

May 2011



**Lighted  Lamp
Magazine**

From the Editor

Hi everyone,

Summer is nearly here at last, and what a relief it is to not have to worry about homework and other school responsibilities for a few months. For me, it is also a time when I can spend more time growing closer to God without as many distractions.

As Rebekah wrote in her article this month, it is important to constantly become more like Jesus, and get to know Him and to love Him better every day. Isn't it wonderful that God is always with us and we never have to be separated from Him? We cannot always be near the people that we love the most but we can always be near to God, thanks to Jesus's sacrifice for our sins. Hallelujah!

Have a blessed summer.

Priscilla

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Photography by Rebekah M.

“We can have no power from Christ
unless we live in a persuasion that
we have none of our own.”

—John Owen

Photography by Riley S.



Mission:

To encourage and strengthen
Christian teens to love and
follow God with their whole
hearts, souls, and minds; and
to glorify God.

Editor:

Priscilla Carsten

Writers:

Daniel Brady
Rebekah M.
Victoria L. A.

Photographers:

Mari Carsten
Rebekah M.
Riley S.

Cover:

“A path in the Vosges Moun-
tains” by Scetty

Graphic Design:

Ashley Jones
Elizabeth J.C.



What is Worldview?



by Daniel Brady

Worldview is an elusive concept. It is certainly a favorite topic among philosophers, but despite this (or because of this) it defies any concise definitions. As a preliminary explanation, worldview is the way that someone thinks about the universe around them. Worldview is usually explained in such broad terms that every possible part of a person's belief system is a part of it. However, this is too vague to be workable. If every facet of human thought were what was meant by worldview, then virtually all intellectual inquiry would become a study in worldview. Of course, this is not too far off the mark, since academics of all stripes are practically in the business of combating false worldview assumptions. However, worldview in this sense becomes so large as to be unusable as an individual concept in itself. For example, if a worldview is the sum total of unique assumptions and doctrines that affect the way a person views the world, then in a room of twenty people, there are twenty different worldviews, even if all are from the same culture and religion. It is inevitable that people of different experiences and backgrounds will have their perceptions of the world colored differently, and this would account for the diversity. This misses the fact that in this room of twenty people, all of them are likely to be operating on a very similar playing field, and that common ground would be a part of the worldview that they share. To make

worldview too narrow, however, would be to miss several of its key features. Worldview understood simply as the outwardly accepted norms of a society does not address the underlying presuppositions that make worldview study so unique. A worldview is more than the things someone thinks, it is how they think them. It is often the case that a worldview is not carefully reflected upon by its adherents, and thus does not take a well-defined form. In identifying a worldview, then, it is dangerous to impose an assumption that is too precise. Popular worldviews at their core are usually quite hazy, and are almost never idealized systems with well-balanced doctrines.

Recent trends in intellectual climate have led to an emphasis on the importance of cultural group or society in forming a worldview. However, at the basic level, a worldview is primarily something that belongs to individuals, because it is in answer to questions of human nature rather than 'society nature' that worldview takes shape. The need for some kind of worldview is obvious because as humans, we have to have some kind of system that we use to deal with our everyday experience. The things that happen to us do not have associated with them clear cut answers for why they are happening. Our minds do not have the answers already there so that no questions ever need to be asked. Most questions concerning knowledge

are left tentatively up in the air for us to investigate, but the fascinating thing is that before any careful consideration of this kind takes place, normal human life does go on. We learn language long before we consider how it works. We might assume that there are spiritual beings in the universe without ever reflecting on why we think so and how it fits into our philosophical perspectives. Where worldview formation comes into play is in basic categorizations that are an attempt to make sense of the ‘whole picture.’ Categorization and organization are the most basic tendencies in all intellectual inquiry at any level, and how things are organized is what drives a worldview.

