an intelligent defense of biblical Christianity.

TEACHER VIDEO GUIDELINE: ENGAGING THE CULTURE

Before showing the video segment, instruct your child to pay special attention to the comments made by the students and be ready to discuss them afterwards. The video runs about 2.5 minutes.

Student comments:

1. "I was brought up in a Christian family and taught the Bible. And then in school, in high school and even college, you're taught evolution."
2. "I'm not really interested in where we came from or where we're going. We're here for some reason, and if we're not, as long as we have fun, ya know."
3. "The truth is, there are no absolute truths. I mean; even God doesn't work that way."
4. "Since there are no truths, you have to find your own way. Nothing is concrete, or set in stone. Everything changes, that's the only thing we do know is change."
5. "I think it's the role of the professors to challenge our beliefs, because we come here with a set of beliefs, and we've got to get rid of it."
6. "It's our body and if we want to hurt it or be nice to it, whatever, it's our choice, and no one should tell us what to do."
7. "Truth to me is, uh, what is truth to me? Umm, boy, that's a tough one. Maybe I'll have to think about that."
8. "I don't think anybody really knows [the truth]."

Follow up questions:

- 1) One student said that he was not interested in where he came from or where he was going, as long as he had fun. What did he mean by that? Is this a common attitude among people you know?
- 2) Another student was brought up in a Christian home and was taught the Bible, yet was not able to answer the question, "What is truth to you?" (Comments #1 & 7). Why do you think that was the case?
- 3) A female student said it's the role of professors to challenge the beliefs of their students. Do you agree? If you were this girl's parents, what would you think about this comment? (For insight, look back to the opening letter from a mom concerning her daughter who was lead away from the faith.)

Countering Culture: LESSON ONE

ENGAGING OUR POST-CHRISTIAN CULTURE

KEY CONCEPT

Biblical discipleship involves engaging the culture in order to maintain a moral and free society.

KEY QUOTE

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

KEY VERSE

Colossians 2:8

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

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. A CHRISTIAN STUDENT’S EXPERIENCE
- B. Video

II. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

- A. “The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so... is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.”²
—Francis Schaeffer
- B. MATTHEW 22:37-38

III. A BIBLICAL VIEW OF CULTURE

- A. GENESIS 1:28. The Cultural Commission
- B. EXAMPLE: Daniel 1:4, 17-20
- C. MATTHEW 5:13-16. “Salt and light.”

¹ Benjamin Wiker. *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) p. 301, 314.

² Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1981), p. 17.

IV. FULFILLING THE CULTURAL COMMISSION

A. COLOSSIANS 2:8. What makes a philosophy deceptive?

B. 2 TIMOTHY 2:24–26

1. 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5. How do we set people free?

2. EXAMPLE: Paul in ACTS 17

3. EXAMPLE: What is a “family”?

V. CONCLUSION

A. As the Apostle Paul countered the religious worldviews of his day in Acts 17, so faithful and aware Christians must counter the false philosophies of our day.

Worldview Assessment Survey

Circle the letter before the statement that **best describes** your belief about each subject? You may circle more than one statement for each subject. If none of the statements reflect your beliefs, do not circle any.

1. **God:**
 - a. There is no God.
 - b. Though there may be a God, there is insufficient evidence to know for sure.
 - c. "God" is an energy force that is part of everyone and everything.
 - d. There is a God who can be known.

2. **Religion:**
 - a. All religions are false and detrimental to mankind's progress.
 - b. Primitive man developed religion to answer life's perplexing questions.
 - c. All religions are true and lead to the same divine source.
 - d. Christianity is the only true religion.

3. **Nature:**
 - a. Matter is eternal and is all that exists.
 - b. The universe is the only reality. Even though many people believe in it, the supernatural (God, angels, etc.) is not real.
 - c. Everything in the universe is one spiritual reality.
 - d. There exists both the natural (the physical universe) and supernatural (God, angels, etc.).

4. **Truth:**
 - a. There is no ultimate truth (something may be true for one person but not for someone else).
 - b. The scientific method is the only sure way to know what is true.
 - c. One's inner feelings reveal what is true for each individual.
 - d. Truth comes from studying the world, but ultimately from God's revelation found in the Bible.

5. **Life:**
 - a. Life arose on earth from non-living matter.
 - b. Life came about by natural processes and slowly evolved over time.
 - c. Everything in the universe is part of a living energy force.
 - d. God created all living creatures.

6. **Human nature:**
 - a. Humans are neither good nor bad; they just are.
 - b. Humans are basically good, but society causes some individuals to behave in bad ways.
 - c. Humans are one with God, the problem is that most do not realize it.
 - d. Humans were created in God's image but have fallen into sin.

7. **Human significance:**
 - a. Life is meaningless; humans have no more significance than a rock or a snail.
 - b. Humans have significance because they are the most highly evolved form of life on earth.
 - c. Humans have significant as part of the divine life-force.
 - d. Being made in the image of God gives significance and dignity to all individuals.

8. **Ethics:**
 - a. Right and wrong are determined by those who have power over others.
 - b. Morality is relative to each individual and situation; therefore, whatever works best or seems right at the time is the right thing to do.
 - c. Morality is what feels right to you in any given situation.
 - d. There are absolute moral standards that apply to every individual, in every culture, throughout all time.

9. **Sociology:**
 - a. Traditional marriage oppresses women and should be abolished.
 - b. Social relationships, such as marriage, should change with the times to reflect the current needs of individuals.
 - c. Every one should be free to express his or her sexual preferences in whatever way they choose, regardless of marital status.
 - d. The family (a life-time marriage between one man and one woman) is ordained by God as the foundation for society, and promoting any other arrangement hurts individuals and society.

10. **Law:**
 - a. Laws are made by the ruling class to maintain power over others.
 - b. Laws are man-made and should change as mankind's understanding changes over time.
 - c. Laws should be passed to protect the environment and endangered species, regardless of the impact on human life.
 - d. Laws are eternal principles designed by God into the nature of the world. Mankind can discover these laws and apply them in science as well as in civil government.

