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A Review of *Finding Truth* by Nancy R Pearcey

By Dan W Reynolds, PhD

Finding Truth by Nancy Pearcey is an insightful and critical book for our times. Pearcey shows how to apply five principles derived from the first chapter of Romans to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of non-Christian worldviews.¹ She shows the logical fallacies, inconsistencies, and inadequacies in post-modernism, scientism, evolutionism, naturalism, several religions, and many other “isms.” She shows how alternate worldviews must “borrow” ideas from Christianity in order to make their cases. Alternate worldviews usually fail to explain critical parts of the real world and are often self-contradictory and self-refuting. Pearcey shows how Christianity *does* provide a basis for understanding all aspects of the real world without contradictions. Christianity provides a trustworthy epistemology to discover truth. Christianity uniquely maintains a high view of humanity, reason, and creation, thereby providing an

adequate basis for all aspects of human life. *Finding Truth* is essential reading for all high school and college-aged Christians who are being bombarded by secularism daily.

Nancy Pearcey was raised in a Christian home but became agnostic in her teens.² She had many questions about reality and Christianity which her church

leaders did not answer. Finally, she spent time with Francis Schaeffer in Switzerland at L’Abri Fellowship in the 1970s where she found the answers she was seeking and gave her life to Christ. She was coauthor with Chuck Colson of the book *How Now Shall We Live?* In addition to her books, Pearcey has written many articles and books chapters and has appeared on national television and radio programs. Pearcey has great intellectual depth and the ability to communicate truth clearly and concisely.



Nancy Pearcey

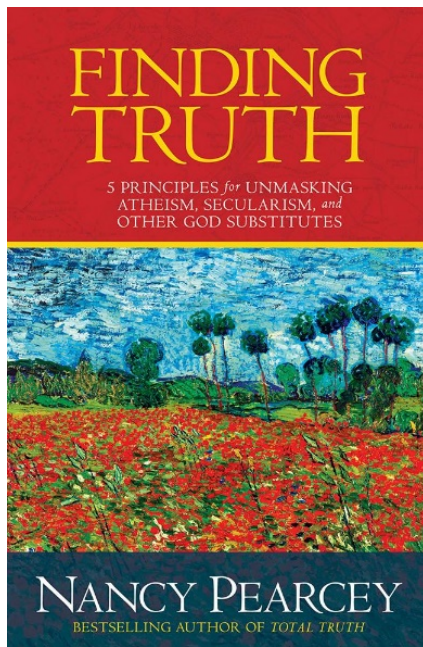
This review will discuss highlights of the book, chapter by chapter. All quotations are from *Finding Truth* and are by Nancy Pearcey unless indicated otherwise.

Foreword

The Foreword was written by Pearcey’s husband, Richard. Christianity, far from being the popular caricature of a fact-free belief system rooted in fantasy and wish fulfillment, is a faith *based on evidence*. The Bible calls us to *test* everything (1 Thes. 5:21). Christ gave direct empirical evidence to back his claims for who he was and his resurrection (Mark 2:10–11; Matt. 11:2–5; John 20:24–28; 1 Cor. 15:17). Moderns think faith is private and not based

Cook, Colorado Springs, 383 pages with a study guide and index.

² Nancy Pearcey website: <http://www.nancypearcey.com/>



¹ Pearcey N (2015) *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes*, David C

on evidence—the opposite of the biblical position. Christianity teaches faith (trust) based on evidence.

Christianity outperforms competing worldviews. This book equips the reader with the tools to unmask and test modern worldview (idols) in the public square. We should test different worldviews and adopt the best one. Secularists deny or hold low views of the realities of mind, free will, and morality. Yet they assert their beliefs as though *their thinking* is correct and universally applicable, *choose* the aspects of reality they wish to emphasize, and *judge* others who disagree with them. Secularists hold reduced views of humanity that lead to less humane living.

