

Engaging God's World¹ - Part 1:
Your **Life**, Your Culture & Your Worldview!

Introduction:

Good morning everyone! How are you doing this morning? I certainly hope you having a good week, that you are you learning a lot, drawing closer to God, making new friends, and having some great fun. What a pleasure it is for me to be with you his morning! I have the great privilege of speaking with you on some issues that are incredibly important and very relevant for you personally — what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, to be complete in Him, and how on that basis we can serve as leaders and agents of change in the church and the world.

SLIDE #1. I have titled this session today, “Engaging God’s World: Your Life, Your Culture, and Your Worldview!”

Overall, we want to do three things this morning. (1) I want to explore a bit about where you are in **your lives** right now, examine your longings and desires, and how worldview connects to all this. (2) I want to take a look at the culture around you, **your culture** and how various worldviews in your culture will try to deceive you, to misdirect your longings and desires, and derail you in your attempts to live an influential, God-centered life. (3) Lastly, I want us to study the essentials of a **biblically based worldview and way of life** as the basis for your own growth, development and fulfillment as a Christian and how it can serve as a basis to transform you and your culture through you! I hope that sounds meaningful and exciting to you.

Through these things we are seeking to engage God’s world by looking your life, your culture, and your worldview.

¹ This part of the title is taken from Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning and Living* (Eerdmans 2002).

But before we get underway, I thought it would be fun to run some brain-teaser type thoughts and questions by you that should wake us up and help us get our minds in gear before we start doing some heavy thinking. What do you say? Sound ok? Ok! Here then are some questions to that will really make us think!

1. **SLIDE #2** Should vegetarians eat animal crackers?
2. Why do they lock gas station restrooms? Are they afraid someone will clean them?
3. Why is the word “abbreviation” so long (5 syllables in fact!)?
4. If you’re cross-eyed and have dyslexia, can you read all right?
5. **SLIDE #3** Why doesn’t glue stick to the inside of the glue bottle?
6. How can there be interstate highways in Hawaii?
7. Why is it that when you transport something by car is called a “shipment,” but when you transport something by ship it’s called “cargo?”
8. Why does your nose run, and your feet smell?
9. **SLIDE #4** What is the speed of dark?
10. How come you park on a driveway, and drive on a parkway?
11. Did Adam and Eve have a belly button?
12. When a cow laughs, does milk come out of its nose?
13. When you choke a smurf, what color does it turn?
14. **SLIDE #5** What’s the difference between **shampoo** and **realpoo**?
15. Why do you sink so slowly in quicksand?
16. Aren’t boxing rings really square?
17. If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?
18. **SLIDE #6** Why do people go to Burger King and order a double Whopper with fries and insist on getting a Diet coke?
19. How do we really know that the alphabet is in the right order?
20. What happens if you get scared half to death ... twice?
21. How can you tell when you have run out of invisible ink?

22. **SLIDE #7** If your toast always lands jelly side down and a cat always lands on its feet, what would happen if you attached a piece of jelly toast on the back of a cat and dropped it?
23. If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving definitely isn't for you!
24. Is it really true that the sooner you fall behind, the more time you will have to catch up?
25. Can God create a rock so big that He can't lift it?

No doubt your thinking caps are now on, and we are ready set to go!

I have been doing a little thinking about what my life was like when I was your age, and what your lives are like right now, and I think I have come to a conclusion about both me back then and about you now:

I was, and you are hopelessly **romantics!** Young people in their middle teens are **romantic people!** Now what I mean by this is that people your age — indeed, you yourselves — are filled with emotions, with longings, with desires, with passions, with aspirations, with desires, with excitement, with fears, with anxieties, with insecurities, with dreams, with visions, with hopes for your lives and futures, for your families and friendships, for all that you hope to get out of life and love, to find joy and meaning and happiness and purpose!

Am I right? Before I go any farther, let me just say that these passions of yours are God-given, they are good, they are right, they are healthy, and they are an indication that your souls and minds and hearts and bodies are coming to life! To be sure, you can misdirect these longings and desires, but they are still from God and you can obey and honor him with them and what you do with them. What we want to do is to irrigate these longings and desires, to waters these hopes and dreams in a way that honors God and blesses you and others through you.

What triggers these feelings? What are they like and where do they come from? Perhaps you are feeling your lives coming to life it in an experience of the grandeur of **nature**, in a sunrise or sunset, or mountain range or in a view of ocean waves. Perhaps you detect it in how you are moved by the power of

music, all kinds of music (and we will be listening to 4 songs in this presentation), or in the powerful story of a film or TV program that grips your soul. Perhaps you sense it in the desires and attractions you have for members of the **opposite sex** and the in cravings you have for meaningful **friendships** and for being a part of a **community**. Perhaps you are find yourself awakening to the **mysteries** of the world and of life itself, and are longing to know **God** as your creator and redeemer more and more.

SLIDE #8 Along these lines, maybe you can relate to a great Danish philosopher by the name of Søren Kierkegaard wrote in his diary as a passionate teenager that his great goal in life was to understand himself, to develop a solid sense of self-identity, to know his calling and to search for that one truth or idea for which he could live and die. As he put it,

“The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wants me to do; the thing is to find a truth that is true for me, ***to find the idea for which I can live and die.***”

SLIDE #9 Or perhaps you can identify with the words of this poem called “The Buried Life” by Matthew Arnold who was longing to know about the mystery of his beating heart and the wonders of life itself.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true original course;
A longing to inquire into the mystery of this heart
Which beats so wild, so deep in us —
To know whence our lives come and where they go. (Lines 45-54).

Or have you ever had an experience like the sixteen-year old character Gene Forrester in John Knowles novel *A Separate Peace* who was totally overwhelmed at the magnificent beauty of summer mornings in New Hampshire.

SLIDE #10 One summer day after another broke with cool [radiance] ... and there was a breath of widening life in the morning air, something hard to describe — an oxygen intoxicant... some odor, some feeling so hopelessly promising that I would fall back in my bed on guard against

it... I wanted to break out crying from stabs of hopeless joy, or intolerable promise, or because those mornings were too full of beauty for me?

In our day and age, **music** is often times one of the most powerful ways of expressing this deep longing for life. Yet sometimes we feel dead inside, and it seems so hard to feel alive, and so we are looking for experiences that will wake us up and even save us.

I am sure most of you are familiar with Avril Lavigne. She's Canadian and is a bit rebellious, but as I have listened to her music, I hear longings and desires for life and meaning and adventure in her words and music, probably just like you have. I thought it would be worth listening to one of her songs that expresses her heart's aspirations, and she does in "Anything But Ordinary," from her CD *Let Go*. Let's listen to this song.