11. **Politics:**
 - a. To eliminate war and poverty, nations of the world should unite under a one-world government.
 - b. Government should guarantee all its citizens a minimum wage, healthcare, and housing.
 - c. The state should give more power to local communities so individuals can reach their greatest potential.
 - d. Because power tends to corrupt those who rule, the role of government should be limited to a few basic areas, such as maintaining an orderly society and protecting its citizens from attack by other nations.

12. **Economics:**
 - a. All aspects of the economy should be in the hands of the state to ensure that everyone has an equal share of the wealth.
 - b. The wealthy should be taxed at a higher rate to provide for the needs of the poor.

- c. As a person develops a greater awareness of his god-like qualities, he or she will gain greater wealth.
- d. The best economic system is one that allows the peaceful and free exchange of goods and services with a minimum of government interference.

SCORING:

Add the number of times you selected each letter and place the total in the box beside the corresponding letter below.

A = _____ B = _____ C = _____ D = _____

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK ONE

- 1) **STUDY THE TEXT:** Read Chapter 1 in *Countering Culture*.
- 2) **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**
 - a. Write a one-page outline of the chapter.
 - b. Write ten multiple-choice questions that cover the content of the chapter.
 - c. Write a one-page paper on the following: One of the goals in studying worldviews is for the Christian to be better equipped for communicating the gospel to people who have been captured by deceptive philosophies. How does 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 relate to this task? What practical ideas can be gleaned from Paul's example in Acts 17:16-34?
- 3) **WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS:** James Dobson and Gary Bauer state that our culture is engaged in a battle over ideas. Analyze two current events in the news that illustrate this battle. For each item you choose, write a paragraph describing the various sides of the conflict and be prepared to present and discuss the issues with your parents. For example, the text mentions the debate over defining marriage and family.
- 4) **COUNTERING CULTURE RESEARCH PROJECT:** Go to a local high school or college campus and ask the survey questions noted below to 25 or more students. You can either write out their answers or take a camcorder to record their responses. Write a short paper summarizing their comments and what you learned from this experience. Note: You may need to secure permission to be on a high school campus, so call the school administration office first. Explain that you are asking four questions as part of an informal "Opinion Survey." Maintain a neutral stance and don't argue over their answers. This is just to seek opinions.

OPINION SURVEY

- 1) What is truth?
- 2) Do you believe in God?
- 3) Can you give any reasons for why you believe/disbelieve in God?
- 4) How would you describe God? (If "yes" to #3)

Countering Culture: LESSON TWO

WORLDVIEWS SEEKING TO CAPTURE YOU

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT

In order to counter the culture, Christians must understand three worldviews that are influencing education, politics, the media, and the courts: Secular Humanism, Postmodern Marxism, and Cosmic Humanism.

KEY QUOTE

“...the clash that is coming—and that has, indeed, already begun—is...between those who claim the Judeo-Christian worldview and those who have abandoned that worldview in favor of the ‘isms’ of contemporary American life—feminism, multiculturalism, gay liberationism, lifestyle liberalism—what I here lump together as a family called ‘the secularist orthodoxy.’”¹

—Robert P. George

KEY VERSE

Matthew 7:16

“You’ll recognize them by their fruit.”

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, your child should:

- 1) Know the ten categories that comprise a worldview and the key question(s) associated with each.
- 2) Explain how the following worldviews are influencing our culture: Secular Humanism, Postmodernism Marxism, and Cosmic Humanism.

LESSON PREPARATION

READ the text, STUDY this lesson outline, and PREVIEW the *Countering Culture* video for this lesson.

NOTE: The video segment for this lesson is longer than usual. It is divided into three sections—one each for Secular Humanism (running time is about 8 minutes), Postmodern Marxism (about 6 minutes), and Cosmic Humanism (7 minutes). You will need to carefully monitor the suggested discussion time in order to complete this lesson in one class period. Or, you may decide to spend more time and extend this for two classes.

PREPARE THE FOLLOWING TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND HANDOUTS:

- ❑ Cue the *Capturing Culture* VIDEO to counter 02:53 (counter should be set to 00:00 at the opening title).

1 Robert P. George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies*, (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001) p. 3.

- ❑ Copy note-taking outline for the lesson and the week's assignment.
- ❑ OPTIONAL: Obtain a copy of *The Truman Show* on VHS or DVD and cue it to the final scene (see I. A.). For background on the film, go online to www.screenit.com/movies/1998/the_truman_show.html.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. REVIEW WORLDVIEW DEFINITION

A. THREE ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

1. INTRODUCE the story line of *The Truman Show* (1998 release, starring Jim Carey.) Truman Burbank (Jim Carey) slowly begins to realize that his idyllic life is really the subject of a live, around the clock TV show and that everyone he knows is just an actor playing a part in it. SAY: As you view the final scene of the film, listen for the three questions Truman asks Christof, the show's creator and director. (Show the clip beginning with Truman climbing the steps toward the exit door.)
2. ASK: What are the three questions Truman asks?
 - a. Who are you? (By implication, referring to "God")
 - b. Who am I?
 - c. Was nothing real?
3. ASK: Why are these questions important for all of us to ask? (These questions are the foundational questions that everyone asks at some point in their life. They form the basis of what we understand about the world and our place in it—in other words, our religious view of the world, or *worldview*.)
4. ASK: In what college courses are these three questions studied? (Write on board)
 - a. Who are you, God? => Religion/Theology
 - b. Who am I? => Psychology
 - c. What is real? => Philosophy

B. DEFINING WORLDVIEW

1. ASK: What are the major worldview categories? (As learners respond, write on the board the following and, after the arrow; have them associate the worldview category with each question.)
 - a. Who are you, God? => Religion/Theology
 - b. Who am I? => Psychology
 - c. What is real? => Philosophy
 - d. How did life begin? => Biology
 - e. What is right? => Ethics

