

Worldview: A View *Of* and *For* the World



Cover Story

The American church today is undergoing a messy generational divorce: Those born between 1981 and 2000 are walking away in unprecedented numbers. According to Notre Dame sociologist Christian Smith, the false religion they are converting to is not militant atheism, but *liberal whateverism*. “The more aggressive side of this view asserts that religion per se is pernicious and should be eliminated or radically privatized,” Smith says. “The more accommodating side says religion is fine as a personal lifestyle commodity, but that religious inclinations are ultimately arbitrary and should not be taken too seriously.”¹

When the vast majority of young adults raised in the church respond to the critical issues of our age with a “whatever” attitude, the need for intensive study of the biblical worldview and its counterfeits becomes startlingly clear.

The good news is that a disciplined, holistic study of worldview, such as the one offered by Summit Ministries, has a profound impact

not only on students’ intellectual beliefs but on their spiritual habits and lifestyle as well.

Take church attendance, for instance. Only about 20 percent of twenty-something Christians attend church regularly. But a recent survey of 1,500 Summit alumni found that 96.4 percent of Summit graduates attend church two or more times per month. Even more than just taking a seat in a pew, Summit graduates also report that their Summit experience dramatically increased their level of Christian commitment, feeling of closeness to God, devotional life, prayer life, sharing of their faith, understanding of the Christian worldview and other worldviews, confidence in the truth of Christianity, ability to defend their faith when challenged, and general preparation for higher education.

Given this kind of impact, why wouldn’t we want every single Christian young person to have a Summit experience?

Worldview Training Is Not Optional

David Noebel, in his landmark book on worldviews, *Understanding the Times*, defines worldview as a *set of ideas, beliefs, convictions,*

*or values that provides a framework or map to help us understand God, the world, and our relationship to God and the world.*² There Noebel details the Christian worldview and five competing worldviews. The book’s outline forms Summit’s famous worldview chart (an interactive chart can be found at www.summit.org/worldview-chart/).

Many Christians shortsightedly see worldview training as an optional luxury for those who are intellectually inclined. But to the extent that our worldviews shape both our view *of* the world — the world as it actually is — and our view *for* the world — a way to act and interact with the world — everyone has a worldview, whether they realize it or not. Summit teaches that the biblical worldview is the only worldview that tells the whole truth about God, about human nature, and about the world around us.

Does understanding a biblical worldview really make a difference? Summit lecturer and *WORLD Magazine* Associate Publisher Warren Cole Smith maintains that studying and teaching a worldview approach is the fulfillment of Christ’s charge to teach all He has commanded. “Worldview is nothing more than the next step in the discipleship process,” Smith says. “It’s an integral part of Christianity.”

Discernment in a World of Worldviews

We are inundated with ideas every day, and they are never neutral. Every news story, advertisement, slice of entertainment, and college professor attempts to persuade us to view the world in a certain way. For most people, though, this persuasion is entirely subconscious. They’ve never studied the counterfeit worldviews that surround them, so they don’t

from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers

The problem with America today is not that we have so many atheists. It's that we have so many Christians who *function* as atheists because they either don't know or don't care that the Bible alone tells the whole truth about God, human nature, and the world around us.

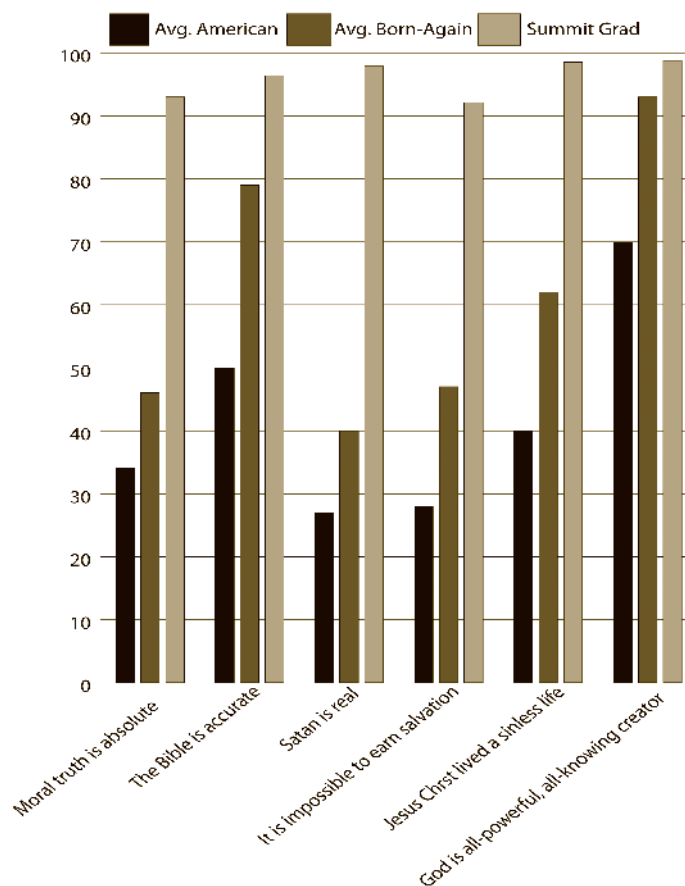
For 50 years Summit has prepared the rising generation to resolutely champion a biblical worldview in every area of life. But does Summit's approach really work? To find out we recently launched a massive research project that involved administering a 126-question survey to 1,500 Summit graduates.

Our staff believes wholeheartedly in Summit, but even we were caught off guard by how powerful Summit's 12-day course has proven to be in the lives of its graduates.

Take biblical worldview knowledge, for example. As you can see from the chart, only a tiny percentage of Americans possesses a biblical worldview. Those who claim to be born-again Christians score only slightly higher. But Summit grads are almost off the charts.

“God is using Summit to prepare a generation of biblically-sound leaders!”

Dr. Jeff Myers



We also asked our graduates what specific difference Summit made in their lives. They told us that Summit had a statistically significant impact on their:

- Level of Christian commitment,
- Feeling of closeness to God,
- Devotional life,
- Prayer life,
- Sharing of faith,
- Understanding of Christian worldview,
- Understanding of other worldviews,
- Ability to explain beliefs,
- Ability to defend faith under challenge, and
- General preparation for higher education.

But does what these young adults believe really affect the way they live? Yes! Respondents to the survey told us they are

intentional or very intentional in applying their Christian worldview to:

- Political convictions,
- Conversations,
- Finances,
- Entertainment choices,
- Vocation,
- Life purpose,
- Friendships, and
- Family relationships.

God is using Summit to prepare a generation of biblically-sound, culturally-engaged leaders!

A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to share these results with Dr. Del Tackett's (host of the Truth Project) Sunday school class. One lady asked, "Do you have this kind of training for adults?" I'm pleased to say that we do indeed. The enclosed flyer gives more details about our adult conference, but please consider this letter as your invitation to join

me and our outstanding faculty for an unforgettable six-day and five-night conference at the stunning Glen Eyrie Castle, February 26 to March 2.

I've been participating in Summit Winter Conference for years and commend it as a terrific all-around experience. Whether you want to get deep into the issues while sipping hot drinks around a fire, go for an invigorating hike in the spectacular Glen Eyrie estate, or just curl up with a fascinating selection from our book table, the Summit Winter Conference is perfect for growing, resting, and gaining perspective.

I hope you'll join me at the Summit Winter Conference February 26 to March 2. You can go to www.summit.org/conferences/adult/colorado/ or call toll free at 877.488.8787 to register.

realize how they've been subtly persuaded to see the world in a certain way.