SLIDE #11

Anything But Ordinary—Avril Lavigne

Sometimes I get so weird
I even freak myself out
I laugh myself to sleep
It's my lullaby
Sometimes I drive so fast
Just to feel the danger
I wanna scream
It makes me feel alive

Is it enough to love
Is it enough to breathe
Somebody rip my heart out
And leave me here to bleed
Is it enough to die
Somebody save my life
I'd rather be anything but ordinary please

To walk within the lines
Would make my life so boring
I want to know that I
Have been to the extreme
So knock me off my feet
Come on now give it to me
Anything to make me feel alive

Is it enough to love
Is it enough to breathe
Somebody rip my heart out
And leave me here to bleed
Is it enough to die
Somebody save my life
I'd rather be anything but ordinary please
I'd rather be anything but ordinary please.

SLIDE #12

**Let down your defences
Use no common sense
If you look you will see
that this world is a beautiful
accident turbulent succulent
opulent permanent, no way
I wanna taste it
Don't wanna waste it away**

Sometimes I get so weird
I even freak myself out
I laugh my self to sleep
It's my lullaby

Is it enough
Is it enough
Is it enough to breathe
Somebody rip my heart out
And leave me here to bleed
Is it enough to die
Somebody save my life
I'd rather be anything but ordinary please

Is it enough
Is it enough to die
Somebody save my life
I'd rather be anything but ordinary please
I'd rather be anything but ordinary please.

What do you hear in these lyrics and in this music and in this voice? I hear a young woman, not much older than you guys, who is longing for life with all her heart. Listen to her language: for her it is not enough to love, breathe, or die. She doesn't want a boring life. She wants something extreme. To feel danger, to

scream, to rip her heart out, to do anything to make her feel alive. She pleads for someone to save her in this world which she says is beautiful, turbulent succulent, opulent, and permanent. She wants to taste of life fully, and in no way wants to waste it. She would rather be anything but ordinary, please! Do you connect with her longings and desires, her hopes and dreams?

Avril is looking for what philosophers and theologians call life's greatest good (*summum bonum*), the life that is truly fulfilling, truly meaningful, truly happy, truly alive. I think that as a Christian young person, that is what you are looking for too! Yet here is an important point for both Avril and for you: nothing in this world on its own without God is going to satisfy her or you ultimately.

For sure, what the world has to offer by itself may satisfy us temporarily, in the short term. But permanently, in the long run, we won't find our ultimate or final happiness, our greatest good in what the world or other people or things or experiences have to offer on their own without God.

SLIDE #13

Bono of U2 speaks for many, many people, perhaps for many of us when he sings in perhaps his most famous song, "I still haven't found what I am looking for." I wonder if Avril has found what she is looking for? I wonder if you have found what you are looking for? The fact of the matter is that Avril was meant to live and you were meant to live, but your true life and mine, your true happiness and mine is found only in a relationship with God as that relationship with God is fleshed out in and affects every area of your lives.

A great church father named **St. Augustine** looked for happiness in fame and in money and in sexuality, but none of these things brought him happiness. He never found that truth worth living and dying for, the answer to the mystery of his beating heart, or what he was really and truly looking for until he met God in Jesus Christ. **SLIDE #14** But once he discovered the secret to life in Him, he wrote these famous words in his autobiography called the Confessions:

"O Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our spirits are restless until they rest in You!"

How many of you have heard of a band called **Switchfoot**? The guys in this band are from San Diego in Southern California, and I was recently introduced to their music when I met their record producer at a retreat in Maryland back in June. I have been listening to their music and studying the words to their songs recently, and on their most recent CD called *The Beautiful Letdown*, they have a song titled "Meant to Live" that talks about what we are talking about, how we long to live and live fully, and to live for so much more than just what the world around us without God has to offer. They are singing about today what St. Augustine wrote about so long ago that God made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. Listen carefully!

SLIDE #15

Meant To Live--Switchfoot

Fumbling his confidence
And wondering why the world has passed him by
Hoping that he's bent for more than arguments
And failed attempts to fly, fly

[Chorus]

We were meant to live for so much more
Have we lost ourselves?
Somewhere we live inside
Somewhere we live inside
We were meant to live for so much more
Have we lost ourselves?
Somewhere we live inside

Dreaming about Providence
And whether mice or men have second tries
Maybe we've been livin' with our eyes half open
Maybe we're bent and broken, broken

[Chorus]

We want more than this world's got to offer
We want more than this world's got to offer
We want more than the wars of our fathers
And everything inside screams for second life, yeah

SLIDE #16

We were meant to live for so much more

Have we lost ourselves?
We were meant to live for so much more
Have we lost ourselves?
We were meant to live for so much more
Have we lost ourselves?
We were meant to live
We were meant to live

What a powerful song! Have we lost ourselves, they keep asking? Are we living with our eyes just half open? Are we bent and broken? How they want more than what the world's got to offer. They want redemption, and every thing screams out for second tries and second life! You, too, were meant to live, to find your longings and desires fulfilled, to have your hopes and dreams irrigated and watered so that they will grow and flourish. ***If this is going to be your experience, then you will need a view of life that is based on God and rooted in the Bible. If this is going to happen to you, you will need a biblical worldview, a deeply Christian outlook on the whole of life.***

WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

But what exactly is a worldview and what difference does it make in our lives? Let me mention several definitions of a worldview and then brief summarized what a worldview does for us. Then I have another song to play for you about a Christian worldview!

SLIDE #17

First, here are several definitions of a worldview.

1. A worldview is your view-of-the-world!
2. Your essential philosophy of life or system of basic beliefs by which you make sense of the world and your place and way of life within it.
3. It is your rock bottom answers to life's deepest questions: Who is God? What is real? What can I know? Who am I? Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? Why is there evil? Is there life after death? Etc.
4. **SLIDE 18** "All-embracing life system" — Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*

5. “The comprehensive framework of your basic beliefs about things.” — Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*
6. “A world view is a set of presuppositions and assumptions held consciously or unconsciously about God (or his absence) and the basic make-up of the universe, our world, and ourselves.” —James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*
7. **SLIDE 19** A collection of one's presuppositions or convictions about reality which constitute one's total outlook on life. —Andrew Hoffercker, *Building a Christian World View*
8. Vision of God, the universe, our world and ourselves as the basis for an accompanying way of life that is rooted and grounded in the human heart.” David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*

You see, what the Bible calls the “heart” is the very center and core of your nature and personality as a human being. Everything you are and do is a function of your heart. The heart is the mini-me! It is the mini-you.

The heart is the seat and source of your **thoughts and ideas** or your intellectual life.

