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# Chapter Summaries

## PART ONE: THE LIES WE ARE TOLD

1: By the end of the nineteenth century, increased acceptance of evolutionary theory had contributed to a naturalistic worldview: ‘There is no Creator God, and there won’t be a judgement.’ This had profound implications: human beings are no longer given unique dignity, there is no purpose in history, death is the end and there is no absolute morality or universal religious truth.

2: Trailblazers in the liberation of humanity from the fear of God included Ludwig Feuerbach, Charles Darwin and Karl Marx. Once God is denied, the next thing to be challenged is the notion that there is one absolute moral code which we all have to obey. This led straight to the horrors of the gulags and the inhumanities perpetrated during the Cultural Revolution. Bad ideas bear bitter fruit.

3: Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Reich and Margaret Sanger saw themselves as saviours, liberating people from the repression of traditional morality. They dreamed of a future of unlimited personal freedom. But in a fallen sinful world, the dream of unbounded freedom unravels inexorably into nightmare. As moral norms are eroded, the powerful use their power to exploit the weak. Violence and evil are not only normalised, they are celebrated. Sexual

liberation has resulted in historically unprecedented global rates of fatherlessness.

4: Without a transcendent authority, who, or what, is left to judge between competing claims to truth? Confidence that our problems would be solved by human reason and science collapsed into the radical doubt of postmodernism. The pioneers of critical theory wanted to bring about a society where all inequalities in outcome were removed. The 'hegemony' of established institutions had to be undermined. This could be attempted by using radical doubt (aka critical theory) to question all objective truth, including scientific truth (and much that had previously assumed as 'common sense'). Critical theory has taken root in all the major institutions of the West. At a popular level, we are all now expected to join the battle to achieve 'absolute' freedom and 'absolute' equality.

5: Critical theory began in the universities, but as graduates entered all the various professions, the result at a popular level has been the rise of 'identity politics'. Many view the West as inherently evil (racist, patriarchal, capitalist). Some activists want to destroy the very structures which have created freedom and prosperity: 'Smash the patriarchy' (aka the family), 'Smash capitalism' (aka wealth creation and private property), 'Smash the police' (aka law and order), 'Smash down the statutes' (aka our collective memory and history). The essential unity of the human race, and the essential dignity of human identity, are both undermined by the current insistence on pushing people into groups defined by their diverse characteristics.

6: How has the Christian church responded to the rise of a worldview that denies God and denies ultimate truth? Confusingly, some clergy seem to have cheered it on! Challenges to the authority of Scripture lie behind the rise of unbelief within the professing church. Some 'Christian' ministers paint evil as good, good as evil, and mock the idea of judgement and hell.

## PART TWO: THE TRUTH WE MUST HOLD

7: God is the Creator, and the ground of truth, justice and morality. Our creation in the image of God is the only firm foundation for the respect of human rights. The Bible affirms both the dignity of every individual person, and the essential unity of the human race. Because of the fall into sin, oppression and suffering are endemic to human existence. Every individual is morally responsible, but forgiveness is offered to all in Christ.

8: The biblical worldview is the foundation of human flourishing in society. God designed family and work. The married family should not be undermined. Property should be protected and work should be rewarded. We need to learn from the past and allow for innovation in the present. Civil authorities should be supported. All human institutions are answerable to God, which provides a bulwark against oppression. The division of the world into nation states offers protection from the threat of global tyranny.

9: Christ is King. The biblical worldview is the foundation of future hope. God has good purposes for this world. He will bring about complete justice, and restoration of the whole creation, when Christ returns.

10: Christians are not just to know the truth, but to live it. We are created to live for God's glory. Worship should be the pulse of our existence. When we love and fear God, we won't fear anyone or anything else. Loving God and loving our neighbour includes sharing the good news of salvation and working for our neighbour's good.

**Further Resources:** Be equipped to live out and tell out the truth!

**Part 1**

**The**

**LIES**

**We Are Told**

*‘The fool says in his heart: “There is no God.”*

*(Ps. 14:1)*



# 1 ‘There Is No God and No Absolute Morality’

Christians today are expected to keep their faith to themselves. Claims about God’s truth and about absolute morality, we’re told, belong only to the realm of *personal experience*.