- f. How should society be structured? => Sociology
 - g. Who makes the rules? => Law
 - h. What is the basis for government? => Politics
 - i. What produces a sound economy? => Economics
 - j. How should we interpret human events? => History
2. WORLDVIEW TREE. Describe the “Worldview Tree” to illustrate how “worldview thinking” works. NOTE: This illustration was used in lesson 9 in the *Thinking Like A Christian* study and is used here as a review. **As a puzzle was the organizing illustration for worldview in the first study, the tree and roots will be the main illustration for this study.**
- a. EXAMPLE: The U.S. Constitution. Why did the United States Constitution structure our government into three branches? (Draw a picture of a tree with its root system below the surface.) SAY: Think of it this way. Every tree has a root system that feeds and nourishes the entire plant. The fruit that is produced on the end of the branches comes as a natural result of the nourishment from the roots. The fruit is related organically to the roots. In other words, the roots determine the fruit!
 - b. SAY: The delegates at the Constitutional Convention had before them a blank sheet of paper and asked, “What type of government should we make?” They were starting from scratch.
 - c. SAY: An important component of our constitution is the design that called for three branches of government: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. The founders didn't have to put in three branches, but they chose to do so. Why? (As a system of checks and balances, to keep one person or group of people from having too much power.)
 - d. ASK: But why were the founders afraid of someone having too much power? (Because people might abuse their power and use it in a corrupt way.)
 - e. ASK: Why were they afraid that someone in power might use their power in a corrupt way? (Because they had seen it happen before in history.) SAY: We still are not at the root cause. Why did the founders believe that people might abuse the power of government? (Because of man's basic sin nature.) Right! It's because of their religious understanding of the nature of man.
 - f. Religious Roots. Write the following words (in CAPS) beside the tree, starting at the roots and working your way up the trunk to the limb and to the fruit on the end as you SAY: The founder's Theology (roots)—that there is a God that sets the standards and to whom mankind is accountable—led to their Psychology (trunk)—an understanding about human nature—which in turn fed their Politics (limb)—a system of governing—which produced the fruit of a Republic with three branches (fruit on the end of limb).
 - g. SUMMARY: You cannot separate the root from the fruit. The roots of any system of government are always religious! You cannot separate religious ideas from political ideas.

- h. **THE POINT:** The point of using the “worldview tree” is to show that a worldview is not just a set of isolated ideas or disciplines of study. A worldview functions as an organic unity, showing the relationship of one idea with other ideas, creating an interconnecting whole.
3. WESTERN CULTURE IS DECLINING
 - a. Show the quote by William S. Lind: “In the United States of America, our traditional, Western, Judeo-Christian culture is collapsing. It is not collapsing because it failed. On the contrary it has given us the freest and most prosperous society in human history. Rather, it is collapsing because we are abandoning it.”²
 - b. **ASK:** What could cause such a dramatic and widespread shift in perspective? (Cultural radicals, people who hate our Judeo-Christian culture, are driving this change.)
 - c. **TRANSITION:** To fully understand the current culture war, we need to recognize each of these divergent worldviews and apprehend their influence throughout our society—even in many of our seminaries and churches.

II. WORLDVIEWS IN CONFLICT

- A. **READ** Colossians 2:8 and **SAY:** Paul is using military language when he says, “See to it...”—it’s a form of military command to avoid being captured by deceptive philosophies. **ASK:** What are some ways we can keep from being captured? (Various responses, but one way is to recognize who is the enemy.)
 1. **ILLUSTRATION:** Recognizing the enemy. If I had the choice of being in any war throughout history, I would choose the Revolutionary war between America and Great Britain. Do you know why? (Let them guess.) Because as an American I could easily recognize the enemy—They all wore red coats and marched down the middle of the field! On the other hand, the war that I would definitely *not* want to fight in is the Vietnam War. That’s because many of our soldiers fought and died in the jungles without ever *seeing* the enemy.
 2. **THE POINT:** Many Christians are captured by deceptive worldviews because they don’t understand how those worldviews are at odds with Christianity. Therefore, we must first be able to recognize the enemy before we can defend against their tactics.

B. SECULAR HUMANISM

1. **PLAY:** **Video segment** on secular humanism.
2. **DISCUSS:** Secular humanists’ influence in education.

² William S. Lind, p. 37.

- a. Writing in the 1930's, humanist Charles Potter penned these words (SAY OR DISPLAY THE QUOTE): "Education is the most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism. What can the theistic Sunday schools, meeting for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?"³
 - b. ASK: What evidences do you see that Potter was right? (Use textbook examples from biology, social studies, and psychology.)
 - c. ASK if learners have any personal examples of humanist indoctrination from their educational experiences.
3. ASK: Can you give examples of humanist influence in popular culture? (Use examples from text to supplement learners' examples.)
 4. TRANSITION: These facts simply highlight our contention all along—that worldviews matter! And other views are trying to capture you.

C. POSTMODERN MARXISM

1. SHOW: Video segment on Postmodern Marxism.
2. DISCUSS: Marxist influence in education, popular culture, and the courts. (As time permits, present examples from the text.)
3. SUMMARIZE: ASK your child to summarize the influence of Postmodern Marxism.

D. COSMIC HUMANISM

1. SHOW: Video segment on Cosmic Humanism.
2. ASK: How have you come across New Age ideas? (Supplement your learner's comments with examples from the text.)

- E. WRAP UP: Have your child summarize what he/she learned from this lesson.

³ Charles Francis Potter, *Humanism: A New Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930) p. 128.

**TEACHER VIDEO GUIDELINE:
WORLDVIEWS SEEKING TO CAPTURE YOU**

The Secular Humanist Worldview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Since the dawn of time, man has searched for truth.
 - 1. What is truth? Where can it be found? What does the future hold?
 - 2. Secular Humanists believe truth comes from science. “Man is the measure of all things.”
- B. Secular Humanism is sometimes confused with “humanism.”
 - 1. Many people consider themselves to be humanists, the belief that humans have dignity and should be valued.
 - 2. However, “Secular Humanism” denotes someone who denies the existence of God, rejects divine revelation, and believes morality is relative to individuals or societies.
- C. The church has lost much of its effect on the culture.

II. HISTORY OF SECULAR HUMANISM

- A. Western civilization was built primarily on two foundations: the Judeo-Christian religious tradition of theism and revelation, and the Greek influence of rational investigation and artistic creativity.
- B. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during the time known as the Age of Enlightenment, there was a great increase in two major philosophies:
 - 1. Rationalism is the belief that all claims of truth should be judged solely by human reason, without any appeal to divine revelation.
 - 2. Empiricism (or scientism) is the belief that knowledge is gained primarily through human experience—through the five senses.
- C. It was also at this time that modern science was born, largely due to the biblical worldview.
 - 1. The biblical worldview has always held that the universe was created by a rational and orderly Creator and, therefore, could be understood through scientific investigation.