The heart is the seat and source of your **loves and desires** or your emotional life.

The heart is the seat and source of your **choices and decisions** or your volitional life.

The heart is the seat and source of your **worship and spirituality** or your religious life.

SLIDE #20 That’s why Proverbs 4: 23 says, “Guard over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” That is why Jesus says in Matthew 6: 21, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The heart is right where a worldview belongs, and worldview belongs in your heart. The heart of the matter of your worldview is that a worldview is a matter of your heart. So, you see, life proceeds ‘kardiopically’ out of a vision of your heart, out of the very center of your being, out of innermost self! So from this we can see why a worldview is so important.

SLIDE #21

WHY A WORLDVIEW SO IMPORTANT

1. Everyone has a worldview whether they realize it or not.
2. A worldview guides our thoughts and ideas.
3. A worldview determines our loves and affections.
4. A worldview provides guidance and direction.
5. A worldview shapes our values and behavior.
6. A worldview identifies the good life (*summum bonum*) and provides meaning and hope.

What is the vision of God, the universe, the world and other people that is rooted and grounded in your heart? What flows from your inner most being as the springs of your life? What worldview guides your thoughts and ideas, your loves and affections, gives you guidance and direction, dictates your values and behavior, and shapes the meaning and purpose of your life?

NATALIE'S STORY

SLIDE #22

At Dallas Baptist University, one of my students whose name is Natalie says that when she was a teenager, probably about your age, her vision of life, the worldview of her heart was dominated by the effects of a broken home. So she set out on a search for love and significance, and her quest to find love and significance came through seductive ways of dressing and sexual enticement. This outlook on life, she concluded, was a big mistake, and it resulted in pain and heartaches.

But then Jesus Christ came to her in His grace and brought her salvation. Natalie was reconciled to God, became a new creation in Christ, and her total outlook and way of life changed. She began to cultivate a new worldview based on God's Word that has taken deep root in her heart!

As a very romantic person then and even now, Natalie's emotions, longings, desires, passions, aspirations, desires, dreams, visions, and hopes for her life and future have found deep fulfillment in her relationship with Christ. She

began to see things and do things like Jesus Himself sees and does things, and she hasn't been the same person since. Her relationship with Christ and her Christian worldview have made a world of difference in her life. And what God and a biblical worldview have done for Natalie can do for you as well in bringing all your hopes and dreams to fulfillment in Him, making you complete in Christ.

The group Audio Adrenaline has a great song titled "My World View" that talks about how important it is to have a worldview like Jesus does, like Natalie now has, and like I hope you want and are learning to have as well. Listen carefully to the words.

SLIDE #23

My World View--Audio Adrenaline

I want to see the world through Jesus' eyes
See through Jesus tears
I want to see the world through Jesus' eyes
My vision's not as clear
I want to feel the world with the hands that made it
Know the pain and appreciate it
Hear their cries and hope to understand

CHORUS

My world view
It's how I see the world
It's how I look at you
My world view
It's how I see the world
Would you like to see it to?
My world view

I want to place my foot upon the rock
The rock that doesn't move
For upon the rock the Kingdom's built
And here's the Kingdom view
I see creation and I see Adam's fall
I see through the years and I can see it all

All things come together for the good

CHORUS II

My world view
It's how I see the world

It's how I look at you
My world view
It's how I see the world
Would you like to see it to?
My world view
It's how I see the world
Would you like to see it to?
My world view

Coming into view, coming into view, coming into to full view

CHORUS III **SLIDE #24**

My world view
I can see, I see it forever
It's how I see the world
It's how I look at you
My world view
Coming into view coming into full view
It's how I see the world
Would you like to see it too?

Bulls eye! This great song talks about what we are after, a view of the world like Jesus has, a worldview that sees the tears and the pain from his point of view, that understands reality and other people from the perspective of creation, Adam's fall, and Christ's redemption — the kingdom view — and how all things work together for good. Several times in the song we hear the refrain in the form of this question: Would you like to see it too? Would you like to see it too? How do you answer this question?

This biblical worldview is the world's true story. It's your true story and it's mine. The problem is there are many other worldviews out there in YOUR CULTURE that often prevent us from viewing life and living in the world the way God wants us to.

These other outlooks and ways of life can destroy our biblical vision of life that is to be rooted and grounded in the heart. They can keep us from finding the fulfillment of our emotions, longings, desires, passions, aspirations, desires, dreams, visions, and hopes for her life and future in God, and serving Him faithfully and fruitfully in all aspects of life. So in our next session we will examine

two or three of these worldview in YOUR CULTURE that pose the problem so you can be on your guard.

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Orlando, Florida

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Engaging God's World - Part 2:
Your Life, **Your Culture** & Your Worldview!

Introduction: Teenagers and Their Beliefs

I'm scared, really scared, scared to death! You may ask: What are you so scared about? What makes you so fearful? After all, it's not Halloween yet! What happened: did you get a get a good look in the mirror!

Here's what scares me and makes me fearful: when I hear about what teenagers like you in the US, including Christian teenagers, really believe and how they live, and what this means for their own lives and for the future of the church and our country! For sure, spirituality, including Christian spirituality, is very important in the lives of young people today. In fact, it's rather popular to be spiritual! The WB program *Seventh Heaven* proves that! Or the older show *Touched by an Angel* indicates how spirituality is all the rage.

But when you contrast what people your age claim to be spiritually and religiously, and what they actually believe and how they actually live, you figure out pretty fast that there are a lot of hypocrites out there, and that the spirituality and religious life of many young people today is really a private, pragmatic, and pretty superficial matter. Here are some scary statistics indeed!

SLIDE #1

Scary Statistics

64% or almost two-thirds of teens describe themselves as "religious," three out of every five call themselves "spiritual" (60%), and three out of five say they are "committed Christians" (60%). (1999)

Of teens who call themselves Christians, 26% said they are "absolutely committed" and 57% said that they were "moderately committed" to the Christian faith. (1999)

53% or slightly more than half of all teens say that Jesus committed sins while He was on earth. (2000)

SLIDE #2

More Scary Statistics

51% of professing teenagers say the bodily resurrection of Jesus never occurred.

65% or two out of three teens say that the Devil or Satan is not a real being but is only a symbol of evil. (2000)

59% of Christian teens believe that all religions teach equally valid truths.

61% or three out of five teens agree that if a person is generally good, they will earn a place in heaven. (2000)

SLIDE #3

Still More Scary Statistics

9% of born again teens believe in moral absolutes (91% don't), and just 4% of the non-born again teens believe that there are moral absolutes (96% don't). (2001)

90% of Christian teens believe that copying CDs for friends and unauthorized music downloading is morally acceptable (10% say it's wrong), compared to 94% of non-Christians (6% say it's wrong).

