

**Class Notes for**  
**Western Thought and Culture**  
**Including Key Ideas from Francis Schaeffer's**  
***How Should We Then Live?***

**And Key Ideas from James Hitchcock's**  
***What Is Secular Humanism?: Why Humanism Became Secular and How***  
***It Is Changing Our World***

**Rome: Chapter One of Schaeffer**

[Text] How people think affects how they act. Presuppositions are the basic ways a person looks at life (his "world view"). We make decisions based upon presuppositions. The "grid".

Little old lady crosses street in front of our car. Stop or hit her?  
Presupposition = life is valuable.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7 - KJV)

Where do presuppositions come from?

Most are caught like measles, not carefully thought through and chosen. There aren't many basic world views. You can see several alternatives while surveying history.

Why begin with Rome?

Direct ancestor of modern western thought - especially ideas about law and policies (borrowed some from Greeks).

Rome had no real answers for basic problems of humanity.

What were basic characteristics of Rome:

Society was absolute - all values related to the city-state. Values were determined by people (citizens) - "polis" - an insufficient base (when society changes, values change, no stable truth and reality).

Gods are important , were borrowed from Greeks. Not like God of Bible - Roman gods were just people, a bit bigger than life. More like superman than like God of Bible.

Not really a sufficient basis because their gods were not infinite (not big enough to carry them through strains of life).

Elitist government - Julius Caesar took control (about 50 B.C.) because of chaos in Rome. Elections held, then people were killed - either because they won (losers killed them) or because they lost (opponents were killed by new leaders). Like a local election I heard of on radio in an Appalachian state, common today in some parts of world (murder opposition - Stalin). In U.S., we just fire our opponents. Much rioting. Julius Caesar took control by use of a powerful army and did a great deal of political reorganizing. Julius was made dictator for life - no more elections - because of desperation of people. [Like today - people want answers and may accept a dictator who promises answers. Reason for accepting communism; also explains many coups in S. America. Will U.S. get this desperate? Do we expect miracles from leaders? Is this why our leaders are given more and more power?]

Caesar Augustus became the next leader when Julius died (27 BC). He used terminology of the republic, but was still a dictator.

Like today - communists call their countries "democratic" and free countries "imperialist" [like "newspeak" in 1984].

Augustus had many impressive programs and reforms - but they weren't strong enough to last forever.

Schaeffer's bridge analogy - culture and freedom are fragile. If base is weak, the culture will collapse - can't survive under pressure. Rome stood as long as the pressure wasn't very great.

Augustus firmly established absolute power - people accepted it in return for peace and prosperity. (Key values today also).

What was different about Christianity? (vs. other religions of the day)

Contrast Christianity with Roman Empire - an adequate base that will endure the pressures of life. Why?

Based on God - the true God:

infinite (not limited like Roman gods)

personal (concerned with us)

Based on God who speaks to us (O.T. and N.T.)

God has given absolutes, unchanging values for us to live by and to judge society by. Example: the dignity and value of the person.

.....

Why did Romans torture and kill Christians? (instead of immediately embracing)

Cruelty of Romans - enjoyed violence and sex (TV violence is modern version)

But basically persecution came because Christians were rebels seen as unpatriotic. Schaeffer has said that we must teach our kids to be rebels - rebel against secular humanism that almost everyone accepts.

They worshiped God alone. One God was considered treason because Caesar was worshiped as a god. Blind patriotism is idolatry. (considered patriotic) If Christians had just added Jesus, they would have been accepted by leaders. It was Jesus as the only God that caused problems. [true today: Is Jesus just an addition to life -one part of regular lifestyle - or does He change everything; the center of life? "Lord, not just Savior." Having Christ as Lord makes you different and often less accepted].

Early Christians wouldn't compromise. Christians had an absolute. Revelation of God was absolute standard of right and wrong.

Who was key person in moving from persecution to acceptance of Christianity?

Constantine ended persecution in 313, then made Christianity the state religion in 381. Did Rome change overnight? No - most people went on in their sin and apathy - not really revival. But...

Christians did affect Rome to a limited extent:

Stopped infanticide - "exposure" killing unwanted babies. (Some compare it with abortion)

Slavery (not racially based) weakened and almost disappeared.

Stopped killing for fun - the gladiatorial games were suppressed (like violence on TV).

Constantine was probably not a Christian, a compromiser (tried to combine Christianity with sun worship) - beginnings of syncretism.

Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> birth of sun - so also made it birth of Christ.

Obelisks in cathedrals

Worship on Sundays

### Art

Pre-Constantine - key motif was Christ or shepherd with a lamb over shoulder. Biblical

Post-Constantine - Christ as warrior (taking on secularist theme and cloaking it with religion) [Patterson]

Very common today - church takes on secularist causes and values.

Rome generally continued to decline

Art and music especially were poor.

Schaeffer calls it "bombastic" - Dr. Hayner says that during gladiatorial games they played a loud, organ-like instrument that could be heard up to 20 miles away!

Inflation increased

Government continued to grow and become more costly

Less freedom, forced work

### Why did Rome fall?

Not just because the barbarians invaded, but because it had no sufficient base. It collapsed under the above pressures and the barbarians. (internal rot).

Shows a society based just on man alone is not enough.

[Collapse of Rome was not collapse of Christianity - can make a case for the barbarians actually being Christians!]

e.g. Their concern for churches, some Roman Christians welcomed the invaders.

## **Middle Ages - Schaeffer chapter 2**

The Early Church - how was it different from Middle Ages Church?

The early church had a living Christianity, and its art was lifelike - example of how thinking spreads to actions, even art.

This changes. Why? Because their world view changes.

What were the distortions of Christianity introduced in the Middle Ages?

1. Authority of church equal to and eventually over authority of Bible.
2. Stress on salvation by works, not by faith alone.
3. Corruption and materialism in church.
4. Syncretism - pagan elements added to Bible (distortion).

example: belief that earth was the middle of universe.

(Ptolemy taught this - a secular writer).

Adoring image - just as idols had been adored in pantheon.  
[begun by Constantine]

Mariology (elevating her over what Bible says).

Also Greek philosophy (Plato) combined  
with Bible [Augustine was strongly  
influenced by Plato].

A Bit of Philosophy [Chart]

Plato emphasized ideals, perfection. This world is a shadow of reality - another world of ideals exists. (Also called "forms" by Plato.) We talk about "chair" to describe many different objects. Behind them all is the ideal of chair. Behind every object and idea is an ideal object or idea. The ideal is eternal, the real is temporary. They are given in advance, not developed from experience [Aristotle says latter].

Augustine: we live in 2 worlds; city of God (ideal) and city of man (real).

Cave analogy

This eventually caused some to depreciate this world and elevate the ideals (spiritual mystical experiences). Body-sinful, spirit-perfect. Thus monks practiced self-abuse, didn't wash body. {"Once cleansed by Christ, a man need not be cleansed again."}

Also influenced art - humanity of people set aside, portrayed as symbols, not realistic.

Trying to portray ideas/forms. Nature de-emphasized.

But very positive developments by Christians.

What were some of the positive things the church did in Middle Ages?

Monasteries were depositories for old documents - manuscripts copied, so that Bible and Greek classics were preserved.

Very generous, charitable institutions, hospitals developed.

St. Francis forbade his followers to receive any money  
(anti-materialistic). (Franciscans - J.M. Talbot).

Work ethic emphasis (value of hard work).

Church tried economic controls (enforce just prices).

-

What resulted from more power for the church in Middle Ages?

Overall, the church and state begin to have closer relationship (feed each other).

Baptism became social and political, not just spiritual (socially acceptable).

Church became institution orientated, not "salt of the earth." The pope's power peaked about 1100-1300.

Councillor movement arose (about 1400) to decentralize power of pope - power in all the bishops together, not just pope - but the movement failed.

What was early church's view of Greek philosophy?

How did early church handle pagan cultural heritage? Many early Christians handled Greek writings without compromise. Paul cited Greek writers, as did other Christian leaders. They appreciated classical learning, used it but without compromising Biblical Christianity (used it, but didn't combine it with Christianity - syncretism).

Good example for us in studying psychology, science, etc.

Who was Charlemagne? What did he do?

