

"The Nature & Necessity of World Views"
Dallas Willard @ UCLA Veritas, 9.27.2003 [56:00]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6hwsG7AUZ0>

Scribe's Comments - The session was transcribed from the YouTube video in good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The **bold** & [bracket] disclose the scribe's interest & commentary and links to other teachings by Willard.

The Sociological Side (compared to the Scientific side of World View.)

The person who agrees with Dr. Koons can still be embarrassed about being thought unscientific. What we're dealing with here is the power of world view.

[Social pressure to believe what others believe or to hide what you believe.]

Worldview (def.) - *"Your assumptions about the realities and values that govern you and the world in which you live."* [2:30]

* Did you worry you'd be eaten by a Dinosaur? No, they're not there.

It's part of your world view even though you didn't think about it.

Your world view is your assumptions if you don't think about them. You don't have to think about them in order for them to determine your behavior. You can't live without a world view.

It is a biological reality built into your body.

Your body responds in terms of your world view whether you think about it or not. Your world view is most clearly seen in things you don't think about and talk about. If you have to think about all the stuff that determines your action, you're dead. You can't get across the street. We're made to be biological units that live in a world with a unified 360 degree orientation which very often is far removed from our conscious thinking.

There is no unified, consistent picture of what it means to be "scientific" in general. There is a solid meaning to Science as long as your talking about a particular science. Scientists don't generally worry about world views but they still have one. **As academic people we carry one an unexamined set of assumptions about the world and often we pound them off on science.**

* "Resurrection" - A professor said, "...that could not have happened because that would be contrary to the laws of physics." That is part of the professor's worldview.

Young man wasn't in position to ask, "What law was that?"

* Ask your Chemistry professor for a reference to a refereed journal that shows people do not survive the death of their brain. You can't get one.

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~ KNOWLEDGE

[8:05]

["Genius of Jesus" @ 4:00; "Disappearance of Moral Knowledge" 17:30; "Truth Value" @ 8:05; "Truth - What is?" @ 23:40]

(def.) **"Our ability to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought and experience."**

This is what our Universities are devoted to.

But knowledge requires truth. You can not know what is not true.

TRUTH * "Veritas Forum". Nice that it is in Latin. [9:00]

Truth is in trouble. Not just religious or moral truth but "Truth".

* *"An institution of higher education is, by definition, dedicated to the search for truth and its dissemination."* (WASC Standard 1.A)

[Truth - Value of @ 17:00]

* Harvard Shield changing - Problem of the unity of "truth". Thru the years there has been a de facto drift in University affairs that relegates truth to just the natural world.

Our ability to represent God, personal character of the human, spiritual side is eliminated from knowledge.

Truth (def.) - "A thought or statement is true if what it is about is as that thought or statement represents it." [Truth - What is @ 33:45]

* "Do you have a quarter in your pocket?" This is true if you do.

Truth is involved in knowledge because KNOWLEDGE is "our capacity to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought & experience."

That can include authority. Nearly everything we know is known on a basis of authority.

* Do you know the Playoffs have begun in the NBA? Take my word for it.

[Knowledge as a believer in Jesus is our ability to re-present Jesus on an appropriate basis of what we think and how we act with integrity to living as Jesus lived. We "know" Jesus based on our capacity to represent Him. We know the truth and in that knowledge we have freedom. To know truth is to know Jesus for He is the Truth.]

Truth does not accommodate belief. Belief has to accommodate Truth. No one has ever made a proposition true by simply believing it. [12:15]

Get a group, movement, grant won't make it true.

* *"A million Frenchmen have been wrong."*

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The bitterness of truth is its total indifference to human WILL and DESIRE together with the fact that human DESIRE and WILL is set on reshaping reality and therefore truth to suit itself.

This is the fundamental conflict in human life - the conflict between desire or will and truth. That conflict affects everything we do including on the University campus.

[Battle between Flesh & Spirit - "Desire" is used 31 x's]

When it comes to worldview questions, the same issue is *Truth* is there. "How do we know the truth?" still applies. It is difficult to settle the question.

* Whether you're going to continue conscience existence when your brain no longer functions.

If it is true, then it is true regardless of what you think about it.

What if it turns out you can't stop existing? [14:00]

* Hamlet - *"To sleep, per chance to dream. Aye, there's the rub."*

Here is a question of fact or truth. It has incredible bearing on how we approach our life:

Am I a fundamentally a material object that gets organized by DNA and exists for a little while than stops existing? Or am I an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's universe?

Wow! What a difference!

~ **WORLDVIEW - (5) Key Questions in Life** [14:52]

[Genius of Jesus @ 11:00; Truth Value @ 39:00]

1. What is the Nature of Reality?

- What counts as knowledge of Reality?

"Reality" (def.) - What you run into when you're wrong.

* Running out of gas = reality

Is a human being just a physical organism?

Are thought, will, artistic genius, aspiration, knowledge just chemistry?