Sources:

<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=37>

Dale Buss, *Wall Street Journal*, Op-ed, July 9, 2004

What these scary statistics, and others like them, suggest to me is that today's teens, despite their spirituality and religious beliefs, have actually been led astray by the surrounding culture and its worldviews, and have, bottom line, bought into its devastating errors and destructive ways of life. This includes many Christian teens as well. If you have seen the movie *Saved*, you know what I am talking about where the enculturation and hypocrisy are widespread.

But we don't want YOU to be among them. We don't want you to be among those who profess Christianity but fail to walk your talk for three simple, but profound reasons. **SLIDE #4**

First of all, hypocrisy is simply wrong and it dishonors God.

Second, hypocrisy undermines your integrity, and keeps you from becoming a whole, complete person in Jesus Christ and finding your ultimate fulfillment in Him.

Third, hypocrisy will destroy your aspirations to leadership and will thwart your attempts to be an agent of transformation in the church and culture through your various callings.

How can we prevent this hypocrisy from happening? What should we teach? What should we do? How can we weave together a fabric of faithfulness over an entire Christian lifetime?

Let me remind you again that my purpose in our discussion today is not just to impart information about worldviews or to fill your head with many good facts about a Christian worldview. That's a good thing. But there is more.

Rather, my deeper purpose has to do with your life, with the kind of person you are, to encourage you to become the human being God wants you to become in Jesus Christ, to help you cultivate godly character and wise conduct, to become a young man and young woman of integrity and virtue, to be challenged to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, to embody an authentic faith, hope and love in your daily lives as seen in your words and deeds. To be strong and courageous. Gaining information, learning about ideas, understanding truth is all very important. I endorse this goal wholeheartedly. But I am after more than that. I am hunting for bigger game. I want a better trophy. I am not satisfied to just dish out the words and facts, and then hope you catch on.

SLIDE #5

Rather, I want you to be affected at the deepest level of your being in how you think, in what you love, and in the way you live. We live out of our ideas, affections, and desires, and so I would like to put you on the road toward a

Christian transformation of your minds, your hearts, and your wills. I don't just want you to know the truth, but to be enflamed with it. I don't want you to be just told about God's wisdom, but to fall in love with it. I don't want to just tell you what to do, but somehow to cause you to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

For I want you to see that what you do in your life is going to be a direct function of your strongest, most ardent desires, and it is of utmost importance that those desires of yours be ones that honor God and conform to His vision for your life in this world as a Christian. **SLIDE #6** As Milan Kundera states in his novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, "Insofar as it is possible to divide people up into categories, the surest criterion is the deep-seated desires that orient them to one or another lifelong activity."² The lifelong activity that I want to orient you to is one of Christian faithfulness and fruitfulness over the long haul. I hope and pray this is or will be your deepest desire. If it is, then you will be it and do it.

To accomplish this, I want to stimulate your Christian imagination with a larger vision of the Christian faith, to entice you with God's truth, provoke you to biblical goodness, and inspire you with divine beauty.

Don't leave this place without undergoing, by the grace of God, a transformation of your desires at the root of your being and in the fruit of your lives, a change that will last, not just for a week, but for a lifetime.

But there are many worldviews out there in **your culture** that can trip you up and cause you to stumble spiritually. There are many worldviews out there in your culture that promise you personal happiness but will fail to deliver on their promises. There are many worldviews out there that seek to thwart your effectiveness as a leader in the church and in the world. So we need to know what these worldviews are in general, and I want to focus on one in particular, the one that I think is the most harmful in your culture today.

² Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (New York: Harper & Row, 1991), p. 193.

I. Your Culture and Its Worldviews

The ultimate issues behind this brief survey of various worldviews are the issues about reality and truth. Figuring out which worldviews lie and deceive and create a false dream world, and which one gets it right and tells the true truth about the really real is perhaps the most important question anyone can ever ask and answer. Morpheus points this out to Neo in this clip from *The Matrix*. **Video Clip Chapter 11- Matrix: How do you know it's the real world?** So which worldviews create dream worlds and lead us astray? First there is deism.

A. Deism:

SLIDE # 7

Deists believe in a transcendent God as a First Cause who created the universe but then left it to run on its own.

God is not with us, not fully personal, not sovereign over human affairs, and not providential.

SLIDE # 8

In this outlook, neither miracles, an inspired Bible, or the incarnation of Jesus as God's Son are possible.

God is watching us from a distance (Bette Midler)!

For more on deism, go to <http://www.deism.com/>

B. Naturalism:

SLIDE # 9

- Only physical matter exists and is all there is, ever was, or ever will be. God does not exist. Hence, naturalism is also atheism.
- Human beings have evolved from the lower primates and are complex, physical "machines" functioning as an interrelation of chemical and physical properties without natures or souls.

SLIDE # 10

- Death results in the total extinction of the individual human being without the possibility of eternal life.

- Ethics is created by human beings and are relative to each person and situation.
- For more on naturalism, go to <http://naturalism.org/>

For many people, the issue of the existence of God is absolutely crucial, as this clip from the movie *Contact* indicates. **Video Clip Chapter 6 – Contact: Ockham’s Razor.**

C. Nihilism

SLIDE #11

Nihilism, coming from the latin root for nothing, is the natural child of naturalism and is more of a **feeling** of despair and hopelessness than an actual worldview.

If God does not exist, then nothing has meaning.

Nihilism is the negation of everything — reality, knowledge, ethics, beauty, persons, and meaning.

For more on nihilism, go to <http://www.geocities.com/liudegast/nihilism.html>

Listen carefully to this description of nihilism from the character Troy in the film *Reality Bites*. **Video Clip Chapter 9 - Reality Bites: “Life is just a random lottery...” SLIDE #12** “There is no point to any of this. It’s all just a random lottery of meaningless tragedy and a series of near escapes.” The OT book Ecclesiastes asserts something similar, for life without God in sin is vain and futile: “Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 2: 11

D. Atheistic Existentialism

SLIDE #13

In its atheistic form, existentialism, derived from the term "existence" recognizes that naturalism/atheism breeds nihilism and that nihilism is unlivable.

Life without meaning is impossible.

In the face of recognized meaninglessness and in a revolt against it, existentialism seeks to go beyond nihilism by creating meaning and significance through personal choices and actions. For more on existentialism, go to <http://www.connect.net/ron/exist.html>

I don't have it on a film clip, but Troy who illustrated naturalism for us, a bit later in *Reality Bites* speaks like an existentialist when he talks about what he needs to do to make a meaningless life meaningful for him: **SLIDE # 14** "See...this is all we need. A couple of smokes, a cup of coffee, and a little bit of conversation. You and me and five bucks."

