

Christian Education Needs the Bible Framework to Counter the Intrusion of Pervasive Paganism

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## Introduction

Today it appears that many members of the body of Christ confess they have a Biblical worldview while simultaneously, think, talk and function as though they have a pagan worldview. It is noble that many but not all in the church want to help the poor, stand up against abortion, human-trafficking, pornography, gambling, and other challenges. However, while many Christians, know what they are against; there are relatively few that know how to live Christian lives in a pagan world, particularly in its contemporary forms of empiricism, relativism, humanism, liberalism or neo-orthodoxy. Christians in the church, in government, in business, in science and medicine, in every aspect of society believe the Bible has little relevance to their daily lives. Further, there is more evidence it demonstrates their inability to apply the Bible to their lives when nearly half reject the Bible as authoritative and much of the church supports abortion, homosexuality and same-sex marriage, and capitulates or accommodates non-Biblical thinking in their churches. Worse it demonstrates that they think more like pagans, similar to the Greeks that separated the spiritual from the physical.

This should not be surprising as students in the United States, during 12 years of education, spend approximately 12,000 hours<sup>1</sup> learning about all subjects from a secular-pagan worldview while approximately 1,800 hours in church focused on one subject, theology.

This happened because God has allowed paganism to infiltrate Christian education. It is not that God is targeting the church. Rather, God wants Christians to trust and obey Him, which requires the church to test and reject paganism. Consider that God allowed Israel to see signs and wonders to test Israel; to see if Israel trusted His Word.

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us

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<sup>1</sup> Truth in American Education. “How Many Hours Do We Spend in School? A Comprehensive Guide.” April, 20, 2024, accessed March 1, 2025. <https://truthinamericaneducation.com/how-many-hours-do-we-spend-in-school/>.

go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut. 13:1-3).<sup>2</sup>

Regrettably, the church has not stood by God's Word, either because it does not recognize paganism, or it has increasingly integrated paganism into its own philosophy and doctrines. What the church should have done is follow the Bereans' example. Even though Paul was an apostle and testified to his authority with signs and wonders, including healings, visions and tongues, the Bereans checked the Scriptures to see if Paul's words were in conformance with revealed Scripture. ... "they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11b).

So then, syncretism is the problem. The church has imported evolution, psychiatry, antisemitism, and substituted the deity of government for God. This new hybrid religion, regardless the denomination, made so-called scientists its priests. Some of the vehicles have been the seminaries, some from public pressure through public education and entertainment. The church, specifically, Christian education needs the Bible Framework to counter the intrusion of pervasive paganism.

### **History of Pervasive Paganism**

The well-respected Bible scholar and scientist, Charles Clough defined paganism as the carnal mind which views its god as universal, impersonal and is both good and evil.<sup>3</sup> Another term that is synonymous with a universal, impersonal, amoral god is fate, a power above the gods of antiquity. The ancient gods were the embodiment of perceived principles, given names to

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations in this paper are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) with Strong's Numbers, copyright 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Charles A. Clough. *Biblical Framework Series 1995–2003, Part 2: Buried Truths of Origins, Ch. 1 – Biblical Creation vs. Pagan Origin Myths, Lesson 3 – Introduction: Religious Neutrality Theory*. Fellowship Chapel, Jarrettsville, MD, 1995.

be known, worshipped and blamed; since in paganism man is always a victim. Nevertheless, even they were subject to fate and chance.

Paul countered the critics and cynics of his day on Mars' Hill to the Greek philosophers, that are still admired today, explaining from a biblical framework that their religion was man-made, and they should turn to the one true God.

*The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God... Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:24-27a, 29-31)*

Rather than define paganism as primitive religion; it is better defined by its beliefs which are consistent from ancient to modern times. According to Mr. Clough, the pagan worldview includes two key beliefs.<sup>4</sup>

- Continuity of Being: There is only a quantitative not a qualitative material difference between God, man and nature. Rather everything in the universe is composed of the same physical material, just higher or lower along the same continuum.
- Impersonal Chance: Since the universe and everything in it is made of matter, there is nothing superior, yet events happen for which there is no explanation.

These same principles can be found in both ancient western and eastern religions, and today these same principles are found in cosmic evolution, embraced in their thinking by both secularists and theological liberals. Further, “Energized by the god of this world and the carnal mind, the pagan program has spread its deception across many disciplines, including astronomy,

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<sup>4</sup> Charles A. Clough. *Bible Framework for Worship and Obedience in an Age of Global Deception, Part II: Buried Truths of Origins*. Bible Framework Ministries, 1996. pp. 9-12.

biology, geology, anthropology, and physics.”<sup>5</sup> Essentially, “Paganism merely corrupts what God made good. Satan is no creator, but a corruptor. He nudges small errors that grow over time, so that we travel always farther from God’s narrow path.”<sup>6</sup>

What has happened to the church is not unique in history. There are several biblical examples; the Antediluvian world, the post-Flood world, and Israel after the deaths of Joshua and Israel’s elders that were eyewitnesses to God’s miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

It is evident from Genesis that a part of Adam’s family respected and practiced Biblical worship. Moses cited that God accepted Abel’s blood sacrifice. God would not have accepted Abel’s sacrifice if he were not in a right relationship with God. “Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering” (Gen 4:4). Moses continued to write about Adam’s godly line through Seth, which included both Enoch, who “walked with God” (Gen 5:24), and Noah also, “a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God” (Gen 5:9). Yet, the rest of humanity fell away, corrupted by Satan, the world and their flesh (Gen 6:11-12).