Charlemagne was crowned by the pope in 800 - conquered most of what had been Roman Empire before. He built many churches and strengthened the church [an expert in church growth theory!]. Forced tithing. He assembled many scholars from throughout Europe,

forming a "palace school." All the scholars were clergy. Charlemagne also founded a school of music. He learned to read, but could only write his name (he said he was too old to learn to write more). Was he a Christian? Questionable - at least 9 wives and concubines, lied a lot, admitted to 10 illegitimate kids. [key to church growth - have a lot of kids.]

Music included the Gregorian chants, a mystical form of music. (reflected idealism of Plato).

[chart]

During Middle Ages - awakened piety (St. Francis), awakened cultural and intellectual life (Charlemagne), but distortions of doctrine [Biblical base eroded] and corruption were in church [popes]. Must not consider the Middle Ages the "dark ages." People in Renaissance saw it as dark, because they saw themselves as being so wonderful in comparison (like today's secularists who see old fashioned religion as outdated). The Renaissance was not all good and middle ages were not awful.

#### What innovations and changes occurred in the Middle Ages?

About 1050-1200 many developments:

More efficient agriculture (use of heavy plow).

More foreign trade (by-product of Crusades).

University movement develops (non-clergy schools).

Begun by Peter Abelard - University of Paris is 1150.  
Problem - if you taught anything different from accepted view, you'd be burned at stake. So how do you have debates? Invented "Devil's advocate" - protected advocates of opposite view. We need to know something of the other side - less likely to change if hear a little of opposite side.

"Inoculation effect"

University had theology as "queen of science."

-

#### Who was Thomas Aquinas?

One outstanding teacher in 1200's in the universities .

A theologian - still very influential in some Catholic circles.

Aquinas elevated the intellect a great deal - mind is made in image of God, so it is a reliable guide to truth (Bible and universe God created won't conflict).

#### What Philosopher did Aquinas emphasize?

Aquinas emphasized Aristotle's philosophy (opposite of Plato). Aristotle (ancient Greek philosopher) said ideas develop from experience. Aquinas wasn't far off. Aquinas believed Bible was source of universal truth - it was his reference point - but he did react to Augustine, who was more Platonic (felt he had too much emphasis on ideas).

Aquinas may have overemphasized intellect on source of truth, but he did believe it was fallen (Schaeffer's mistaken here). (Abelard and some other philosophers of the period did not think intellect was fallen.)

Eventually Greek philosophy became enthroned - especially Aristotle - but let's not blame it all on Aquinas (as Schaeffer does).

[Chart]

#### Is Plato or Aristotle more Biblical?

Bible emphasizes both - not just ideals, but also real world as valuable (because it's created). All of life is sacred, all are part of God's universe. Don't separate them.

Unity/diversity used by Paul - Eph. 4:1-16.

Ideal/real - I Cor. 13:9-12.

.....

### **Chapter Three: Renaissance**

#### What two eras came out of Middle Ages?

Out of the middle ages came two movements:

1. The Renaissance - in Southern Europe, rooted in Italy. 1300's and 1400's.
2. The Reformation - in Northern Europe. 1400's and 1500's.

#### Renaissance Art - How was it different from Middle Ages art?

Renaissance art emphasized realism reflected the philosophic emphasis upon nature. Previously art was symbolic more than representing realistically. Now = used perspective

Proper emphasis on nature was good aspect of Renaissance.



### How did art represent Human-centeredness of Renaissance?

The man-centered thinking comes through in the art. People became the center of space in paintings. Also, writings about artists began - focus on artist (the person) not just the art.

### Who were key artists of Renaissance?

In the north part of Europe (where Reformation occurred) Jan Van Eyck (pronounced Ike) used nature and realism, but combined these with Scriptural truth.

Compare with the unreality, symbolic art of middle ages - p. 34 [people not standing on ground, keys under top center figure].

The art of the Renaissance also shows increasing autonomy (independence) of man, which results in loss of meaning. Example "The Red Virgin" (p. 69) - the king's mistress. She was a real person - an advancement over being a symbol - but all meaning is destroyed because of who the model was and the exposure of the breast. A dramatic change - from Mary as ideal and mystical (other worldly) to Mary as mistress. [a long fall]

Not all Renaissance people were worldly, but most were more impressed with pagan philosophers of Greece than with Bible. [Hitchcock]

There was a movement in the later Renaissance to capture the universal beginning only with man - find ultimate meaning apart from God.

(Plato and Aristotle compartmentalized) ideal/real

### Pro's and Con's of Michelangelo's Art

example: the statue "David" by Michelangelo (p. 73) - very realistic, but not the David of Bible (not circumcised). Rather it was the ideal man - the humanist ideal person - shows man is great, can become perfect by his own efforts. Autonomous man again.

Idea of autonomy of man also seen in 'The Captive's' - man tearing self out of rocks (not unfinished piece of art, as some thought.) "Self-made man."

Michelangelo may have seen weakness of humanism later in life - he did the Pietas later in life - Schaeffer feels there is less humanistic pride implied.

### Describe people of Renaissance

People of Renaissance were not anti-religious as much as they were skeptical and inquiring. Self-indulgence prevailed (contrast to self-denied of middle ages).

The Renaissance was a very worldly time - many "natural" children were born - children without a legal father. Prostitution abounded. Worshiped beauty apart from morality.

There was a very short revival during the Renaissance - under Savonarola in Florence. Preached eternal punishment and Florence repented. Savonarola was made ruler of the city, but was killed 4 years later. Only a brief interlude in a very worldly and violent Renaissance.

What does Schaeffer see as basic ideas of Dante?

Dante's writings reflected separation (Literature).

Ideal love - romantic writing for Beatrice, saw her only a couple of times.

Sensual love - no romantic writings for the wife he lived with .

How is it expressed today?

Today in movies - ideal love and ideal sexuality - want perfect, overwhelming feelings all the time and an earthshaking zap in bed. It just isn't that way, unrealistic expectation lead to divorce court or dissatisfaction with spouse. Separate sensual love (for current spouse) from ideal love (for spouse-to-be).

Summary

Behind some objections to Amy Grant's 1997 album - no explicitly Christian music, so accused of going "secular" - shows the critics use of strict separation of sacred and secular (all of life is sacred). ideal - nature/real - grace

(chart)

Separation of ideal and real is unbiblical - both are important in Bible. (example - sensual and ideal (agape) love for wife.)

## **Chapter Four: The Reformation**

Distinction between secular humanism and other kinds: [Hitchcock]

A humanist

Studies humanities (history, literature, etc.).

Feels humans have dignity, people can do noble things.

Has a special loyalty to people.

Any of these can be combined with Christianity. Contrast with:

Secular humanism (Schaeffer's "humanism") (humanist manifesto)

God is either excluded or ignored (not necessarily atheists - but could be).

Biggest problem with humanism - it doesn't fit who people are - not able to find ultimate meaning and purpose on own.

Moral standards tend to be those society accepts, not permanent (no absolutes).

Universe not created

Supernatural discounted

Have power within self to realize dreams (become what can be).

Religion valuable only to promote personal well-being.

Schaeffer - people are sufficient in themselves to solve all own problems. Autonomous.

Where was Reformation and what did it do?

In the North, a reaction to the distortions of Gospel in Middle Ages and during Renaissance.

Who prepared the way for Reformation?

Forerunners of Reformation: John Wycliffe and John Huss. (mid to late 1300's)

They emphasized:

Bible as final authority [not church].

Salvation through Christ alone [not works].

Priesthood of all believers (thus equality of all).

Led to concept that merchant was of equal dignity to king  
(all vocations worthwhile).

Bible translation into common languages. (Not just for clergy in Latin).

Later others took up these themes, especially Luther. Posted his 95 theses on church door in Wittenberg, Germany (1517). He was protesting selling of indulgences (forgiveness of sins without confession or repentance).

Sold by pope to pay for rebuilding of St. Peter. [church building programs again!].

Posting disagreements on church door was customary method of discussion. What was unique was that they were translated from Latin (language of scholars) into German (language of people) and distributed (printing press was about 60 years old).

Luther also emphasized justification by faith and only two sacraments (not 7 as in Catholic Church).

#### Other Reformers:

Zwingli - Zurich, Switzerland

Calvin - Geneva, Switzerland

Cromwell - England (a bit later)

-

#### Anything in common between Renaissance and Reformation?

Reformers held one thing in common with Renaissance - skepticism about tradition - but leaned on Bible to determine what should be accepted.