2. However, as scientific investigation continued to uncover the mysteries of the universe, some people began to believe that divine revelation from God was impractical, or even impossible.
- D. The result was that religious beliefs began to lose importance in many people's lives.
- E. Secular Humanist advances:
1. In 1933, the first Humanist Manifesto was published, making it clear that God had no place in the Secular Humanist worldview.
 2. In 1973, Paul Kurtz, editor of *Free Inquiry* and one of today's leading Secular Humanists, drafted the Humanist Manifesto II, which was signed by many influential educators, authors, and scientists. "No deity will save us. We must save ourselves."
 3. Secular Humanists have influenced every area of society and education, including science, psychology, feminism, government, law, and the media.

The Marxist Worldview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The ideas penned by Karl Marx have had devastating consequences: countries plagued by poverty, private property forcefully taken, and the death of millions.
- B. The Marxist-Leninist Worldview was doomed to fail, because it was never based on reality.
- C. Why should we study Marxism-Leninism? Isn't Marxist ideology and communism dead?
1. Marxism continues to thrive in many countries (e.g., Asia, Africa, and Latin America).
 2. On many American university campuses, Marxism flourishes, where thousands of professors teach the evils of capitalism and advocate a Marxist utopia.
 3. We should study the Marxist-Leninist worldview to make sure these ideas are never practiced again.
- D. No worldview will work if it is not based on reality, especially the reality of human nature. It is precisely here that Marxism-Leninism fails.

II. MARXISM TODAY: NEO-MARXISM AND POSTMODERNISM

- A. There's not just one kind of Marxism, but several, and they take a different approach to certain things. But the core of radicalism remains, that you can mold people through political agencies and change the very nature of human beings in doing so.
- B. While Classical Marxism has fallen in former communist countries, Marxism still appeals to western intellectuals.
 1. Marxist-Leninists believe that economic change, through socialism, will transform the culture.
 2. Neo-Marxists (Leftists) teach that cultural change must come before socialism will be achieved.
 3. Changing America's values is seen as the best way to usher in the socialist utopia.
 - a. This is why the Left try to undermine traditional moral and cultural values.
 - b. And the fastest and most effective way to do this is through the cultural-shaping institutions of education, the arts, and the media.
- C. Marxism in Higher Education.
 1. "Marxism continues to flourish on American college campuses, as perhaps nowhere else in the world."—Thomas Sowell
 2. Marxism is dominant in departments of English, sociology, and history.
 3. College students who realize their education is slanted toward a Marxist worldview have to work twice as hard to understand the arguments of the Left better than the Left understands it and then study twice as hard to understand the refutations.

The Cosmic Humanist Worldview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Cosmic Humanism, more commonly known as the New Age Movement, has grown at an astonishing rate in Europe and the United States. Even so, the New Age movement is not easy to define. New Agers do not agree in all their beliefs.
- B. Key elements of New Age beliefs:
 1. Their movement is both a religious and a social cause.

2. The future will be an age of peace and enlightenment.
 3. By furthering their worldview through education and politics, both personal and cultural transformation will usher in this new age.
- C. Cosmic Humanists move beyond the atheistic humanisms to declare that humanity is divine, that man is God.
- D. Since the New Age movement is not an organized religion, solid statistics are hard to acquire.
1. Some sociologists have estimated that as many as 12 million Americans are active participants in the New Age, while another 30 million show regular interest.
 2. It has also been estimated that in America alone there are 10,000 professional astrologers serving over 20 million clients.

II. THE ROOTS OF COSMIC HUMANISM

- A. While many analysts point to the early 1970s as the beginning of the New Age movement, its ideas have been around for thousands of years. The current movement is simply the latest manifestation of an ancient and persistent occult-metaphysical tradition.
1. This tradition threads through Gnosticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and many forms of mysticism. It is found among many American-based religious groups such as Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and Eckankar.
- B. Transcendentalism (Ralph Waldo Emerson and others).
1. They merged the mysticism and dogmas of the East with the popular American values of individualism and self-responsibility, and looked to nature to teach spiritual truths.
 2. Transcendentalists believed that God is revealed in all religions, and that by studying nature and ourselves—without the need for any special revelation such as the Bible—they could uncover the secrets of their inner-selves, knowledge of the divine.
- C. Asian Immigration (1960s)
1. Religious ideas, such as Transcendental Meditation and Zen Buddhism were ushered in.
 2. They offered an exotic, even paradoxical philosophy combined with a deep experientialism.

D. Popularizing Elements

1. Music groups such as The Beatles.
2. New Age Organizations and Journals, and Hollywood movies.

Countering Culture: LESSON TWO

WORLDVIEWS SEEKING TO CAPTURE YOU

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT

In order to counter the culture, Christians must understand three worldviews that are influencing education, politics, the media, and the courts: Secular Humanism, Postmodern Marxism, and Cosmic Humanism.

KEY QUOTE

“...the clash that is coming—and that has, indeed, already begun—is...between those who claim the Judeo-Christian worldview and those who have abandoned that worldview in favor of the ‘isms’ of contemporary American life—feminism, multiculturalism, gay liberationism, lifestyle liberalism—what I here lump together as a family called ‘the secularist orthodoxy.’”¹

—Robert P. George

KEY VERSE

Matthew 7:16

“You’ll recognize them by their fruit.”

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- 1) Know the key question(s) associated with each worldview discipline.
- 2) Explain how the following worldviews are influencing our culture: Secular Humanism, Postmodernism Marxism, and Cosmic Humanism.

DEFINING WORLDVIEW

1. WHO ARE YOU, _____? =>
2. WHO AM I? =>
3. WHAT IS _____? =>
4. HOW DID _____ BEGIN? =>
5. WHAT IS RIGHT? =>
6. HOW SHOULD _____ BE STRUCTURED? =>
7. WHO MAKES THE _____? =>
8. WHAT IS THE _____ FOR GOVERNMENT? =>
9. WHAT PRODUCES A SOUND _____? =>
10. HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET HUMAN _____? =>

¹ Robert P. George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies*, (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001) p. 3.

