

What to Do When Anti-Christian Worldviews Infiltrate the Classroom

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1. What Is Meant by “Worldview”?

- “For all people walk each in the name of his god. But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.” (Micah 4:5) (“Walk” means “trust and travel” in Gen. 5:24, 6:9, 17:1, 24:40, 48:15, etc.)
- “The term worldview refers to any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement, or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world, and man’s relations to God and the world.” (David Noebel, *Understanding the Times*)
- *Weltanschauung* (Immanuel Kant; G.W.F. Hegel); *Weltansicht* (Wilhelm von Humboldt)

2. How Can a Worldview Be Identified?

- **3 Questions:** What does the messenger say about Creation, Fall, Redemption? (Nancey Pearcey, *Total Truth*) Or, about Human Nature, Human Morality, Human Fulfillment? (Kelly James Clark and Anne Poortenga, *The Story of Ethics*)
- **8 Questions:** What is reality? What is truth? How and why did the universe come into existence? What is human nature? What’s the difference between good and evil? What’s the solution to evil? How will the world end? How does our culture reflect the answers to each of these questions? (David Thompson, *What in the World Is Going On?*)
- **Across the Disciplines:** (See the handout by Ryan MacPherson, “Using and Misusing Science.”)

3. Which Worldviews Have Shaped American Culture, Past and Present?

The Big Divide

- **Objectivism:** Truth exists independently of our opinions concerning it.
- **Skepticism:** Truth does not exist independently of our opinions, because:
 - **Relativism:** ... truth is whatever we all agree that it should be; or,
 - **Subjectivism:** ... truth is personal, and we each are entitled to make up our own truths; or,
 - **Nihilism:** ... there is no such thing as truth and any talk of true/false/etc. is utter nonsense.

Objective Worldviews (Classical, Medieval, and Early Modern Periods of Western Civilization)

- **Natural Law:** Each person has been created by God and has objective moral obligations to God and to others in accord with the distinction between good and evil that has been written into each person’s heart (conscience) and can further be recognized by the proper use of reason. Although we fall short in our moral obligations to both God and our neighbors, nevertheless the family and the state, when operating in accord with natural law, can constrain sin considerably and thereby protect people’s God-given rights to life, liberty, and property.
- **Biblical Christianity:** The Natural Law worldview is correct but incomplete, since it presents only the Law and not the Gospel. The Gospel (“Good News”) message is that God has provided forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens the faith by which we personally receive these blessings and also equips us to love one another and to glorify God.

Skeptical Worldviews (Late Modernism → Materialism; Postmodernism → Pantheism/Existentialism)

- **Materialism:** Only matter exists, no soul or spirit. Physical laws account for everything.
 - **Darwinism:** All species have evolved from a common ancestor through the natural processes of genetic mutations and the survival of the fittest. Religion is merely the product of cultural evolution. Morality also is an evolutionary adaptation, and it should be revised to keep pace with new needs.
 - **Marxism:** Every chapter of history centers around class conflict: master vs. slave, business owner vs. employee, etc. Religion is merely a myth invented by the powerful class to take advantage of the weaker class. Christianity is the “opium of the masses.”
- **Pantheism:** God is in everything, and everything is God. The creator and the creation are one and the same. A cosmic connection links everyone and everything together into a grand harmony.
 - **Environmentalism:** The Earth is our mother. Natural resources deserve our honor and respect, as if they are gods. Endangered species have as much, if not more, moral worth than people, especially when compared to human fetuses or the elderly.
 - **Mysticism:** Through meditation people can achieve harmony and balance with themselves and with nature. Prayer has power because of its positive energy (no matter to whom one prays).
- **Existentialism:** Human nature does not define our existence; rather, our choices have the power to recreate human nature, transforming us into whatever we wish to become.

- **Existentialism (continued):**
 - **Individualism:** “It’s my life.” “Be true to yourself.” “My body, my choice.”
 - **Transgenderism:** A person who identifies as a _____ thereby is a _____; society owes it to that person to honor and respect that self-identification as if it is the person’s authentic nature.
- Or, for the “Whatever” Generation of Post-Christian America, **Moral Therapeutic Deism:** God exists and He wants us to be nice to each other. Life is about finding happiness and feeling good about myself. For most things, I don’t really need God involved. Most people are good enough to go to heaven when they die.