[chart]

#### What was Bible the basis for?

1. Meaning in life - why things exist.
2. Absolutes (distinguishing right and wrong).
3. Truth in every area it speaks to - not exhaustive truth, but genuine truth (not all of the truth that exists is in Bible - foundation for science later).
4. Source of information about God - revelation by God himself - key to understanding the world He created.
5. Basis for human dignity (Christian humanism) - because man is created by God in image of God (thus man is creative, though flawed).

6. Fallenness of man was another important doctrine of Reformation - people cannot start from themselves to get answers (autonomous).

Fallenness implies abnormality of human race (not in condition originally intended by God). Thus cruelty can be explained, as well as greatness (image of God).

7. Relationship to God - by faith alone (in contrast to church's teaching regarding works).

What did scene with screen portray?

Interesting - a screen often separated congregation from altar before Reformation. These were often taken down and Bible placed there instead - Bible is means to approaching God.

Were Reformers anti-art?

Reformers have been accused of being anti-culture, especially anti-art. But they appreciated the fine arts.

Reformers did destroy many beautiful images - not because they disliked art, but because they were seen as images to be worshiped. Other works of art were usually kept (and not all statues were destroyed).

What key artists linked with Reformation?

The Reformation produced fine art (we can be proud of their work).

Durer - pictures of animals in nature. He saw nature as having value because it was God's world. (p. 99).

Rembrandt - Schaeffer says he was a true Christian, though flawed. Even made a self-portrait of himself crucifying Christ (p. 101) - showed understanding of personal salvation. He appreciated nature without idealizing it. His flaw? Lived with a woman for years without a marriage.

[Why? First wife died and in her will said if he remarried, he would lose inheritance, so he didn't remarry but he lived with the woman. "Common law" marriage.]

Rembrandt seems a good example of compartmentalizing life from faith as in Renaissance.

What were the effects on politics from Reformation?

The Reformation gradually resulted in increased political freedom (not perfection but great improvement). Freedom without chaos resulted from a consensus who believed in biblical absolutes. [Schaeffer talks elsewhere about form and freedom: Bible gives form - absolutes- but allows for great freedoms within those absolutes].

[chart]

Reformers emphasized that Bible not only gave basis for morals, but also for law. Whenever Reformation Christianity spread, the power of kings and government became more limited. Elsewhere, absolutist governments increased (less liberty). Why the growth in freedom? Bible emphasis upon responsibility of everyone (even kings) to God's law. Government of law not government of man.

[chart]

### What were the influences of Reformation on USA?

Founding fathers of U.S. built from this Reformation base. Many were not evangelical Christians - many were deists (God created then took an extended vacation, not involved with world, has not revealed himself in Bible).

Even earlier strong Christian influence in America - Pilgrims.

See Pat Robertson's book America's Dates with Destiny

But they borrowed liberally from the Reformation base. They used assumptions and principles of Christianity in forming constitution. Thus:

"To whatever degree a society allows the teaching of the Bible to bring forth its natural conclusions, it is able to have form and freedom in society and Government." Schaeffer

### Does there have to be a majority of the country who are Christians for our faith to influence?

This does not mean 51% majority is final source of right and wrong - Biblical absolutes are the ultimate basis by which society is to be judged (not majority rules). Important basis of U.S. and British law: Blackstone's Commentaries.

### Who was William Blackstone?

Law is only valid if consistent with God's "higher law".

So when Schaeffer says that there comes a time when civil disobedience is needed, it isn't all that radical - this was assumed if man's law was contrary to God's law even by writer of constitution. They knew Blackstone. Lawyers used to study Blackstone - but

Supreme Court Justice Holmes changed the "need" for that [law became what majority wanted].

"If the majority decides they want to go to hell, I'm ready to help them."

### Who was Machiavelli?

In contrast to government by law, Machiavelli (about 1500) emphasized powerful control by a strong leader.

Wrote The Prince - about a dictator who takes complete control. King should do anything - kill, steal, cheat, whatever to achieve political ends (Hitler and Stalin were disciples of Machiavelli).

The Reformers believed in the fall - knew even the greatest Prince was also sinful - so emphasized checks and balances in government. Every Reformation country included checks and balances in some form (Biblical example: prophet - priest - king).

## **Chapter Five: The Reformation--Continued**

### What were weaknesses of Reformation?

Reformation was not a "golden age" - far from perfect.

Four problems.

1. Some reformers went overboard - persecuted those who disagreed.
2. Little missionary activity.
3. Church did not speak out strongly against racial prejudice and slavery.

Defined black man as less than person - a distortion of Bible passages (see chapter on minorities in Grunlan's Christian sociology text). Antisemitism

### How did end of slavery take place?

End of British slavery can be directly traced to the influence of John Wesley (1700's, early 1800's). A dynamic Christian.

William Wilberforce fought slave trade in Parliament many years. Wesley's last letter was to Wilberforce, encouraging him in this.

1807 - slave trade abolished.

1833-34 - abolished in empire

Slavery ended in England 20 years before the U.S. without a civil war. How? Compensation to slave owners. If U.S. had done this, it would have been cheaper and no casualties and bitterness.

Also, John Newton, former slave trader, fought slavery after his salvation.

4. Lack of compassionate use of wealth - too often church was silent here. Many Christians became wealthy, but failed to be charitable.

Slums in England

Children and women exploited

Large differences between wealthy and the poor

Who was Malthus?

At the time some followed Malthus, a preacher, (about 1800) who said poverty is inevitable and social reforms make things worse. Some even say medical care makes things worse - should let poor die out. Later called "Social Darwinism."

Survival of fittest, strong should overpower weak.

Evolutionists are usually inconsistent at this point. Really no basis for rejecting social Darwinism if biblical base is removed. Hitler's Germany was extension of

this - superiority of Arian race, eliminate others (especially Jews).

The tragedy is that the church was too often silent on compassionate use of wealth. Why silent?

Some were Christians in name only.

Apathy

Other key people who fought social problems and were influenced by Reformation.

Most were later in history, but some did fight the abuses, especially followers of Wesley.

John Howard (prison reform)



Lord Shaftesburg (fought exploitation of women and children).

Many clinics and schools set up by Wesley. (He wrote medical texts! Not a typical evangelist!)

Whitfield, Asbury

The Wesley revival produced great social reforms in England - 1700's and early 1800's. Many secular historians say the revival saved England from a bloody French Revolution.

England's "Bloodless Revolution" - about 30 years after Cromwell and Puritans had ruled England. In 1688 England was not a Christian nation, but it was still greatly influenced by earlier reformers.

James II had come to throne and tried to be a tyrant, but was deposed. William of Orange and Mary succeeded him and the new monarchs knew their place. They signed "Declaration of Rights" - Parliament becomes equal to king in power.

The freedom and democracy this represented was very rare in history. This form of government is the exception - most of world for almost all of history has been ruled by powerful kings and dictators. (We take it for granted.)

## **Chapter Six: The Enlightenment**

What was Enlightenment? Human-reason centered, basis of modernism (rejected by post-modernism).

Contrast the "Bloodless Revolution" with the horrible French Revolution [irony = secularists accuse religion of bloody persecution and intolerance. French Revolution was secular and had both!]

The French desired a perfect society! (Utopia - remake the world.) How? By torture and killing!

Crazy? Communists are still trying!

### Key people of Enlightenment and French Revolution

Background for French Revolution:

Voltaire - saw church as source of problems, felt it should be crushed. He was impressed with England's greater freedoms and felt France could do as well. A crucial difference: England had Reformation base, France had Voltaire's secular humanism, [the few French who were religious were deists].

Rousseau - felt people were naturally good and civilization produced evils. Talked of "noble savage" - need to get back to nature (like today!) and discover man's original goodness. Need freedom from restraint, don't suppress the person. Applications:

1. Social contract - government based on agreement of majority, others forced to agree.
2. Emile - book on permissive child rearing (his kids were real terrors - sent them away to orphanages.)
3. Education - little or none needed. Let child discover self and world, never force, letting the "beautiful flower bloom". Still an influence today. [Planting without cultivating produces weeds!]

What was the French Revolution? (Enlightenment idealistically applied).

1789-1792 Key slogan "Liberty, equality, fraternity." (brotherhood)

"Imagine"

Issued "Declaration of Rights of Man." It stated the Supreme Being was the general will of the people (majority = God).