WORLDVIEW THINKING



The Secular Humanist Worldview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Since the dawn of time, man has searched for truth.
- B. Secular Humanism is sometimes confused with “Humanism.”
 - 1. Many people consider themselves to be humanists, the belief that humans have dignity and should be valued.
 - 2. However, “_____ humanism” signifies someone who denies the existence of God, rejects divine revelation, and believes morality is relative to individuals or societies.
- C. The church has lost much of its effect on the culture.

II. HISTORY OF SECULAR HUMANISM

- A. Western civilization was primarily built on two foundations: the Judeo-Christian religious tradition of theism and revelation, and the Greek influence of rational investigation and artistic creativity.
- B. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during the time known as the Age of _____, there was a great increase in two major philosophies:
 - 1. _____ is the belief that all claims of truth should be judged solely by human reason, without any appeal to divine revelation.
 - 2. Empiricism (or Scientism) is the belief that knowledge is gained primarily through human experience—through the five _____.
- C. It was also at this time that modern science was born, largely due to the biblical worldview.
 - 1. The biblical worldview has always held that the universe was created by a rational and orderly _____.
 - 2. However, as scientific investigation continued to uncover the mysteries of the universe, some people began to believe that divine revelation from God was impractical, or even _____.

- D. The result was that religious beliefs began to lose importance in many people's lives.
- E. Secular Humanist advances:
 - 1. In _____, the first Humanist Manifesto was published, making it clear that god had no place in the Secular Humanist worldview.
 - 2. In _____, Paul Kurtz, editor of Free Inquiry and one of today's leading Secular Humanists, drafted the Humanist Manifesto II, which was signed by many influential educators, authors, and scientists. "No deity will save us. We must save ourselves."
 - 3. Secular Humanists have influenced every area of society and education, including science, psychology, feminism, government, law, and the media.

The Marxist Worldview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The ideas penned by Karl Marx have had devastating consequences: countries plagued by poverty, private property forcefully taken, and the death of millions.
- B. The Marxist-Leninist Worldview was doomed to fail, because it was never based on _____.
- C. Why should we study Marxism-Leninism? Isn't Marxist ideology and communism dead?
 - 1. Marxism continues to _____ in many countries (e.g., Asia, Africa, and Latin America).
 - 2. On many American university campuses, Marxism flourishes, where 1,000's of professors teach the evils of capitalism and advocate a Marxist utopia.
 - 3. We should study the Marxist-Leninist worldview to make sure that these ideas are never practiced again.
- D. No worldview will work if it is not based on reality, especially the reality of _____ nature. It is precisely here that Marxism-Leninism fails.

II. MARXISM TODAY: NEO-MARXISM AND POSTMODERNISM

- A. There's not just one kind of Marxism, but several, and they take a different approach to certain things. But the core of radicalism remains, that you can mold people through political agencies and change the very nature of human beings in doing so.
- B. While Classical Marxism has fallen in former communist countries, Marxism still appeals to western intellectuals.

1. Marxist-Leninists believe that _____ change, through socialism, will transform the culture.
2. Neo-Marxists (Leftists) teach that _____ change must come before socialism will be achieved.
3. Changing America's _____ is seen as the best way to usher in the socialist utopia.
 - a. This is why the Left try to undermine traditional moral and cultural values.
 - b. And the fastest and most effective way to do this is through the cultural-shaping institutions of education, the _____, and the _____.

C. Marxism in higher education:

1. "Marxism continues to flourish on American college campuses, as perhaps nowhere else in the world." — Thomas Sowell
2. Marxism is dominant in departments of English, sociology, and history.
3. College students who realize that their education is slanted toward a Marxist worldview have to work twice as hard to understand the arguments of the Left better than the Left understands it and then study twice as hard to understand the refutations.

The Cosmic Humanist Worldview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Cosmic Humanism, more commonly known as the _____ Movement, has grown at an astonishing rate in Europe and the United States. Even so, the New Age movement is not easy to _____. New Agers do not agree in all their beliefs.
- B. Key elements of New Age beliefs:
 1. Their movement is both a religious and a _____ cause.
 2. The future will be an age of peace and _____.
 3. By furthering their worldview through education and politics, both personal and cultural transformation will usher in this new age.
- C. Cosmic Humanists move beyond the atheistic humanisms to declare that humanity is _____, that man is God.

D. Since the New Age movement is not an organized religion, solid statistics are hard to acquire.

1. Some sociologists have estimated that as many as ____ million Americans are active participants in the New Age, while another _____ million show regular interest.
2. It has also been estimated that in America alone there are 10,000 professional astrologers serving over 20 million clients.

II. THE ROOTS OF COSMIC HUMANISM

A. While many analysts point to the early 1970s as the beginning of the New Age movement, its ideas have been around for thousands of years. The current movement is simply the latest manifestation of an _____ and persistent occult-metaphysical tradition.

1. This tradition threads through Gnosticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and many forms of _____.

B. Transcendentalism: (Ralph Waldo Emerson and others)

1. They merged the mysticism and dogmas of the East with the popular American values of _____ and self-responsibility, looking to nature to teach spiritual truths.
2. Transcendentalists believed that God was revealed in all _____, and that by studying nature and ourselves—without the need for any special revelation, such as the Bible—they could uncover the secrets of their inner-selves, knowledge of the divine.

C. Asian Immigration (1960s)

1. Religious ideas, such as Transcendental Meditation and Zen Buddhism were ushered in.
2. They offered an exotic, even paradoxical philosophy combined with a deep experientialism.