The Bible continued, within a few hundred years after Noah and his family left the Ark, mankind quickly fell away, substituting their own salvation rather than trusting God.

They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:4).

Man disobeyed God’s direct instructions to Noah and his descendants. First, God told Noah and his family to “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1b), then established civil government to preserve humanity from the sin that destroyed the antediluvian world. Finally,

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<sup>5</sup> Charles A. Clough. *Bible Framework for Worship and Obedience in an Age of Global Deception, Part II: Buried Truths of Origins*. Bible Framework Ministries, 1996. P. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Biblical Christian Education Program. “True Faith vs Paganism,” accessed Mar 1, 2025. <https://getwisdom.us/true-faith-vs-paganism/>.

God made a covenant, an unconditional contract, with Noah, his descendants and nature in which God promised to never to destroy the world by flood again. Yet, man motivated by fear quickly rebelled against God on three specific points.

- They would establish their own religion/ethics (unfaithfulness).
- They would be their own authority (rebellion).
- They would settle in one place instead of populating the world (disobedience).

This is noteworthy because Abram was called from pagan city of Ur and a pagan family. "... 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River... and they served other gods'" (Josh. 24:2). There is little evidence that the world remembered God because the parents failed to instruct their children about God, His instructions and His covenant with Noah.

Contemporaneously, though Lot himself was righteous ( 2 Pet. 2:7) and attempted to influence his culture (Gen. 19:9) he did not instruct his family about God, losing his wife and producing the kingdoms of Edom and Ammon through an incestuous relationship with his daughters. This lack of teaching about God is repeated on a national level with Israel after Joshua passed, during the time of the judges.

The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died... All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel (Judg. 2:7-8a, 10).

The result was Israel repeated the sin of Nimrod; they trusted their own wisdom rather than God's; they were their own authority. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25). Though Samuel warned them with God's own words, Israel rejected God as their king. "The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7).

New Testament examples include Paul's, John's, Peter's and Jude's warnings to the church if it isn't proactively discerning will adopt the worldview of the future pagan world.

*... do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world... They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:1-3, 5-6). (italics added)*

### How Is Paganism Pervasive in Christianity Today

Elements of paganism are identifiable in Christianity today. America's worldview, born out of the reformation with its stress on "*sola scriptura*" – the Scriptures alone are the authority...<sup>7</sup> (italics in the original) The colonists were 98% Protestant.<sup>8</sup> However, Protestantism decreased as a percentage of the population; according to Gallup polls, 70% in 1953 to 33% in 2023.<sup>9</sup> The same Gallup poll asked if a person would describe themselves as "born-again" or evangelical. That number fell from 36% in 1992 to 32% in 2022. More telling was the belief in Biblical inerrancy. Gallup asked U.S. adults their views on inspiration and inerrancy.

Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Bible -- the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word, the Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, or the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by man?

Table 1. View About the Bible

	Actual word	Inspired word	Fables, legends	No opinion
2022	20%	49%	29%	1%
1976	38%	45%	13%	5%

<sup>7</sup> Paul Enns. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Moody Press, Chicago. 1989. p. 444.

<sup>8</sup> Bonomi, Patricia. "Religious Pluralism in the Middle Colonies." *Divining America*, TeacherServe. National Humanities Center, accessed February 4, 2025.

<https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/midcol.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Gallup. "Fewer in U.S Now See Bible as Literal Word of God," accessed March 6, 2025.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/Religion.aspx>.

The belief that the Bible is fables and legends has more than doubled, while belief in the actual, literal word of God fell almost by half. Interestingly, those that do not believe everything in the Bible should be taken literally increased by 9% from 45% to 49%.

The problem is that most of the church has absorbed the lie that there is no objective truth. Much of Christianity believes that the Bible is a fallible book written by fallible man rather than the God's absolute truth. Few believe in verbal (actual words), plenary (every part of the Bible) inspiration, in other words, inerrancy in all of the Bible's contents, including doctrine, history, science, geography, etc.<sup>10</sup> Once God's holy, perfect and eternal truth is rejected then sinful, finite man must determine for himself what truth to believe. In going away from a Biblical worldview man must move towards a pagan worldview. Solomon wrote about this choice and explicitly stated that rejecting a Biblical worldview for a pagan worldview leads to destruction.

*Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD. They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. (Pro. 1:29-32). (italics added)*

It is sad when those that should pay close attention to their errors reject God's warning. They have adopted the view that everything is the same as it's always been and always will be (2 Pet. 3:3-4), and do not believe in the God of the Bible or refuse to believe that God could warn them.

Narrowing the domain from the U.S. population to evangelicals, a Pew Research poll compared the answers of millennial evangelical Protestants (born 1981-1996) and older evangelical Protestants (born before 1981).<sup>11</sup> "Evangelical Millennials views on some issues differ from those of their elders," demonstrated current thinking regarding a Biblical or pagan worldview. The results showed that millennials' views are less Biblical on several issues. As an

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Enns. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Moody Press, Chicago. 1989. p. 638.