They worked on a constitution for 2 years, and felt they were beginning a new age (even new calendar - called 1792 "year one.")

They proclaimed Reason as their goddess.

People were excited about this new world. Willing to do anything, even murder, to have the perfect society. This was secular humanism at its purest.

Result: "Reign of Terror" (1792-1794)

40,000 executed - many of them peasants. The bloodbath - distinct from other bloodbaths.

1. Desired to be perfect
2. Came from within, not outsiders
3. Terrible inflation also occurred

example - pound of candles

1790 - \$.18 1795 - \$.08 1796 - \$.40

Anarchy reigned (Freedom without form)

Like just before Julius Caesar in Rome

Why did Napoleon take power?

By 1799 people had gotten their fill, and Napoleon takes charge.

Napoleon then took on the rest of Europe. He had read Machiavelli's Prince and felt he could commit no crime. He was very brutal. He finally met his waterloo in Belgium. (1815)

Similarities between French Revolution and Communist Revolution

Schaeffer compares communism with French Revolution and Napoleon.

1. Lenin took charge in Russia much as Napoleon took charge in France - when people get desperate enough, they'll take a dictator.

Other examples: Hitler, Julius Caesar. It could happen again.

2. Communism is very repressive, stifling political and artistic freedom. Even allies have to be coerced. (Poland).

Communists say repression is temporary until utopia can be reached - yet there is no evidence of progress in that direction. Dictatorship appears to be permanent.

3. No ultimate basis for morality (right and wrong) - materialist base of communism is just as humanistic as French. Only have "arbitrary absolutes" no final basis for right and wrong.

How is Christianity different from both French Revolution and Communism?

Contrast N.T. Christianity - very positive government reform and great strides against injustice. (especially under Wesleyan revival).

Bible gives absolutes - standards of right and wrong. It shows the problems and why they exist (man's fall and rebellion against God).

Is Christianity at all like Communism?

Sometimes Communism sounds very "Christian" - desirable goals of equality, justice, etc. Schaeffer elsewhere explains by saying Marxism is a Christian heresy - Karl Marx borrowed some of the ideals of N.T. Christianity and put them in his system.

## **Chapter Seven: The Rise of Modern Science**

How do you find truth? (authority, folk wisdom, logic/reason, intuition, scientific method)

About the same time as the Renaissance and Reformation, the Scientific Revolution begins. Until then, Aristotle had been accepted as the ultimate authority in most areas of science. Science was based upon authority not observation.

2<sup>nd</sup> century example - Galen drew what he thought a human brain looked like, based upon dissection of animal brains. Vesalius and others did human dissection (1500's) and found Galen was wrong. Yet Vesalius was denounced by leading scientists - one "scientist" said he would rather agree with Galen and be wrong then to change his mind!

150 A.D. example - Ptolemy's theory had been accepted - earth was in middle of galaxy and middle of universe. Copernicus (1500's) and Galileo did observation and decided the earth was only one of several planets around the sun, and not the center of universe. Resulted in persecution. This is why many modern scientists look at religion with disdain - the church fought the correct ideas of Galileo and Copernicus.

An alternate account: Ptolemy, a heathen gave a wrong theory. The church accepted the prevailing "scientific" view. Reverend Father Copernicus stood against the theory, accepted by most "scientific" authorities - the preacher was right and science wrong!

Why did the church reject Copernicus and Galileo?

The Catholic church attacked Copernicus and Galileo not because it conflicted with the Bible, but because it conflicted with church authorities. Galileo showed how Copernicus theory fit the Bible account.

Who was Francis Bacon?

He wrote of the need for observation and systematic collecting of data, rather than using authority. He took the Bible seriously.

While the Reformation did not cause the rise of modern science, the Scientific Revolution did rest upon a biblical world-view. Whitehead and other secular scientists have indicated this.

How did a Christian base help "modern science" begin?

Many early scientists believed the universe was made by a reasonable God - thus orderliness in nature is to be expected. [This was held by both Reformation and non-Reformation Christians].

How can non-Christians be scientifically creative?

Because of the image of God in them (whether or not they realize it). Yet the world view influences the direction of that creativity - for good or evil. Later - the Christian base was lost, but momentum continued.

Not all early scientists were Christians (but many were) and nearly all lived within ???

#### Christian assumptions about science and nature:

1. Correlation between observer (scientist) and what was observed - if one doesn't believe this, then can't trust senses and can't get data.
2. Science is not autonomous - not the center of reference point -(vs. Scientism - science as religion, the only source of truth). But Bible states that science is valuable both to God and man. e.g. "It is the glory of the king to search out a matter." (Prov. 25:2)
3. The Bible and the scientific method would never contradict one another (true science and valid understanding of Bible).
4. Objective reality exists - something is really there for science to examine (vs. it is all just mental and imagined - a basic philosophical assumption). Eastern religions and some philosophy question this. Objective reality is implicit in the Bible.
5. The world is worth discovering - because it is God's creation (thus valuable).
6. People are free to investigate it ("subdue it"- Gen 1:28)
7. "Uniformity of natural causes in an open system." There is cause and effect - systematic relationships that can be discovered in nature and mankind - but universe is open:
  - a. Man has a free will (not 100% cause and effect).
  - b. God can intervene in history and personally.
  - c. Not a cosmic machine [Because universe is open, God can intervene - miracles occur].

See Compolo on different dimensions and limits to space (A Reasonable Faith).

Other early scientists:

#### Who was Sir Isaac Newton?

Attraction between objects in universe - called gravity. Measured speed of sound. His famous book The Mathematical Principles was recently edited and re-released - 1997.

He tried to be loyal to what he felt Bible taught - he believed in a personal God who created the universe. In latter years of life he wrote more about bible than science.

Not all of Newton's speculations about science were valid, but he made many helpful additions to science.

Who was Pascal? (A computer language was named after him)

Made the first successful barometer and helped develop calculus. Also a fine writer. Schaeffer describes him as "an outstanding Christian."

What was the Royal Society?

Most members were Christians in early years (began 1662). British society for advancing science.

Who was M. Faraday? (early 1800's)

Discovered the inductions of electric current. The electrical term for capacitance is named after him - the Farad. He was a fine Christian, Schaeffer says. Public experiments.

Who was Maxwell? (mid 1800's)

Also a famous experimenter with electric current, believed in a personal God.

Some have suggested that the Biblical concept of orderly universe has been undermined by Einstein's theory of relativity and other recent theories. But such theories still assume orderliness in the universe. Most scientific calculations and achievements assume orderly cause and effect. Because of the uniformity of natural causes, science can precede (a necessary assumption for science).

.....

Empire widespread, after Victoria Britain declined due to economics.

1850 - 50% of world's production

1870 - 33% of world's production

1910 - 15% of world's production

Empires decline when people aren't willing to take hard decisions. Will to retain power is less (just after WWI).

Parallels between U.S. and British growth and decline (high point for US after WWII).

Trade deficit growing rapidly - world dominance declining rapidly.

British empire may have occurred by accident, but economics brought its fall.

(3800-4092) Moral Climate before Wesley in decline. Alcoholism, violent crime. Wesley and Whitfield preached to people in open air because church rejected him. Drew great crowds. Whitfield and Wesley - both preached to thousands. 28 times a week normally (if took a rest - only 14 a week.) Charles Wesley music. Social consequences.

### **Chapters Eight through Ten:**

#### **The Breakdown in Modern Philosophy and Science**

##### **Modern Philosophy and Modern Theology**

##### **Modern Art, Music Literature, and Films**

Age of Non-Reason/Fragmentation

What is Schaeffer trying to say by drawing the circles?

Standard philosophy: trying to find unity and knowledge - explain universe and all things in it. Make sense out of life starting from man alone (secular humanism).

○ = system developed by person to explain all of life.

Next philosopher comes along and discounts that system. ⊗

Then makes his own. ⊗○

and so on.

What were these philosophies?

Locke - blank slate theory - all experience is written on person from birth.

Rousseau - said no, not blank slate at birth. Basically good at birth.

Kant - goes another direction. Says rationalism (platonic) provides structures of thinking, empiricism (Aristotelian) provides content of thinking.

Schaeffer's summary of Kant is very poor, reviewers of our text state.

Each of these is a simplified summary of their ideas - not representative of their complete systems - but they have 3 things in common (with most philosophy from Socrates to Contemporary period ca. 1900).