In 2011 a study of attitudes among young adults in America was published which found:

Six out of ten (60 percent) of the emerging adults we interviewed expressed a highly individualistic approach to morality. They said that morality is a personal choice, entirely a matter of individual decision. Moral rights and wrongs are essentially matters of individual opinion, in their view ... In this world of moral individualism, then, anyone can hold their own convictions about morality, but they also *must keep those views private*. Giving voice to one’s own moral views is itself nearly immoral ...<sup>1</sup>

The idea of moral judgement has morphed into the derogatory term ‘judgementalism’, and morality is associated with a negative ‘moralism.’<sup>2</sup> Christians may be told: ‘Believe what you want, worship

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1 Smith, C et al, *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*, (OUP US, 2011), pp. 21, 24, emphasis mine.

2 Furedi, F, ‘The Diseasing of Judgment’, *First Things*, January 2021, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2021/01/the-diseasing-of-judgment> (accessed 30 December, 2020).



as you wish, and run your home as you please, but don't bring your faith into the public square!

The 'public square' relates to what goes on outside our own religious practice at home and at church. It concerns interactions with our neighbours and community (work, education, business, voluntary associations, public services), what goes on in our nation (media, academia, politics), and globally (international bodies and corporations). 'Public truth' is thought to be based on physical and material things that can be scientifically proven. Anything non-material, it is assumed, floats in the realm of the unprovable and personal.

Our culture is infused with a *naturalistic* worldview (this world is all there is). It stands against the *theistic* worldview (this world is created by God). Our culture, then, is deeply opposed to biblical Christianity.

We can easily feel intimidated. But we should remember that two thousand years ago the apostle Paul lived in a culture which was even more hostile than ours to the truth claims of Christ. Yet Paul was confident that there is a truth that every human being knows:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who *suppress the truth* by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is *plain to them*, because God has made it *plain to them*. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what is made, so that men are without excuse. (Rom. 1:18-20, emphasis mine)

We have all perceived God's invisible attributes. God has plainly revealed Himself to all, and the truth has been 'clearly seen' (v. 20). Despite the clarity of this revelation, people 'suppress the truth' (v. 18). 'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie' (v. 25).

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

### A WORLD WITHOUT WINDOWS

The devil is the father of lies (John 8:44), he has never stopped telling lies, and his biggest lie is to deny the existence of the Creator. The glory of creation, from the vast scale of the universe to the complexity of every cell, proclaims that there is a Creator God. But we are more likely to fall for the lie if we accept the (false) assumption that 'real truth' only has to do with physical and material things that can be scientifically proven (you can't examine God in a laboratory).

The naturalistic worldview suggests that people used to believe in God in a pre-scientific age, but now that 'science' can explain everything, we can dispense with that old superstition.

The British Humanist Society has a video for school children in which comedian Stephen Fry tells them that science is the 'testing of theories against evidence' and that it's 'reality', as opposed to religion and the supernatural (by implication 'unreality').<sup>3</sup>

So we are to shut the windows, pull the blinds down, and exclude any thought that there might be anything 'out there', beyond the things we can see and touch and taste and hear and feel. We are left in a prison (albeit a comfortable prison) from which there is no escape. No exit to the world outside. No access to transcendence, eternal values, mystery, or God.<sup>4</sup>

This is often assumed to be a 'scientific' worldview: objectively true, and based on firm evidence. It's really a philosophical worldview, a pseudo-religion, which offers an alternative explanation for evil and an alternative offer of 'salvation'. The Bible teaches that suffering and injustice came into the world as a result of the 'Fall' (that is, disobedience to God), and that the *ultimate* solution lies in the

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3 How do we know what's true and false? British Humanist Society <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk5IWzTfWeM> (accessed 11 January, 2021). See chapter 7 for comment.