Part One: I Lost My Faith at an Evangelical College

Some Christian colleges don't teach the intellectual foundations of the faith. The field of apologetics has met this need however. We need to be prepared to help people "study their way back to God." The Bible provides five principles for evaluating any worldview in Romans 1.

The apostle Paul says:

People have access to evidence for God's existence through the created order (general revelation: Pslm. 19:1–2, Rom. 1:19–20). Scripture is special revelation.

Powerful evidences in the physical universe for a creator are the beginning/origin of the universe, the fine tuning of physics, and the origin of life.³ There are coded messages (software) in DNA and proteins (hardware). Intelligence is the only known source of coded information in all of human experience, including empirical science. Pearcey says an intelligible universe must have been the product of an intelligence.

Human nature is included in the created order and is part of general revelation. This book focuses on human nature to make its case. Humans are *personal* beings—conscious agents able to feel, think, decide, and act in contrast to being under the control of blind automatic forces; we are not mere complex chemical machines. The personal side of human nature can only be explained if we were created by another personal agent. Since we are personal, we must have been made by someone, not something. Many idols (alternate worldviews) reduce humans to *something* and so can't explain our nature or existence (Pslm. 115:5–6). A cause must be capable of producing the observed effect.

Most children believe in some form of God to explain the world; it requires an "education" to be persuaded otherwise. We must become like children to accept the truth about God and Jesus (Matt. 18:3). As adults, we suppress

the truth found in general revelation (Rom. 1:21, 25) to avoid moral accountability to God because we become aware of sin.

We avoid God by creating idols (Rom. 1:23)—God substitutes. We must all decide what we accept as the ultimate reality. "An idol is anything we want more than God, anything we rely on more than God, anything we look to for greater fulfillment than God. Idolatry is thus the hidden sin driving all other sins." Idols are by nature too limited to provide the "ultimate meaning and purpose of our lives." God gives us up to our idols in order to help us realize the consequences of our choices (Rom. 1:21,28). One of the consequences of idolatry is futile thinking, or according to Pearcey, a faulty worldview—a worldview that gives false promises and "misleading answers to the questions of life."

Pearcey conceptualizes worldviews as a box. What fits inside the box is defined by what is considered real and important. Whatever does not fit into the box is viewed as false and illusory. Idolatrous worldviews are built upon some portion of the created order to the exclusion of the rest. For example, materialism only acknowledges the reality of the physical universe, thereby excluding God, free will, and the personal.

Pearcey advances five strategic principles for assessing worldviews and revealing the superiority of Christianity.

1. Identify the Idol—anything in the created order that replaces God, including philosophies and worldviews. The New Atheists and materialists have Nature for an idol. Rationalists worship human reason as the ultimate source of truth.
2. Identify the Reductionism: "Idolatry leads to a debased worldview which opens the door to oppression, injustice, and all the other evils listed at the end of the chapter [Rom. 1]." Idols lead to a lower valuation (a reduced view) of human life. A reductionism is a "strategy for suppressing the truth" (Rom. 1:18). Examples of reductionisms are religion is a psychological crutch, people's thoughts are only brain chemistry, or all living things can be explained by chemistry and physics alone. For a materialist, nature is the ultimate reality; everything must be explained by chemistry and physics alone. So, things like minds, souls, free will, morality, consciousness, and God are illusions. Christianity does not employ a reductionism. Humans are created in God's image, so retain a high value. A personal God is capable of creating the physical realm as well as the personal. We are personal

³ For a discussion of these topics, see <https://tasc-creation-science.org/article/scientific-evidence-points-creator>

beings because we were created by and in the likeness of a personal God.

3. Test the Idol: Check for consistency of the idolatrous worldview against general revelation. Once an idol and its reductionism are revealed, one can ask if the idol is true—does it fit what we know about the world? Any worldview that deifies part of creation will be inadequate to explain the whole. Materialism must deny free will, yet everyone experiences making choices freely every day. Our experience of free will is part of general revelation. Since free will can't be accounted for by materialism, materialism fails as an ultimate explanation of reality and hence can't be ultimate truth. So, materialists can't abide by their own philosophy and must remain in a constant state of cognitive dissonance. Materialists must write off free will as an illusion. All idols will contradict reality at some point because they only have a piece of the truth which can't account for the whole.