In a confusing, rapidly changing world, most people are motivated to find meaning and wrestle with the fundamental questions that all humans ask: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? And perhaps most important, How do I know my answers to these questions are true? Each worldview draws upon different sources of authority to answer these questions. Christians turn to the Bible. Secular humanists turn to enlightenment philosophers. Marxists cherish the *Communist Manifesto*. Because ideas have consequences, the answers people accept to these ultimate questions shape everything they do from the moment they wake up until they go to bed at night — how they treat people, how they vote, how they spend money, and even what they fear.

Take materialism, for example. Materialists believe that humans are merely “matter in motion.” Thus their guiding values become the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain.

In stark contrast, Christianity sees human beings as imbued with dignity and producers of culture. When society replaces this view with one that sees people as mere consumers of resources, people are treated as *things*, a means to someone else's pleasurable end. Christian Smith pinpoints the effect this dehumanizing view has on young adults. “Many emerging adults have few considered moral bearings, are devoted to mass consumerism, routinely become intoxicated and engage in casual sexual hook-ups, are civically and politically uninformed and alienated.”³

John Stonestreet, a Summit lecturer, uses Psalm 135 to show that societies become what they worship. Materialism, he says, strips people of dignity as image-bear-

ers of God and relegates them to the status of mere resource-consuming organisms. It's no wonder that the first instinct of many young adults isn't to produce something for society, but rather to consume something for themselves. Ultimately, materialism is a culturally bankrupt idea whose consequences destroy human value.⁴

Thus when we grow in our knowledge of the biblical worldview we not only come to understand the world as God intends us to, we are also arming ourselves against the onslaught of counterfeit and competing worldviews.

Our Worldview Dictates How We Act

Understanding our world as God intends us to understand it enables us to act as God intends us to act. Take David, for example. During the transition between Saul's kingship and David's, men from the various Israelite tribes aligned themselves with David against his enemies. Notable among these were the sons of Issachar who, Scripture tells us, understood the times in which they lived and knew what Israel should do. They were able to advise David with wisdom and to fight for what God intended (1 Chronicles 12:32). When we cultivate a thorough knowledge of the biblical worldview into our thinking, we too will be better equipped to exert a biblical influence in various facets of our culture, be it entertainment, the arts, economics, politics, or sociology.

Case in point: Many young adults today express a fervent interest in “social justice.” But according to Warren Smith, our reactions to abject poverty, human trafficking, genocide, and discrimination are tied

up in our worldviews. “Are you interested in social justice?” Smith asks. “Then you should be interested in worldview. These are all issues the Bible is not silent on.” While many young adults wish to eradicate such problems, how many know *why* they want

to or *how* they can succeed? Who among them can articulate why people should not be bought and sold for sex? Can they offer a persuasive argument for why it is wrong to slaughter

a whole race or class of people?

The biblical worldview is the only one that can consistently tell us why we should care and how best to act. John Stonestreet says, “If you don't take the sacred seriously, you won't stand up when it's time to stand up.”⁵ Or, as Warren Smith puts it while chastising rising secularism, “You can't produce a moral culture without a moral foundation.”

Smith believes that teens and young adults crave the kind of understanding that worldview study can bring. Reiterating that understanding the world and its ideas is a nonnegotiable command from Jesus, Smith says, “I think people are hungry for [worldview teaching.] They're looking for ways to impact the culture. People are not resisting it; they're just not finding it.”

Notes

1. Christian Smith, “Religious Tolerance: Karma, Christ, Whatever?” *The Huffington Post*, September 16, 2011, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>.
2. David Noebel, *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today's Competing Worldviews*, 2nd ed. (Manitou Springs, Colorado: Summit Press, 2006), 16.
3. See Note 1.
4. John Stonestreet, “Why Students Walk Away from the Faith,” Summit Ministries, <http://www.summit.org>.
5. John Stonestreet, “When Worldviews Collide, Part 1,” Summit Ministries, <http://www.summit.org>.

“**Understanding our world as God intends us to understand it enables us to act as God intends us to act.**”

breakdown

a closer look at worldview today

Top Worldview Issues in 2012

- » **Rising Secularism** — As noted in our cover story (see page 1), more and more teens are unwittingly adopting *liberal whateverism* as their worldview. We see on university campuses, in businesses, and in entertainment, that popular American culture pushes Christian belief into the sphere of private life. But a worldview that builds false distinctions between sacred and secular is bankrupt on every level and leaves society powerless even to handle basic questions of morality.
- » **Marriage/Family** — A civilization's health rises and falls with the health of marriage and the family structure. In 2012, more challenges will come for the institution of marriage, and not just in the issue of same-sex marriage. Society is questioning the validity of marriage itself as study after study shows fewer people are getting married and more and more people see marriage as obsolete. But the evidence is clear: As families break down, the cultural, educational, and economic consequences are felt across society.
- » **Politics/Government** — Being an election year, the proper role of government should be at the forefront of our minds in 2012. Why did God institute governments in the first place? How do individual politicians' worldviews affect their policy decisions? The answers to these questions depend on one's worldview.
- » **Economics** — In the U.S. and all around the world, strained economies are wreaking havoc on families, businesses, and governments. As we saw in our November *Journal*, different worldviews offer different answers to tackling these challenges. Secular humanists and Marxists — seeing people as resource-consumers — seek to do so by throwing more money and commodities at people. But a biblical worldview shows us that as image-bearers, prosperity is more about producing than consuming.

Ways to Teach Worldview

- » **Read the News:** The news cycle is replete with examples of the consequences of ideas and worldviews.
- » **Catch a Flick:** Films are often case studies in worldview. Ask, "Which worldview is shaping the plot?" And, "Who are the good guys and who are the bad guys and why?"
- » **Turn Your Radio On :** Musicians are the poets of our day. Each song reflects the artist's worldview. Turn on the radio, and then turn it off and analyze the lyrics.
- » **Crack a Book:** In both fiction and non-fiction, authors are putting forth their own worldviews and the worldviews of others. In non-fiction it's often explicit; in literature it's through the lives of their characters.
- » **Head to the Museum:** The visual arts express world views because artists offer the world as they see it. Also, read Hans Rookmaker's *Modern Art and the Death of Culture* to grasp how changes in art reflect changes in cultural world views.

Free Worldview Resources Available at www.summit.org

- » **Worldviews in the News** — A list of the day's most powerful worldview headlines from a variety of media outlets
- » **Rapid Response** — Write-ups on pertinent news items featuring analysis, commentary, talking points, and links to sources
- » **The Point with John Stonestreet** — Daily one-minute worldview commentaries heard on over 725 radio outlets
- » **Worldview Dictionary** — Definitions and explanations of worldview terms used throughout Summit materials

a look at our world

news and commentary

Editor's Note: As you know, our President Emeritus Dr. David Noebel helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. This month Dr. Myers organized some of that research and wrote commentary on several items. Let us know if this is helpful (and, if you'd like to see the complete list of Doc's clippings, just go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/ and turn to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483).

Secular Humanism

Commenting on the horrific video of a child run over and killed in China with nary a glance from passers-by, Cheryl K. Chumley writes in the *Washington Times* (Nov. 14, 2011, p. 36), "While it's still nearly impossible to envision such a scene as occurred to that little Chinese girl replicating in the streets of America, the simple fact is once God is removed from society, so too are moral constraints. And we're not as far from that scenario as we'd like to believe."

Well, we're getting closer every day. On Oct. 31 the Supreme Court declined to hear the case of the removal of roadside crosses honoring fallen Utah Highway Patrol troopers. And the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals refused to overturn San Diego State University's policy of allowing campus clubs to choose their own leadership except when those clubs are religious in nature, leading to a situation in which a homosexual group could deny a leadership position to a Christian, but a Christian group could not deny a leadership position to a homosexual. *Human Events* (Nov. 11, 2011, p. 6) points out that the House of Representatives recently tried to clear up the confusion with a resolution reminding

folks that "In God We Trust" is the national motto. Who were they reminding? Primarily President Obama, who mistakenly declared the national motto to be *E Pluribus Unum*, "out of many one."