<sup>11</sup> Pew Research Center. "2014 U.S. Religious Landscape Study." Conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014, accessed February 3, 2025. <https://www.pewresearch.org/dataset/pew-research-center-2014-u-s-religious-landscape-study/>



example, even though Bible defines marriage as between a man and a woman and condemns homosexuality, both of which man defines as normal based on man's reasoning.<sup>12</sup>

Table 2. Evangelical Millennials views on some issues differ from those of their elders<sup>13</sup>

% of Evangelical Protestants who say...		
	Older (b. before 1981)	Millennials (b. 1981-1996)
Favor same-sex marriage	23%	45%
Homosexuality should be accepted by society	32%	51%
Growing immigrant population is a change for the better	13%	27%
Bigger government and more services are preferable	27%	41%
Stricter environmental laws are worth the cost	43%	55%
Govt. aid does more harm than good	36%	45%

- Favor same-sex marriage (45%), "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24)
- Homosexuality should be accepted by society (51%). "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them." (Lev. 20:13)

A case could be made that millennials' views on the other questions are likewise influenced by paganism. These results aren't spiritually conclusive statement. But Biblical cautions are applicable.

- "Growing immigrant population is a change for the better" shows that a minority of both older evangelical protestants as well as the millennials agree with the statement. Nevertheless, approx. twice as many millennials now believe the statement though most of the world continues to have a pagan worldview. Remember how Israel intermingled with the Canaanites and corrupted their faith during the time of the patriarchs (Gen. 24:3) and even during the time of Moses.

... the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor (Num. 25:1b-3a).

<sup>12</sup> American Psychological Association. "Understanding sexual orientation and homosexuality." <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/orientation> and "Same-sex marriage: What you need to know" <https://www.apa.org/topics/marriage-relationships/same-sex-marriage>

<sup>13</sup> Pew Research Center. "2014 U.S. Religious Landscape Study."

- Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, “No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles” (1 Sam. 8:19-20).

One issue that millennial evangelical Protestants agreed with the elders was on abortion. Sadly, the same survey recorded that 33% of both groups believe that “Abortion should be legal in *all/most cases*” despite that only God gives life (Psa. 139:13-16), neither man, nor woman. (italics added) Beyond this, mankind has value above nature because man is made in God’s image. “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man” (Gen. 9:6).

Nevertheless, the main point is that millennials submission to Biblical revelation is remarkably less than previous generations. It appears that the older generations, like ancient Israel, did not teach their posterity a Biblical worldview. This is a failure of education, a combination of academic, church and family. There is one final poll to examine.

The American Bible Society has sponsored the annual State of the Bible survey since 2011 to track America’s relationship with the Bible, faith and the church.<sup>14</sup> The most recent survey was conducted in January 2024 with a focus on the Bible in America today. It must be noted that the study defines Bible users as “Individuals who read, listen to, or pray with the Bible on their own at least 3–4 times a year, outside of a church service or church event.”<sup>15</sup> If this spiritual malnourishment were the equivalent of physical malnourishment it would be considered starvation. Even if the meal equivalent were 2,000 calories each (a meal), 8,000 calories for a

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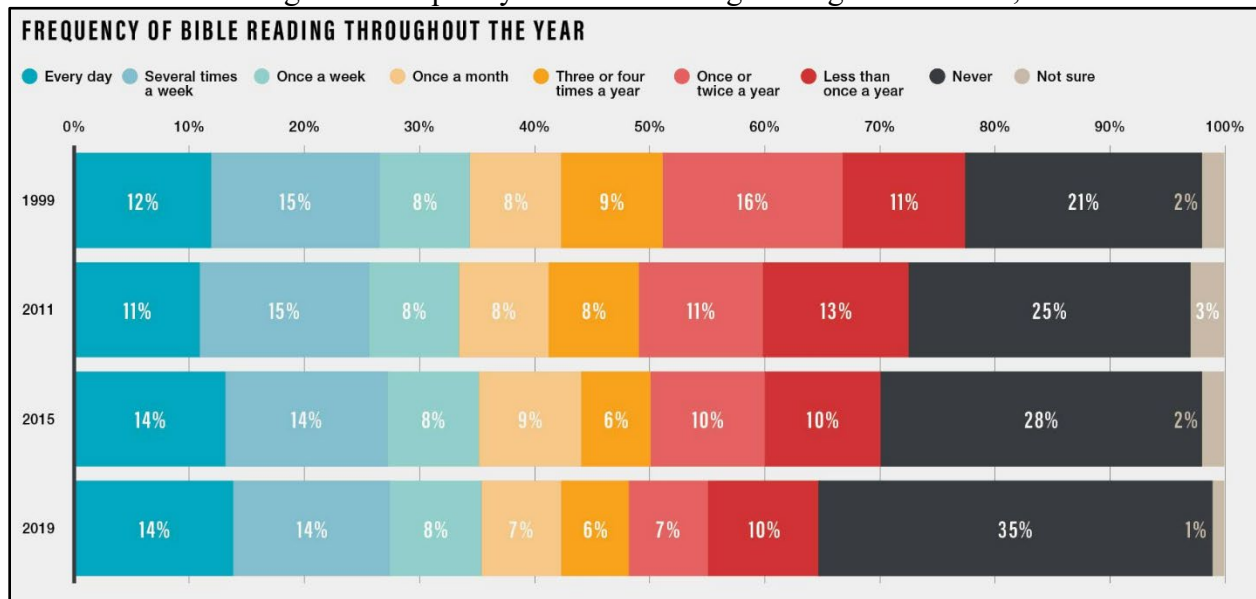
<sup>14</sup> Jeffery Fulks, Angel Mann, Randy Petersen and John Farquhar Plake. *State of the Bible USA 2024*. American Bible Society. Philadelphia, 2024. pg. 215.