Perhaps the most significant part of a worldview is the idea of meta-narrative. It is on this particular topic that I will focus. Meta-narrative is an overarching story or myth through which reality is understood. Myth is not used here as synonymous with a fabricated fairy-tale or an unscientific account, but rather as specially regarded events or stories that give significance to history and everyday life. Myths are in the popular mind understood to be purely nonfactual, but that is not entirely the point thus far. Their significance is in that they use a story in such a way that the story gives meaning to reality. Since meta-narratives try to answer the essential questions about the meaning of life, myths are usually a common factor in how a meta-narrative is conceived. Thus, meta-narrative is the big picture or plot line about reality, myth is how that plot line is expressed. It is important to note that the use of mythical stories is not restricted to primitive tribes: the three great monotheistic religions of the world rely heavily on events that are intended to be understood as grounded in history. These are not myths in the typical mythological/nonfactual sense, they

are instead events in history which have universal significance precisely because they are historical. It is also possible for something like the theory of evolution become the ‘mythical story’ by which a group understands itself. This is not a stab at evolutionary theory, but the fact is that even a scientific theory can serve as the groundwork for understanding human existence in a way that transcends (though not necessarily contradicts) its scientific boundaries. In this case, the plot line of the Darwinian meta-narrative follows the random growth of life, which starts from the most humble of origins towards the most magnificent ends, at which point the tragedy and irony of the universe suddenly takes hold and the human race is obliterated into unending nothingness. This is no less a meta-narrative than the Hindu vision of endless reincarnation.

The meta-narrative of Christianity is perhaps the most essential part of its framework. Of course God is its primary focus, but the distinctive of Christianity is that it focuses on God as revealed by Jesus Christ himself. Jesus Christ is the person whom all Christians put their faith in, and yet Jesus Christ is a person of history. This puzzling dichotomy between the earthly man, who lived and breathed and ate, and the divine person, who is the object of faith and who gives significance to all of history, has caused serious problems throughout Christian history. The problem has recently been augmented by the radically divergent conclusions of the so-called “Quest for the Historical Jesus,” coined by Albert Schweitzer over a hundred years ago. In the final analysis, however, Jesus’s historical reality is critically related to the Christian faith. The things that he did have overarching significance for all people in all places. He understood himself to be the fulfillment of the entire history

of Israel. God was working through the history of Israel which culminated in Jesus's life, death, and resurrection in order to redeem his creation from the fall which brought sin into the world. These are not bare historical events, these are myths in the specialized sense because they reveal God's character and his purpose for the entire creation. Jesus's resurrection thus can be understood as mythical because it means that all those who believe in him will rise again to eternal life, and is thus an integral part of the Christian meta-narrative while maintaining its historicity. Jesus was more than simply the revelation of God in an isolated sense; the events of Israel's history pointed toward him because God was also at work in Israel, and this means that Christianity relies on meta-narrative to understand God because Jesus himself is the central part of God's own redemptive plan.

Now, the primary question concerning any worldview is whether it is accurate; whether reality is the way we think that it is. The quest to investigate this is a difficult one, and there are no easy shortcuts. The domain of philosophy is devoted primarily to this question of truth, and its answers are not easy nor is there a consensus. There is, though, a body of literature from thousands of years of great Christian minds that can help to lay the groundwork of why Christianity is convincing and worthy of allegiance. Apologetics has seen an explosion of interest in recent years, and a thoroughly reasonable defense can be made for practically all Christian truth claims. Following this is an interest in Christian worldview as a competitor against secular philosophies in the public arena, which includes how Christians as disciples of Jesus ought to think about the world around them. The philosophical rigor of this aside for the moment, the most crucial part of a Christian world-

view is how it views God's redemptive plan for his creation. This more than anything else sets the disciple of Jesus apart from a secularist or a pantheist. Rather than formulating a doctrine of God and seeing how Jesus and the Bible can fit into it, the Christian should instead be looking at the entire history of God's relationship with humanity and its climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible for an understanding of who God is and who we are. God is primary in all of these things, but the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ is what counts for a true worldview.