Education

Prof. Oskar Gruenwald in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* (2011, pp. 16-17) notes that "truth, freedom, and virtue are the quintessential aspects of the human striving for excellence and self-understanding as prerequisites for a more felicitous social life. These are also the irreplaceable ideals for a higher education which can empower individuals to discern what is true, good, and beautiful." C.S. Lewis called this "correspondence to reality": The universe actually is as it is, and truth, justice, and love actually exist.

Here's a suggestion to families in the midst of college visits: Show Gruenwald's quote to your child's would-be professors. If they vehemently disagree, that tells you something about their worldview. If they don't get it, that tells you something about their intelligence. In either case, you might want to look elsewhere for educational excellence.

Heather MacDonald in *The Weekly Standard* (Oct. 31, 2011, p. 17) details the latest in educational malpractice: "Over the

last several months, L.A. Board of Education member Steve Zimmer, a former teacher and activist, has been working closely with the anti-dating-violence program Peace Over Violence on how to expand its services district-wide. The proposed expansion, estimated to cost \$2 million in its first year and approximately \$600,000 a year thereafter, would hire a new central district administrator and four full-time assistants who would coordinate each school's anti-dating-violence programs and would train a teacher or staff member on each campus to help students identify when they may be veering toward physical, emotional, or verbal abuse and to raise awareness of these issues." This in a largely Hispanic district in which only 35 percent of Hispanic seventh-graders are proficient in English, and only 43 percent are proficient in math.

That the L.A. school district seems to have abandoned any pretense of education should not surprise those who have been studying the bizarre practices of the secular humanist education system: Once you give up the idea that human beings are made in God's image and are to be stewards on the earth, education loses its meaning. Yet schools continue, if for no other reason than to keep students off the streets. But what if they cause trouble anyway? Then use the school experience to indoctrinate them against violence, in the hope that they'll peacefully slink away and leave us alone.

A biblical worldview of education calls for so much more: No young person is simply a wastrel lurking on the edge of civilization. All are image-bearers of God. Therefore we mentor the vulnerable (rescue the perishing), communicate a vision (where there is no vision, the people perish), and help them recognize and value the good, the

"... once God is removed from society, so too are moral constraints."

Cheryl Chumley

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a look at our world

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true, and the beautiful.

Science

I've always found inspiration in agnostic scientist Robert Jastrow's statement about the limits of science: "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountain of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

Sometimes, though, it's a mathematician sitting there, one such as James D. Stein (Ph.D. Cal-Berkeley) whose new book, *Cosmic Numbers*, posits that there are 13 numbers essential to life on earth — and that these numbers show that the entire universe must exist exactly as it does in order for us to exist. To atheists such as the recently departed Christopher Hitchens, this is merely a fantastic coincidence. To believers it is something else altogether — evidence of the creative work of a God who reveals Himself as a loving Heavenly Father.

Anarchism

What seems to elude reporters covering the various "Occupy" movements (Wall Street, Port of Oakland, McPherson Square in D.C.) is that lack of sanitation is not the big problem. The big problem is that movements like this usually start with an impulsive response to a real problem (crony capitalism) but are co-opted by professional revolutionaries, some of whom are truly dangerous. Of course, many OWS leaders are mere publicity hounds who gravitate toward television cameras. This explains the involvement of Oakland rapper Boots Riley, a self-declared communist whose main con-

tribution to art is a song entitled "5 Million Ways to Kill a CEO" (see Michelle Malkin, *Human Events*, Nov. 7, 2011, p. 20).

But now the professional revolutionaries are coming out of the closet as well. Slavoj Zizek, who the state of New York had the short-sightedness to hire as an NYU professor, inspired protestors by saying,

"Carnivals come cheap. What matters is the day after, when we will have to return to normal life. Will there be any changes then?" (Kevin Williamson, *National Review*, Oct. 31, 2011, p. 18). What kinds of changes does Zizek want? Consider

this prior statement: "I am a Leninist. Lenin wasn't afraid to dirty his hands. If you can get power, grab it... we need Marx more than ever." (*New Statesman*, Oct. 29, 2009).

Another professional revolutionary (and terrorist) Bill Ayers told protestors not to use violence, but to use their brilliance, humor, and wisdom to "dramatize the violence that exists" (Jessica Guido, NBC Chicago, Nov. 17, 2011). That's a little mellower than the old Bill Ayers, who once said "Kill all the rich people. Break up their cars and apartments. Bring the revolution home. Kill your parents..." (Have Ayers and his ilk really changed? Read Aaron Klein and Brenda J. Elliott's *Red Army: The Radical Network That Must Be Defeated to Save America* before deciding.).

In addition to the professional revolutionaries of the Marxist variety, the anarchist crowd has also gotten involved. Setting aside for a moment the question of why people

committed to tearing down society's structures would care about organizing people, Matthew Continetti from the *Weekly Standard* (Nov. 28, 2011, p. 21) points out that anarchism is actually a well-developed political theory. In addition to the name "Marx," perhaps we should also get used to hearing names like Fourier, Bakunin, and Guerin.

For now, though, the OWS movement seems to be winding down. Maybe it's just because it's cold outside. But many commentators suspect that it is because the protestors don't have enough horsepower to create a movement. Kevin D. Williamson

"The protestors do not know what they want, they do not know what they do not want."

Kevin Williamson

in the *National Review* (Oct. 31, 2011, p. 18) says, "The protesters do not know what they want, they do not know what they do not want. That is because they do not understand the nature of the problem that they intuit, in their ignorant way, but cannot think through, lacking the intellectual tools."

One of the best Christianity commentaries on OWS was from *WORLD Magazine's* Marvin Olasky who chalks much of the movement up to class envy. Olasky says, "When I became a Christian in 1976, many of my sinful tendencies remained... but one instantly disappeared: class envy. Strange but true. My pre-Christian life did not include a day without envy of the rich. My Christian life has not included a day with it. Would that I could say that about my other sins! But my life has been better without class envy" (*WORLD Magazine*, Oct. 22, 2011, p. 76).

Well said.

Adult Conferences: They Keep Coming Back

Once Boone and Peggy Powell experienced Summit, they couldn't keep from coming back. And they kept bringing friends.

Boone Powell spent twenty years as CEO of Baylor Healthcare System, Inc. in Texas. After retiring in 2000, he and his wife bought a home in Colorado Springs where they began hearing a buzz about Summit Ministries and David Noebel. Naturally, Boone wanted to see what the fuss was about. That's how he and Peggy found themselves sitting at desks in the back of Summit's Manitou Springs classroom. That summer, the Powells, along with hundreds of younger students, listened with rapt attention to Summit lectures. They were hooked.

Since then the Powells have become repeat attendees of Summit's adult conference held each year at Glen Eyrie Castle in nearby Colorado Springs — just minutes from their home.

"We figured we probably ought to get ourselves up to speed [on worldview training]. We're slow learners," Boone said with a chuckle.

Once they attended the adult conference, Peggy said she and her husband understood for the first time *why* they believe what they believe and *why* the world is as it is. "I see and understand more about the great battle that is going on," she said.

But the Powells weren't content to learn more just for

"I see and understand more about the great battle that is going on."

Peggy Powell

themselves. Understanding the world of ideas clarified for them the need for more people to possess a deeper understanding of worldview thinking. Attending Summit's adult conference inspired them to bring others. In all, Boone estimates that they have brought about 50 people to Summit's adult conferences through the years.