4. Check for Internal Consistency: Does a worldview contradict itself? All idol-centered worldviews contradict themselves and hence commit epistemological suicide. This happens because their worldview logically results in a low view of the human mind. For example, materialists claim their philosophy is based purely on reason and observation and must therefore be true. But what basis is there for them to believe what their observations and reason are telling them? Materialists are necessarily evolutionists who believe the human brain evolved by a process that shaped it to maximize the likelihood of survival and reproduction. Would the thoughts of such a brain be reliable for perceiving reality? Perhaps on a physical level, but on philosophical issues? A mistaken idea might be adaptive yet false. What if the human brain evolved to believe in nonexistent deities because such a belief led to increased longevity and opportunities for mating? Materialists must believe something like this since most people believe in some form of the supernatural (most people are not atheists). So, if our minds have evolved for survival and not recognition of reality, why should anyone trust its reasoning or conclusions? Hence materialism has no basis for a correct epistemology and therefore undercuts any reason to believe its truth claims; materialism refutes itself and commits suicide. Pearcey says that all idolatrous worldviews suffer from "self-referential absurdity." Because of their reductionisms, they have a low view of reason (low view of humanity and the human mind), yet reason is what they must use to argue for their worldview. Hence the assumptions of their worldviews disallow confidence in reason and thereby undercut their arguments; these worldviews lack internal consistency. Pearcey says that these other worldviews must borrow (she calls the adherents "freeloaders") a high view of the human mind from Christianity in order to make their claims and in so doing contradict themselves and expose the inadequacy of their philosophies.

5. Compare to the Christian View (replace the idol): And this brings us to the fifth principle: showing how Christianity is superior to other worldviews. Christianity is focused on the true God, has no reductionism, hence retains a high view of humanity and reason, is consistent with what we know about the world from experience (including science and the personal realm), is internally consistent since the scriptures don't contradict themselves and there is a basis for a trustworthy epistemology; a rational self-subsistent creator created rational beings (in his image) in an intelligible universe. Hence, we can be certain that the truth about God, the world, and ourselves is knowable.

Pearcey emphasizes that Christians must be aware of elements of worldviews they may have unconsciously absorbed during their education or from society. Applying the five principles can help expose these elements. We must be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2).

Pearcey spends the rest of her book fleshing out the five principles.

Part 2: Twilight of the Gods

Principle #1: Identify the Idol

What does a particular worldview set up as a God substitute or idol? "The history of philosophy is largely a history of setting up God surrogates." Idols are what we cherish most in our inner being other than God. "If you do not start with God, you must start somewhere else. You must propose something else as the ultimate, eternal, uncreated reality that is the cause and source of everything else." That something will be what is considered divine and is the idol set up by that worldview. All worldviews start with unprovable reality, value, and possibility assumptions. While these assumptions can't be proven, their implications can be tested against what we do know about the world. The worldview that is consistent with human experience (science and the personal) and is internally consistent is what we hope to find and adopt.

Pearcey spends a little time discussing ancient philosophies such as polytheism and pantheism. She also mentions Buddhism and related religions. But the majority of her attention is aimed at secular and modern philosophies.

One modern philosophy is scientific materialism. This worldview puts physics as the ultimate cause that can explain everything else. Scientific materialism uses physics as a God substitute, an idol. Many that hold this view admit that it is a type of faith since detailed explanations for the origin of the universe and the origin of life are not currently available. Scientific materialism leads to Marxism, the belief that the means of production (goods and services required for survival) shape societies. Hence for

Marxism, everything in the human sphere reduces to economics and who controls the means of production.