<sup>15</sup> Fulks, Mann, Petersen, and Plake. *State of the Bible USA 2024*, pg. 203.

year (four meals) falls short of 438,000 minimum (1,200 cal. per day) to avoid starving.<sup>16</sup> God's Word is more important than physical food (Job 23:12; John 6:27).

This report demonstrated that not only has America's reliance on the Bible declined but there has also been a deemphasis on biblical literacy among Christian organizations (Pro. 2:9; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:14). Despite the minimal definition of a Bible user, only 38% of Americans considered themselves as such; about a 25% drop from 50% when the annual survey began. Further, those that have not read the Bible at all increased from 25% to 35%.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it appears that Americans are exchanging biblical wisdom for man's wisdom, paganism.

Figure 1. Frequency of Bible Reading Throughout the Year, 2020.



Further, Barna also reported in the same 2020 research that,

Individuals are much more likely to say a prayer than they are to attend a church service—understandable, as this faith practice is far more accessible and may maintain appeal in a culture that remains open to spirituality even as religious affiliation and institutions have declined in favor. *Large majorities of Americans still say that prayer is something that they do on a weekly basis.* (bold rather than italics in the original) From

<sup>16</sup> Our World in Data. "Minimum daily requirement of calories, 2022," accessed February 4, 2025.

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/minimum-requirement-calories>.

<sup>17</sup> Barna. "Signs of Decline & Hope Among Key Metrics of Faith." March 4, 2020, accessed February 25, 2025.

<https://www.barna.com/research/changing-state-of-the-church/>.

1996 to 2010, there was no statistical difference in the percentage of Americans who prayed, with the number hovering around 83 percent.<sup>18</sup>

However, in 2019, only 36% read the Bible at least weekly. Today, there are a many other indicators that Christians are less guided by Scripture, hence more influenced by paganism.

There are numerous articles on how Christians are struggling with sexual sin, including adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography transgenderism, and divorce.<sup>19</sup> Yet, the Bible repeatedly condemns sexual immorality and divorce. "...Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce," says the LORD," (Mal. 2:15b, 16a) and,

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God (1 Thes. 4:3-5).

Nevertheless, though God's will was expressly stated, Christians frequently support divorce, often with the same rationale as the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day (Matt. 19:3-8). Yet, Jesus reminded them that marriage was intended to be forever. Further, if we remember that the marriage of man and woman reflect Jesus and the Church, then it makes sense that marriage is meant to be permanent.

There are other evidences that should be studied further. "English Bible translation has lost its way in the past half century. We are farther from a reliable and stable text than ever before."<sup>20</sup> Christian music is focused on emotion and lacks theological depth.<sup>21</sup> And Christian psychology did not gain traction in the West until after World War II, though Christian

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<sup>18</sup> Barna. "Signs of Decline & Hope Among Key Metrics of Faith." March 4, 2020, accessed February 25, 2025. <https://www.barna.com/research/changing-state-of-the-church/>.

<sup>19</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer. *Putting Your Past Behind You: Finding Hope for Life's Deepest Hurts*. Moody Publishers, Chicago. 1990. p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Leland Ryken. *The Word of God in English*. Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL. 2002. p. 293.

<sup>21</sup> Camilla Klein. "Revealed: The Shocking Truth about What's Wrong with Contemporary Christian Music." February, 28, 2025, accessed March 1, 2025. <https://christianeducatorsacademy.com/revealed-the-shocking-truth-about-whats-wrong-with-contemporary-christian-music/>.

counseling from the Bible has existed for 2,000 years.<sup>22</sup> Many of these professionals, leaders and servants, have honorable intentions but have fallen into the same sin as Eve under Satan's deception (Gen. 3:6a). But, how these violations of God's Word not only occurred in the church but have come to be supported by much of the church is from hundreds of years of capitulation and accommodation of pagan beliefs.