They've also introduced a number of teenagers to Summit's two-week summer conferences because they believe so fervently in the value of the worldview studies Summit provides. Boone recounted the story of a teenager he considered an "adopted" grandson. The Romanian immigrant came from a broken home, and Boone invested in the young man. One summer he paid the boy's way to attend a Summit student conference. Not long after enrolling in the Air Force Academy, the

young man found himself leading discussions with other cadets about the world and the biblical worldview.

"I went back to my Summit notebook," the boy told Boone when asked what he taught the other cadets.

Reg and Virginia Lyle are two of the dozens of people to whom the Powells introduced Summit. They came with Boone and Peggy to an adult conference several years ago, and they've also come back nearly every year since. "I know of no other program that answers worldview questions like Summit does," Reg said.

This year the Lyles are bringing their church's youth pastor to the adult conference with the hope that a seed for Summit and study of the biblical worldview will be planted. "Summit will provide real insight for him," Reg said. "My wife and I are excited to see his response."

Reg, a semi-retired petroleum geologist, said he and his wife keep coming back because they want to learn how to help Christians apply the biblical worldview in their respective fields. "I'm more into working to get people in positions where hopefully they're going to catch on fire for Summit," Reg said.

Summit's 2012 Winter Conference for Adults will be February 26-March 2 at the Glen Eyrie Castle in Colorado Springs. For more information, go to summit.org/adult/colorado/ or call 877.488.8787.



Boone and Peggy Powell



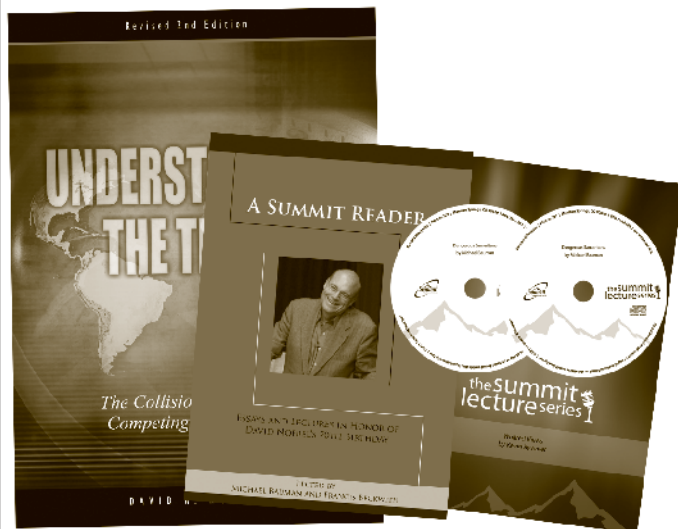
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“The culture is too far gone to care. What difference does my worldview really make?”

Without an understanding of the biblical worldview, it's impossible to clearly see the ideas vying for supremacy today or to know how to properly act. Summit's **Worldview Basics Package** can be the first step toward understanding the concept of worldview as well as the prevalent worldviews of the day.

The **Worldview Basics Package** includes:

Book: *Understanding the Times* (David Noebel) defines worldview and analyzes the six major worldviews of the day and what they have to say in disciplines like theology, biology, law history, and several others.

Book: *A Summit Reader* (Edited by Francis J. Beckwith and Michael Bauman), published in honor of David Noebel's 70th birthday, is a collections of essays and lectures from Summit's most acclaimed speakers and scholars.

DVD: Summit lecturer Kevin Bywater sets up the biblical basis for worldview studies and explains how to analyze the world through the lens of a biblical worldview.

CD: Summit speaker John Stonestreet draws upon research and years of working with students to pinpoint why so many walk away from Christianity and how parents, teachers, and mentors can keep this from happening.

CD: Summit founder Dr. David Noebel shares his experience in college and systematically examines what the biblical worldview says about the ten categories of religious thought.

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a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

Philosophy

C. S. Lewis formulated the classic dilemma of freedom of choice and ethics as a quest for identifying truth as “correspondence to reality,” also known as the Tao (the Way or the Road), defined as “the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are” (1996: 30). Lewis further points out St. Augustine’s conception of virtue as “ordo amoris, the ordinate condition of the affections in which every object is accorded that kind and degree of love which is appropriate to it” (1996: 28-29). This leads to the conclusion that truth, freedom, and virtue are the quintessential aspects of the human striving for excellence and self-understanding as prerequisites for a more felicitous social life. These are also the irreplaceable ideals for a higher education which can empower individuals to discern what is true, good, and beautiful.

Oskar Gruenwald
Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies
2011, p. 16-17

Ethics

Confirmation of biblical wisdom came earlier this fall from an unlikely source: an Ivy League savant who says it’s wrong to depend on the Bible.

The prestigious Oxford University Press sent me the new book *Morality Without God* by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, a Dartmouth professor (I’m going to quote him a lot, so I’ll use his initials). WSA begins by complaining that his students quote to him Dostoevsky’s favorite line, “If God is dead,

everything is permitted.” WSA then argues that we don’t need God: We all should simply agree not to harm others — cause death, pain, or disability — unless there is “adequate reason.”

Wondering if WSA is one of those exceedingly rare secular professors with the courage to be pro-life, I emailed him to ask. He responded that there is no “simple solution to this complex problem . . . the moral problem of abortion cannot be solved by citing religious texts or religious leaders.”

Hmm . . . how can it be solved? WSA wrote, “What matters is the present and future harm to the fetus and others. This does not solve the problem, but it tells us where to focus our discussions. I hope this helps.”

Hmm . . . It helps only if WSA can tell us how to compare “harm to the fetus” (death) to other harms, so I emailed him again. He responded, “The bottom line is that I think some moral problems are insoluble. . . . They are just too difficult for us to figure out. . . . The answer, ‘I do not know,’ should become common.”

Hmm . . . I asked WSA whether people could really make “I don’t know” the default statement. He responded, “Why not? People get used to having a belief about everything, but they do not have to. Life can be lived like an experiment where you guess but do not believe until you see how it turns out.”

Wow. My first thought was that he was describing how liberals have lived in the 20th century. Let’s wait and see how the rule of Stalin, Mao, Castro, and other Communists turns out: We don’t want to assume that the preaching of class conflict, envy, and resentment will

have any real-life effects.

My second thought was that WSA was right. Chapter 1 of Proverbs declares that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Biblically, those who do not believe in God should truthfully say, “I don’t know.”

But back to abortion. Ronald Reagan’s logic was that if a hunter sees movement in the forest and doesn’t know whether it’s a deer or a person, he should not shoot. But WSA suggested in his book *Moral Skepticisms* (2006) that since we don’t know whether abortion is morally wrong, it’s unfair for employers to insist health plans not pay for abortions.

Hmm . . . health plans should pay for an abortion even though we know abortion does not protect the health of the unborn child? I asked WSA, and he responded by saying that abortions can promote the health (physical and psychological) of the employee.

So there we go. In theory, a person might say he doesn’t know what’s ethical in regard to abortion. In practice, he or she has to choose. Should a college cover abortion in its health plan or not? Gotta choose. A young man calls up and says his girlfriend is pregnant. Gotta choose. A professor claims to ride the fence. Gotta choose.

Four conclusions:

1. In many situations facts don’t speak for themselves: That’s where presuppositions and assumptions — worldviews, in short — enter in. Colleges should teach students to analyze situations and learn that ideas always have consequences.

2. Christians should not talk so much about “morality,” a word derived

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from mores, the beliefs of a particular tribe. Ethics, however, are based on ideas that are true at all times and in all cultures. The ethical problem of abortion can only be solved by consulting wisdom that comes from God.

3. Chapter 3 of Proverbs has it right: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." Those are deadly words to those who assert that they have no need for God. Those are words of life to those who have learned differently.