The idol of empiricism holds that only things that can be experienced by our five senses are real. Francis Bacon was the founder of this philosophy. Today, to assert the existence of nonempirical things is considered irrational. People who believe in nonempirical entities have faith, not the facts. Yet to say that all that exists is only what can be observed is an unproveable assumption. Logically, there may be things that exist that our senses cannot detect. Those things can't be ruled out with certainty, especially if there is good evidence suggesting their existence. But radical empiricism holds that only our sensations are knowable; we can't be sure if the external world we attribute to them is real. We are trapped inside our own imaginations with no way to confidently bridge to the external world (if it exists). Hence the empiricist philosophy has no way to establish what is real beyond sensory experience, and for this reason it commits epistemological suicide. How could you ever empirically test scientific theories about a physical world that you are not sure exists? Indeed, empiricism can't affirm itself for the same reason: one can know he has an experience but has no way to know what the experience means; what is actually being observed is unknowable.

The idol of rationalism holds that the way to reliable truth is by reason. But just as with empiricism, there is no independent test to see if the ideas of the mind are true, so the rationalist is stuck in his own mind. Rene Descartes is credited with this philosophy.

Empiricism and rationalism were born in the turmoil of the Reformation and Renaissance. People were looking for a reliable epistemology. The conflicting philosophical and religious claims of the day left many wanting to start over—to rebuild knowledge from the ground up upon a firm foundation. Empiricism and rationalism were the result. Although Bacon and Descartes were Christians, their philosophies had the human mind instead of God as the most reliable source of truth. Modernism is based upon these philosophies. Pearcey points out that, ironically, these philosophies, far from providing a solid epistemology, can make no claims about the truth beyond the inner experience of the human mind.

Immanuel Kant embraced empiricism and rationalism and took them a step further. He believed that the source of true knowledge is human consciousness. The human mind can even help determine the truth about the world (determine what is true). Our categories for space, time, first/last, before/after and others begin in our minds and bring order to the world. Kant's philosophy is called *idealism*. Idealism suffers from the same limitations as empiricism and rationalism: one can't ever be sure of the truth of anything beyond one's conscious mind. This

result is called *solipsism*, the belief that no one can know anything outside of their own mind.

Romanticism holds that the ultimate arbiter of truth is the creative imagination. The idol for romanticism is the human mind.

Modernism is based upon empiricism, rationalism, and romanticism; all ultimately have the human mind as an idol.

Idols are born when someone takes a part of the created order (nature, human consciousness, sensory perceptions, reason, etc.) and attempts to absolutize it—to make it divine. The reductionism associated with the idol becomes the conceptual box within which everything known must fit. Everything that does not fit in the box is considered an illusion. But idols can't bear the explanatory weight placed upon them and will invariably have to deny parts of general revelation and/or are self-refuting (not internally consistent).

Philosophies get some of the truth, but not all of it. Materialism is right in that it acknowledges the physical world and its many law-like properties. Empiricism is partially right; our senses can be trusted to give us a correct picture of much of the world. Rationalism has merit in that the universe is intelligible and human intellect can rightly know much of its nature. Jesus affirmed the need for empirical evidence and provided it for his claims to deity many times. He encouraged his disciples to believe in the miracles he had performed in front of them (John 14:11), healed a paralytic in front of skeptics (Mark 2:9–11), told Thomas to touch his resurrected body (John 20:26–29), and appeared after the resurrection to 500 people (1 Cor. 15:6). The apostles were likewise basing their beliefs on empirical evidence. Consider 1 John 1:1:

That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen with our eyes*, which we *looked upon* and have *touched with our hands*, concerning *the word of life*— the life was made manifest, and *we have seen it*, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— *that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you*, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3, ESV)

Or consider Peter:

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but *we were eyewitnesses of his majesty*. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," *we ourselves heard this very voice borne*

from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16-18, ESV)

Here is Luke:

He [Jesus] presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, *appearing to them* during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3, ESV)

Romanticism is right in that the human mind can be creative.