2. Who is well off? [Who is "Blessed"? "Wealthy?" "Successful"?]

"Blessedness" - The Good Life

Can you still be well off if you have cancer? Don't have enough money?

A profound world view question that reflects itself in nearly everything that we do.

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3. Who is a "really good" person? [16:50]

Get a fight out of someone by questioning if they're a "good person" versus "are you well off".

One of the deepest world view questions, "*Am I a good person?*"

"I am a stinker!" Or, "Joe thinks I'm a stinker!"

Blood pressure goes up when I or others think I am not good.

4. How do you get to be a good person?

5. What counts as knowledge?

All teaching institutions, great teachers, even little teachers give answers to these questions. [18:25]

Jesus - There never has been anyone more influential in teaching answers to these questions than Jesus. He's not the only one - Plato, Buddha, Freud, UCLA.

In the University setting the dominating world view is expressed through what is accepted as research and what counts as possible knowledge. [Genius of Jesus @ 15:30]

Is there a single course of studies on UCLA (or USC or Berkeley) that you're engaged in that regards knowledge of God is part of the subject matter? Where your grade might be determined by something you have to say about God? That is the sociological reality. People who are caught up in the sociological wave will hear it all and dismiss it. To them it's just like the Dinosaur. [Jesus was expelled from the University.]

I want to take the time to insist that you are in a system which teaches a worldview without responsibly defending it.

~ How is a "World View" taught? [20:55]

- Mainly by body language, facial expressions, tones of voice and inflection, 'looks', off hand remarks about people & events
- By what is permissible
- By example - how we treat people
- By who gets rewarded or punished in various ways

Almost never is world view taught by explicit statement. It is modeled. Explicit statement is usually happens only to reinforce what is taught indirectly as indicated above.

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~ **Secular Worldview**

[21:48]

We have a secular orthodoxy that is a sociological reality not a rationally supported outlook. Tonight I am calling attention to this. This is something we have to deal with.

UCLA answering the great questions in a straight forward way but they don't stand on the street corner and argue for it.

1. Reality is the natural, sense perceptible world.
How is that taught? That's the only thing they pay attention to.
2. The spiritual is not real and is not knowable. [Disappearance of Moral Knowledge] That has been developing for a long time in our academic culture. It is something we have to recognize. It's becoming increasingly popular to speak about spirituality. Any serious moral issue will be treated not as something that is a subject for knowledge because it falls in the non-physical realm. You can not make any sense out of morality if you stick to your physics. That's the same thing is true about logic. Logical implication is not something in the physical world. That does not mean it is not real. Watch students want to know what logic is all about? They quickly learn and are socialized to not ask the question because if you ask the question, your too stupid to understand the answers. "Just learn the rules!" Logic, like morality, is not part of the physical world.
3. You are your body.
4. Well being is physical/social - success, \$, health

These answers are the assumptions of what we do and do not do.

We would not try to defend them but in some special philosophical context possibly. They are the assumptions we live by, set up our curriculum and qualify our teachers, to publish or not to publish, to get grants or not get grants.

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~ Jesus Worldview - Answer 4 Great Questions [25:25]

Jesus has an answer to these questions. We ought to think Jesus was halfway smart. After all He is without any question the single most influential person in history. He got that way by being able to do a lot of stuff. If he didn't get that way by doing a lot of stuff, you'll have to explain how he got that way.

1. Reality is God and His activities [Kingdom] including the natural world (physical, social.)
2. The person who is well off has a life deriving from God and His Kingdom. **[Blessed]**
* Put that next to "*Go to Sears and get the good life at a good price.*"
Go to UCLA and become a famous person who gets awards & grants
3. A Good Person is the person pervaded with God's agape love.
4. You become a good person by becoming an apprentice of Jesus Christ.

That's a worldview and that competes with a worldview that is taught at UCLA, USC, Harvard. You have a fairly unified worldview that is taught by inflection, action, model, and so on. If you get crosswise of that, you will soon find out you are not acceptable. It's very powerful. It is a sociological reality.

There is another world view which is the one that founded the Universities and dominated the world views until 75 years ago. [28:00]

That change is part of the socialization process that has gone on in history, a necessary one in many respects, in which the University had to divorce itself from the explicit institutions of religion in society. **[Later answered in Q & A]**

The Making of the Modern University, Julie Reuben
(Ph.D at Stanford, now teaches at Harvard)

It wasn't that someone suddenly found out that Jesus was wrong. Nobody found that out. It was not discovered. It was negotiated over a period of time in which people decided it would be that way and was able to set the tone against it. [28:55]

- The answers of Jesus constituted the worldview of the Universities well into the 20th Century.

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- We have been locked into a sociological not an intellectual reaction. This is one of the hardest things for us to come to grips with. We like to think of ourselves as engaged in a rational enterprise in the Universities. We are apt to miss or not understand the sociological realities that determine the worldview that is actually taught.

~ **The Disappearance of Logic** - That goes along with disappearance in logic from campuses today. Logic has disappeared. Your argument is now judged by your conclusion not your conclusion by your argument.