4. "If God is dead, everything is permitted."

Marvin Olasky
WORLD Magazine
November 21, 2009, p. 84

Psychology

Many Americans have been shocked by reports about a recent pro-pedophilia conference in Baltimore in which psychiatrists and other mental health professionals, representing institutions like Harvard and Johns Hopkins, sought to present pedophilia in a sympathetic and even positive light. But why should this surprise us?

Academic articles in scholarly journals have been presenting pedophilia in a sympathetic light for years, and, as Matthew Cullinan Hoffman noted, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) released a report in 1998 "claiming that the 'negative potential' of adult sex with children was 'overstated' and that 'the vast majority of both men and women reported no negative sexual effects from their child sexual abuse experiences.' It even claimed that large numbers of the victims reported that their experiences were 'positive,' and

suggested that the phrase 'child sex abuse' be replaced with 'adult-child sex.'" Others have coined the more disgusting term "intergenerational intimacy."

The APA's report was so disturbing that it drew an official rebuke from Congress, yet the pro-pedophile (or, pro-pederast) push continues. In fact, some psychiatric leaders, like Dr. Richard Green, who were instrumental in removing homosexuality from the APA's list of mental disorders in 1973, have been fighting to remove pedophilia as well.

Consider, for example, this statement from the late John Hopkins professor John Money: "Pedophilia and ephebophilia [referring to sexual attraction felt by an adult toward an adolescent] are no more a matter of voluntary choice than are left-handedness or color blindness. There is no known method of treatment by which they may be effectively and permanently altered, suppressed, or replaced. Punishment is useless. There is no satisfactory hypothesis, evolutionary or otherwise, as to why they exist in nature's overall scheme of things. One must simply accept the fact that they do exist, and then, with optimum enlightenment, formulate a policy of what to do about it."

Michael Brown
Townhall.com
August 26, 2011

Alfred Kinsey's ongoing sexual anarchy campaign has no end in sight.

Matt Barber, associate dean of the Liberty University School of Law, and I attended the "B4U-ACT" pedophile conference Aug. 17. To eliminate

the "stigma" against pedophiles, this growing sexual anarchist lobby wants the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to redefine pedophilia as a normal sexual orientation of "Minor-Attracted Persons."

Adhering to the Kinsey principle of lulling "straights" into a false sense of security, pedophile dress was largely conservative - short hair, jackets, some ties and few noticeable male ear piercings.

Matt Barber and I sat in the back of the meeting room among roughly 50 activists and their "mental health" attending female enablers. "Pedophilia, Minor-Attracted Persons, and the DSM: Issues and Controversies," keynoted "Fred Berlin, M.D., Ph.D., as founder, National Institute for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Trauma; Johns Hopkins Sexual Disorders Clinic."

However, the sex clinic was initially founded by John Money, Ph.D., to give judges "leeway" to keep child molesters out of jail. Money (deceased), a pedophile advocate, also called for an end to all age-of-consent laws. Dr. Berlin was his disciple.

In 1973, our "post Kinsey era," a small APA committee of psychiatrists, quite terrified by homosexual public harassment, agreed to rely on Kinsey's fraudulent human sexuality "data" to redefine homosexuality as normal, removing it from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of mental disorders.

The APA decision was hyped in college textbooks, law journal articles, judicial rulings, and by 1974 pitched as high-school sex education. Soon the homosexual lobby would sail into primary

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schools and kindergartens by agitating recurring AIDS “prevention,” “bullying” and “hate” panics.

To redefine homosexuality as a normal “orientation,” nature not nurture, researchers were told to ignore all data of early sex abuse or other trauma. This hoax was followed by the 1999 U.S. Department of Justice data that found 64 percent of forcible sodomy victims to be boys under age 12.

For after claiming 10 percent to 37 percent of men were sometime homosexual, Kinsey also said children are sexual from birth and so deserve to have sex with adults or youths (taught as a 1974 Planned Parenthood sex ed doctrine).

The APA path to pedophile norms follows the success of the homosexual anarchy campaign. Arguably, the pedophile media lobby directed the passionate boy-boy kisses on the TV series “Glee,” to enable fellow “Minor-Attracted Persons” to increasingly be seen as a boy’s sex “friend.”

B4U-ACT claims to “help mental health professionals learn more about attraction to minors and to consider the effects of stereotyping, stigma, and fear.” While the group claimed they want to teach pedophiles “how to live life fully and stay within the law,” no one suggested how to stop their child lust or molestation.

Barber asked what “age of consent” the group proposed and what role pornography plays as a causative factor in child sex abuse. No one would answer the first question, and all denied any harm from pornography.

Judith Reisman
WorldNetDaily

August 22, 2011

Anarchism

Over the course of the nineteenth century the quest for the ideal society took many directions that can be clustered in two broad categories. There were the Marxian attempts at “scientific socialism,” in which the proletarian vanguard sought to overthrow the bourgeoisie to bring about the classless society as ordained by the laws of history. And there was the revolutionary anarchist project of achieving utopia by leveling hierarchies and abolishing authorities.

The two overlapped on certain points. But for the most part the Marxists looked at the anarchists as boobs and the anarchists looked at the Marxists as totalitarians—which of course they were. Scientific socialism is more famous than revolutionary anarchism, if only because in the twentieth century it succeeded in taking over much of the world. The incalculable human cost of communism has obscured the destructive activities of the anarchists, but they were considerable.

Anarchism is often dismissed as merely the rationalization of hooligans. But that is a mistake. Anarchism has a theory and even a canon: Bakunin, Kropotkin, Goldman, and others. Anarchism’s purpose is to turn the whole world into one big Fourierist phalanx. “At every stage of history our concern must be to dismantle those forms of authority and oppression that survive from an era when they might have been justified in terms of the need for security or survival or economic development, but that now contribute

to—rather than alleviate—material and cultural deficit,” writes Noam Chomsky in an introduction to Daniel Guérin’s classic, *Anarchism*. Dismantle “the system.” Then we’ll be free.

Matthew Continetti
The Weekly Standard
November 28, 2011, p. 21

In 2003, a like-minded mob of police-provoking anarchists, anti-war organizers and progressive activists descended on the Port of Oakland to coordinate a “Day of Action.” They hurled concrete, wood and iron bolts at cops while attempting to block military shipments to soldiers in wartime -- and then whined about police brutality.

Fast-forward eight years. This week’s “Day of Action” is spearheaded by the likes of Oakland rapper Boots Riley, a militant, self-declared “communist” who penned “5 Million Ways To Kill a CEO” (“Toss a dollar in the river and when he jump in/If you find he can swim, put lead boots on him and do it again”) and “Lazy Muthaf**kas” (“You ain’t never learned to drive or tie your shoe/I got my ear to the street and my eye on you/... You’re a lazy *****! Lazy *****!”). After the 9/11 attacks, I reported on Riley’s appalling album cover depicting him partying in front of a doctored image of the World Trade Center being blown up.

Like fellow Occupier, 9/11 conspiracy theorist and Oakland community organizer Van Jones, Riley has long stoked anti-police grievances. In “Pork and Beef,” he rapped: “If you got beef with c-o-ps/Throw a Molotov at the p-i-gs.”

Add to this toxic mix the thugs

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of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. The planned march on Oakland's port is being billed as an expression of "solidarity with longshore workers in their struggle" against grain importer EGT. In Longview, Wash., wildcat union workers cut train brake lines, smashed windows, dumped grain and took hostages earlier this fall to protest the company's decision to employ not non-union workers, but workers from a competing shop. A federal judge fined the ILWU \$250,000 after it defied a court restraining order. Even Obama's National Labor Relations Board was forced to issue a complaint against the union's "violent and aggressive" actions.

