

LIVING PROOF Series (Message 6) Understanding Worldviews of Cultural and Progressive “Christianity”

The Biblical Christian Worldview Mandate

Review Worldview and Secular Humanistic Worldview

Everyone has a worldview whether they know the definition or not. Many definitions for this term have been put forth depending on your source. Following is my best effort to summarize some of what I know from my own experience and read from other sources. After we broadly define worldview, I will subdivide and clarify the differences between *secular* and *biblical Christian worldviews*.

A worldview describes the framework or paradigm – the lens through which we view, process, even judge people, circumstances, and events in our world. Our values and belief systems are formed from our worldview. It is not too strong a statement to say that our worldview affects every area of our lives, including relationships and religion (whether one has any or not).

What is meant by the phrase “secular worldview or secular humanism”?

The bottom line of what makes a worldview a *secular* one is clear. Man (or woman) is at the center of this view. Individuals would never articulate it this way, but they are their own “gods”. Some say they believe in a higher power but cannot define it because it sounds like some form of religion.

Secular humanists measure themselves by themselves or other people in whom they believe or have faith for any number of human reasons.

Moral absolutes do not exist. Morals are relative. Fairness and justice are high on their lists but completely depend on their personal views. Many are big nature believers or naturalists. They often refer to following the science as long as the "science" does not conflict with their views. Constant dilemmas are born from this worldview. That is obvious because each is his or her own *god* or ultimate authority. Most do not believe in an afterlife because where one spends eternity, if there was one requires judging good and evil. Who gets to decide? You do and therein lies the problem. (See Romans 1: 18-23; 2 Timothy 3: 1-5)

Understanding the terms "Cultural Christian" and "Progressive Christian"

The following definitions or descriptions of these popular terms will be argumentative to some who hold to them. Others will not care what I have to say about them as I fall into the category they label as rigid or dogmatic, even elitist, Christianity, meaning those who know much about the Bible, Jesus, and what it means to be "born-again", but are more *talk than walk*. I will return that point of view.

Cultural Christian. This one is the easiest to address. Cultural Christians are not Christians at all. They *identify* (a popular word choice in our culture) as Christian for one or more of several reasons. First, they are not Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, or any other world religion. So in order to not be considered pagan or having no religion, they would check the box including themselves as Christians.

A second reason cultural Christians claim this identifier is that they were raised in a home in which their parents had the same reasons for calling themselves Christian; and they may

have even gone to church on occasion (like Christmas Eve or Easter.)

One final reason is these people identify more with the good man Jesus was and all the good things He did for people; miracles and healing. He also said a lot of good things that make sense in any culture. They often believe getting into Heaven is a function of doing more good than bad during their lifetimes. The human version of the “theory of relativity”.

Progressive Christian. Those who identify as *progressive Christians* can be more difficult to understand in terms of their theology and whether they are born-again as Jesus mandated (John 3). Following are characteristics used to describe some who consider themselves *progressive* as it relates to Christianity. The short list is neither all-inclusive nor exclusive.

Inerrancy of Scripture. It would not be an exaggeration to say that most Christians today do not believe the Bible is inerrant – without errors. People point to “contradictions” and mistakes that someone else pointed them to. The biblical promises of inspiration and inerrancy only apply directly to the original manuscripts, yet it is important to remember biblical manuscripts today are in 99 percent agreement with one another. Yes, there are some minor differences, but the vast majority of the biblical text is identical from one manuscript to another. Most of the differences are in punctuation, word endings, minor grammatical issues, word order, etc.–issues easily explainable as scribal mistakes or changes in spelling rules. No important theological issue is thrown into doubt by any supposed error or contradiction. Just because we cannot find a solution does not mean that a solution doesn’t exist.

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved

by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” 1 Peter 1:20-21

If you are a Christian who denies the inerrancy of the Word of God, be very careful not to find yourself in heresy or usurping the role of the Holy Spirit for your own beliefs. Ask yourself this: If you can pick and choose which verses of Scripture you believe, why can't anyone do this and in so doing, render God's Word a collection of sayings there for the choosing and believing. Just because you do not understand or agree with certain passages does not make you right and God wrong.

Salvation thru Christ alone. This is the most troubling and puzzling. Yet the feeling that there must be other ways to be reconciled to God has become pervasive in some churches and among “famous or celebrity” progressive Christians. Oprah comes to mind. To hold this view makes Jesus Christ not your Savior but a liar; an arrogant one at that. Only one verse need be put forth. These are Jesus' own words. The world hates these words and hates those of us who cling to them as absolute truth.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” **John 14:6**

Social justice. Did you know that the enslavement of one people by another has existed almost since tribes of people have been on this earth. God never intended that, but it was another outcome of the fall of man going back to Genesis 3. We read about it in one form or another throughout biblical history. God's own people went from favored status to enslaved by the Egyptians during the ~400 year time there. Slavery in Europe and the US came about in large part because tribes in Africa had captured/enslaved other tribes and gladly sold them to traders who came there.

Within the Americas, native tribes conquered each other,

repeatedly taking lands and enslaving or slaughtering people as a result because that is how war and tribalism have worked. So when it comes to reparations, who owes who and how far back do you go?

And one final word. God gave Palestine and surrounding areas to the Jews thousands of years ago. He displaced evil wicked disobedient people as part of the process.

Much more has been said and written on these varying worldviews. That is all we have time for today.

For Christ's sake,

Walter