4 Berger, P, et al eds, *Against the World, For the World: The Hartford Appeal and the Future of American Religion*, (Seabury, 1976). Sociologist Peter Berger coined the phrase 'world without windows' to describe a worldview which rejects the supernatural, and believes that all there is, is matter. He also described it as the 'prison of modernity'.

redemption secured by Christ. The Bible also teaches that the world is God's handiwork, and that it is our duty to comprehend and develop the resources of the world for the blessing of humanity. Sociologist Rodney Stark has argued convincingly that Christian theology was 'essential for the rise of science'.<sup>5</sup> Christianity and science should never be pitted against each other. But the naturalistic worldview claims that ignorance, inequality, superstition and religion (not sin!) cause human suffering. It can *only* be solved by means of science and the exercise of human reason (including the elimination of religion).<sup>6</sup>

Here are some of the most common lies about humans and about society, believed by many, promoted in our education system, and often assumed in public life. They all flow from a worldview that rejects God.

### NO CREATOR GOD: WE JUST EVOLVED

The first lie is that we exist as the result of a process of random chance and the evolutionary process. Human beings are shaped only by chemical, physical and economic forces, and we are not essentially any different to other living beings. **Jacob Bronowski (1908-1974)**, presenter of a famous BBC series called *The Ascent of Man*, affirmed that:

Man is a part of nature, in the same sense that a stone is, or a cactus, or a camel.<sup>7</sup>

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5 Stark, R, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformation, Science, Witch-Hunts and the End of Slavery*, (Princeton University Press, 2003), section 2 'God's Handiwork: The Religious Origins of Science', pp. 121-199, p. 123.

6 The stated objective of the British Humanist Society until July 2011 was 'the moral and social development of the community free from theistic or dogmatic beliefs or doctrines'; since then they have had 'rebranding' to appear more tolerant, but they are currently campaigning to end all faith schools in Britain. The Christian Institute, *Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill: Compulsory Atheism Lessons*, 2021, p. 11.

7 Bronowski, J, *The Ascent of Man*, 1965/2011.

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

All reality is made up only of matter. Our mind, thoughts and beliefs are just chemical actions of the brain. We do not have an eternal soul. There is no supernatural realm. This belief is the basis of humanism, which 'begins from man alone, and makes man the measure of all things'.<sup>8</sup> **Carl Sagan (1934-1996)**, named as 'Humanist of the Year' in 1981, asserted:

The cosmos is all there ever is, there ever was, or ever will be.<sup>9</sup>

If it is true that our thoughts and beliefs are just chemical actions of the brain, why should we give them credence? Charles Darwin realised the implications of his own theory:

The horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust the conviction of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?<sup>10</sup>

The utilitarian ethicist **Peter Singer (b. 1946)** argues that the logical deduction of evolution through random mutation and natural selection is that there is nothing special about humanity, and no absolute reason to protect human life above animal life.

Racists violate the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of their own race ... Sexists violate the principle of equality by favoring the interests of their own sex.

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8 Schaeffer, F, Koop, E C, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1980), p. 97.

9 Sagan, C, *Cosmos: A Personal Journey*, (Random House, 1980), p.4. This is reiterated in the 3 Humanist Manifestos of 1933, 1973 and 2003: <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto1/>, <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/>, <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3/>, (accessed 4 January 2021).

10 'Darwin's "Horrid Doubt": The Mind', *Evolution News and Science Today*, Discovery Institute, September 11, 2014, <https://evolutionnews.org/2014/09/darwinshorrid/> (accessed 18 June, 2020).

## THE LIES WE ARE TOLD, THE TRUTH WE MUST HOLD

Similarly speciesists allow the interests of their own species to override the greater interests of members of other species.<sup>11</sup>

The idea that humans are special, he argues, arose from Christianity and the belief that humans alone have a soul that will never die. The Christian teaching was that to kill was to consign a person to their eternal destiny, and that to take innocent human life was to sin against God the Creator.<sup>12</sup> Singer rejects Christianity, and places all of sentient life on a continuum. Actions causing pain to, or destruction of, beings with intelligent awareness (like whales), are wrong. Similar actions upon beings with seemingly no intelligent awareness (like human embryos) are not wrong. Animals and humans should be treated with consistent criteria of compassion: you may need to kill in order to relieve pain. The killing of disabled babies, for instance, is justified in view of their likely suffering.