### **How the Church Has Absorbed Paganism**

The suffering we see in the world today is the consequence of man rejecting God's revelation. Sadly, Christians, like Israel in Canaan, have absorbed the doctrine of demons from the pagan society around them. The attacks have come from various directions, including; higher criticism of the Bible, theology, and evolution. What they all have in common is a rejection of God and His revelation to man.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness *of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness*, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, *being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse*. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but *they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools* (Rom. 1:18-23). (italics added)

Consider that man, who knows that God exists, suppresses the truth, attempting to generate all-encompassing theories from a finite knowledge of the visible and invisible, the natural and the supernatural. Anything that man believes is an alternative to believing in the God revealed in the Bible, and in nature. Before Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and others invented and introduced heresies.<sup>23</sup> Before rationalism and liberalism exchanged the truth for Darwin's evolution; higher criticism undermined the truth and authority of the words of the Bible. The Bible has been

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<sup>22</sup> Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon. *Psychology and the Church: Critical Questions, Crucial Answers*. The Berean Call, Bend, OR. 2008. p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Dr John E. Danish, *The Bible and Higher Criticism*, Berean Memorial Church, Irving, Tx, 1971.

authoritative in every word since Moses wrote the first books of the Old Testament. In fact, the authority of the self-authenticating biblical text was used to determine the text's inclusion in the 66 books of the biblical canon.<sup>24</sup>

Johann Semler (1725-1791), the father of German rationalism, introduced the Accommodation Theory to make the Bible acceptable to an age of rationalism. He postulated “that Jesus Christ and the apostles accommodated themselves to the prejudices, the errors, and the superstition of the people in the time in which they lived.”<sup>25</sup> So, Semler's attack was not on the words, but on the people of the New Testament. Semler also rejected several Old Testament books as non-canonical simply because these books violated the three principles of rationalism.<sup>26</sup>

1. Power of Reason: Rationalists hold that human reason can lead to certainty and knowledge.
2. Innate Ideas: Certain concepts or truths are said to be inherent in the human mind.
3. Universal Truths: Rationalists often seek universal principles that transcend particular experiences.

Johann Eichhorn (1752-1827) was the next enemy to attack the authority of the Bible. He is known as the father of higher criticism which three principles became the basis for higher critical analysis, which “tore the Bible to shreds.”<sup>27</sup>

1. Ancient people attributed to the direct action of God whatever awed them and whatever was beyond their power of understanding.
2. Exaggeration among Orientals is the norm. Therefore, what they say is not to be taken as literal fact, and rationalism decides what is exaggerated.
3. The Hebrew's thinking in terms of the supernatural working of God omitted details which would show events as being purely natural.

Eichhorn shifted Semler's thought, from the writer to the reader. Eichhorn declared that Genesis chapters 1 through 3 and the miracles of the Old Testament were consequently poetic descriptions, symbolic pictures, Asian imagery, and rhetorical exaggeration. Their miracles were

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<sup>24</sup> Charles C. Ryrie. *Basic Theology*. ChariotVictor Publishing, Colorado Springs, CO. 1986. p. 105.

<sup>25</sup> Dr John E. Danish, *The Bible and Higher Criticism*, Berean Memorial Church, Irving, Tx, 1971.

<sup>26</sup> Rationalist International. “Exploring the Core Principles of the Rationalist Movement.” Accessed February 19, 2025. <https://www.rationalists.net/post/exploring-the-core-principles-of-rationalist-movements>.

<sup>27</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and Higher Criticism*. Berean Memorial Church, Irving, Tx, 1971.

a misunderstanding of the readers, not of what they wrote. By removing the supernatural elements from the Bible, he hoped to make the Bible acceptable to rationalism.”<sup>28</sup>

K. H. Graf (1815-1869) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) followed Eichhorn. Wellhausen was a rationalistic radical theologian, influenced by Hegel (1770-1831). He wrote “The History of Israel” in which he proposed the Documentary Hypotheses that biblical history began around the time of Amos (800-700 B.C.) and that everything preceding it was fiction; particularly the Pentateuch was a mix of legend and myth.<sup>29</sup> The higher critics rejected the supernatural, miracles, virgin birth and resurrection. Over time seminaries adopted higher “destructive” criticism and taught it to pastoral students, and now “most ministers hold this documentary view of the origin of Scriptures.”<sup>30</sup> As a result, the higher critics and liberal theologians sabotaged their own authority. The higher critics cannot appeal to the authority of the Bible at the same time as disparaging it. The liberal theologian says that the Bible is not a collection of infallible doctrines or propositions of truth and beliefs about God and man. The liberal may use orthodox terminology but means different things by it.

Paul Enns summed the tenets of liberal theology represented by; Immanuel Kant (1724-1904), Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Georg Hegel (1770-1831) are:<sup>31</sup>

- The Bible is not revelation but a witness to revelation: it is not to be equated objectively with the Word of God; the revelation of God is not in words.
- Jesus Christ is the focal point of God’s revelation: man meets God in an experiential encounter with Jesus Christ.
- The events of Scripture are transcendent, experiential stories rather than verifiable history. The fact that many Bible accounts are “myths” or “sagas” does not affect their higher meaning and validity.
- God is transcendent, the “wholly other.” A sharp distinction exists between man and God; man can come to fellowship with God only through a “leap of faith.”

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<sup>28</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and Higher Criticism*. Berean Memorial Church, Irving, Tx, 1971.

<sup>29</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and Higher Criticism*.

<sup>30</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and Higher Criticism*.

<sup>31</sup> Bernard Ramm. *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI. 1966. p. 81.