The beauty of Christianity is that it encompasses all the “isms” because it places God at the center of things. It is from him everything else comes. Christianity focuses on the creator instead of a part of the creation so there is no reductionism and the resulting explanatory box is large enough for everything to fit in. “A biblical worldview enables Christians to approach every viewpoint with a free and respectful attitude, knowing that virtually every perspective offers something of value.” An apologist shows how Christianity completes and gives full context to philosophies that only see part of the truth.

Principle #2: How Nietzsche Wins (Identify the Idol’s Reductionism)

Idols always lead to destructive behavior because they always lead to a lower view of human life. When humans are not thought of as made in God’s image, they are thought of as some aspect of the created order; a reduced view of humanity is the result. A diminishing of human dignity opens the door to cruelty and injustice. For example, if people are merely complex chemical reactions as the materialist would logically conclude, then abortion, euthanasia, suicide, selective sterilization, even slavery and genocide could be justified. After all, of what intrinsic value is a complex chemical reaction that owes its existence to time, chance, chemistry, and physics? While materialists may insist that such evil behaviors are repugnant to them (as they should be), their philosophy logically facilitates cruelty.

The materialist’s reductionism facilitates forgetting God and mitigating one’s own moral responsibility. If humans are mere complex chemical reactions controlled by only chemistry and physics, they have no free will, no moral responsibility, and no intrinsic worth. Embracing materialism is an attempt by sinful men to suppress the truth about God and their own moral responsibility (Rom. 1:18).

Some materialists dismiss the human mental world as fiction. Our thoughts, attitudes, desires, decisions, fears, perceptions, and plans are illusory and just the result of brain chemistry. “But if consciousness is an illusion, then how is [a materialist] conscious of that fact? And why should we trust the thinking of scientists who tell us there is no such thing as thinking?” Hence materialism refutes itself by denying the very mind that embraces it.

General revelation encompasses the totality of human experience, including the worlds inside and outside of our minds. Hence it includes the physical universe as well as our conscious life within: decisions, emotions, thoughts, desires, perceptions, intentions, reasonings, etc. are all part of the inner life that everyone knows to exist from everyday experience. Any philosophy that denies the reality of any part of general revelation must be false.

Postmodernism has resulted in political correctness, speech codes, identity politics, and multiculturalism. Speech codes define what is acceptable to say about race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, etc. Postmodernism defines a person’s identity in terms of the groups he belongs to. People do not so much produce culture but are shaped by them. This view holds that our ideas are the result of “social constructions stitched together by cultural forces. Individuals are little more than mouthpieces for communities based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity.” The idol of postmodernism is the forces of culture or community. According to postmodernism, every culture has its own truth based on its own perspective which can’t be judged by anyone outside the community. Hence there is no transcendent truth applicable to all cultures, just the relative “truths” of each culture, each being the product of social forces and history. Any culture that would dare claim truths that apply beyond itself is seen as arrogant. All “truths” held by the various cultures are equally valid, but none are absolutely true. For postmodernism, reality is merely our perceptions of the world. Even what can be learned by science is not considered absolute truth. For the postmodernist, there is no absolute reality but only a variety of different perceptions and interpretations by various cultures. There is no “extra-mental truth”; all is subjective. “The implication is that people hold certain ideas not because they have good reasons but because they are black or white, a man or woman, Asian or Hispanic, or whatever.” People are a product of their culture with little freedom to transcend their history. Hence postmodernism reduces humans as being the product of social forces they are helpless to counter. But this is obviously contradicted by anyone who “escapes” their cultural heritage spiritually, economically, intellectually, etc. People who become Christians consciously enter into the new transcendent culture of the church whose values are determined by God, not man. And if there is no transcendent truth, why should anyone adopt the postmodern view and its claim to understand all cultures?

Next Pearcey takes on pantheism and Islam. Pantheism is the belief that all that exists is god or god is the universe. The human self is considered an illusion. The world is a “manifestation of the divine essence.” The goal is to realize your oneness with the universe. Pantheism reduces everything to an impersonal spiritual essence and thereby reduces the value of the individual and human dignity.