### Three things early philosophies had in common (up to 1900)

1. Man can begin from self and own reasoning (or data) and arrive at understanding of truth and reality.
2. Reason is valuable - especially the law of non-contradiction; If one thing is true, its opposite is false [basic to logic] "A" and "Non-A" - Schaeffer.
3. Optimism - felt it was possible to arrive at a unified and true understanding of reality - believed they would succeed.

### Key shift away from these 3 - Kierkegaard

#### What did Kierkegaard believe about ultimate philosophical systems?

Schaeffer sees Kierkegaard as crucial change - not looking for ultimate system that explains everything - optimism only through leap of faith (no reason involved). He was father of existentialism.

#### What is existentialism, specifically according to John Paul Sartre?

Existentialism: "existence precedes essence" You experience existence before you can have meaning. Don't start with meaning to know how to live (traditional philosophy) but after existing a person defines himself. You authenticate existence by living and doing. (Sartre p. 15) Has much in common with postmodernism (find personal meaning, not objective truth).

Ultimately all is absurd - there is no meaning. But you can choose with no reason involved - and that provides meaning for you, but no ultimate meaning in life. (Sartre p. 49) Termed "anti-philosophy philosophy."

Sartre may have become a Christian as he was dying - Is Man the Measure by Norman Geisler, p. 46.

Schaeffer suggests that existentialism (and its counterpart in religion--liberalism and neo-orthodoxy) produces despair, because no ultimate meaning in life. Anything as source of meaning--even occult/demons (in Schaeffer video).

Experience without content - This emphasis upon non-reason and despair produces results (people are as they think). Nietzsche's nihilism is another example of this--raw power is everything, so violence is acceptable (Machiavelli).



### How is non-reason represented in art?

Progressive fragmentation in art:

Picasso, father of "modern art" (p. 189).

[but he couldn't consistently paint in a fragmented manner - painted wives and children realistically].

Eventually art becomes absurd: chance paintings, totally black, converse, etc. "Anti-art art"

### How is fragmentation represented in theology? [Both Schaeffer and Hitchcock good here]

Karl Barth & Paul Tillock - combine rationalistic Enlightenment thinking and biblical Christianity--many mistakes in Bible.

Yet religious words bring emotion without need for content. Just becomes another trip. "High on Jesus"--catch phrase during Jesus movement of early 1970's. There *is* emotion in faith (need both feeling and fact), but if just "high" on Jesus then this fits liberal theology. Jesus as just a spiritual high fits well with Karl Marx--"religion is the opiate of the people."

Anti-God theology. Taken to logical extreme--"God is dead" theology. Not literal death, but the idea of God lost all meaning to modern people. Now with post-modernism, supernatural being reclaimed (angels) but without God of Bible.

### How is fragmentation represented in music?

Progressive fragmentation in music: Schoenberg - no resolution in music (satisfying conclusion). Singing "A-Men"

Contrast with Bach of Reformation : diversity with resolution = freedom and form of Bible]

No resolution - no ultimate meaning (thus life is not satisfying).

Debussy - fragmentation in music

Cage - no order, confusion, or silence (singing random notes, "plays" piano by looking at it and doing nothing). Yet he too is inconsistent - he picks mushrooms very carefully, not chance.

What is Cage trying to say? All is meaningless, life is pure chance and absurd. Anti-music music.

Fragmentation and Rock Music.

See my web page on Schaeffer and Rock Music:

[www.don.ratcliffs.net/conferences/scharock.pdf](http://www.don.ratcliffs.net/conferences/scharock.pdf)

Rock music reflects many of the styles of music we have studied - the prototype (best example) being the Beatles: Best example is their White album:

electronic music (Revolution #9)

muzak ("good night") used this regularly at a conservative Christian radio station.

country and western, Eastern music, other styles

Also reflect philosophy - Neat book about music in 60's & 70's - Philosophy at 33-1/2 RPM

words that appear to say something yet really do not (but some do)

Postmodernist - words can mean anything; any meaning is OK.

Perhaps Frank Zappa did this to a greater extreme.

electronic music - much like what Schaeffer uses, but fused with rock  
(much more than Beatles)

sarcasm, putting down almost anything conventional (nihilistic even in the  
60's and 70's).

### Sources in meaning found in rock

1. Romantic love - Elvis, most popular theme historically with rock
2. Sex (more today but overtones since beginning) straight & gay, "Rock Around the Clock"
3. Drugs (banned about 1970)
4. Mysticism and occult - George Harrison, Moody blues, Black Sabbath
5. Revolution - reaction to status quo, Punk styles.
6. Utopia - "Imagine" "This is the Age of Aquarius", 5<sup>th</sup> Dimension - "Everything is Beautiful"

7. Meaning in Violence - begun with Alice Cooper (decapitating chicken on stage) continued in some punk rock
8. Meaning in filthy language - Frank Zappa- 4 letter words in 1960's. 2 Live Crew
9. Suicide
10. No meaning in life - "Dust in the Wind", Kansas, also reflected in some modern rock.
11. Life "stinks" - nihilistic
12. Christian music - ultimate truth, objective meaning, each of the above understood from God's perspective.

How is fragmentation expressed in literature and the media?

T.S. Elliot - fragmented poetry - Wasteland (later became a Christian). "Non-literature literature." Just words strung together without any real meaning (just see whatever meaning you want to). Postmodernism in literature (Kay Ludwigson).

Fragmentation in media (TV, movies, etc.) like Greece. [Segment of "BlowUp"]

Space Jam - Bugs Bunny mixed with Michael Jordan (real and imaginary blended) [at least there was a plot].

"My way of leaving reality"--Fellini in Schaeffer film.

**Chapters Eleven and Twelve: Our Society/Manipulation and the New Elite**

Age of Personal Peace (film 9)

Note: see my article on B. F. Skinner and Francis Schaeffer located at:

<http://don.ratcliffs.net/conferences/fasskinner.html>

What are the Two impoverished values held by most people?

1. Personal peace - want to be left alone, not troubled by others' problems. Minimum of disturbance desired. Indifference, apathy.
2. Affluence - desire for increasing prosperity, success judged by material goods.

Hedonism - love of pleasure.

No ultimate meaning beyond these values. Popularized by mass media. No memory of post-Christian influence (early colonists Wesley & Whitfield, Moody). and memory of associated values weakening [inertia of past].

Work ethic without Christian base is ugly - (love, compassion, fairness, etc.).

Work is end in itself (no reason behind it).

What were results in 1960's of these two poor values without Christian influences?

Student revolts in 1960's (reacting to affluence and apathy. Resulting in meaninglessness, return to Rousseau's humanisms).

Drug movement - an ideology, a religion of students. a means of meaning though totally subjective (had given up on objective meaning). A leap into irrationality to find meaning. If everyone turns on, peace and beauty will result.

Free speech movement, degenerated into obscenity, then new left movement.

These were reactions to the two impoverished values - they wanted more than those values.

Schaeffer says their analysis was right, but solution was wrong.

Why was Woodstock a turning point?

Thought it was beginning of utopia (like French Revolution - 60's youth wanted perfection), new society.

Actually beginning of decline (optimism evaporated).

Death of Jimi Hendrix via drugs.

Drugs still taken, but to escape, not as ideology. (ca. 1970)

New Left declines due to bombings and violence (terrorism still very alive, most active overseas).

What does Schaeffer say was characteristic of 1970's?

Apathy, loss of hope

The quieting of universities showed an acceptance of the two impoverished values. ("I could have wept" says Schaeffer).

In Europe and other parts of world, youth became Marxist - an irrational leap of faith. People closed their eyes to its historic oppression and only listened to their words regarding dignity and rights (taken from Christianity).

Change in government

major concern in Christian Manifesto and Hitchcock. No longer government based on Blackstone - now based upon 51% majority. No absolutes - all is relative. Thus, the constitution can be made to say what people want it to say - based on what justices feel would help society. Anything can become law.

How is abortion an example of a change of legal system?

Change in abortion laws in 1973 - completely stripped the rights of the unborn child. This is a totally arbitrary decision. May open to door to other arbitrary life decision. (Euthanasia, infanticide, and designated unwanted group - could be any group) - the progression in Hitler's Germany).

Supreme Court - major power in U.S. has changed much of society from biblical basis.