With all of this in mind, the way a Christian thinks is going to be far different from the way someone without any kind of faith in Jesus Christ thinks. The Christian understands himself as one who is in Christ, saved from sin and death and granted by great mercy a new life that will not perish. All of this takes its meaning in the context of the meta-narrative of God's plan for creation and for us specifically as humans. Ultimately, God has created man for communion with him into eternity. This is the grand vision of Christianity: that fallen man will be made into the likeness of God's Son, Jesus, so that we may know God and be known by God forever. Indeed, it was the plan from the beginning, because both male and female were made in the image of God. The significance of this is that eternal life is a present possession. Those who are in Christ are already on their way towards finally being glorified. The story is in its last chapters before the end, and there is nothing to fear about the uncertainty of the future. Everything about life comes under the scope of God's plan, and it was in this light that Jesus explained what his real food was: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34 ESV).¹⁰

A GIFT OF LOVE

by Victoria L. A.

There is a God who reigns above,
He watches over you
And even though He is my God,
He can be your God, too.

He made all that is in the earth,
The birds that fly above.
And died on Calvary's rugged cross,
To give you all His love.

Just bow your knees and pray to Him,
He'll save your soul from hell,
He can abide within your heart.
So you the world may tell.

Tell all your friends about His love,
His care for you and me.
Then they can have His gift of love,
Through Him who set us free.

Although we cannot see His face,
Or hear His voice divine,
I feel His love and know He's there,
Within this heart of mine.

God cares about each one of us,
And died to set us free.
No matter what may happen now,
We'll rise with Him to be.

Remember now His wondrous love,
And His free gift of grace.
Then we can rise to be with Him
And see His blessed face.

We'll dwell for all eternity,
With God and Son in Heaven.
And ne'er forget His gift of love,
He has to all men given.

Photography by Mari Carsten

Quiz: Who Are These Bible Characters?

1. Zerubbabel

- a. Governor of Judah who led the people in rebuilding the city wall
- b. King of Tyre who provided cedar, cypress, and gold for Solomon's temple
- c. King of Persia whom Esther married
- d. King of Gath before whom David pretended madness

2. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite

- a. Tried to stop Nehemiah from building the wall around Jerusalem
- b. The Hebrew names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- c. David's three mighty men
- d. Job's three friends

3. Jael

- a. The woman who met Peter at the gate after he was miraculously released from prison
- b. A prophetess inquired of after the book of the law was found during the reign of King Josiah
- c. An Isrealite woman who killed an enemy king by pounding a tent peg into his head
- d. One of David's daughters

4. Matthias

- a. Chosen by lot to take the place of Judas Iscariot as one of the 12 apostles
- b. Paul urges Philemon to receive this man
- c. Refused to feed David's men after they had protected his sheep
- d. Became a leper because he burned incense in the temple and was not a priest

5. Barzillai the Gileadite

- a. A sorcerer and false prophet met by Barnabas and Saul in Paphos
- b. A judge of Isreal for 22 years
- c. Provided supplies to David when David fled from Absalom
- d. Ahab died in battle while fighting this enemy king

6. Abiathar

- a. Hid a hundred of God's prophets in caves during the days of Elijah
- b. One of Jacob's sons
- c. Warned of God's coming judgement during the time of Uzziah and Jeroboam
- d. Escaped and told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests

7. Mahlon

- a. Ruth's late first husband and Naomi's son
- b. A Moabite king who rebelled against Isreal after Ahab's death
- c. A Persian king who lived during the time of Isreal's captivity
- d. The high priest's servant whose ear Peter cut off

8. Gershom and Eliezer

- a. Sons of Moses
- b. Brothers of David
- c. Sons of Eli who didn't follow God's directions for priests
- d. Two of the men sent by Moses to spy out the promised land

9. Gamaliel

- a. Appointed by Nebuchadnezzar as ruler over the Isrealites who were not taken to Babylon at the time of the captivity
- b. Elijah's servant
- c. A Pharisee who said that if Jesus was not of God, Christianity would soon disappear
- d. Elisha's servant

10. Eutychus

- a. Paul and Silas stayed in his house at Thessalonica
- b. A blind man healed by Jesus
- c. A messenger from the Phillipians to Paul in prison
- d. Fell out of a window while Paul was preaching

Rebekah M.'s

Insights through Hebrew



THE FINAL SOLUTION

Last month, I wrote about the importance of maturity and discipleship. Today I will continue on that theme.