The unapologetic local union president vowed: "It's going to get worse before it gets better." Mark those words.

Michelle Malkin
Human Events

November 7, 2011, p. 20

Controversial activist, professor and author Bill Ayers was videotaped recently giving advice about non-violent protesting to Occupy Chicago protesters.

Filmed last month by Education Action Group, EAG-TV, and posted on their YouTube page, the video shows Ayers teaching a group of protesters in a "teach-in."

Ayers made headlines in 2008 when his connection to then-candidate Barack Obama were crystallized -- perhaps most notably -- by Sarah Palin who accused Obama of "palling around with terrorists."

During the teach-in, Ayers preached inclusion. When asked if violence was a necessary step to increase

the Occupy movement, Ayers tells the listeners violence is not the answer instead protesters should use their brilliance, humor, wisdom and body to "dramatize the violence that exists".

Jessica Guido
NBC Chicago
November 17, 2011

For those who wonder why American newspapers find themselves in such perilous condition, The Scrapbook recommends a look at the November 10, 2011, Style section of the Washington Post.

The front page is almost entirely consumed with a bird's-eye view of McPherson Square in Washington, site of one of the "Occupy D.C." encampments, complete with careful identification of renamed sidewalks—Che Guevara Avenue, Angela Davis Avenue, etc.—and minute annotations of its various components: "The chess tent [where] after dark the 'de-escalation team' deploys from here to settle conflicts," "Camp Malcolm [X], formerly Camp Awesome," the Drum Circle, People's Kitchen, Chair Massage, Safe Space, and solar panels.

[...]

Campers have descended on political gatherings around town, assaulting little old ladies and blocking traffic at will, and even driving McPherson Square's resident family of mallard ducks to distraction. Not to put too fine a point on it, the smell is discernible a block away, and small children are living in tents as the weather descends to the freezing point. And yet, as with Occupy Wall Street in Manhattan, the civic fathers in the nation's capital

seem inclined to permit this unlawful encampment on public property — an appropriation of a much-appreciated urban refuge in downtown Washington — to continue indefinitely.

The Weekly Standard
November 21, 2011, p. 2

So there were Hula Hoops, a composting station, facially pierced trustafarians eating quiche, 9/11 truthers and U.S.S. Liberty truthers, the Black Panther Party, a demand that you "define your aesthetic, gather your tribe, and actualize your vision," speed chess, the Grey Panthers (no relation), not one person who could correctly define the term "credit-default swap" or "derivative," a tragically droopy woman proclaiming herself "the topless paparazzo," demands to abolish fiat currency, demands to issue fiat currency, Ron Paulistas and anti-Paulistas, tracts on "species equality" and much jawboning about the occupation's need for less patriarchal styles of decision-making and more matriarchal styles, dark whispers about "psy-ops," a whole lot of angst and wailing about student loans, open calls for a "benevolent dictator," a delegation representing Harvard Men for Economic Justice, a pink unicorn tricycle, a sign reading "The Human Condition Has Gotta Change!" and — I'm not making this up — several renditions of "Give Peace a Chance."

"Carnivals come cheap," Slavoj Žižek, the intellectual world's leading apostle of Marxist-Leninist political violence, told the cheering crowd at Occupy Wall Street. "What matters is the day after, when we will have to return to normal life. Will there be any changes

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then? . . . We know what we do not want. But what do we want?" Professor Zizek, who is to our national discredit in the employ of New York University, is half right. The protesters do not know what they want, and they do not know what they do not want. That is because they do not understand the nature of the problem that they intuit, in their ignorant way, but cannot think through, lacking the intellectual tools.

"I think we do represent that 99 percent," said Mike, who identifies himself as a black-bloc anarchist, albeit a soft one who votes, and voted for Barack Obama at that (Black-Bloc Anarchists for Obama: Do not expect to be seated at the 2012 convention, guys). "What we want is economic justice." And what is economic justice? He doesn't know.

Kevin D. Williamson
National Review
October 31, 2011, p. 18

"I am a Leninist. Lenin wasn't afraid to dirty his hands. If you can get power, grab it . . . we need Marx more than ever."

Slavoj Zizek
New Statesman
October 29, 2009

Homosexuality

A fierce legal battle on free speech and family values is brewing about Internet filters used by school administrators to block students' access to gay educational and advocacy websites.

Gay rights groups say school systems cannot impose blanket bans on gay-related informational and cultural websites on school computers, while

values groups warn that the absence of the blocking filters could leave children exposed to sexually explicit material.

"There is no legitimate reason why any public school should be using an anti-LGBT filter," said Joshua Block, staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) Project and leader of the "Don't Filter Me" campaign.

The ACLU has sent warning letters to many school districts, including Prince William County Public Schools in Virginia, advising them that Internet filters blocking nonsexual gay websites are unconstitutional and must be removed to "avoid any potential litigation."

But David Cortman, a lawyer with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), which defends traditional values organizations, counters that "school districts shouldn't be bullied into exposing students to sexually explicit materials."

Cheryl Wetzstein
The Washington Times
August 29, 2011

I have the utmost sympathy for men and women who feel they are trapped in the wrong body. At the same time, Western society is heading in the direction of what can only be called transgender insanity, or transanity for short.

Consider these recent examples.

1) In England, two married men (and fathers) divorced their wives and began living together as a gay couple, after which they decided to identify as a transsexual "lesbian" couple (yes, male "lesbians"), after which one of the men

had sex-change surgery, which makes them eligible to be married as husband and wife, even though the husband still identifies as a woman.

2) Chaz Bono recently received criticism from the transgender daughter/son of Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, born Kaitlyn but now, at age 19, known as Stephen. (Remember that Chaz, who remains female from the waist down, danced as a male on *Dancing with the Stars*, raising the legitimate question: What constitutes male or female?)

After Chaz had explained that being transgender could be likened to having a "mismatched" brain and body, similar to a "birth defect like a cleft palate," Stephen wrote on his blog that, "Chaz is a misogynist. He is a trans man who seems to believe that his female-assignedness and his female socialisation makes him immune from being a misogynist, and he is manifestly wrong."

And how does Stephen describe "himself"? He is "a gay trans man for whom both identities are equally important, a white anti-racist, a feminist, and a poet."

So, rather than remain Kaitlyn and be a young woman attracted to men, Stephen (who is still female) identifies as a gay man as well as a feminist.

3) Dan Savage is a gay sex columnist and a vocal critic of traditional Judeo-Christian morals, best known today for spearheading the "It Gets Better" campaign.

Recently, he became the target of trans activists who glitter bombed him twice in November. He was branded a "transphobe" for using terms like "shemale" and referring to "freak tranny

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porn” (although Savage, on his part, claims that he was simply repeating words used by a questioner in his audience).

One of his critics, writing on the Bilerico Project, is Tobi Hill-Meyer, whose bio states, “Tobi Hill-Meyer is just about your average multiracial, pansexual, transracially inseminated queerspawn, genderqueer, transdyke, colonized mestiza, pornographer, activist, writer.”

Does this qualify as transanity?

Before you dismiss all this as totally fringe, remember that Chastity/Chaz Bono is a very public figure, that in 2006, New York City’s Metropolitan Transit Authority ruled that men who identified as women could use the ladies bathrooms at all subway stations, that more and more TV shows are normalizing (and even celebrating) transgenderism, and that, in one high school, a male teen was voted class queen while in another school, a female teen was voted class king.

And let’s not forget that Massachusetts just passed a radical transgender bill, according to which, “‘Gender identity’ shall mean a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth.” (Yes, this is now the legal definition in Massachusetts.)