Pearcey says that pantheism is the other side of the same coin as materialism; both reduce the personal to the impersonal. Christianity does not deny our personhood but encourages us to love God with all our hearts and minds, to be transformed into the personal image of Christ, to be one with a person, not with impersonal Nature. Hence pantheism denies human personhood and is therefore false.

Islam is one of the three major monotheistic religions and accepts some of the same scriptures as Christianity and Judaism. It does see God as the transcendent creator of all. However, it denies the doctrine of the Trinity. Christians believe God is love. Love is relational—it takes at least two persons to practice love. Before the creation, the three persons of the Godhead were in a love relationship. So, when God created the world, he had always been practicing love (John 17:24). In Islam, God is one. Before the creation, God would not have had anyone to love. He would need his creation to express love. This concept of God suggests he would not have been complete until he created the world. This contradicts the Christian view that God is self-sufficient and not dependent on his creation; He is complete in himself lacking nothing (John 17:24, Acts 17:25, Exo. 3:14, Pslm. 90:2). The Islamic god requires total unquestioning submission from his followers. The relationship is based on submission, not love. This lower view of God—a god dependent on his creation to love—leads to a lower view of human personhood and dignity. Christians believe that the Trinity is touched upon in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 1:26) so that an independently loving God fits into Judaism.

Pearcey next discusses Nazism and Communism. The idol of Nazism is race and of Communism, economic class. For the Nazi, if you are of the wrong race, you must be extinguished. For the communist, if you are of the wrong class (bourgeoisie), you must be deposed. Both of these political philosophies associate human worth to some narrow category instead of the creator and thereby pave the way for the atrocities seen in the last century. If you are of the wrong race or political class, you are evil and must be overcome. Both of these political philosophies have a low view of humanity and therefore miss the mark in understanding human dignity and personhood.

Principle #3: Secular Leaps of Faith

This principle tests a system of belief against general revelation. General revelation includes all of human experience. Hence our sensory perceptions, emotions, thoughts, decisions, morality, sense of dignity, and freedom to make moral choices are included. General revelation says that we and the natural world exist and that we are personal beings that make choices. Any worldview that tries to deny the reality of any part of general revelation must be false. As discussed previously, materialism fails the test because it must deny free will. By

eliminating free will, one also must deny moral responsibility, any sense of morality, freedom, human dignity, purpose, justice, and meaning. But no one can or does live that way! The impossibility of living out a materialistic worldview is one clue to its lack of validity. Hence materialists are locked into a constant state of cognitive dissonance between what they believe and what they experience. Some atheists acknowledge this problem and reply that false concepts such as free will must nevertheless be embraced as a practical matter; even though it is false and an illusion, it must nevertheless be maintained as a “useful fiction.” Such “doublethink” attempts to embrace contradictory concepts simultaneously—clearly illogical thinking! Materialists deny general revelation; they suppress the truth about free will. Materialism commits suicide.

Pearcey points out that the root of the Greek word for “foolish” in Rom. 1:21 is *syniemi*, which literally means to synthesize or put together. The actual Greek word in the text is *asyniemi*: to take apart or fail to synthesize. In other words, people who attempt to build a worldview on logically incoherent thoughts (e.g., materialism and free will) become “futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts [are] darkened.”

Postmodernists exalt the human mind as the source of truth. The external world, if it exists, is unknowable—only the world of ideas is certain. And yet everyone who assumes a postmodern worldview lives as if the external world exists and is knowable, for they must. Hence, postmodernism denies part of general revelation and therefore must be false. The external world is not merely a mental construct but exists independently of observers and is intelligible; it was created by God.

Pearcey says we can gently show others the inconsistencies in their worldviews by following their presuppositions to their logical conclusions, then showing in contrast how Christianity is logically consistent with the real world.