Nor is there an absolute obligation to protect human life above the environment itself.

Increasingly, some in the ‘deep green’ radical environmentalist movement argue that the earth itself is the greatest good, and that it is threatened by human life. Finnish activist **Pentti Linkola (1932-2020)**, for example, believed that humans are like a tumour on the earth, consuming more than our fair share of nature’s resources. The vast majority of humans should be killed. The remainder should be controlled by an authoritarian environmentalist state, with people forcibly sterilized and private cars confiscated.<sup>13</sup>

### NO CREATOR GOD: NO JUDGEMENT

The second lie arises from the first. If there is no Creator, we’re not answerable to a Creator and there won’t be a judgement. The atheist philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)** insisted that there is no

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11 Singer, P, *Writings on an Ethical Life*, (Fourth Estate, 2002), p. 35.

12 Ibid., p. 129.

13 Linkola, P, *Human Flood*, 1989, translated by Heinonen H and Moynihan M, [http://www.penttilinkola.com/pentti\\_linkola/ecofascism\\_writings/humanflood/](http://www.penttilinkola.com/pentti_linkola/ecofascism_writings/humanflood/) (accessed 26 March 2020).

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

transcendent morality, so we are not constrained by an external moral code. Human will alone determines what *we* want to do. He believed it's harmful to be restricted by religions or social conventions.<sup>14</sup>

American sociologist **Philip Rieff (1922-2016)**, author of *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1966), maintained that the distinguishing mark of modernity was the assumption that we are not accountable to anyone other than ourselves. If we won't have to give account to God, then who has the right to tell us what to do? The idea gained ground that the exercise of *all* authority is toxic. Today it is often assumed to be demeaning, even psychologically damaging, to submit to authority.

If there's no God, we can create our own identity, choose our own destiny, and construct our own morality. We only have this one life on earth, so we should fulfil ourselves while we can. Our highest goal is often viewed as self-actualization.<sup>15</sup>

If we are simply driven by natural biological instincts, it's often assumed that behaviour is inevitably determined by sexual desires (we look at the impact of Freud's thinking in chapter 3). One of the most pervasive lies believed today is that guilt is necessarily a harmful emotion. Christian morality is thought to be evil, as it arouses so many guilt feelings. This is all the logical outworking of putting ourselves at the centre of our universe, rather than acknowledging and worshipping our Creator.

Within the cultural framework of extreme individualism, everyone must do what is right in their own eyes. Refusal to affirm whatever moral choice someone makes is taken to mean that we do not value or respect them as human beings. It may even be viewed as hating them. With increasing criticism of the very idea of authority, and the advance of the idea that moral judgements are indicative of being closed-minded, people became reluctant to express views

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14 More on Nietzsche in chapter 3.

15 A simple definition of self-actualization is: 'the complete realization of one's potential, and the full development of one's abilities and appreciation for life'; <https://www.simplypsychology.org/self-actualization.html> (accessed 3 March, 2021).

about morality in public. By 2021, it was common to hear the slogan ‘criticism is violence’ on university campuses.<sup>16</sup>

### ‘TRUE TRUTH’?

If we go along with the lie that truth is only to do with what we see, touch or feel, (physical reality), then anything outside of the material realm is seen as a matter of individual preference or opinion.<sup>17</sup> God, morality and faith get pushed back into a personal realm that cannot be demonstrated to be true. Values are for each person to decide for themselves. Religion cannot be proved.

This worldview insists that discussion of God and morality should be confined to individual experience, separate from day-to-day realities of education, business, law, medicine, technology, and social work. Well-meaning Christians may pray, read the Bible, and go to church on Sundays, but live the rest of the time as if God didn’t exist. This ‘naturalistic’ worldview controls much of education, the media, and public life.

Naturalistic Worldview
1 No Creator God, we just evolved
2 No Creator God, no judgement
3 ‘True Truth’ has to do with physical reality

What are some of the implications of this worldview?