The final goal of God's working in our lives is for us to be transformed into the image of the resurrected Jesus Christ. The final goal for every believer is to be as Jesus was to His Father.

2 Peter 1:17(KJV)- For he (the Lord Jesus Christ) received from God the Father honour

and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

As children of God, we have partaken of Jesus Christ's blood and received forgiveness of sins and new life. We have been included into His covenant, received into His Kingdom, and been adopted into His family. We have been transformed by Jesus, we have believed, baptized and been saved. But the journey does not end

there!

Having been spiritually born again, we must grow spiritually from a baby to a little child, from a little child to a young man, from a young man to a father. (For more information about this, read the book of 1 John.) This concept is also likened to seeds that are sprouted. A little mustard seed must grow into a seedling, then into a thriving young plant, and then into a big tree, which produces more seeds. A grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, but then it bears much fruit.

The final goal of our growth in Christ is explained by Paul in Ephesians 4:12-16. He explains why Jesus empowered His body and gave spiritual gifts:

- 1) Perfection of the saints
- 2) Work of the Ministry
- 3) Edifying of the Body
- 4) Unity of the Faith
- 5) Knowledge of the Son of God
- 6) Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ

We are no longer supposed to be children, but speaking the truth in love, are to grow up into Christ. And the whole body of Christ increases and grows in love. Increasing of the body of Christ would mean “adding to our numbers daily”, and bringing the salvation of Jesus to the lost world.

Peter also equates the bearing of spiritual fruit with maturity. Maturity and fruitfulness go hand in hand. A spiritual baby, like a physical baby, grows from being a taker to a giver. A spiritual father is as much, or more, a giver than a taker. A large tree grows from tender care to establishing deep roots by which it discovers its own

water and mineral supply and produces fruit. A young seedling is easily hurt and much is protected and carefully nourished. 2 Peter 1 contains an exhortation by Peter, that we believers must give all diligence and add to our faith even more virtues and characters, the pinnacle of which is love. And having all these things, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful, and your entrance into the Kingdom is made abundant. Maturity does not end in godliness, but in love. Christ’s love was demonstrated to us on the cross. We as disciples are called to take up our cross and follow Him.

Peter also exhorted,

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10 KJV)

Being called out of darkness, we have to proclaim the praises of God to those who are still in darkness. Having obtained mercy, we must now show mercy! I exhort you to study and memorize these passages as they are very important.

How does this apply to me? Having believed and been baptized into the Kingdom of God, my journey now is twofold:

- 1) To grow into the image of Christ, and become His student (disciple)
- 2) To become fruitful and share the joy of salvation with others in this lost world

The great commission, written in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, and Acts 1:4-8 tells more about how we are able to share that joy

of salvation with others. It starts by telling us that all power is given to Jesus. We also know that He empowered us through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In the great commission, He commissioned His 11 disciples to go to all nations to teach the commands of Christ and to baptize those who believed. However, the great commission was not just for the apostles. Today, we are spiritual descendants of these 11 apostles if we believe, are baptized (in water and in the Holy Spirit, receiving all power). Our next responsibility is to be a disciple by learning and obeying the commands of Christ, one of which is the command to make disciples.

We who love and follow Jesus are all disciples of Christ. The same Jesus that was with the apostles is with us to the end of the world and His commands have been handed down to us through the apostles. The gospel is to be preached in all the ends of the earth, and then the end shall come. (See Habakkuk 2:14 and Matthew 24:14.) We are to be His witness in Jerusalem (our backyard), in Judea (our state), in Samaria (in neighboring states), and in all the earth.

Insight through Hebrew:

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for Universe, “olam” also means “Age”. Jesus is King of the Universe (olam) and He is with us to the end of the age (olam), forever and ever (olam). When the ends of the earth is reached with the gospel, this present evil age (olam hazeh) will end and the age to come (olam haba) begun. Remember that the age of Christ’s Kingdom can be lived now in us and spread through us.