D. Popularizing Elements

1. Music groups such as The Beatles.
2. New Age organizations, Journals, and Hollywood movies.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK TWO

- 1) STUDY THE TEXT: Read Chapter 2 in *Countering Culture*.
- 2) WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
 - a. Write a one-page outline of the chapter.
 - b. Write ten multiple-choice questions that cover the content of the chapter.
 - c. Write a one-page paper on the following: Read George Barna's December 1, 2003 report, *A Biblical Worldview Has a Radical Effect on a Person's Life* (www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=154&Reference=A) and interact with his findings using the questions that follow to get you started (NOTE: If you do not have internet access, respond to the following questions based on your reading of the text). What surprised you? Would these statistics hold true for those in your church or community? Why do you think so few Christians have a biblical worldview? What do you think is the solution? Why are other worldviews gaining influence in people's lives?
- 3) WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS. Choose two items from current news, television, music, or movies. For each one, write a paragraph analyzing the worldview category it belongs to and tracing the connecting categories down to its roots. Be prepared to present and discuss these issues with your parents.
- 4) COUNTERING CULTURE RESEARCH PROJECT. Evaluate Ms. Harlow's statement below for worldview bias. Focus on the underlying ideas Ms. Harlow assumes to be true. To assist you in analyzing Ms. Harlow's comments, substitute "freeing the slaves" for "these sodomy laws" and ask yourself if Ms. Harlow would make the same argument in favor of slavery. What does this tell you about what she really believes?*

Ruth Harlow is legal director of the homosexual advocacy group Lambda Legal and was the lead attorney in the *Lawrence vs. Texas* case that ruled the Texas state law against sodomy was unconstitutional. After the 2003 *Lawrence* case, Ms. Harlow said, "people with strong Christian views are outnumbered by a majority of Americans who opposed these sodomy laws. They are more and more being pushed to the sidelines," she said. "We don't have any problems with individuals making their own choices and having their own religious views. But in our country, a minority of individuals cannot dictate those views for the whole country." (*Homosexuals Push for Same-Sex Marriage After Sodomy Ruling*, CNSNews.com, June 26, 2003)

RESEARCH PROJECT

Ruth Harlow is legal director of the homosexual advocacy group Lambda Legal and was the lead attorney in the *Lawrence vs. Texas* case that ruled the Texas state law against sodomy was unconstitutional. After the 2003 *Lawrence* case, Ms. Harlow said, "people with strong Christian views are outnumbered by a majority of Americans who opposed these sodomy laws. They are more and more being pushed to the sidelines," she said. "We

don't have any problems with individuals making their own choices and having their own religious views. But in our country, a minority of individuals cannot dictate those views for the whole country.” (*Homosexuals Push for Same-Sex Marriage After Sodomy Ruling*, CNSNews.com, June 26, 2003)

Evaluate Ms. Harlow’s statement for accuracy and worldview bias. What worldview issues does she raise? (Some of the issues are: the morality of homosexual sodomy and how we know what is moral, the relationship between morality and law, the role of the Federal Courts in overturning state laws, judicial activism versus judicial constructionism.) Are her statements factually accurate? (For example, a Gallup poll taken in late July, 2003, showed that less than half (48%) of Americans agreed that “homosexual relations between consenting adults” should be legal. While 67% of those who never attend church agreed, only 27% of those who attend church once a week felt the same.) How would you respond to her comments? (Since those who never attend church are a minority, why are *they* forcing their views on the majority who do attend church?)

*NOTE TO PARENTS: The research project paper should include the following:

During the early 1800's, the nation was divided over the issue of slavery. But it was a minority of Christians, primarily, both in Great Britain and the United States, who began to agitate and push for freeing those in bondage. This was an unpopular position, but they were convinced that their cause was morally right, and they pressed the issue. The same was true during the 1960's regarding civil rights of blacks, with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. leading the way by declaring that "all men are created equal," an idea that comes from a biblical worldview.

Yet, we can assume that Ms. Harlow would not agree that this view should have been dismissed because it was a minority view. We find then, that she does not really mean what she says. She has a prior commitment to a worldview that accepts homosexuality as a moral lifestyle, and she is using the argument of "majority rule" as a way to give legitimacy to her desire to see homosexuals given greater social acceptance.

Another problem with Ms. Harlow's reasoning is that it rests on the whims of 51% of the people. A Gallop poll taken *before* the *Lawrence* decision indicated that 51% of Americans agreed that gays should be able to choose their own lifestyle, including marriage. Yet, after the *Lawrence* case was handed down, this shifted and according to a *USA Today* poll, Americans oppose homosexual "marriage" by a more than 2-1 margin (65% to 31%). The margin among those who feel strongly about the issue was 3-1 (52% to 17%), meaning those who oppose same-sex "marriage" are more adamant about their position than those who support the redefinition of marriage. In light of this new majority view, does Ms. Harlow now retract her support for gay marriage? We assume, because of her worldview commitment, she would not.

Ms. Harlow also fails to understand that our nation is not a democracy, but a republic. That means that even if 51% or more of the people have a preference for a certain law, it is still up to the elected representatives to debate the issue and make the best decision for the people. Again, this shows her worldview bias, since a secular humanist worldview prefers democracy over republican government.

Countering Culture: LESSON THREE

WHAT ABOUT GOD?

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT:

Reasons given by Secular Humanists for not believing in God are founded on faith-based assumptions.

KEY QUOTE:

“We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.” *Humanist Manifesto II*

KEY VERSE:

Luke 16:31

(Jesus) said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, your child should be able to:

- 1) State three reasons presented by Secular Humanists for not believing in God.
- 2) Point out logical fallacies with arguments against God’s existence.
- 3) Display a respectful attitude toward others when countering false ideas.

LESSON PREPARATION

READ the text, STUDY this lesson outline, and PREVIEW the *Countering Culture* video for this lesson (about 3 minutes running time).

PREPARE THE FOLLOWING TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND HANDOUTS:

- Cue the *Capturing Culture* VIDEO at counter 25:38.
- Copy note-taking outline for the lesson and the week’s assignment.
- Optional: secure the songs mentioned in the text by Bon Jovi and Dave Matthews to play in class.
- Optional: Secure the movie, *Patch Adams*, and cue to the scene where he is on the cliff conversing with God (counter 1:32:00 from the opening title).

LESSON OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. After playing or displaying the lyrics of Bon Jovi and Dave Matthews’ songs, SAY: I think Jon and Dave are absolutely right, if... *what?* (Have learners complete the sentence... there is no God!)

- B. LEAD A BRIEF DISCUSSION about how one's belief about God makes a difference in day to day living.

II. REASONS FOR NOT BELIEVING IN GOD

- A. INTRODUCE and show the Capturing Culture video segment. Have your child pay special attention to what Paul Kurtz mentions as implications of his theological atheism.