E. Pantheism and the New Age Movement

SLIDE # 15

Pantheism (pan = all; theos = God) is a world view which identifies God with all there is: God is all; all is God. Everything that exists is one and this unity is divine.

The apparent infinity and eternity of the universe are divine qualities, and all things, including human beings, animals, and inanimate objects like rocks and dirt are divine in nature.

SLIDE #16

The New Age Movement, which is based on pantheism, encourages people through mystical experience to develop a new cosmic consciousness in which they recognize their own divinity, the unity of all things, and become one with the universe.

For more on pantheism and new age spirituality, go to <http://www.pantheism.net/>

George Lucas in his *Star Wars* movie trilogy intentional promoted a pantheistic, new age worldview, especially through the adorable Yoda who tells Luke Skywalker in this film clip about the Force in pantheistic terms. **Video Clip Chapter 12 – Star Wars: “The Force...” SLIDE # 17**

“Size matters not, look at me! Judge me by my size, do you? Huh! And well you should not, for my ally is the Force and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we and not this crude matter. You must feel the Force around you and between you and me and the tree, the rock, everyw here, yes, even between the land and the ship.”

F. Postmodernism

SLIDE # 18

Postmodernism is a critical response to modernism which trusted in human reason and science as the way to truth, and it rejects world views of any and every kind because they rest on untrustworthy foundations.

A postmodern person must seek to live in the presence of uncertainty and relativity with no absolutes, recognizing the frailty of language and our inability to ever know the truth, that there is no final meaning, and how all of life is determined by politics and power.

Key themes in postmodernism include the blurring of reality and fantasy, incoherence, spoofs, and superficiality. These things can be seen in many ways in our architecture, malls and theme parks, in MTV and music videos, in reality TV, in movies and in celebrity worship. Don't believe in any "ism"- believe only in yourself! This is exactly the advice Ferris Bueller gives in this short video clip!

Video Clip Chapter 4 – Ferris Bueller: “Isms”

II. The Worldview of Secularism

That's your list of false, erroneous dream world worldviews that don't tell us the truth about reality: deism, naturalism, nihilism, atheistic existentialism, pantheism and the new age movement, postmodernism. It is enough to make your head swim, to pull a mental muscle in thinking about all this. But there is one worldview that concerns me most and I haven't mentioned it yet, but one that could certainly sink your boat if you are not aware of it. The worldview of which I speak is secularism. This is the bottom line viewpoint in our culture, the worldview common denominator, the essential philosophic outlook of most

people today in our country. Even many Christians live like secularists without realizing it. A formal definition might go like this: **SLIDE # 19**

Secularism is a worldview or system of thought that seeks to understand and order life on the basis of ideas taken solely from this world and it excludes God and His Word and Kingdom from the real business of daily life. Secularism is simply living life as if God didn't exist. Some secularists are deists who believe in God but don't think He is involved in human life. Other secularists are naturalists or atheists who don't believe in God at all. Even some may be Christians, but they limit God's role in their lives to the church and to their private spiritual experiences. Whatever the source, secularism means that God is left out or told to stay out of huge areas on life like these:

SLIDE #20

Government: wall of separation between church and state

Education: no prayer or religious studies in public schools

Science: everything must be explained by evolution

Technology: nothing should stop our conquest of nature or human nature (cloning)

Law: no place for the 10 Commandments in a courthouse

Business and economics: leave your religion at home when you go to work where the "law of the jungle" (cut-throat competition) prevails

Arts and Entertainment: God rarely stars in, except when ridiculed.

This is how secularism as a worldview affects public life, the public square where He is excluded from having a role. But here is how secularism might affect you at a personal level. Remember those scary statistics we read at the first of this talk? Bottom line is that they reveal how secularism has affected many teenagers like you today.

But let me be more specific and mention several ways secularism (which, don't forget excludes God and His Word and Kingdom rule from the real business

of daily life) could impact you negatively, keeping you from being and doing all God wants you to be and do.

SLIDE #21

1. Compartmentalization (dualism): if you are religious, then limit God to the private, sacred compartment of your life like church or bible studies, and keep Him out of everything else (public things like work, school, relationships, family, fun, etc).
2. Secular Humanism: making people the supreme beings and the measure of all things. Human standards rule all things.
3. Relativism: believing that there is no final truth or correct views about important issues in life. Nothing is really right or wrong.

SLIDE #22

4. Tolerance: every point of view (no matter how crazy) and way of life (no matter how corrupt) is equally valid and should not be criticized.
5. Pragmatism: do what works rather than do what is right. Success, not principles, should be your chief concern.
6. Hedonism: living life for pleasure, especially in the areas of sex and food. Indulging in lust and gluttony as ways of life.

SLIDE #23

7. Materialism: making money, wealth and possessions the most important things in your life. Things, things, things and more things is your motto.
8. Egotism: becoming well-known or a famous celebrity (actor, rock star, athlete!) is your primary goal in life and will make you happy.

These are the eight ways secularism as a worldview could crater your Christian life and make you a number in the scary statistics we looked at just a few moments ago. The secularism of your culture destroys lives with its compartmentalization, humanism, relativism, tolerance, pragmatism, hedonism, materialism and egotism. More and more people, especially students like you, are crying out for a new way to be human, to break from secularism or other false, dream world worldviews, and that is exactly what God in Jesus Christ and

a Christian worldview does for us, as Switchfoot sings about in this song with the title "New Way to be Human."

SLIDE #24

New Way To Be Human — Switchfoot

Everyday it's the same thing
Another trend has begun
Hey kids, this might be the one
It's a race to be noticed
And it's leaving us numb
Hey kids, we can be the ones
With all of our fashion
We're still incomplete
The God of redemption
Could break our routine

There's a new way to be human
It's nothing we've ever been
There's a new way to be human
New way to be human

And where is our inspiration?
When all the heroes are gone
Hey kids, could we be the ones?
Cause nobody's famous
And nobody's fine
We all need forgiveness
We're longing inside

There's a new way to be human
It's nothing we've ever been
There's a new way to be human
It's spreadin' under my skin
There's a new way to be human
Where divinity blends
With a new way to be human
New way to be human

SLIDE #25

You're throwing your love across
My impossible space
You've created me
Take me out of me into...