Principle #4: Why Worldviews Commit Suicide

This principle asks if a worldview is internally consistent—are the premises of a worldview logically coherent. If a philosophy contradicts itself, it commits suicide and obviously can't be true. This is the most basic rule of logic, The Law of Noncontradiction: two contradictory ideas cannot be simultaneously correct. “An especially damaging form of contradiction is self-referential absurdity—which means a theory sets up a definition of truth that it *itself* fails to meet.” The statement “there are no absolutes” contradicts itself because it is claiming that there is at least one absolute. Such a statement commits suicide.

The reductionism of most idols leads to this kind of self-refutation. The reductionisms of most idols have a low

view of the human mind (logic, reason, rationality), and if such a mind is not trustworthy, then why should anyone believe any of its ideas, including worldviews that have a low view of the human mind? Most idolatrous worldviews make an exception for themselves in this regard. They borrow from Christianity the notion that there is a real world that is knowable and that their worldview is the correct picture of the real world. But why should any exception be made for their ideas? Logically, no exception should be made so their worldview commits suicide. Christianity has a high view of the human mind holding that it possesses rationality that can discover truth because we were created in the image of a rational God. Hence from a Christian perspective, we can trust the human mind's ability to discover and know truth; the Christian worldview does not commit suicide, nor does it contradict itself. Of course, Christianity teaches that human reason has limits and must be tempered with the truth found in special revelation, the Bible. Exalting human reason to idol status, of course, is another self-defeating worldview.

Pearcey uses principle #4 to show how logical positivism, Marxism, behaviorism, empiricism, Freudianism, materialism, evolutionary epistemology, evolutionism, Darwinism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, scientism, and others are all self-contradictory and self-refuting worldviews.

Modern science arose in Christian Europe. Only Christianity has an epistemology that facilitates science: a rational God created an orderly, intelligible, and good universe (Gen. 1:31) with humans possessing rationality able to understand the creation. God made the human mind and the physical universe in such a way that there is a correspondence between them, making the latter knowable to the former. In the Christian view, there is a real external world that can be reliably known by a rational mind. Just as truth may be obtained from studying the scriptures, truth can also be obtained by studying the creation. The Bible encourages us to test truth claims and ideas by collecting and weighing evidence. This same principle, when applied to the external world, is what we call science. Science was only possible with a Christian epistemology since Christianity uniquely held the correct attitudes towards nature and human reason. The irony is that today materialists practicing science must borrow the Christian ideas that the universe is intelligible and that human reason can grasp its workings; they must borrow from Christian epistemology to do their work!

Postmodernism claims that people's ideas about the world come from their group memberships and not from individual creativity. People don't create their own narrative about reality, their group's narrative creates them. Hence the point of view of a group as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc. is the determiner of

truth but only in a relative since. No group's truth is absolute or necessarily applicable to other groups; there is no metanarrative. Individuals within a group absorb their beliefs from the group. Postmodernism was inspired in part by people fearful of comprehensive explanations for the world because they believed thinking in absolutes inevitably results in tyranny and oppression. One of their mistakes is thinking all comprehensive explanations/worldviews lead to tyranny. While idolatry leads to reduced views of human dignity and hence eventually to oppression, Christianity asserts absolutes yet emphasizes love for others. The irony is that Christianity affirms human dignity, freedom, creativity, equality, and rationality while also providing a basis for law, ethics, morality, human rights, epistemology, care for the physical world/environment, etc. Another contraction is the assertion that the postmodern view applies across all groups—it asserts an absolute and thereby contradicts its advocacy of relativism; postmodernism commits suicide. Since postmodernism claims that any group's worldview is just as valid as any other, there is no basis for opposing group's that hold to evil ideologies. While postmodernism claims to hold "diversity" and "tolerance" as critical values, in practice there is little tolerance for ideas differing from postmodernism. One must be politically correct. One must not impose one's values on others (except upon Christians who don't want to bake a cake for a homosexual wedding, have their tax money pay for abortions, etc.).