4. How Do Anti-Christian Worldviews Enter the Classroom?

- Education has an **irreducibly religious purpose**—so of course worldviews enter the classroom!
 - “Education” (*Latin*: lead or guide), “pedagogy” (*Greek*: train or nurture), and “curriculum” (*Latin*: runner’s pathway) involve character development as well as knowledge and skills.
 - “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” (*Northwest Land Ordinance, 1787*)
- The dominant worldview of **the American schoolhouse** has changed:
 - Protestantism (colonial period through the 1800s)
 - Protestantism/Catholicism/Judaism (early to mid 1900s)
 - Materialism/Pantheism/Existentialism (mid 1900s to present)
- Along the way, the **gatekeepers** have changed the **passwords**:
 - **Discernment** (objectivity) is kicked out, **Diversity** (skepticism) is welcomed in.
 - **Truth** (objectivity) is kicked out, **Tolerance** (skepticism) is welcomed in.
 - **Western Civilization** (cultivating objectivity) goes out, **Global Awareness** (skepticism) comes in.
 - **Christianity** (objectivity) is at best one “**Faith Tradition**” (skepticism) among many.
- Educators have **boldly erected high places** to false gods (cf. 1 Kings 12:31).
 - Evolutionary timescale and processes in history and biology.
 - Sexual perversion in social studies and literature.
- Educators have stolen **Christian goods** and turned them into **postmodern gods** (cf. 2 Chronicles 24:7).
 - **Diversity:** The panethnic blessing (Genesis 12:3), the inclusive Passover (Numbers 9:14), the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19), and the Beatific Vision (Revelation 7:9) vs. celebrating every perversion.
 - **Love:** A commitment to promote what is best for one’s neighbor vs. celebrating your neighbor’s choices.
- Educators have propagated curricula characterized by **factual errors** and **blatant omissions**.
 - Portraying Christians as cruel and Muslims as peaceful throughout the 1400-year history of *jihad*.
 - Removing major people, concepts, and headings (“Western Civilization,” “Reformation”) from curricula.
- Educators have employed **deceptive rhetoric** and **fallacious reasoning**.
 - Listing Christians, Jews, and Muslims as “People of the Book” or members of the “Abrahamic faith.”
 - Portraying biblically coherent viewpoints as deficient by “critical thinking” standards.
- Educators have **welcomed evil** and **forbidden good**.
 - Professional scholarly associations endorse sexual perversion and forbid “discrimination” against it.
 - Judges rule that no parent has the right to advanced notice or informed consent regarding curricula.
 - Graduate schools withhold admission from applicants with a Christian worldview.
- See also the checklists for comparing curricula in Allen Quist, *America’s Schools: Battleground for Freedom*.

5. What Can Objective Thinkers (Christians and Natural Lawyers) Do about All This?

- Be equally vigilant in **public schools, parochial schools, and homeschools**.
- Use natural law to **expose the fallacious reasoning** that props up false worldviews.
- Assert your **natural rights** in the schoolhouse and the courthouse, in the press and at the ballot box.
- **Prepare your children and your children’s children** to recognize idolatry and respond appropriately (Daniel 3:16–18, 6:6–10).
 - Identify the root problem: **guilt over sin**, motivating a denial of God or at least of His Law.
 - Point people toward the one thing that can ultimately make a difference: **forgiveness in Christ**.
 - “Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad,” when **persecuted for Christ’s sake** (Matthew 5:10–12).
- **Meditate daily upon God’s Word**, keeping the Bible, the Hymnal, and the Catechism at the foundation of the entire educational process—both “school” and “lifelong learning.”
 - You will never be able to preview all of the curriculum and find all of the pitfalls. (Do only what you can.)
 - You will never be able to master Christian apologetics and win every debate. (Do only what you can.)
 - But, God has called you to **“walk”** (trust and travel) in His ways; His Word reveals the path (Psalm 119).
 - Most especially, God has called you to **pass down His Word to your children and your children’s children** (Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalm 78:4–7; Ephesians 6:4).
 - Also, God has called you both to **be mentored** and to **be a mentor** within the church (Titus 2:1–8).