Schaeffer is especially fearful of power of Supreme Court.

Ultra government - Jesus as King

Schaeffer spoke against abortion long before evangelicals really gave it much thought (most people thought it was just a Catholic issue - like birth control). He talked about elderly being killed almost 20 years before Kevorkian.

TV Manipulation - a genuine danger

(Moody racial demonstration in Time magazine and TV news.)

Pictures edited - to present a specific viewpoint of events. Implies objectiveness but it is almost impossible. Some feel pictures add to objectivity -- but they actually limit it further (radio - a bit easier to spot bias of language, harder if picture is added - 2 sources of bias to screen).

Newscasters are not communists - but they are secular humanists. This world view strongly affects the presentation (all 3 networks have some humanist bias).

Research shows broadcasters are far more left wing than the rest of country. News sources also make news by what they dig up - they report what they feel fits their image.

Example: Creation trial in Arkansas, did not report Geisler's comments on creation (which took hours in court) but leaped on a side comment on UFO's. Minimal coverage of Promise Keepers, and usually nothing on Christian festivals.

Working at CNN - perhaps as much a ministry as preaching or as in missions.

### **Chapter Thirteen: The Alternatives**

Pressures brought upon U.S.

#### **Five sources of pressure that may result in chaos in USA?**

1. Economic breakdown - hard to cope with recession. To counteract, government has new programs, more debt, prints more money and thus more inflation. Uncontrolled inflation in Germany resulted in Hitler's acceptance. Unstable stock market overdue for collapse.
2. War and threat of war - especially atomic warfare - may cause people to give up freedoms for mere survival. Intimidation, not just ability to destroy - haven't had a war on US continents since Civil War.
3. Chaos of violence - terrorism. Some may feel authoritarian government is better than terrorism (such as Julius Caesar and Napoleon). Increased airport security, bombing in NY City and Oklahoma City, Olympics.
4. Pressure to redistribute wealth (many more 'have-nots' than 'haves' in world) - lowering of affluence resulting will cause reaction (perhaps a welcome of authoritarian government to soften the blow). Poverty.
5. Shortages of food and natural resources. Thus solutions via more powerful government will be welcomed - perhaps demanded. (The reason Iran and Iraq are so crucial - oil.)

#### **Three Alternatives as a result of pressures**

These pressure movements on the present secular humanist base - a weak base that can't withstand them.

Result 1. Disintegration (Rome)

2. Authoritarian Government (Hitler). People will probably take the latter. (imposed order)

3. The only viable alternative: Return to Reformation base, Christ and the Bible. Requires a commitment.

Acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord. Christians do not have to be majority for this to occur. The basic problem is not the outward things - need to go to root of problem; the basic world view. People are as they think. But then as Christians, we must act upon our

world view to influence society, as Wesley, Wilberforce, Shaftesbury did. The danger is capitulation to personal peace - silence until religious activities and life styles are endangered (probably too late). To act will cost us (Paul wrote from prison - might cost us personal freedom). Early Christians met martyrdom. We may lose jobs.

### What is Postmodernism?

A major variety of thinking among some university students and faculty (a bit like existentialism).

Many variations - not one unified perspective.

Postmodernism is a reaction to modernism (which Schaeffer attacks - scientific thinking with rigid cause and effect and assumption of objectivity getting outside the immediate situation). Opposite of determinism - we are free.

Believes in open, not closed universe.

Very open to human choices, in fact so open there is little possibility of offering anything as true. No objective truth - just truth for you or me. Feelings, not objective truth.

What seems to be cause and effects - something we bring to situation. Even the meaning of words heard, read and stated are the result of what we bring to them.

We each have a story - a narrative. Move beyond the idea of systems that exist objectively "out there" to the idea of my story, "my take" on what happens.

Affirm a multiplicity of views, not one right, perfect, objective view.

Emphasizes paradox - opposites can exist at the same time and same place. (Schaeffer affirms the principle of non-contradiction in logic - if something is true, the opposite can't also be true. Postmodernism disagrees - two opposite things can exist in paradox). Paradox exists in Christianity: One God and three persons (can't logically explain it - beyond reason but still true).

Deconstructionism - realizing that words and ideas are constructed, that there are implications and philosophies behind them. To deconstruct is to tear apart the ideas and see underlying values being taught - what is presumed?

For example, an extreme feminist postmodernist might suggest that history should be deconstructed to reveal an overemphasis on males, because males predominantly wrote original documents in male dominant society and history is usually written by males in male dominant societies. Thus can't trust historical documents or histories themselves. Not trying to say feminist history is objectively true, but rather it is just a different take on history.

Perhaps - say postmodernists there is greater value in diversity - multiple voices, especially the voices traditionally ignored or silenced - than in trying to find some "objective" perspective that always hides biases.

Need to deconstruct "truth" - see underlying values and hidden agendas of standard accounts of truth. Language itself has these hidden assumptions, so need to deconstruct language and see how there is no inherent meaning. But text is not just words - all of life is a text, a story and each of us tells a story by our lives.

Are we a story? Yes - our lives tell why we love and who is important to us. Bible is full of stories, may speak to postmodernists much better than philosophy or logic. Perhaps more potential today to tell our story.

Related to tribalism - increasing diversity and less emphasis on a common view of life or society - varied allegiances and understandings. The idea of nation-wide or society-wide allegiances masks the fact that these affirm the power of some and make other people powerless - oppression is result, a Marxist idea, and there are Marxist postmodernists - not following Marxism as a political system, but Marxism as a philosophy that deconstructs capitalism to show its oppression.

Usually they are called Neomarxists.

My view - postmodernism is contrary to Christianity, but it also affirms the free choices people make - there are genuine choices. At least in theory Christianity is allowed a voice, because of the value of diversity. Much better that modernist view of religion as old and outdated, a relic of the past. The enlightenment base wedded to religion brought liberal theology and atheist base for science. Postmodernism is opposite enlightenment assumptions of objective truth that exclude God. Problem with postmodernism is it is too open - anything is OK, no objective base for affirming anything or denying anything ultimately.

Christians should affirm the idea of objective reality of Enlightenment - God sees objectively - but also the subjectivity of postmodernism. We can't be completely objective, we only see part of picture (I Cor. 13). We only see through a glass darkly: but we can see part of it, we see in glass, even if clouded.

Sometime things don't make sense, as writer of Ecclesiastes emphasizes. Like it can seem senseless and chaotic at times - as postmodernists say - but we also know God is somehow behind the scenes.

See web page for Schaeffer's list of priorities, just before he passed away:  
[www.don.ratcliffs.net/conferences/priorities.pdf](http://www.don.ratcliffs.net/conferences/priorities.pdf)



## **Key Ideas from James Hitchcock *What Is Secular Humanism?: Why Humanism Became Secular and How It Is Changing Our World***

[comments by Prof. Ratcliff are in brackets]

*Hitchcock is a Roman Catholic, but he cooperated with Francis Schaeffer in at least one book project. He and Schaeffer disagree quite a bit about the Reformation, but they agree on many other topics. His book is titled *What is Secular Humanism?* and is now out of print.*

### **Chapter One: "What is Secular Humanism?"**

Four general definitions of "humanist":

1. someone who teaches in the humanities (philosophy, fine arts, literature)
2. a person who believes humans have a special dignity; people do noble and inspiring things. Contrasts with those who see humans as insignificant, as lacking any spiritual dimension. Thus a Christian humanist would see human dignity as God-given.
3. having a special loyalty to humankind; people are distinct from the rest of nature. We are not just animals.
4. a person who excludes God and religion; may not deny the existence of God but God does not have any practical significance for people. Best termed "secular humanism." God is not active in the world, no permanent values ["absolutes" Schaeffer calls them].

While many secular humanists are atheists, they don't have to be. [Schaeffer just designates these people "humanists."] Example--John Dewey: "It is the business of those who do not believe that religion is . . . a protected industry to contend . . . for keeping the schools free from what they must regard as a false bias." Dewey is quite likely the philosophy who as influenced American history more than any other person, and was a key author of "The Humanist Manifesto." Other people who signed the humanist manifesto included Sidney Hook, Isaac Asimov, Francis Crick, Albert Ellis, B. F. Skinner, Allen Guttmacher (founder of Planned Parenthood), Joseph Fletcher, and Betty Friedan. Secular humanists have far more influence upon public opinion than their numbers would suggest. Secular humanism is not the tolerant influence it appears to be--it actively opposes movements that advocate more conservative beliefs and morality.