Principle #5: Free-Loading Atheists

Pearcey says that every worldview that has a reductionism (lower view of human dignity and/or the human mind/reason) borrows parts of Christianity to make its case. Each worldview must implicitly maintain a high view of reason to argue its case, otherwise why should anyone believe it? Pearcey says that when we analyze a worldview, we can identify which parts of Christianity are borrowed (where the worldview breaks down). It is at these points that we can start a conversation with alternative worldview adherents in order to show why Christianity works better. This is plainly seen in worldviews that are relativistic about truth and morals. People holding such worldviews assert (rightly) that racism is wrong yet without any philosophical basis for saying so. They say there is no absolute truth or certainty in knowledge, yet they respect the findings of science as though they were unassailable. Only by incorporating elements of Christianity can adherents of alternate worldviews make any truth claims about reality or morality. Some atheists even admit this and refer to themselves as "free-loading." We have already seen why the Christian worldview was/is necessary to do science. People who subscribe to any worldview are consciously or unconsciously placing their faith in unprovable assumptions about reality. This fact places all worldviews on a level playing field. Hence worldviews function as religions

whether they are thought of in that way or not. The question is which worldview best explains general revelation (human experience) without external and internal inconsistencies or contradictions. Another way to reach people holding other worldviews is to point out where their worldview logically leads them. As already touched upon, materialism says there is no free will, no morality, no justice, no meaning or purpose in life, no value to life; this philosophy, when carried to its logical conclusion, must result in despair.

Pearcey says we must understand our audience if we wish to reach them with the gospel. We can do this if we understand and are conversant about their worldviews. Our Christian young people must learn how to recognize, analyze, explain, and debunk other worldviews if they are to be able to maintain their faith and persuasively share it with others. In doing so, they will learn to love their neighbors as themselves.

Part Three: How Critical Thinking Saves Faith

Pearcey says that we are more likely to have an enduring faith if we study and understand alternate worldviews instead of merely avoiding exposure to them. Applying the five principles should facilitate understanding others' worldviews and respectful dialog about Christianity. We can acknowledge the strengths of any worldview while understanding its short comings and how Christianity is better. Critical thinking is especially important for high school and college-aged Christians who are bombarded with secular ideas daily. Studying alternate worldviews from a Christian perspective will immunize believers from deceptive philosophies and facilitate evangelism.

Pearcey briefly reviews the five principles. She says Christians need to formulate Christian philosophies and apply them to every area of life. She says there should be Christian views on politics, law, art, sex, gender roles, literature, education, science, medicine, child rearing, the environment, entertainment—everything. Since we Christians have the best worldview, we should be able to develop the best views for every area of human life. We need to compete in the world of ideas. "Christianity is total truth, not just religious truth. Because it is total truth, it is relevant and applicable to all areas of life."

In conclusion, I highly recommend *Finding Truth* to all Christians but especially Christian young people, to anyone trying to sort out what is reality, and to those who want to better understand modern culture from a Christian perspective. ☞

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, August 8, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 237

"Rebuttal of Darwin's Evolutionary Theory: In the Footsteps of Darwin at the Galápagos Islands"

Parents, build and keep your children's faith in God! Please come out for a very worthwhile summer excursion and bring your children around 10 years or above (plus friends) to this informative, exciting, picturesque program to help them from being deceived by naturalistic evolution being taught to them as fact in the public schools and by the secular media, causing dismissal of God our creator! We are losing over half of even our churched children by middle school due in large part to the above influence. Mark Stephens, MCS, will present the program with the use of a documentary video developed by Brad Harrub, PhD and shot on location in the beautiful, exotic Galapagos Islands. (DVD available at focuspress.org)

Also, at the meeting, you will have opportunity to help your children and loved ones with further edification by picking up copies as lasting gifts to them of TASC's recently published, *Restoring The Truth About Origins: Book I*, at 15% discount of only \$25 (bring cash or check made out to TASC). Also, we are excited to give you a brief preview of *Book II*, a lasting testimony to God our creator available in August. We hope to see you there with your kids and friends for a big, supportive crowd!

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