Additionally, Kevin DeYoung's quote from Gary Dorrien's, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900*, is an excellent example of how liberalism rejects the authority of the plain meaning of Scripture;<sup>32</sup>

It's the conviction one can be a faithful Christian without believing in hell or a universal flood, without believing God commanded the extermination of the Canaanites, and without believing God 'demanded the literal sacrifice of his Son as a substitutionary legal payment for sin.'<sup>33</sup>

After the authority of the Bible was rejected, and theology was subjected to man's reasoning rather than God's revelation, others then rejected the Bible and Christianity altogether. A few notable false teachers include:

- Charles Darwin (1809-1882): Published "The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life" in 1859, which popularized the concept of evolution, in which he postulated that life forms evolved over millions of years from a common life source. This evolution occurred through a process identified as natural selection, where organisms had to genetically adapt and change into different organisms over time to survive. This survival of the fittest was applied not only to biology but to other areas of life, including sociology and economics. Marx made it a central doctrine of communism to explain the struggle of history.

Now evolution has been the most single potent factor to undermine the popular belief in the existence of God. When evolution finally permeated down from the scientists to the man in the streets, this was the biggest feature to bring question about God, and it is today.<sup>34</sup>

- Karl Marx (1818-1883): Marx's communism was articulated in "Das Kapital (1867-1894)," and was based Hegel's dialecticism. It was man-made atheist religion designed to remake society into a paradise with peace and plenty, "patterned after Satan's design of the good life without God such as reflected by the Canaanite civilization."<sup>35</sup> Communism had to destroy and replace religion, particularly Christianity, with the religion of materialism.
- Sigmund Freud (1856-1939): was another atheist, who believed that mankind was motivated chiefly by pleasure and is unhappy because society repressed his sexual gratification. This created neuroses which psychiatry had to heal. Freud saw neither a

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<sup>32</sup> Kevin De Young, "Liberalism Is (Still) a Threat to Fundamentalism," quoting Gary Dorrien. *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900*. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville, 2001, accessed February 18, 2025. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/liberalism-threat-fundamentalism/>

<sup>33</sup> Kevin De Young. "Liberalism Is (Still) a Threat to Fundamentalism."

<sup>34</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and the Modern Mind*. Berean Memorial Church, Irving, Tx, 1971

<sup>35</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and the Modern Mind*. Berean Memorial Church, Irving, Tx, 1971



purpose in man's existence nor God and therefore "everything goes" as there are no transcendent ethical limits. Freud simply carried evolution to its logical conclusions relative to human behavior. Leaders and authorities do not know the difference between a free society and a permissive society.<sup>36</sup>

- John Dewey (1859-1952): is the father of progressive education. He rejected God. He rejected the idea of a soul. He rejected the idea of moral laws and eternal truths. He was against individualism. He promoted an education in which the individual was to lose himself in the mass.<sup>37</sup>

As these false doctrines of faith were accepted and spread through the West and much of the world, they were also absorbed by churches, seminaries, even denominations that did not recognize an authority higher than man. So, today, many Christians accept the Bible as a good book, even a great book, inspired by God, but not authoritative. So, when society conflicts with the Bible they believe society. Yet the literal warnings of Scripture are clear, and warnings have no purpose if the Bible is not authoritative. Peter wrote such a warning in his last epistle.

*... you should remember the words spoken previously by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour spoken by your apostles; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last of the days mockers with mockery, ordering their manner of life according to their own personal desires, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things are remaining permanently in that state in which they were since the beginning of the creation. For concerning this they willfully forget that heavens existed from ancient times, and land [standing] out of water, and by means of water cohering by the word of God, through which the ordered world of that time, having been deluged by water, was ruined. But the present heavens and the earth by the same word have been stored with fire, being kept so guarded with a view to the day of judgment and misery of men destitute of reverential awe towards God.*<sup>38</sup> (2 Pet. 3:2-7) (italics added)

Since these men rejected God, they made mankind their own final authority or humanism.

Humanism possesses two forms.<sup>39</sup> Secular humanism which "emphasizes the value and freedom of human beings. In addition, humanism believes that we should exercise individual powers of reason rather than accepting the truth of scriptures or dogma," and "religious humanism, the idea

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<sup>36</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and the Modern Mind*.

<sup>37</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and the Modern Mind*.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest. *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1961.

<sup>39</sup> Philosophy Terms. <https://philosophyterms.com/humanism/>

is basically that God exists, but he *wants* us to act like humanists — to search for truth,” yet defined by man rather than God.

Today, it is called theological liberalism. Practically all roads lead to heaven by human works as a loving God would not sacrifice His only mythical son. Further, since man is basically good, he has only to correct his mistakes through education, rather than repent from sin. The contemporary understanding of liberal Christianity was exemplified by Karl Barth (1886-1968), the founder of neo-orthodoxy.<sup>40</sup> Barth recognized that Christian liberalism was unattractive to the public since liberalism’s answers were ungrounded in Biblical authority.<sup>41</sup> Though Barth believed in the importance, necessity and value of the Bible, he did so from the perspective of higher criticism. He did not believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, or that the Bible provided doctrinal truths. To Barth the Bible is not the objective Word of God but rather a *witness* to the Word.<sup>42</sup> (italics in the original) The Bible could provide a means for people to know God through subjective experience... However, the only way man can truly come to know God is by God’s revelation of Himself to man. The Bible Framework provides a way to understand God’s revelation in a way that honors the authority of God’s Word, progressively, contextually, and comprehensively.