### NO UNIQUE DIGNITY FOR HUMAN LIFE

The theory of evolution and the resulting naturalistic worldview sees humans as a product of chance in an impersonal universe. If human beings *are* just a chance product of a long, unfolding process of natural development, one implication is that there is *no* intrinsic value or

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16 Furedi, F, ‘The Disingering of Judgment’, *First Things*, January 2021, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2021/01/the-disingering-of-judgment> (accessed 30 December, 2020).

17 For example, gender ideology suggests that subjective experience can override physical reality.

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

dignity to every human life. You begin to judge the value of life by criteria such as usefulness, enjoyment, autonomy, or awareness. It is no surprise that the Second Humanist Manifesto (1973) insisted that all should have the right to both abortion and euthanasia, and that suicide should be legalised.<sup>18</sup>

Over many decades, the natural historian **Sir David Attenborough** (b. 1926) has thrilled audiences worldwide with his wildlife documentaries. Arguably, no one has done more to bring the glories of creation right into people's homes. Attenborough fails to give glory to the Creator for the wonders of the universe. He regards us as mere products of evolution, so that the human race is like a plague on the Earth which needs to be managed and controlled.<sup>19</sup> When you deny the Creator, you deny the unique dignity of human beings made in His image.

Environmentalist Pentti Linkola, mentioned above, was also dismissive of human dignity:

... humanity, by squirting and birthing all these teeming, filth-producing multitudes from out of itself, in the process also suffocates and defames its own culture ...<sup>20</sup>

With that view of humanity, we are not surprised to know that he asked:

Who misses all those who died in the Second World War? Who misses the twenty million executed by Stalin? Who misses Hitler's six million Jews?<sup>21</sup>

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18 Humanist Manifesto II, 1973, Articles 6 and 7, <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/> (accessed 13 January, 2021).

19 Attenborough, D, 'Humans are Plague on Earth', *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 January, 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/earthnews/9815862/Humans-are-plague-on-Earth-Attenborough.html> (accessed 7 October, 2020).

20 Linkola, P, *Human Flood*, 1989, translated by Heinonen H and Moynihan M, [http://www.penttilinkola.com/pentti\\_linkola/ecofascism\\_writings/humanflood/](http://www.penttilinkola.com/pentti_linkola/ecofascism_writings/humanflood/) (accessed 26 March 2020).

21 Ibid.



He and other 'deep green' environmentalists have argued that human society could even have *an obligation* to use abortion, infanticide, euthanasia and eugenic policies to regulate world population.

That should shock us. But it's the logical outworking of a materialistic view of the universe. The Christian writer **Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984)** observed:

If man is not made in the image of God, nothing then stands in the way of inhumanity.<sup>22</sup>

If we are just products of chance and matter, then there is no purpose in history and nothing after death. This robs life of meaning and purpose beyond survival. British evolutionary biologist, and author of *The God Delusion*, **Richard Dawkins (b. 1941)** writes:

Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of life, has no purpose in mind ... It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker.<sup>23</sup>

Professor **William Provine (1942-2015)** was a leading atheist and historian of science. He was brutally honest about the implications of atheism:

Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me.<sup>24</sup>

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22 Schaeffer, F, Koop, E C, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1980), p. 15.

23 Quoted in Blanchard, J, *Does God Believe in Atheists?* (Evangelical Press, 2000), p. 120.

24 Provine, W B, debate with Johnson, P E, at Stanford University, April 30, 1994, <http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm> (accessed 18 June, 2020).

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

### NO ABSOLUTE MORALITY

If there is no Creator, we are not answerable to a Creator, there are no absolute moral standards, and we make our own rules. To feel guilt is unhealthy, even pathological. The Christian teaching about God's moral law and the need for repentance is viewed as psychological and emotional abuse, an assault on individual freedom.