For the past few years, I have been learning more about being a disciple. I have been learning so much of the commands of Christ and received so much of His blessing that I feel this is the time for me to grow further in love so I can share the abundant riches of Christ. I have been praying that God will give me the opportunity to share the gospel and bring the kingdom of God to my neighborhood. I pray that you too will be empowered to proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness and into God’s marvelous light.

Christ is the final solution for this world. Christ is the final goal of our journey of discipleship. The disciple may become like his master. I exhort you as Paul did to the church of Colosse,

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. (Colossians 4:2-6 KJV.)

Amen. 🕯️

Prayer Page



Government leaders have a lot of responsibility to try to make good decisions for the people they represent. We need to remember to pray that they will have wisdom to make good decisions that will honor God and be best for the people. We should pray for those in our government who are Christians as well as those who are not, knowing that God has the power to change people's hearts, as all Christians know from personal experience.

In 1 Timothy 2:1-4(NKJV) Paul writes, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our

Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Since government leaders make a lot of decisions on difficult issues, and because the decisions they make affect many people, it is especially important that we do not forget to include them in our prayers. ☩

THE WISDOM OF GOD

FOREIGNERS SERIES

by Priscilla Carsten

“The world evolved over millions of years. Gradually the bad traits disappeared and better ones became dominant through natural selection.” This is what the voice of evolution and atheism tells us. Technology and science have enabled man to do great things. Scientists know a lot about the world we live in. But do they know as much as the Creator? Pretend you are in elementary school. Another kid comes up to you and says, “Computers were made by putting a stack of books inside the computer and putting a light on so you can see them from the screen.” Do you believe him or do you believe your father, who builds computers?

God knows everything. Psalm 139 says that He knows everything about us. Matthew 10:30 says He knows how many hairs are on our heads. We don’t even know that about ourselves. In Job 38 through 41, God asks Job whether he has commanded the morning or can move the constellations, among similar questions. In chapter 42 verse 2(NKJV), Job answers, “I know that you can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.”

Wisdom does not come from man, but from God. And it makes sense that the One who controls the world can distribute wisdom however He wishes. He gave wisdom to Joseph to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, and to Daniel to interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s. He gave Solomon wisdom when he asked for it, and said in James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach,

and it will be given to him.”

God also has the power to take away wisdom. 2 Samuel 15:31 says, “Then someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!” Ecclesiastes 2:26 says, “For [God] gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.”

Wisdom and foolishness have an interesting position for us as foreigners. I Corinthians 1:27 says, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;” This is backwards from the way the world operates. Usually the wise prosper but the foolish don’t get very far because they get taken advantage of. Why would God choose the foolish?

I Corinthians 3:18-20- Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their [own] craftiness”; and again, “The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

The problem with the wise in the world is their attitude toward God. Isaiah 47:10 says ““For

you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, 'No one sees me'; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me.'" That is the reason God has chosen the foolish; the wise have rejected Him. They realize that they know a lot and think that they don't need God. They think they know how the world began, and it doesn't involve God. They think they know how to find the answers to mankind's problems, like famine and sickness and poverty, and they don't need God. They think religion is for the weak. They don't need help; they know how to survive.

I Corinthians 1:21- For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

To non-Christians, it doesn't make sense that God's Son would be born in a manger. It doesn't make sense that He would choose his followers from among the common people, often the ones who broke the laws God had set up in the Old Testament. Most of all, it doesn't make sense that He would die for us, and rise again. Why would God die for us? It doesn't make sense according to the world's motivations.

In the end, the wisdom of the wise is not real wisdom, because they have rejected the source of all real wisdom.

Isaiah 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden."

The only real wisdom is in God. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." If we want to be wise according to the standards of the heavenly country, we must believe in the Holy One. He is the only one who has wisdom, and studying His word and asking Him for wisdom are the only ways we can get it.

It is encouraging that we don't have to know everything to come to God. We don't have to be super-scientists, we just have to believe in God and seek Him. Don't follow the wisdom of the world; follow the Creator and Giver of wisdom.

Isaiah 35:8- A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray. ☩