### **Chapter Two: "The Road to Modernity"**

The Western world is the result of two basic influences: the rationalism of the Greeks and Judaeo-Christian tradition. The Greeks believed in many gods, but the Greek philosophers spoke of God as the "One" that could not be identified with any specific god of the Greeks. The humanism of the Greeks emphasized the value of human achievement and trust in human abilities. The religion of the Jews and Greek philosophy became integrated by the early Christians, seen in John's Gospel where he calls Jesus "The Word" and discusses the philosophical idea of the Logos. The monasteries preserved both religious learning and manuscripts by Greek philosophers and writers. The Catholic church added many pagan practices to the Christian faith. In the late Middle Ages philosophers began including Aristotle's ideas, with the best synthesis between Christianity and Aristotle being accomplished by Thomas Aquinas. Later philosophers felt Aquinas gave too much credence to reason, as they felt faith became irrelevant in the process. In contrast Nominalists declared that philosophy should be completely separated from faith.

The Renaissance people were almost never atheists, and some of them were very devout. Renaissance humanists were interested in poetry, history, art work, music, rather than philosophy which was considered too abstract and removed from everyday life. Theology was not excluded from life by Renaissance humanists, but they did believe things deteriorated after Christianity triumphed in the Roman Empire. In a sense they were intellectually Christians yet in their emotions and imaginations they were pagan. While the art work was often religious, they also honored great families and cities in art, and nudity in art was celebrated as a representation of human nature in general.

Machiavelli wrote *\*The Prince\** which emphasized power as a worthy goal. In contrast, Savonarola preached hell fire and brimstone revival sermons that influenced the people of Florence to turn from their ways, even burning books and paintings that were full of "vanity." The pope ordered Savonarola to be burned at the stake; the pope at the time was openly immoral.

In the northern part of Europe people were shocked at the rather profane ways of the humanists in Italy. Erasmus made use of Aristotle's ideas, as well as the work of Aquinas, and encouraged a more individualistic belief in the attempt to help Christians become more pious and understand their faith in a more authentic way. He can be considered the first "Christian humanist." People at the time said that "Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched." Yet Erasmus spoke out against the Reformation. The Reformation pushed aside the Renaissance, and Luther had no sympathy for the humanism of the Renaissance. The emphasis of the sin nature and faith alone as the basis for salvation was quite anti-humanistic, and some extremists in the Reformation excluded much of the fine arts from worship, with the exception of music. The Reformers renounced monasticism, emphasizing that worldly vocations were religiously significant, and Calvinists encouraged the quest for wealth and capitalism. While disagreeing on many points of theology, Protestants and Catholics agreed on the basics of the Christian faith, and secular perspectives were ignored at this time.

### **Chapter Three: "The Secularization of the West"**

The upheaval of religion in the 1500's helped produce the rise of secular thought and decline of religion. More and more Christians had to cope with pluralism because of the multiplying groups who all claimed to have the truth. With the religious wars and persecution of the time, people began to develop greater skepticism about religious faith. Most often religion in the 1700's was bland and formal that didn't arouse any emotions. Ethics becomes more important than doctrines, and emotional display in church becomes embarrassing. For example, in England in the late 1600's and early 1700's attending church was more a social issue than faith issue. In this context the Methodist movement began, a reaction to formal and emotionless religion.

In the 1500's Copernicus challenged the accepted theory that the universe revolved around the earth, and a century later Galileo was condemned by the Roman Catholic church for supporting that view. Both Protestants and Catholics felt the new theory contradicted the Bible; they felt that humans were no longer a central concern to God if they just lived on a minor planet. As the evidence supported the new theory, people began to doubt other things the church had taught them, and religious authority became less credible. However, science did not directly lead to secularization; most of the early scientists were devout Christians. Isaac Newton, for example thought that the laws of physics showed God really existed. The philosophers of science sought to protect faith from skepticism, but actually their attempts to protect faith undermined people's confidence in religion. No longer was theology the "queen of the sciences," the center of study and the real world. There were not many direct attacks on religion, instead it just became neglected as self-sufficiency increased. In the 1700's this changed and faith was directly attacked during "The Enlightenment." They left no room for a supernatural world or mystery. Most intellectuals held to Deism--God created the world, but left it to run according to natural laws; there are no miracles,

God does not act in history, and the Bible is not God's revelation--instead it was just a group of tales people made up. The morals held by these individuals was similar to Christian morality, but they felt their views should only come from reason rather than any religious authority. Voltaire provided the outline of secular humanism even as it exists today, and stated "If God did not exist, he would have to be invented." In other words, most people felt that atheism was unreasonable, but their concept of God was quite different from that of earlier scientists and theologians. Religious toleration was encouraged as a basic principle of life, so that religious groups would remain small and powerless. Most churches, strangely enough, did not resist the Enlightenment, other than revivalist groups such as the Methodists. Many church leaders embraced the ideas of the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment became a political movement in the French Revolution of 1789. Religious authority was swept aside and violence reigned, sweeping aside the dream that peace and tolerance could be achieved through Enlightenment ideas. The result was virtual anarchy and the "Reign of Terror" in which thousands of French citizens were victims of the guillotine. This clearly proved that rationality was the result of following Enlightenment philosophy; when man-centered thinking prevailed, the evil side of human

nature expresses itself most clearly. Humanism was no more tolerant than the earlier religious people who persecuted others.

In the early 1800's many of the European countries experienced revival, a reaction to the earlier suppression of faith. Romanticism was born, which emphasized the presence of mystery in human existence. Not all romantics were religious, some were strong believers. On the other hand, science continued to move in a more anti-religious direction at this time, although some scientists--such as Pasteur and Mendel--were devout Christians. During the 1900's "scientism" developed, which said that science has all methods that lead to truth and would solve all of humankind's problems. Religion was thought to be obsolete.

Key people of this era include Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud, who all encouraged a materialistic view of the world. While Darwin did not totally reject the idea of God, he was increasingly skeptical as he got older. Freud dismissed religion as a delusion of the mentally ill. Marx stated that most rational thinking by people just covered up an underlying self-interest in economic prosperity. During the 1800's atheism became more and more popular, as people came to believe that only by rejecting God could people become more mature. Friederich Nietzsche, a philosopher, stated that God had died; in other words, the idea of a God had died. This is a secular humanism that denies and rebels against God. Instead of the Enlightenment idea of rationality, Nietzsche saw the destructive nature of secular humanism, as the denial of God's existence brought genuine freedom that allowed all moral constraints to be lost. Thus Nihilism was born, which involved the annihilation and destruction of everything that was concerned good and right.

#### **Chapter Four: "The American Experience"**

Most of the early settlers in the American continent were believers who practiced their faith. However, by the late 1700's, most of the colonies were powerfully influenced by Enlightenment ideas. Leaders such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington were either Deists or nominally religious, not letting their faith influence their lives a great deal. The Declaration of Independence specifically mentions God, but the constitution did not. Many Americans at the time were very religious, but most of its leaders were less religious. The church and state were kept quite separate so that there would be freedom of worship for everyone. This religious freedom was virtually unheard of at the time. Some leaders were quite suspicious of faith, trying to keep all religion out of public life and confined to private life. A few, such as Jefferson, affirmed those aspects of Christianity that fit with Enlightenment thinking and rejected everything else.

While church membership was low at the time, the people were in general quite religious in their beliefs. Earlier in the eighteenth century the Great Awakening had influenced many, and in the next century the Second Great Awakening influenced a large proportion of the population. Visitors to the United States, such as Tocqueville, were very impressed with the public discussion of the Bible and God at the time. Many immigrants in the 1800's were secular humanists, but the majority were at least somewhat religious. Most

appreciated the religious toleration in America. During the civil war period, religion was used to justify slavery by people in the south, and condemn slavery in the north. After the Civil War, people tended to move from the country to cities in search of industrial jobs. While some people left their faith behind, there was also a major emphasis of evangelism and millions of people became Christians or were encouraged in their faith as a result. The majority of people attended church, and even those who did not affirmed a belief in God and Christian morals were virtually universal as guiding principles until World War II.