The MassResistance website explains that that the bill, “Forces charter schools to allow cross-dressing and other transgender behavior by students, and to include that in their published non-discrimination statement.” Mass-

Resistance also warns, “You could soon see your day-care provider, second-grade teacher, waiter, school bus driver, store clerk, etc. be a man wearing a skirt and lipstick, possibly with hormone-enhanced breasts.”

But why this should surprise us? After all, the mayor of Silverton, Oregon, Stu Rasmussen, was first elected as a fairly typical, heterosexual male, but then, after “acquiring cleavage,” he was reelected as a heterosexual, cross-dressing, cleavage-flaunting man (who has a girlfriend too).

He did come under criticism for one specific incident, though, and in August 3, 2009, he was censured by the city council after making an appearance at a children’s meeting in an inappropriate outfit, specifically, an open-backed bathing suit, a mini-skirt, and high-heels. Yet those criticizing Mayor Stu were careful to point out that they had no problem with him dressing as a woman at this children’s meeting. They only had a problem with him dressing immodestly as a woman.

This is nothing less than transanity.

Michael Brown

Townhall.com

November 28, 2011

Government

The House of Representatives voted last week to reaffirm “In God We Trust” as the national motto of the United States, on a non-binding resolution approved 396-9, with two abstentions. All except one of the votes against the resolution came from Democrats in the House. Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) cast the lone GOP ‘no’ vote. Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.) has worked on the

resolution for the past four years, citing recent events that display a disturbing erosion of the prominence of the motto in the U.S. public life since it was first established by Congress in 1956. In 2008, Congress had to intervene to ensure that “In God We Trust” was not entirely left out of the new Capitol Visitor Center, and last November, in a speech in Indonesia, President Obama mistakenly declared to be *E pluribus unum*, out of many one. “This resolution sends a clear message to all these government departments and agencies that it’s all right to put up the motto on our buildings and in our classrooms. And I think it will stop the tide of the chilling effect over the past several years,” Forbes told Human Events.

Human Events

November 11, 2011, p. 6

Secular Humanism

The Supreme Court handed a victory to atheist groups Monday, declining to hear a case on roadside crosses honoring fallen Utah state troopers in a move likely to intensify the debate about the constitutionality of religious symbols on public property.

The high court’s refusal on an 8-1 vote to take the case means that a lower-court ruling against the crosses will stand. The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals based in Denver ruled in December that the 14 towering crosses, erected on public property, constitute a government endorsement of Christianity.

Brian Barnard, the Salt Lake City attorney who filed the challenge on behalf of American Atheists, said he was “not surprised” by the outcome, saying the 10th Circuit’s ruling was “correct

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and appropriately applied Supreme Court precedent.”

“There is no question that the [Utah Highway Patrol] troopers should be honored: They gave their lives in the line of duty and in service to Utah,” Mr. Barnard said in a statement. “However, troopers can be and should be honored with a symbol that is inclusive of all Utahns.”

But conservative groups lambasted the court, saying the move would not only result in the removal of religious symbols in the six states under the 10th Circuit’s jurisdiction, but could threaten national memorials such as the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery.

“The U.S. Supreme Court decided today to let stand one of the worst court decisions on religious liberty in American history,” Ken Klukowski, director of the Center for Religious Liberty at the Family Research Council, said in a statement, adding that the refusal to take the case aids the effort to “sterilize the public square of references to faith.”

The other five states affected by the decision are Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming.

Critics also said the court has sowed confusion by failing to set a uniform legal standard on the issue of religious imagery on public lands. A series of lower-court decisions now apply different legal tests in different jurisdictions.

“I’m shocked, frankly, that the court didn’t take up this case because there’s such a split among the circuits on this,” Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff said. “Really, the Supreme Court has created this problem because they’ve said it’s OK to have a religious sym-

bol on public property, depending on where you live.”

Just last year, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of allowing an 8-foot metal cross, erected as a veterans’ memorial, to remain in the Mojave National Preserve in California. In the April 2010 decision, the court ruled 5-4 that the display of public religious symbols “need not be taken as a statement of governmental support for sectarian beliefs.”

Justice Clarence Thomas was the only justice to vote to take the case, saying in a 19-page dissent that the court should have heard the argument to clarify an issue that has “confounded the lower courts and rendered the constitutionality of displays of religious imagery on government property anyone’s guess.”

Four justices must agree to hear arguments before the high court will take a case.

David Silverman, president of American Atheists, said the Utah case would not have been the ideal vehicle for clarifying the court’s position because the state had argued that the purpose of the memorials was secular, not religious.

“I agree that the court could give us a little more guidance on what’s legal and what’s not legal,” Mr. Silverman said. “I don’t think this was the case to do it.”

After the lawsuit was filed in 2005, the Utah Legislature passed a resolution stating that the white cross “has become widely accepted as a symbol of death, and not a religious symbol, when placed along a highway.”

Even so, the 10th Circuit ruled

against the state, finding that the cross memorials gave the impression that “the state of Utah is endorsing Christianity.”

Valerie Richardson
The Washington Times
November 7, 2011, p. 13

According to social commentator Bill Muehlenberg, “The fate of a nation is intimately tied up with its moral and spiritual condition.”

If this is true, would it be wrong for conservative Christians, within the parameters established by our Constitution and laws, to do everything in their power to take the lead in the political and educational and media and business sectors of our country? Or does the very thought of that send shivers up your spine?

In support of his thesis, Muehlenberg points to statements by leaders and thinkers ranging from Thomas Jefferson to Will Durant to Alexis de Tocqueville. He can even cite General Douglas MacArthur and Joseph Stalin to back up his claim.

MacArthur said, “History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.” As for Stalin, the atheistic dictator observed, “America is like a healthy body and its resistance is threefold: its patriotism, its morality, and its spiritual life. If we can undermine these three areas, America will collapse from within.”

Some sociologists have argued that it was the secularizing of America

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in the 20th century that lies at the heart of our national decline, while even non-religious educators have pointed to the destructive, anti-God mentality so prevalent in many of our higher learning institutions.

Why then do so many Americans have such a visceral reaction to the notion of a “Christian” America, despite the fact that the vast majority of Americans profess Christianity? Why is there serious concern that Christian politicians are covertly (or even overtly) trying to impose a theocracy?

One answer is that some Americans are secular to the core, and they would rather see freedom from religion than freedom of religion. The further we are from God, the happier they are. For them, separation of Church and state means that the only legitimate place for religious expression is within the four walls of a church building (or synagogue or mosque).

Others have had it with “Christian politics,” even though they themselves profess the Christian faith. Among them is David P. Gushee, distinguished professor of Christian ethics at Mercer University in Georgia. He writes in an op ed piece for USA Today, “Once again a presidential race is becoming a piety contest.”

Michael Brown
Townhall.com
November 8, 2011

Origins

Without a consistent universe, science is pointless. If the fundamental constants varied randomly with time or position in space, nothing could be explained or predicted. Without a fixed

speed of light, force of gravity or atomic masses, measurement would be meaningless, experiments worthless. If intelligent beings existed in such a universe they would never move beyond magic as an explanation for reality.

Praise the heavens, then, that we live in a sane universe. It’s true that some scientists think the speed of light may have been slightly different billions of years ago, or that the force of gravity experienced on Earth is subtly different from the attractive force on the scale of a galaxy. But our understanding of the universe depends on assuming that constants stay constant. Which is why the slew of digits discussed in James D. Stein’s “Cosmic Numbers” are so important. These numerical values define reality.

As Mr. Stein notes, the ground has been partially covered before. In “Just Six Numbers,” astronomer Martin Rees explored half a dozen constants that if slightly altered would make the universe uninhabitable. But “Cosmic Numbers” takes in a wider spectrum of numerical essentials, 13 in all, with only two values in common with the earlier book: the efficiency with which mass is converted to energy in the hydrogen fusion that powers the sun, and the density of matter.