Evolutionary biologist **Julian Huxley (1887-1975)** became the first Director General of UNESCO<sup>25</sup> in 1946, and first President of the British Humanist Association in 1963. He opposed the idea of absolute moral truth, because:

... the provision of dogma, whose absolute truth is buttressed by authority or guaranteed by revelation ... is likely to break down in the face of the accumulation of new facts and new knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

Canadian psychiatrist **Brock Chisholm (1896-1971)**, first Director General of the World Health Organization, wanted people to be liberated from old-fashioned morality. Children needed to be brought up without rigid ideas of what was right and wrong. People had to break away from the:

... poisonous certainties fed us by our parents, our Sunday and day school teachers, our politicians, our priests, our newspapers and others with a vested interest in controlling us.<sup>27</sup>

Professor Frank Furedi points out that during the 1940s and 1950s, many began to use the terms *authority* and *authoritarian* interchangeably. Then, in the 1950s the word *obedience* began, increasingly, to be used alongside the term *unquestioned*. Implication? Obedience was something for unthinking people!<sup>28</sup>

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25 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

26 Quoted by Furedi, F, 'The Disingering of Judgment', *First Things*, January 2021, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2021/01/the-disingering-of-judgment> (accessed 30 December, 2020).

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

The notion of so-called ‘poisonous pedagogy’ argues that the exercise of *all* authority is toxic. Many young people are never trained to respect authority. In 1993, British sociologist Richard Hoggart observed that when elderly people in the deprived area of Leeds where he had grown up spoke of youth delinquency, they qualified any statement with: ‘*but it’s only my opinion of course.*’ In a world where God and absolute moral standards are denied, we all have to be non-judgemental. We should not be surprised that in the same housing estate, Hoggart found that there was little confidence in the role of parents to guide their children, and that tragically, children were growing up in what was, effectively, a ‘violent, jungle world.’<sup>29</sup>

William Provine, mentioned above, was a man of integrity. As an evolutionary theorist he aimed to live an ethical life, but he was candid about having no firm basis for that:

There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either ... Finally, there is no reason whatsoever that ethics can’t be robust, even if there is *no ultimate foundation for ethics.* If you’re an atheist and know you’re going to die, what really counts is friendship ...<sup>30</sup>

Christian apologist James Sire asks:

If we are only material beings, a product of unintentional, uncaring sources, why do we think we can know anything at all? And why do we think we should be good?<sup>31</sup>

## CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Western civilisation was founded on the biblical worldview that draws a clear distinction between good and evil. That is why Winston

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29 Quoted in Himmelfarb, G, *The Demoralization of Society*, (IEA, 1995), p. 241.

30 ‘William Provine, RIP: Noble in His Honesty’, *Evolution News and Science Today*, 3 September, 2015, Discovery Institute, [https://evolutionnews.org/2015/09/william\\_provine/](https://evolutionnews.org/2015/09/william_provine/) (accessed 18 June, 2020), emphasis mine.

31 Sire, J, *The Universe Next Door*, (first published 1973, 4th edition, IVP Academic, 2004), p. 240.

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

Churchill was able to see with absolute clarity that Nazism was a moral evil which had to be opposed without compromise; equally he realised the moral evil of Communist totalitarianism.<sup>32</sup> But eight decades after the Second World War, it's deeply unfashionable to imply that Western democracy is superior to any other political system because *moral relativism* has led to *cultural relativism*.

George Blake was a British spy working for Soviet Russia between 1953 and 1960. He was fully aware of the oppression in Russia, the show trials and gulags. And yet, despite that, he deliberately worked to destroy the network of agents who were trying to bring freedom and democracy to Eastern Europe. Many of the agents he betrayed were killed, some of them after being tortured.<sup>33</sup> Blake was ultimately arrested and found guilty of treason. He died on 26 December 2020. Obituaries paid tribute to his 'courage'. Andrew Roberts, Churchill's biographer, roundly condemned the '*moral equivalence*' of such obituaries:

A profoundly evil man died on Boxing Day, though one would hardly have known it from the entirely *judgement-free tone of his obituaries* ... Countries that enjoy representative institutions, the rule of law, free and fair elections, freedom of speech, freedom of association and of the press are indeed *morally superior* to those countries that hate and fear such things, and try remorselessly to undermine them. People like George Blake, who dedicated their lives to trying to replace democracy with Communist tyranny, thus ought to be identified when they die with the crimes against humanity that they perpetrated, instead of being presented as the moral equivalent of our own espionage agents in the West.<sup>34</sup>

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32 Roberts, A, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, (Penguin Books, 2019), passim, especially p. 967.