A new way to be human

To a new way to be human
You're a new way to be human
Where my humanity blends
To a new way to be human
Redemption begins
You're a new way to be human
You're a new way to be human
You're the only way to be human
You're a new way to be human

Student Leadership University
Orlando, Florida

Dr. David Naugle
July 21, 2004

Engaging God's World - Part 3:
Your Life, Your Culture & **Your Worldview!**

Introduction:

Don't forget: we are looking for a new way to be human! That's what God created us to be as His image and likeness — fully and truly human in Him for our blessing and for His glory! However, the problem is this: secularism and other false worldviews with their cultural power squish our humanity big time, but a large and generous grasp of a Christian or biblical worldview opens up our humanity to full flower!

At the same time, not only are other worldviews a big problem in this way, but a misunderstanding of Christianity itself can be a big problem too. If our interpretation of Christianity itself is inaccurate or off-base or way too small, then that too can keep us in a little religious fish bowl instead of swimming in the big, wide open ocean of God's comprehensive truth. A misguided Christianity can squish our humanity too, and this often comes in three ways.

SLIDE # 1: First, I have discovered in talking with students over the years that, on the one hand, many have a ***"bits and pieces"*** understanding of Christianity — a teaching here, a doctrine there, a Bible study here, a church event there — but they have failed to see how all the parts of the faith fit together to form a coherent whole. They have stars, but no constellation. They have

puzzle pieces, but no complete puzzle. They have trees but no forest. They have lots of photographs, but no big picture.

On the other hand, there are also many students who are what I call ***New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs Christians***. They have their devotions in the New Testament, and occasionally read a Psalm or Proverb. But they really don't have a clue about how the Old and New Testaments are connected, how Israel and the Church are related, or how Adam, Abraham and Jesus all play leading roles in a total biblical story from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to new creation. If you focus on the NT only, and forget the OT, you only have part of the story. It's like going to a movie an hour late. It's like reading a 66 chapter book, but starting in chapter 40. You might have some idea about what's going on, but the overall story is out of context and subject to serious misunderstanding.

If these two things weren't bad enough — the bits and pieces syndrome and being a New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs Christian only — then this next problem is worst of all: it's ***dualism (sacred-secular split)***. Far too many young believers — older ones, too, for that matter — divide life up into two separate and distinct spheres, the sacred and the secular, the eternal and the temporal, the spiritual and the physical, the church and the world.

God, so the thinking goes, is interested in the sacred, the eternal, the spiritual and the church, but He couldn't care less about the secular, the temporal, the physical and the world. So, they develop a split vision of reality, compartmentalize faith in the sacred realm, live other parts of their lives under a different Lord other than Jesus, and lead a fragmented life as a Christian, trying to minimize the secular and maximize the sacred aspects of their lives. This dualism and compartmentalization is a huge problem in the church today.

SLIDE #2: Now the big idea that I want to share with you about all this is that a truly Christian and biblical worldview can solve these problems and simultaneously teach us a new way to be human! It weaves the bits and pieces of faith together into a coherent whole; it connects the two testaments and puts the Bible together as one complete, imagination-stretching story cover to cover; it

breaks down the false division between sacred and secular and brings all of life under the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ.

This glue that ties everything together, this story that explains the universe, this holistic vision of life that opens our lives up in breathtaking ways to God, other people, creation, and culture, makes us all we were ever created and redeemed to be, growing up into the measure that belongs to the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4). So we want to get it right. We want to do the best we can in understanding our faith because so much is at stake!

SLIDE # 3: Fortunately, understanding a Christian or biblical worldview is as easy as 1, 2, 3, for it consists of three really big, basic doctrines or ideas: 1. Creation (God's original purposes for humanity and the earth). 2. Fall of humanity into sin (what's happened to humanity and the earth and God's purposes for both because of sin). 3. Redemption (how God in Christ has redeemed humanity and the earth from the results of the fall). Let's talk about each of these in broad terms for just a few moments.

SLIDE #4: The story of creation is told in Genesis 1-2. The story of the fall is told in Genesis 3. The story of redemption is told in Genesis 3: 15 — Revelation 22: 21. What, then, is the Bible for the most part? It is the story of redemption with a three chapter introduction: 2 chapters tell us about creation in the beginning, 1 chapter tells us about what happened to creation because of sin, and the rest of the biblical story, all the remaining chapters and books, is about how God salvages or saves a sin-wrecked creation from the ravages of sin through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.

SLIDE #5: We can learn a lot about God from this outline as well. Creation tells us about the power and wisdom of God as creator. The fall tells us about the holiness and justice of God as judge of sin. Redemption tells us about the mercy and grace of God as savior of the world.

SLIDE #6: Creation, fall and redemption also answer our deepest human questions. Where we are, who we are, and why we are here are questions answered by creation. The fall explains what has gone wrong, why is everything

so messed up. Redemption provides the solution or remedy to our tragic human situation and tells us how God has fixed things.

SLIDE #7: Here is another way to look at CFR: Creation is about the formation of all things and it is good news! The fall is about the deformation of all things and this is bad news. Redemption, which, of course, is the gospel, is about the reformation of all things and this is good news again.

SLIDE #8: Creation is paradise established along with the original blessing of peace (*shalom*). The fall is paradise lost bringing the disturbance of the peace (*shalom*). Redemption is paradise regained establishing the renewal of peace (*shalom*) in Christ Jesus who is our peace!

SLIDE #9: Now don't forget that CFR is God's story since He is the author; it's the world's true story in that it explains everything and answers the big questions; and as a Christian, it's your story too! As believers, we merge our story with God's story, we indwelling this story and letting this story dwell in us, and we live our lives out of this story, base our lives on this story in our day-to-day existence. This it is what it means to develop a Christian worldview. So keep this in mind as we go along. Now with this big picture in mind, we can look at creation, fall and redemption in a little more detail.

I. Creation: Genesis 1-2

Genesis 1 tells us about the six days of creation and Genesis 2 tells us about the creation of man, woman and marriage. Now if we really want to understand God's original and permanent purposes for the world and for us as His people based on this creation account, we must take a close look at Genesis 1: 26-28. Theologians calls Genesis 1: 26-28 the "creation decree" because it presents God's enduring decree (His design-plan) for creation. It is God's original commission, His mission statement for humanity and all the earth, the basic theme of the Bible. Here is how it reads:

SLIDE # 10

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Gen. 1:27 And God created man

in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Gen. 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

SLIDE #11: From this passage, we understand *God's three basic purposes* for our lives:³

1. *Spiritual purpose:* Because God made humanity as His image and likeness, this means that we are essentially *spiritual and religious beings*, that we are to be properly related to God, and that we were made to love and worship God with all that we are and all that we have. This is the source of the Greatest Commandment that requires us to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength!