After the Second World War, Civil Rights leaders used religious principles to persuade those who were racially prejudiced to reconsider their ways. However, some preachers, such as Norman Vincent Peale, encouraged happy optimism as the central aspect of their faith, with little or no emphasis on repentance from sin. Political leaders also mentioned God in their speeches [this is termed "Civil Religion" by sociologists].

Most people of the late 40's, 50's, and early 60's were morally conservative, but more out of custom and habit than out of principle. During the mid 1960's youths attacked the prevailing religious and moral conventions. Prosperity was increasing at the time, and with prosperity people tend to leave their faith behind. Needs were increasingly confused with wants, and fewer people were willing to deny themselves anything they wanted. As a result, divorce rates escalated in the 1970's, abortion became legal and acceptable, and drugs were used widely. God was not given any significant place in most people's lives, and few sensed any need for salvation or awareness of personal sin. Secular humanism became the dominant way of life. "Planned obsolescence" in which things were discarded within a few years after purchase because something newer and better was invented, was a relatively new development. These factors influenced people to question the existence of eternal truth, the value of any commitments, and fixed beliefs.

## **Chapter Five: "The Cult of Self-Worship"**

The 1960's were an idealistic time, exemplified by President John Kennedy. While there was little emphasis on divine law or God, leaders of the time were generally believers, at least in a nominal sense. One of the most influential religious books of the time was *\*The Secular City\** by theologian Harvey Cox which emphasized that, while God did exist, that made little difference in practical life. The idealism of Kennedy was carried on by Lyndon Johnson, but injustice and poverty did not end as they intended. By the middle of the 60's youths began to revolt on college campuses; they were disappointed that the idealistic dreams of the era were not fulfilled and that the war in Vietnam existed. These baby boomers promoted the Free Speech Movement which was accompanied by the Dirty Speech Movement. These youths expected much from society because they had been given so much as they grew up. Self-indulgence, in the form of drugs and sex, was considered one of their "rights." A key slogan was "make love, not war," as they regarded a great deal of authority and associated institutions to be illegitimate. Once the Vietnam war came to an end, in the 1970's, self-gratification became the predominant concern among youths; the "me generation" was emphasized. While youths had condemned materialism, and a few turned to a simplified lifestyle, most considered themselves non-

materialistic because they valued things their parents did not and vice versa. Self-centeredness expressed itself in higher divorce rates, increased abortion, and widespread usage of drugs. The idea of committing oneself permanently to anything was abandoned, and many decided to live together rather than be married. Children were considered a "burden" which could be dropped off at a day-care center while both parents worked. Public tolerance of issues such as homosexuality was encouraged; people wanted to avoid the label of being puritanical.

Instead of trying to find meaning in life by religious faith or service to others, increasing numbers turned to self-discovery through psychology. The unhealthy preoccupation with self was described in *\*The Culture of Narcissism\** by Christopher Lasch; it was in essence an idolatry of the self. Paul Vitz critiqued this issue in his book *\*Psychology as Religion\**, where humanistic psychology is portrayed as ignoring the realities of sin and emphasizing freedom, personal growth, and the basic goodness of humanity. The relativism of this approach is seen in the slogans of the day: "If it feels good, do it," "Do your own thing," and the more psychological phrase "Get in touch with your feelings." There was little sense of right and wrong, and thus sin cannot be repented of because sin was no longer considered bad and sometimes even considered virtuous. Christian values in particular were attacked in the realm of sexual morals. The revolution of morals in the 1970's was a product of the Enlightenment; now people do the judging of God and everything else, instead of submitting to God. At the same time, many exotic religions such as Zen Buddhism and the worship of nature became more respectable; offbeat religions proliferated--it was a "religious greenhouse." This indicated that people have a religious nature, a spiritual hunger, a desire for the mystical, but they try to fulfill that spirituality apart from God.

## **Chapter Six: "The Mass Media"**

Secularism has been spread by the media more than any other source. Since the 1930's the film industry had policed itself with a code that required the honor of virtue and the acknowledgment--and usually punishment of--evil. That began to change during the mid 1960's and particularly shifted during the 1970's. At that point more traditional moral views began to be attacked. Even Christians tolerated this, thinking it was just entertainment that would not influence people's values. The media usually dealt with serious and delicate issues in a simplistic, brief, and often sensationalistic manner. The values of the 1950's--being patriotic, religious, and family-oriented--was made the victim of satire and ridicule, while Christian morality was portrayed as a tyrant that a few heroic people stood against. The problem was not just violence of sex, but went much deeper because the writers and producers of television shows and movies usually considered more traditional morality and religious faith to be without meaning or even evils; a threat to freedoms. The media emphasized that change is the only constant thing in life.

Popular music historically had emphasized traditional values until Elvis Presley. While Elvis stated he was religious, his music was accompanied by suggestive, erotic movements of his body. He ended his life wrecked by indulgence and drugs. Rock groups came to emphasize the complete abandonment of moral limitations. The Beatles were

irreligious, while the Rolling Stones confronted every social and moral precept. The group Alice Cooper, in the 1970's, was clearly nihilistic in their attempts at destruction and shocking people, dramatizing mock suicides and executions on stage, even pulling off the heads of animals in the process.

Television produced the sitcom "All in the Family" in which Archie Bunker was an ignorant bigot who believed in the traditional values of family, God, and traditional sexuality. In contrast, the more humane and rational people on the program questioned his conservative views. At the same time, talk shows and other daytime programs were places to display every evil and corrupt thing possible. Unlike many people in real life, religion is rarely considered of great importance to television characters. On television news programs, conservatives tend to be portrayed in the worst possible light while liberals are usually presented in a positive manner. While religion is a very deep, personal thing for most religious people, the media usually notice faith when controversy is generated by it.

## **Chapter Seven: The Law and the Constitution**

At the beginning of the United States some of the founders were genuine Christians and others were Deists. Several customs that were a part of government from the beginning emphasized the Christian faith: "In God We Trust" being placed on money, opening Congress with prayer, chaplains in the Congress and armed services. Two supreme court justices were particularly influential in the secularization of American society through their legal decisions: William O. Douglas and Hugo Black. Douglas' decisions resulted in the exclusion of religious faith in public life, such as public schools. The Supreme Court became an "activist" group of individuals who reinterpreted the Constitution so that it stated what they wanted it to say. The net effect was to place greater restrictions on the freedom to exercise religion, while encouraging those who held other opinions. While the courts have made many decisions against religious groups, they have tended to give secularists unfair legal advantages. In attempting to appear neutral, the court system has tended to deny the rights of believers to be protected from secularism, while upholding the rights of nonbelievers to not be exposed to religion. For example, conservative Christian children may be required to attend secularist--even anti-religious--sex education classes, while nonbelieving children are prohibited from hearing religious instruction in public schools. Religious books may be excluded from schools, yet secular and even anti-religious books may be required reading. One approach that has been used in schools is "values clarification" which encourages youngsters to be "open" about many viewpoints, thus undermining strong values that some youngsters have learned from their parents. Secularist teachers encourage the "myth of neutrality" and that values just reflect personal choices. Yet every school encourages certain values by the curriculum, the methods used in teaching, the books used in class, the teachers that are hired, the methods of discipline used, and many other decisions made. Thus no school can be neutral; leaders that say they are neutral are, either overtly or covertly, promoting the values they favor. As a result, banning religion from schools reflects the values of those who make and enforce the laws. The lack of religion in schools is a powerful message for youngsters--faith is either something to avoid or relatively unimportant. When youths discover that Christmas

carols, reading the Bible, or other religious activities are not permitted in public schools, they can receive the impression that religion is somehow dangerous or unhealthy. Thus educators may purvey a godless perspective without restriction by omitting religious aspects of life, while claiming to be neutral on the issue. Quite a few secularists encourage day-care centers run by the government for young children, thus transferring more influence from the parents. Indeed, Douglas has stated that he questions if parents should have the right to influence their children by religion.

Another supreme court justice, Harry Blackmun, wrote the legal decision making abortion legal, a decision criticized by some who are not even against abortion because it was "an exercise of raw judicial power" [the latter statement was made by Supreme Court Justice White as a dissenting opinion at the time the decision was made]. In general Christians have tended to be passive while their values have been attacked. While perfection and God's kingdom cannot be accomplished through politics, Christians must be politically involved to protect their freedoms from being destroyed.

[Chapters eight and nine are not required for the exam.]