33 Roberts, A, 'The Death of George Blake Reveals How Little We Now Respect Western Values', *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 December, 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/28/death-george-blake-reveals-little-now-respect-western-values/> (accessed 4 January, 2021).

34 Ibid.

## NO UNIVERSAL RELIGIOUS TRUTH

The moral equivalence, rightly condemned by Andrew Roberts, is just one symptom of the current assumption that it's arrogant to claim to know what is universally true. We hear of 'your truth' and 'my truth', and you've probably heard the mantra:

Well, that may be true for you, but it's not true for me!

We are expected to keep moral beliefs and faith in a personal 'spiritual' compartment, and many of the supposedly most brilliant intellects of the age promote a worldview that denies God and dismisses absolute morality. But a consistent application of naturalism leads to despair. As humanist philosopher **Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)** wrote:

Mankind ... is like a group of shipwrecked sailors on a raft in a vast sea at night. There is darkness all around. One by one they fall off the raft into the waters and disappear. When the last man has fallen off, the sea will roll on, and the holes made in the water by their bodies will be covered over. Nature cares not for man.<sup>35</sup>

This worldview gives no firm basis for human dignity or value. To believe that everything is really only matter or energy offers no foundation for meaning, morality, love or hope.

It is no accident that the word 'demoralization' has a double meaning. Originally, 'demoralize' meant to corrupt or to undermine morals. That assumed that there are such things as absolute morals to undermine. But now, 'demoralize' means to discourage – to undermine morale. The connection is obvious. When you lose any sense of objective morality, you will be demoralized in both senses of the word.

Before 1960, suicide had been rare among American young people. By 1980, nearly 400,000 adolescents were attempting suicide each year, and by 1987, suicide had become the second largest cause of death

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35 Attributed to Bertrand Russell, quoted in Smart, S, ed, *The Spectator's Guide to Worldviews*, (Blue Bottle, 2007), p. 119.

## 'There is No God and No Absolute Morality'

among teens, after car accidents.<sup>36</sup> In 1994, **Kurt Cobain (b.1967)**, lead singer of Nirvana, committed suicide. His album 'Nevermind' had sold ten million copies, and his worldview can be summed up in his lyric:

Silence, Here I am, Here I am, Silent.  
Death is what I am, Go to hell, Go to jail ...  
Die.<sup>37</sup>

Cobain's suicide was followed by at least 68 copycat suicides. Vishal Mangalwadi writes:

Cobain's music appealed to contemporary America because it was a full-throttled disharmony of rage, anguish, hatred, despair, meaninglessness, and obscenity. His song titles included, 'I hate myself, I want to die' and 'Rape me.'<sup>38</sup>

Back in the seventh century B.C., the prophet Jeremiah grieved over the self-destructive stupidity of rejecting God and His truth:

My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. (Jer. 2:13)

During the twentieth century, the brave new world of freedom from the 'constraints' of religion increasingly lurched towards pessimistic nihilism. A naturalistic worldview offers no ultimate purpose to life, and no firm grounds for hope.

## FURTHER READING

Furedi, F, 'The Disinger of Judgment', *First Things*, January 2021, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2021/01/the-disinger-of-judgment> (accessed 30 December, 2020)

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36 Mangalwadi, V, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*, (Nelson, 2011), p. 4.

37 Cobain, K, 'Endless, Nameless', (*Nevermind*, 1991).

38 Mangalwadi, V, *The Book That Made Your World*, p. 9.

THE LIES WE ARE TOLD, THE TRUTH WE MUST HOLD

Pearcey, N, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity*, (Crossway, 2004)

Summary: By the end of the nineteenth century, increased acceptance of evolutionary theory had contributed to a naturalistic worldview: 'There is no Creator God, and there won't be a judgement'. This had profound implications: human beings are no longer given unique dignity, there is no purpose in history, death is the end and there is no absolute morality or universal religious truth.