2. *Social purpose:* Because God made human beings as male and female and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply, this means that we are basically *social and communal beings*, that we are to be properly related to other people, and that we were made to love and serve others, especially in the context of marriage, family and friendship. This is the source of the second greatest commandment that requires us to love our neighbors even as we love ourselves.

3. *Cultural purpose:* Because God made human beings to subdue the earth and to rule over the fish of the sea, birds of the sky, and over cattle and all the earth, this means that we are essentially *cultural and vocational beings*, and that we are made for joyful, fruitful work in the world. This is exactly what St. Paul requires of us in Colossians 3:23 when he said, "Do your work heartily for the Lord."

Now you know that God made you for spiritual, social and cultural purposes, for intimate fellowship with God, for loving relationships with others, and to make something beautiful out of the earth.

³ Taken from Michael Wittmer, *Heaven is a Place on Earth: Why Everything You Do Matters to God* (Zondervan 2004).

As believers, we are very familiar with our spiritual and social purposes to love God and neighbor. But we are not as familiar and we don't hear as much in our churches about our third, cultural purpose to rule and subdue the earth. So let me say just an extra word or two about this very important reason for our existence as human beings.

Since God is a worker and we are made as His image and likeness, we are workers too! Work is God's gift and blessing, and just as God creatively and imaginatively made and prepared this wonderful world to be our home, so we too in the same creative and imaginative way are to cultivate and care for the earth!

SLIDE #12: This means that we plant gardens, form relationships, determine manners and create forms of worship. We harness animals and the forces of nature. We develop ideas and traditions. We create technological devices like computers and space shuttles and cell phones. We construct communities and build institutions. As workers with callings, we serve as artists, musicians, teachers, bankers, lawyers, homemakers, and so on. It means that areas such as economics, politics, sport and play, the media, marriage and family, advertising, entertainment, etc. are a part of God's plan for human life. Our cultural purpose is central to our humanity as God's image. This cultural and vocational purpose of ours is a very important part of what it means to be human and to be a Christian! Again, it is the blessing and gift of God!

SLIDE #13: It is no wonder, then, that at the end of the six day creation account, God evaluated His creative work. Genesis 1: 31 says: **“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”** Everything God made is truly excellent. There is nothing wrong whatsoever with anything God made. It was perfect. The bad things in the world are because of our sin, not God's creation.

And God was so pleased with His newly created world that He determined that it would be our home. We actually belong here! And when it fell into trouble through sin, He loved it so much, He sent His son to save it. “For God so loved THE WORLD that He gave His only Son” (John 3: 16). This is good news, the good news about the original creation, and good news about its redemption.

So, this teaching about creation is the foundation of a Christian worldview. In your own development of a Christian worldview, **let me encourage you to make the wonderful discovery, or perhaps the wonderful *rediscovery*, of the world as God's very good creation, and that you recognize and wholeheartedly pursue the spiritual, social, and cultural purposes that God has established at creation and have been renewed for us in Christ.**

This is all great news, isn't it? But there is bad news as well in a Christian view of the world that we cannot avoid. So we must go on to discuss the fall of humanity into sin and its consequences.

II. The Fall of Humanity into Sin (Genesis 3)

An old English nursery rhyme which you probably learned from your mother growing up illustrates the radical brokenness and shattering that came about as a result of the first sin. It is really a short parable about humanity and it goes like this:

SLIDE #14

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the kings' horses and all the kings' men haven't been able to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

HD was an egg, of course, and when he fell, he broke into a 1000 bits and pieces. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, the brokenness and shattering was essentially the same. It was a catastrophe of unlimited proportions. A disaster for which we were responsible struck the newly created earth and as a result, things changed drastically and are no longer the way they are supposed to be. A great disturbance has occurred, and all things are now upside down and abnormal.

Genesis 3: 8-24 tells us that there were at least five severe consequences of our sin. You will notice it effects both humanity and the earth!

SLIDE #15

A. The alienation/separation of man from God (v. 8)

"The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

This is the corruption of our spiritual purpose, and as a result, we are now idolaters.

B. The alienation/separation of man from himself (v. 10)

"I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid (fear) because I was naked (shame); so I hid myself (guilt)."

This is the source of our fallen psychological condition and we are now troubled within and suffer from emotional disorders and mental diseases.

C. The alienation/separation of man from woman (v. 12)

"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

This is the corruption of our social purpose, and as a result, we are now estranged and divided from others.

D. The alienation/separation of man from the earth (vv. 17-19)

"Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; ... By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

This is the corruption of our cultural purpose, and as a result, we now struggle greatly in our day to day work, and will one day die.

E. The separation/alienation of man from the Garden of Eden (vv. 23-24)

"Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, so He drove the man out."

This is the source of our lost paradise and the tragic human condition, and we are now seeking to find happiness and fulfillment any way we can.

Because of our rebellion against God, these five separations/alienations are our lot in life: separations/alienation from God, from self, from others, from the earth and from Eden.

SLIDE #16: St. Augustine added to all this by saying that the two primary results of the original human sin were ignorance and wrong desire.

1. Because of our sin, we are extremely ignorant spiritually, and we have no idea who God is, who we are, where we are, why we are here, what our problem is, or how to fix it.

2. Because of our sin, our desires are out of whack, and we seek happiness by loving the wrong things in the wrong way with wrong results. Our disordered love produces disordered lives and we reap miserable consequences daily.

SLIDE #17: This biblical doctrine of sin and rebellion explains what went wrong and why things are so messed up. So as a basic component in the development of your Christian worldview, you must understand that the *real root cause* of our broken and tragic human condition is not biological (genetic defects) or economic (not enough wealth) or cultural (which corrupts), or social (other people) or educational (not enough knowledge).

Rather the *real root cause* of our trouble is theological: human sin separated us from God brought death into the world and all our woe!

Everything cries out, therefore, for redemption, for salvation, for reconciliation, for renewal, for hope through the coming of the kingdom of God!

III. Redemption (Genesis 3: 15 — Revelation 22: 21)

God did not make junk in the beginning at creation, and though the very good creation has fallen into trouble through sin and death, He will never junk what He has made. Instead He intends to overturn the things that have spoiled His world and thus to redeem it, to restore it, and to get it all back.

Just as a farmer doesn't burn down the barn to get rid of the rats, but rather gets rid of the rats in order to get his barn back, so God's plan as cosmic Redeemer is to get rid of the rats of sin and death in order to get His creation/barn back!