"You're wrong because you don't come out in the right place."

That's how sociology works. "I know you're wrong." Determined what was the place to come out and bending everything to get there. People take different sides and no one is listening. We want to go back to the point where your conclusion is judged by your argument not your argument is judged by your conclusion.

The answers of Jesus have not been shown false and the now prevailing sociological prevailing answers true.

Until you recover the sense of logic, you can never take that issue up.

~ **Where are we now?**

[32:20]

1. Recognize our Worldview assumptions are what governs life.
2. Assume the "burden of proof". Be a rational skeptic. The burden of proof is always mine because I am the one who wants to know. I am not in this discussion to put you back on your heels. I'm here to determine the truth. I'm not trying to win an argument.

If you can find a better way than what Jesus Christ offers, He would be the first person to tell you to take it. If you don't believe that about Him, you can not be His disciple because you can never trust Him. We are not ducking. We are not dodging. We are looking for the truth.

3. Thoroughly consider the teachings of the Bible and the record of Jesus' people on the main world view issues.
4. Put the teachings to test of life.
5. Do the same for the other world views. If I am just my brain and everything I am thinking and doing is just chemistry, I want to know that.

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- * If you're going to stop existing, you're out. It's like going to the Dentist. It is unpleasant for a while but it will be over.

The real problem comes if you're not going to stop existing.

6. Honestly compare. Don't just rest in your "intellectually respectable" prejudices.

End of Teaching @ 34:40

Q & A

[36:25]

Q - Intelligent Design or Young Earth a Science?

A - What is and isn't science should not be our fundamental question. Science means "knowledge". It might not be accepted as "Science" sociologically. But who cares. The fundamental questions are:
Are they reasonable?
Do they have strong support in the evidence?
Do they fit together in a coherent world view?

Q - [37:50] "How can one know God if one can't at the same time know that miracles do not exist?"

A - Those are independent issues logically. Many people have standard arguments for the existence of God who have rejected miracles. Depends upon whether your going to be a Deist or full blown Theist. Christian theists tend to depend on knowledge of miracles for their knowledge of God.

- * Resurrection - Either it happened or it didn't. There has to be some related facts that we can look into that have a bearing of whether or not it happened. Deductive or probability arguments.

Q - Can we know Heaven exists? You can't buy a ticket and go there.

A - Start - "Do we know if there is anything non physical?" and see where it leads. **Knowledge** is defined as, "You know something if it is as you think it to be if that's on an appropriate basis of experience and thought."

- Many people only believe things which other people know.

- * Suppose Jesus is actually the Son of God and suppose He says there is a Heaven. That's an authority argument. If you can establish those two points, you would have evidence to believe in Heaven.

- * "Heaven" is a realm of existence in which persons continue to exist after their bodies ceases to exist.

A by Dr. Koons - There can be a chain of reasoning to reach what is not obvious or known physically?

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Q - Why separate Universities from Religion? [45:25]

A - Right after WWII, Colleges were thought to not be training people well for the future of the country. They were concerned about science, technology and international relations. They were basically classical colleges. Nearly all the colleges were closely aligned with denominations. That includes the ones we think of as the best ones today - Princeton, Harvard, Yale and so on. What they found was the denominational distinctions were not open to inquiry. Think of CS Lewis' *Mere Christianity* (credal tradition and pretty heavy on doctrine and metaphysics) and add denominational differences, these are very deep issues in American history, you see these denominations closed their minds. They were not going to be open to inquiry on how you get baptized because they already knew. That's why there had to be opened a distance between institutional religion and free inquiry. I think the truths of religion should be open to the same kind of scrutiny as any other field should be open to. Historically religion has not been. Hopefully there will be a "reproachment" of religion understood now not narrowly as Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic. Hopefully that's coming to mean less and less. As it does so, I think we can go back to saying, "*Let's open it up and have free inquiry.*" We don't have it know from the secular side because the secular side has trained itself to say that religion is not open to inquiry. That's the change that had to be made.

Q - [49:00] Two-fold question:

- 1) What steps can be taken to encourage open forums to reach the truth?
- 2) Are the Universities going in a positive or negative direction?

A - (Koons) Philosophy has gotten better in my life time. Now a rebirth of metaphysics and that's opened up some space for Christians. In Social Science it still hard to squeeze in the topic of Christianity.

Students can make a big difference by asking the awkward questions. We need to be aware of the sociological realities and all that is involved there.

A - (Willard) [53:05]

Here is your conclusion. "I'm a materialist" What are the premises? That is where logic comes in.

Logic is very important. It's the heart of the battle.

* Journalists have decided what is sexy and what is not so they push that. People say, "Well there is all this discussion." They don't look for the argument.

A journalist will quote Stephen Hocking. But who is going to read Bill Alston, Al Plantegan or Thomas Aquinas and say, "Here's a great mind. He said you better get ready for the next world." You might as well moon somebody.

There is hope but it's going to depend on people being vocal, thoughtful, present and pointing out what's really going on here.