### **The Bible Framework Counters Paganism in the Church**

A common American colloquialism advised people not to discuss religion or politics, the two domains that have the greatest impact on mankind’s present and future. This superficiality is characteristic of liberal religion as it guards against people discussing, asking questions, or learning from a biblical worldview, including truth and ethics. An example of using a biblical

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<sup>40</sup> Dr John E. Danish. *The Bible and the Modern Mind*. Berean Memorial Church, Irving, TX, 1971.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Enns. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Moody Press, Chicago. 1989. p. 562.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Enns. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. p.562.

framework to counter pagans was Stephen's review of Jewish history from Abraham through Jesus, the Righteous One, the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7).

Charlie Clough developed the Bible Framework in Lubbock, Texas in the 1970s when there were few biblical worldview resources available.<sup>43</sup> The Framework was designed to provide biblical and theological literacy to generations that had been and are still being indoctrinated in Darwin, Marx and Freud, and to whom the Bible spoke a foreign language. In fact, communicating the Bible to Americans since the 1970s is like witnessing to pagan cultures. Mr. Clough concluded,

... we had to take the Word of God and respect the historical sequence that God used to reveal His doctrine. And that was the lead-in, that was the curriculum, that was the lesson plan in order to make it clear.<sup>44</sup>

Amos and Jennifer Kwok, who adapted the Bible Framework for children, presented the Bible Framework this way.<sup>45</sup>

1. Bible narrative of key events
2. Truths revealed through the events
3. Contrast biblical with non-biblical worldviews

The Framework builds a progressive and comprehensive biblical worldview from Genesis through Revelation connecting the Old and New Testaments through event pictures in accordance with God's plan (Isa. 46:10). This is where the power of the Bible Framework is helpful. And it is especially helpful in countering the thinking of paganism's rationalism, empiricism, and existentialism, that is so pervasive in modern thinking, even in the church.

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<sup>43</sup> Charles A. Clough. *Biblical Framework for Facing the Intellectual, Moral, and Spiritual Challenges of the 21st Century - Part I*. West Houston Bible Church, Houston, TX, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Charles A. Clough. *Biblical Framework for Facing the Intellectual, Moral, and Spiritual Challenges of the 21st Century - Part I*.

<sup>45</sup> Amos and Jennifer Kwok. *Interlocked: Information Sheet*. Ver. 4. 2021. p.5.

The Bible Framework is neither an historical exegesis, an apologetic nor a systematic theology. In a typical systematic theology, there may include ten major theological doctrines that have been studied extensively through church history. The Bible Framework is a combination of and complements these; not as stand-alone doctrines but interconnected, mutually supporting pictures of doctrines in a purposeful order. Further, the Framework “does not replace traditional Bible study; it is a tool to integrate them.”

*Christians “can learn biblical truths from studying historical events. If these event-based truths are contrasted with corresponding pagan speculations, students will mature in thinking biblically about all of life. The truths have implications in all aspects of our lives—marriage, family, the arts, science, law, business, math, the environment, economics, history, logic, medicine, language ...”*<sup>46</sup>

Though the Framework does overlap its doctrines with standard systematic theologies, its sequence follows the Bible’s historical sequence, God’s superintended pedagogy.

*He has made everything appropriate in its time.* He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end. (Eccl. 3:11) (italics added)

Considering that a systematic theology typically does not address soteriology till the middle even though salvation is addressed several times in Genesis; 1) after the Fall, 2) the Flood, 3) Abraham, and 4) the offering of Isaac. Alternatively, the framework presents pictures of sin, grace, salvation judgement in Eden, then the flood, then Abram, the Exodus and Passover.

There are similarities between a systematic theology and the Bible Framework. And where the various doctrines in a biblically accurate systematic theology can counter points of paganism, the Bible Framework can engage paganism outside and inside the church at any point and expose its ultimate reliance on faith in finite and corruptible man.

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<sup>46</sup> Charles A. Clough. *A Biblical Framework for Worship and Obedience in an Age of Global Deception: An Introduction*. Brochure. 2013.

Table 3. Comparison of Systematic Theology Doctrines with the Bible Framework Key Events and Doctrinal Images

<b>Systematic Theology<sup>47</sup></b>	<b>Bible Framework</b>	
	<b>Key Events</b>	<b>Doctrinal Images</b>
Theology proper (God)	Creation	God, Man, Nature
Bibliology (the Bible)	Fall	Evil and Suffering
Angelology (angels and demons)	Flood	Judgement and Salvation
Anthropology (humanity)	Noahic Covenant	God, Man, Nature
Hamartiology (sin)	Call of Abraham	Election, Justification, Faith
Christology (Christ)	Exodus	Judgment, Salvation
Soteriology (Salvation)	Sinai & the Law	Revelation, Inspiration, Canonicity
Pneumatology (Holy Spirit)	Conquest through Exile	Sanctification
Ecclesiology (the church)	The Birth of the King	Hypostatic Union
Eschatology (End times)	The Life of the King	Kenosis, Impeccability, Infallibility
	The Cross	Substitutionary Blood Atonement
	The Resurrection	Glorification
	The Ascension	Judgment and Salvation
	Pentecost	Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, Sanctification
	Emergence of the Church	Dispensations
	Maturing of the Church	Historical Theology
	Destiny of the Church	Eschatology
	The 2nd Coming	Jesus will rule with justice
	Final Judgment and Eternity	Eternal destinies
		Ultimate fulfillment of man's design