SLIDE #18: The Biblical story from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22 is about this colossal work of redemption, and God's plan to accomplish it is really pretty simple. God promises the redemption of and for the whole world through His

chosen people Israel in the **Old Testament**. In a nutshell that is what the Old Testament is all about, the promise of a coming redeemer and a coming redemption. And He fulfills His promises of a cosmic, worldwide redemption in the **New Testament** through the person and work of His Son our Savior Jesus Christ. By Jesus' incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection, the kingdom or government of God entered the world, defeated sin and death, and imparted the blessings of forgiveness and eternal life to those who believed.

What God has already accomplished in Christ at His first coming will be completed when He returns again at His second coming. Redemption therefore is a two stage process. It has **already** come, but it is also **not yet** complete. So we live in between the times. When Christ does return, the judgments and the resurrection will occur, and He will make all things new. God's presence and kingdom will be fully realized once again for all eternity in the new heavens and the new earth.

SLIDE #19: Colossians 1: 16-20 presents Christ as the creator, preserver, and redeemer of all things. Here we might say He is the cosmic Christ of Colossians.

Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him. Col. 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. Col. 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. Col. 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, Col. 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

As we anticipate the return of the cosmic Christ, and the full manifestation of the new creation, we rejoice in our present status as new creatures in Christ as those who foreshadow that future and who enjoy the restoration of God's original purposes which He designed for us in the beginning! Here is what Christ has done for us now, the present consequences of our redemption already!

SLIDE #20:

1. Spiritually, we are being restored to God, and we are learning to worship and love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength in all aspects of life, in accordance with the spiritual purpose for which God made us originally!

2. Socially, we are being restored to each other, and we are learning what it means to love our neighbors even as we love ourselves, especially in our marriages, families, and friendships, in accordance with the social purpose for which God made us originally.

3. Culturally, we are being restored to our work and vocation, and we are learning what it means to love and serve God and others in the very work of our callings, whatever they may be, in accordance with the cultural purpose for which God made us originally.

4. Psychologically, we are being restored to ourselves, and we are learning what it means to experience substantial healing of our mental diseases and emotional disorders in our hearts and minds and enjoying peace within.

5. Existentially, we are being restored to paradise, and we are learning what it means to find our ultimate fulfillment and happiness in God as we put Him first in our hearts and first every area of our lives. Though our lives and hearts were once restless, they have now found rest in Him. As St. Augustine wrote at the beginning of his *Confessions*, “O Lord, You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”

SLIDE #21: The bottom line is this: what all the kings’ horses and all the kings’ men have never been able to do, God has been and is now doing: He is putting Humpty Dumpty back together again. He is teaching us a new way to be human, and that new way is found only in Himself!

So let me encourage each of you as a central, foundational component in the development of your Christian worldview that you recognize the gospel, Jesus’ redemption as the true and lasting source of your happiness and hope and that you grow deep in your knowledge and faithful in your practice of this redeeming gospel in every sphere of life.

Each of us have a favorite praise chorus or hymn, and one of my favorite hymns was written by a young man named David Clowney when he was only

sixteen years old. Despite being rather young, David had a deep understanding of a biblical worldview based on creation, fall, and redemption, and he based his hymn, titled “God, All Nature Sings Thy Glory,” on these three themes.

Let me read the lyrics to David’s hymn and you think about them carefully and make what he is saying your own as well as your prayer.

“God, All Nature Sings Thy Glory”

God, all nature sings Thy glory, and Thy works proclaim Thy might;
Ordered vastness in the heavens, ordered course of day and night;
Beauty in the changing seasons, beauty in the storming sea;
All the changing moods of nature praise the changeless Trinity.

Clearer still we see Thy hand in man whom Thou hast made for Thee;
Ruler of creation’s glory, image of Thy majesty.
Music, art, the fruitful garden, all the labor of his days;
Are the calling of His Maker, to the harvest feast of praise.

But our sins have spoiled Thine image; nature, conscience only serve,
As unceasing, grim reminders of the wrath which we deserve.
Yet Thy grace and saving mercy in Thy Word of truth revealed.
Claim the praise of all who know Thee, in the blood of Jesus sealed.

God of glory, power, and mercy, all creation praises Thee;
We, Thy creatures, would adore Thee, now and through eternity.
Saved to magnify Thy goodness, grant us strength to do Thy will;
With our acts as with our voices Thy commandments to fulfill.

With this we bring our session to a close. Here is what we have tried to do this morning. First, with the help of Avril Lavigne and Switchfoot, we took a look at your God-given longings and aspirations, and in agreement with Audio Adrenaline, noted that the fulfillment of these aspirations requires a worldview based on God and His word, and rooted and grounded in your hearts!

Second, we examined your cultural context, and with the help of various movie clips, showed how its various worldviews can derail you in your attempts to live a God-centered life. We gave special attention to the destructive effects of secularism which excludes God from the real business of daily life, and argued, once again with Switchfoot, that we need a new way to be human.

This new way to be human, we said, could be found in only in a biblical worldview based on creation, fall and redemption which we studied in this third section of our discussion today. On this basis, hopefully we have learned a little about how this vision of life and reality rooted and grounded in your hearts can transform you into a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, to make you whole and solid and complete as a Christian human being, so that God can use you to engage His world in a transformative and lasting way!

Amen and thank you.

Books to Read on Worldview!

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning and Life* (Eerdmans 2002) Recommended!

Michael E. Wittmer, *Heaven is a Place on Earth: Why Everything You Do Matters to God* (Zondervan 2004) Recommended

Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian Worldview* (IVP 1984)

James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (IVP 2004 revised)

R. C. Sproul, *Lifeviews: Make a Christian Impact on Culture and Society* (Power Books, Revell 1986)

N. Allan Moseley, *Thinking Against the Grain: Developing a Biblical Worldview in a Culture of Myths* (Kregel 2003)

Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Eerdmans 1985) More advanced

David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Eerdmans 2002)
Difficult

Worldview Websites to Check Out!

Wilberforce Forum: <http://www.pfm.org/WilberforceTemplate.cfm>

Mars Hill Audio, <http://marshillaudio.org/>

Trinity Forum, <http://www.ttf.org/>

The Discovery Institute, <http://www.discovery.org/>

BreakPoint, <http://www.pfm.org/BPTemplate.cfm>

L'Abri Fellowship International, <http://www.labri.org/>

Ransom Fellowship, www.ransomfellowship.org

Christian Worldview Network, <http://thebigpicture.homestead.com/>

Summit Ministries, <http://www.summit.org/>

Worldview Academy, <http://www.worldview.org/>

Worldview Weekends, <http://www.worldviewweekend.com/index.shtml>

WorldviewEyes, www.worldvieweyes.org

Christian Worldview Boutique,
<http://members.aol.com/BaxterInstitute/Worldview.html>

David Naugle, www.dbu.edu/naugle