Mr. Stein also addresses fundamental limits like the speed of light and absolute zero in temperature, practical measures such as Avogadro’s number (describing the number of molecules in a fixed quantity of a gas), and cosmological parameters like the Schwarzschild radius, fixing the distance at which nothing can escape from a black hole.

Brian Glegg
Wall Street Journal

November 17, 2011, p. A19

Economics

Yes, I know class hatred.

A year after graduation, hatred led me into the Communist Party USA. Envy led me to advocate murderous revolution of the kind that ravaged Russia, China, Cuba, Cambodia, and other countries. Envy leads to class warfare. Class warfare kills. It might kill this country.

I’ve written in WORLD about how God graciously pulled me out of communism. When I became a Christian in 1976, many of my sinful tendencies remained. It’s been a 35-year struggle to corral them. But one instantly disappeared: class envy. Strange but true. My pre-Christian life did not include a day without envy of the rich. My Christian life has not included a day with it.

Would that I could say that about my other sins! But my life has been better without class envy.

I’m not saying we should ignore the way our concentration of power in Washington allows some to combine political and economic clout. Nor should we ignore how failing public schools leave many children uneducated: That’s our nation’s prime structural problem.

I am saying that the life of this country would improve if we paid less attention to what the rich have, more to the sin in our own lives, and more to the productive ways of helping the poor that WORLD has covered the past 25 years. America, America, God shed His grace on thee.

Marvin Olasky
WORLD Magazine
October 22, 2011, p. 76

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Education

If you wonder why American students rank poorly among industrialized nations on academic skills, here's part of the explanation, from a seventh-grade classroom in the Los Angeles Unified School District:

On a recent morning, [reports the Los Angeles Times,] Trina Greene, manager of Peace Over Violence's Start Strong program, faced a class at Berendo Middle School in Pico-Union and dived into matters of love and control.

She took students through an exercise in which they had to decide whether to leave a relationship. Under one scenario, a girl pinched a boy for looking at another girl. The students said they would end the relationship. But when she bought him a gold chain for his birthday, a number of them wavered, saying they might stay.

Only 35 percent of Hispanic seventh-graders at this overwhelmingly Hispanic middle school were deemed proficient in California's English Language Arts test in 2010-11, and only 43 percent were deemed proficient in Math. Yet Berendo's students are spending precious class time role-playing dating scenarios rather than studying the grammar of dependent clauses or poring over algebra work sheets. (The purchase of a gold chain in this dating scenario is interesting, since we can safely assume that the Start Strong program has been rigorously vetted for "cultural appropriateness." Taxpayers subsidize lunch for 96 percent of Berendo's students.)

Now comes a member of the Los Angeles Board of Education who wants every school in the Los Angeles public

school system to teach students "how to recognize when a relationship is becoming abusive," according to the Los Angeles Times. Over the last several months, L.A. Board of Education member Steve Zimmer, a former teacher and activist, has been working closely with the anti-dating-violence program Peace Over Violence on how to expand its services district-wide. The proposed expansion, estimated to cost \$2 million in its first year and approximately \$600,000 a year thereafter, would hire a new central district administrator and four full-time assistants who would coordinate each school's anti-dating-violence programs and would train a teacher or staff member on each campus to "help students identify when they may be veering toward physical, emotional, or verbal abuse and to raise awareness of these issues."

Heather MacDonald
The Weekly Standard
October 31, 2011, p. 17

Global Warming

How do religions die? Generally they don't, which probably explains why there's so little literature on the subject. Zoroastrianism, for instance, lost many of its sacred texts when Alexander sacked Persepolis in 330 B.C., and most Zoroastrians converted to Islam over 1,000 years ago. Yet today old Zoroaster still counts as many as 210,000 followers, including 11,000 in the U.S. Christopher Hitchens might say you can't kill what wasn't there to begin with.

Still, Zeus and Apollo are no longer with us, and neither are Odin and Thor. Among the secular gods, Marx is mostly dead and Freud is totally so. Something

did away with them, and it's worth asking what.

Consider the case of global warming, another system of doomsaying prophecy and faith in things unseen.

As with religion, it is presided over by a caste of spectacularly unattractive people pretending to an obscure form of knowledge that promises to make the seas retreat and the winds abate. As with religion, it comes with an elaborate list of virtues, vices and indulgences. As with religion, its claims are often non-falsifiable, hence the convenience of the term "climate change" when thermometers don't oblige the expected trend lines. As with religion, it is harsh toward skeptics, heretics and other "deniers." And as with religion, it is susceptible to the earthly temptations of money, power, politics, arrogance and deceit.

This week, the conclave of global warming's cardinals are meeting in Durban, South Africa, for their 17th conference in as many years. The idea is to come up with a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which is set to expire next year, and to require rich countries to pony up \$100 billion a year to help poor countries cope with the alleged effects of climate change. This is said to be essential because in 2017 global warming becomes "catastrophic and irreversible," according to a recent report by the International Energy Agency.

Yet a funny thing happened on the way to the climate apocalypse. Namely, the financial apocalypse.

The U.S., Russia, Japan, Canada and the EU have all but confirmed they won't be signing on to a new Kyoto. The Chinese and Indians won't make a move unless the West does. The notion

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that rich (or formerly rich) countries are going to ship \$100 billion every year to the Micronesias of the world is risible, especially after they've spent it all on Greece.

Cap and trade is a dead letter in the U.S. Even Europe is having second thoughts about carbon-reduction targets that are decimating the continent's heavy industries and cost an estimated \$67 billion a year. "Green" technologies have all proved expensive, environmentally hazardous and wildly unpopular duds.

All this has been enough to put the Durban political agenda on hold for the time being. But religions don't die, and often thrive, when put to the political sidelines. A religion, when not physically extinguished, only dies when it loses faith in itself.

That's where the Climategate emails come in. First released on the eve of the Copenhagen climate summit two years ago and recently updated by a fresh batch, the "hide the decline" emails were an endless source of fun and lurid fascination for those of us who had never been convinced by the global-warming thesis in the first place.

But the real reason they mattered is that they introduced a note of caution into an enterprise whose motivating appeal resided in its increasingly frantic forecasts of catastrophe. Papers were withdrawn; source material re-examined. The Himalayan glaciers, it turned out, weren't going to melt in 30 years. Nobody can say for sure how high the seas are likely to rise—if much at all. Greenland isn't turning green. Florida isn't going anywhere.

The reply global warming alarmists have made to these disclosures is that they did nothing to change the underlying science, and only improved it in particulars. So what to make of the U.N.'s latest supposedly authoritative report on extreme weather events, which is tinged with admissions of doubt and uncertainty? Oddly, the report has left climate activists stuttering with rage at what they call its "watered down" predictions. If nothing else, they understand that any belief system, particularly ones as young as global warming, cannot easily survive more than a few ounces of self-doubt.

Meanwhile, the world marches on. On Sunday, 2,232 days will have elapsed since a category 3 hurricane made landfall in the U.S., the longest period in more than a century that the U.S. has been spared a devastating storm. Great religions are wise enough to avoid marking down the exact

date when the world comes to an end. Not so for the foolish religions. Expect Mayan cosmology to take a hit to its reputation when the world doesn't end on Dec. 21, 2012. Expect likewise when global warming turns out to be neither catastrophic nor irreversible come 2017.

And there is this: Religions are sustained in the long run by the consolations of their teachings and the charisma of their leaders. With global warming, we have a religion whose leaders are prone to spasms of anger and whose followers are beginning to twitch with boredom. Perhaps that's another way religions die.

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