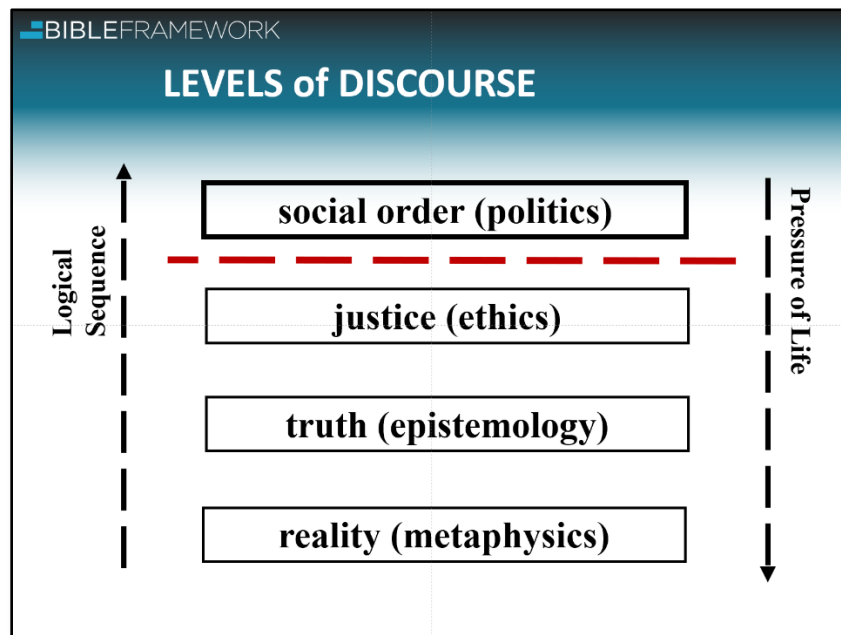
A practical application was when Charlie Clough gave a presentation to the Helms School of Government, Liberty University in October 2020. The name of the presentation was “Biblical vs. Unbiblical Views of Reality, Truth, & Ethics” with application to social and political actions. Highlights included:

- The Levels of Discourse depicted four levels of thinking. The highest was everyday conversation – in this context, politics. This is where people have disagreements. To understand others and resolve disagreements, then people must get to the bedrock of their thinking. Politics (social order) are based on an understanding of justice (ethics),

<sup>47</sup> Karen Engle. “What is Systematic Theology and Why Does It Matter?” assessed February 4, 2025. <https://www.logos.com/grow/what-is-systematic-theology-and-why-does-it-matter/>.

- which in turn is based on truth (epistemology), which is ultimately based on reality (metaphysics). Also, there are two opposite directional arrows which indicate 1) the Logical Sequence: from worldview toward issues, problems, etc., and 2) the Pressure of Life: from a problem people may have confronted them with that drives them towards reality to find a solution.
- The presentation then compared Biblical vs. Pagan viewpoints on the levels of discourse, including quotes from Frederick Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, Walter Kaufmann, intelligent, thoughtful atheists, and others.
  - There were some excellent figures that are not included, but the students found them useful.

Figure 2: Levels of Discourse



The students were appreciative of Mr. Clough and the Bible Framework approach that used an understanding of the Bible to answer pagan attacks. Some of their comments from 38 pages of feedback demonstrate the practical application of the Bible Framework to government.

- Not only did he discuss biblical and pagan views on the bible and events, but he went into detail with... man, nature, reality, lifeforms, truth, authority, evil, justice, and more. It was nice to see a different point of view from the bible and be reassured with what Christians believe.
- This presentation helped me to realize the implications of ongoing movements in the United States. The socialist movement is not a revolt against the capitalistic structure of America, as I had originally thought. Instead, as Dr. Clough explained, it is a revolt against God and a part of the wave of secularization which has been sweeping throughout the world for the past century.

- The Levels of Discourse are important in regard to intelligence because paying attention to them can help us know how our enemies may be thinking. In order to understand their politics, we must first understand their ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics.
- The average American Christian may not be aware of how secular philosophies have influenced and permeated our society. Critically examining these worldviews will enable a Christian to identify discrepancies between the objective truth found in Genesis and the subjective perspectives of contemporary theorists.
- Mr. Clough described how an understanding of major events in the bible can help us to answer the questions of everyday life, whether that be dilemmas in the workplace, setting priorities, and enduring through suffering. The application that can be drawn from the bible to the issues of our world today are stunning.

### **Conclusion**

Though today, many members of the body of Christ confess they have a Biblical worldview, they think, talk and function as though they have a pagan worldview. Regrettably, the church has not adequately prepared generations of believers to understand the Bible, themselves, or their adversaries; the flesh, the world and Satan. Christian education has allowed the world to invade, divide and neutralize much of Christianity. What much of Christianity now accepts as Christian is actually evolution, socialism, humanism based on rationalism, empiricism and existentialism which are doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). However, our Heavenly Father gave us His Word in Christ and in the Bible to show us what to believe, how to believe, and how to answer those that do not believe the Bible. The Bible Framework provides a strategic understanding of God's Word and is an effective way to confront paganism outside and inside the church.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; (Col. 2:8-10)

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