

Christian Worldview

What is a Worldview?

At the simplest level it is how we look at life? How we live our life – based on what we truly believe.

Worldview is not unique to Christianity but a larger question of culture? (e.g. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961): Five key human questions that help distinguish culture: Human nature, Man nature relationship, Time sense, Activity, Social relationship.

A Christian Worldview answers these and other questions from a Biblical perspective.

Assumptions of an orthodox Christian world view:

1) All truth is God's truth! Truth is revealed in a variety of ways (general revelation) but God has told us specific "truth" through the special revelation of God in Christ and through the Biblical revelation.

2) God is supernatural and breaks into the human experience

3a) God's redemption is personal and holistic.

Special grace

Holy Spirit encounter that brings salvation through grace

Saved - Being saved – Will be saved

Transformation (redemption) expands to our emotions, minds, bodies – our total behaviors and lifestyle.

Common grace

God's work of maintaining creation (the world) by promoting righteousness and restraining evil

3b) The *Lordship of Christ* extends far beyond the human soul

Pietism is foundational but limited

Faith is not compartmentalized but integrated

Abraham Kuyper – "not one square inch of the universe should remain outside the claim of Christ"

4) Important beliefs related to the human condition inform our world view.

Chuck Colson suggests Four Key Questions (How Now Shall We Live?)

Where do we come from and who are we?

Why is there pain and suffering? (what has gone wrong?)

Is there a way out? (what can we do to fix it?)

How do we then live?

Beliefs from those responses are important and have consequences about how we think about issues in the world around us: Examples of other beliefs should direct our thinking around many issues (e.g. sanctity of human life, eternity time reference, passion for the

poor and oppressed, personal responsibility, God is creator and creation has purpose, utopia can not be created by human means, etc.)

Implications of Christian World View:

I. Personal Transformation.

We are moving in a process of redemption that must extend beyond our character transformation (spirit of love and compassion for God and people – Matt 22:36) but the transformation of our minds (emotions, even bodies) as well.

Matthew 22:36 (NIV)

³⁶"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'^[b] ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[c]

II Corinthians 10: 5 (NIV)

⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Romans 12: 2 (NIV)

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual^[a] act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Learning to Think Christian? How do we do that?

Discovery of the 'laws' of life

Source: Harry Blamires (The Christian Mind,) –

II. Cultural Differentiation

Christians live and work in a culture that thinks and believes differently. A Christian worldview stands in contrast with other worldviews.

1) We need to understand the assumptions of our own culture and not unintentionally embrace the thinking and values in which we've been nurtured (culturally). (Part of our personal transformation.)

e.g. Pragmatism – “what works best” (Pierce - empiricism) - limits of utilitarianism with the “idealism” of Christianity

e.g. Materialism - Jesus was very clear about the dangers of the pursuit of stuff which is one of the central ethics in contemporary culture

What are other common 'cultural thinking points' that stand in opposition to a Christian world view?

How do we develop Christian thought to test the will of God or to have spiritually wise thoughts (I Cor 2:6ff)?

2) We need to understand other worldviews in order to effectively communicate the gospel in a relevant and truthful manner.

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Acts 17: 16ff (NIV) _ Paul at Mars Hill

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?" ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." ²¹(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

III. Cultural Transformation: (Cultural Commission)

Christians must bring their reasonably defensible world view to the cultural organizations and structures throughout the world. Part of our duty is cultural transformation – based on the extension of ‘truth’ of the Christian worldview to all arenas of life. Footnote: the goal is faithfulness not restoration.

1) The sphere of influence principle

2) Example: William Wilberforce (1759 - 1833) – English Abolitionist

“Surely the principles and practice of Christianity lead not just to meditation, but to action.” (his friend William Pitt – convincing Wilberforce not to give up politics).

What are the arenas of life which represent a great need for transformation?

Where is the intersection of the world’s need, your passions, and your context (station)?

Where are the ordinary areas in your life that need Christian thinking?
Management philosophy? Educational philosophy? Research paradigms?

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