1. DISCUSS Kurtz' inferences for mankind, given his atheism. (We must save the planet and limit the population.)
 - a. WHY does he feel this way? (Since this life on earth is the only one we have, we had better take care of the planet in order to continue the human species.)
 - b. ASK: Are Christians also concerned for the planet? What motivates Christians to be concerned about the environment or population? (God has given us this "garden" to till and protect, so we are responsible to Him for our stewardship of the planet.)
2. TRANSITION: Next, we'll discuss four reasons some choose to disbelieve in God. (List reasons on the board as you progress.)

B. REASON #1 – MAN CREATED THE IDEA OF GOD

1. Use the quotes below to establish this idea.
 - a. Russell: "God is a conception derived from ancient despots."
 - b. Lamont: "human beings... created the gods"
 - c. Humanist Manifesto 2000: "we alone are responsible for our own destiny..."
2. DISCUSS: How do they know they are right? (See Asimov quote: Can't prove God does not exist, but simply assumes God does not exist.)
3. TRANSITION: However, even though it cannot be proven that God does not exist, skeptics and atheists provide reasons for their beliefs.

C. # REASON #2 – LACK OF POSITIVE EVIDENCE FOR GOD

1. EXPLAIN that the "DESIGN ARGUMENT," used by theists as evidence for God's existence, is considered weak since science has proven that evolution, i.e., natural selection, can produce complexity in living things.
2. CRITIQUE the argument against design. ASK: Can you think of a rebuttal to this line of reasoning? (NOTE: A rebuttal, in formal debate, does not mean you have to provide a knockout argument, but it simply has to show that their

3. argument is not necessarily true. Here are two rebuttals: #1 - God could have used natural selection. #2 - Circular reasoning: assumes evolution is naturalistic.)

D. REASON #3 – EVIDENCE AGAINST GOD: THE PROBLEM OF PAIN AND SUFFERING

1. Show or describe the scene from Patch Adams.
2. Outline the formal argument.
 - a. If God is all-good and loving, then He should want to alleviate human pain and suffering.
 - b. And if God is all-powerful, then He is able to alleviate pain and suffering.
 - c. But humans still experience personal pain and suffering.
 - d. Therefore, an all-loving and powerful God must not exist.
3. ROLE-PLAY. With your teen, role-play the following scenario: Two workers are on break (set the scene as appropriate to your teen) and the non-believer (you) asks the believer (your teen), “How can you believe in a god when there is so much evil and suffering in the world?”
4. SUMMARIZE a CRITIQUE of the “problem of pain.”
 - a. First, most suffering is manmade—for example, under evil governments such as Fascism/Nazism/Communism.
 - b. Second, this is a “straw man” fallacy, misrepresenting the character of God. Example: Job’s suffering leads to a greater understanding of God
 - c. Third, the idea that pain is evil assumes a theistic worldview. So the skeptic has to assume that God exists in order to disprove God’s existence!
 - d. Logically, God and suffering can both exist. Just because you may not like the idea of suffering, does not mean God does not exist.
ILLUSTRATION: not liking the color of house does not mean no one lives there.

E. PERSONAL MORAL PREFERENCES

1. Read or display the full quotes and discuss these men’s reasons for being atheists.
 - a. Huxley quote, “I had motives... we objected to the morality...”
 - b. Nagel quote, “I want atheism to be true...”
2. ASK: Why do these admissions make a difference when we talk with a non-believer? (We need to realize that sometimes, people do not have intellectual reasons for the beliefs, but emotional reasons. If this is the case, we are

3. wasting our time trying to convince them intellectually that God is real, because they refuse to admit the evidence even when it is clear.)
 4. READ LUKE 16:31 – some will not believe, even if the dead shall rise!
- F. CONCLUSION. ASK: your teen to summarize the key points so far.
1. Atheists often give intellectual reasons for their theological beliefs.
 2. Theists have credible responses to these arguments.
 3. Some people have emotional reasons for refusing to believe in God.

III. HOW TO APPROACH NON-CHRISTIANS

- A. READ 1 PETER 3:15-16 and ASK: What are the implications of these verses when countering false beliefs. (“give a defense” but with “gentleness and respect.” Our attitude is just as important as our arguments. Recall for the class Paul’s example from lesson 1. The first words out of Paul’s mouth to his pagan audience in Acts 17 were positive, “I see you are very religious...”)
- B. BOA/BOWMAN QUOTES: Read or display the quotes from the text and DISCUSS the two aspects of Boa and Bowman’s suggestions for how we should approach non-Christians.
1. “...help non-Christians rethink some of their beliefs.” ASK: How do we do that? Describe a specific situation with one of your friends, either a situation you’ve had in the past, or what it might look like, given his or her attitude. (Various responses, but centered around pointing out inconsistencies with their non-biblical views.)
 2. “...help non-Christians recognize the rationality of Christian beliefs given a theistic worldview.” ASK: What, specifically, might this look like? (Various responses, but centered around providing reasons for God’s existence, such as showing that recent scientific discoveries demonstrate a even greater aspect of design in the universe as well as on the microscopic level than ever before known, so the Design argument is gaining strength.)
- C. ASK your teen to summarize this section of the lesson. (We should use both reason (persuasion) and love (gentleness) to move non-believers from their skepticism to belief that God is real. We can do this by showing how their reasons for unbelief are illogical or inconsistent, and by demonstrating that a biblical worldview does make sense.)

IV. COUNTERING CULTURE

- A. Challenge your child to take the initiative to talk with an unbelieving friend by asking, “Why do you not believe in God? (Pause for their response, then ask the next question.) Would you be interested in learning about solid reasons for why I

am convinced God does exist?" NOTE: If your child does not know an unbeliever, maybe he or she needs to find one. Could it be our circle of friends is too small, if indeed we are commanded to disciple the nations!

- B. Suggest that as your teen is involved in the culture (movies, music, news reporting, current events, or conversations), he or she watch for instances where the fruit being displayed assumes an atheistic root under the surface. These can be discussed at the end of this week.

TEACHER VIDEO GUIDELINE: SECULAR HUMANIST THEOLOGY**I. THEOLOGY: ATHEISM**

- A. Nancy Pearcey, “Every philosophy starts with an assumption about ultimate reality.... Secular Humanism starts with the assumption that there is no God and that the universe created itself....”
- B. Secular Humanists argue that science and the scientific process have rendered the idea of God obsolete.
 1. Paul Kurtz: “I’m a skeptical atheist, an agnostic.... I’ve looked at the god question... I don’t think the case [for God’s existence] has been made using science...therefore I’m a non-theist.”
 2. “There is no place in the Humanist worldview for either immortality or God. Humanism contends that instead of the gods creating the cosmos, the cosmos, in the form of human beings giving reign to their imagination, created the gods.” — Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*

II. SINCE THERE IS NO GOD, MAN IF LEFT TO CREATE HIS OWN WAY.

- A. “We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us, we must save ourselves.” —Humanist Manifesto II
- B. Paul Kurtz, “We must solve our own problems, create our own futures.... You can’t look outside, in my view, for divine salvation. We have to use the best intelligence and the best cooperation and the best resolve to solve our problems, to save the earth, and improve human life.”

Countering Culture: LESSON THREE

WHAT ABOUT GOD?

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT

Reasons given by Secular Humanists for not believing in God are founded on faith-based assumptions.

KEY QUOTE

“We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.” *Humanist Manifesto II*

KEY VERSE

Luke 16:31

But he said to him, “If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.”

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- 1) State three reasons presented by Secular Humanists for not believing in God.
- 2) Point out logical fallacies with arguments against God’s existence.
- 3) Display a respectful attitude toward others when countering false ideas.

I. SECULAR HUMANIST THEOLOGY (VIDEO)

- A. Nancy Pearcey, “Every philosophy starts with an assumption about ultimate reality.... Secular Humanism starts with the _____ that there is no God and that the universe created itself....”
- B. Secular Humanists argue that science and the scientific process have rendered the idea of God obsolete.
 1. Paul Kurtz: “I’m a skeptical atheist, an agnostic.... I’ve looked at the god question... I don’t think the case [for God’s existence] has been made using science...therefore I’m a non-theist.”
 2. “There is no place in the Humanist worldview for either immortality or God. Humanism contends that instead of the gods creating the cosmos, the cosmos, in the form of human beings giving reign to their _____, created the gods.” —Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*

II. SINCE THERE IS NO GOD, MAN IS LEFT TO CREATE HIS OWN WAY.

- A. “We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, _____ are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us, we must save ourselves.”—*Humanist Manifesto II*
- B. Paul Kurtz, “We must solve our own problems, create our own futures.... You can’t look outside, in my view, for divine salvation. We have to use the best _____ and the best cooperation and the best resolve to solve our problems, to save the earth, and improve human life.”

WHY DISBELIEVE IN GOD?

REASON #1 – MAN CREATED THE IDEA OF GOD

Russell: “God is a conception derived from ancient despots.”

Lamont: “human beings... created the gods”

Humanist Manifesto 2000: “we alone are responsible for our own destiny...”

How do they know they are right?

REASON #2 – LACK OF POSITIVE EVIDENCE FOR GOD

“DESIGN ARGUMENT,” used by theists as evidence for God’s existence, is weak since science has proven that evolution, i.e., natural selection, can produce complexity in living things.

REASON #3 – EVIDENCE AGAINST GOD: THE PROBLEM OF PAIN & SUFFERING

1. If God is all-good and loving, then He should *want* to alleviate human pain and suffering.
2. And if God is all-powerful, then He is *able* to alleviate pain and suffering.
3. But humans still experience personal pain and suffering.
4. Therefore, an all-loving and powerful God must not exist.

CRITIQUE of the “problem of pain”:

REASON #4 – PERSONAL MORAL PREFERENCES

Huxley quote, “I had motives... we objected to the morality...”

Nagel quote, “I want atheism to be true...”

LUKE 16:31 – some will not believe, even if the dead shall rise!

HOW TO APPROACH NON-CHRISTIANS

1 PETER 3:15-16

BOA/BOWMAN

“...help non-Christians rethink some of their beliefs.”

“...help non-Christians recognize the rationality of Christian beliefs given a theistic worldview.”

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK THREE

- 1) **STUDY THE TEXT:** Read Chapter 3 in *Countering Culture*.
- 2) **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**
 - a. Write a one-page outline of the chapter.
 - b. Write ten multiple-choice questions that cover the content of the chapter.
 - c. Write a one-page paper on the following: The text and context of both Acts 17:2-3 and 1 Peter 3:15-16, paying attention to words such as “reasoned,” “explaining,” showing,” “ready,” “defense,” “gentleness,” and “respect,” and how it all contributes to the attitude and actions of a disciple of Jesus Christ when it comes to defending the faith.
- 3) **WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS.** Choose two items from current news, television, music, or movies. For each one, write a paragraph analyzing the worldview category it belongs to and tracing the other connecting categories down to its roots.
- 4) **COUNTERING CULTURE RESEARCH PROJECT.** Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins blamed the attacks of 9-11 on religion—all religion. As he wrote in the London *Guardian*, “To fill a world with religion ... is like littering the streets with loaded guns. Do not be surprised if they are used.” (See Richard Dawkins, “Religion’s misguided missiles,” *London Guardian*, 15 September 2001 online at www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4257777,00.html.)
 - a. Read Dawkins article to determine his main point and supporting sub points. What is the worldview Dawkins assumes to be true? Then analyze his argument for logical fallacies. Does his premise logically lead to his conclusion? For an article to help you brush up on logical fallacies go to www.summit.org/resources.htm and click on “Critical Thinking.”
 - b. Write a respectful letter to Dr. Dawkins explaining where you agree or disagree with his analysis.*

*NOTE TO PARENTS: The RESEARCH PROJECT PAPER should include the following: Dawkins article is based on his Secular Humanist worldview, and contains faulty logic regarding the fallacy of presumption, which is the fallacy whereby someone holds to an unjustified conclusion. This is usually caused by overlooking, denying, evading, or distorting the facts. In particular, he commits the fallacy of “Hasty Generalization” when he blames “all” religion on the deranged acts of a few men who hold to a very particular religious tradition. Also, Dawkins builds a “straw man” argument by defining religion narrowly, excluding the fact that most religions also teach man is responsible for how he behaves in this life. So the problem is not the religious view of life after death, but the real problem resides in the sinful nature of man, which is shared by both those who are religious and those, like Dawkins, who are not. The Holocaust, the Killing Fields of Cambodia, and Stalin’s Gulag, all point to the horrors that mankind can commit.