

Technology Junkies

Chapter One — Worldviews in the Digital Age

“I suspect that most of the individuals who have religious faith are content with blind faith. They feel no obligation to understand what they believe. They may even wish not to have their beliefs disturbed by thought. But if God in whom they believe created them with intellectual and rational powers, then those powers impose upon them the duty to understand the creed of their religion. Not to do so is to verge on superstition.” — Mortimer J. Adler¹

The importance of understanding and examining worldviews in our electronic age is greater today than ever before. The internet brings countless religious, political, and philosophical opinions directly into our homes every single day. Ideas that once could be ignored at the doorstep now arrive instantly through televisions, laptops, tablets, and cell phones.

In just a few short years, names such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and countless other social media platforms became woven into everyday life. These platforms opened doors to opportunities and conversations that previous generations could hardly imagine. They allow people to reconnect with old friends, communicate across great distances, promote causes, debate ideas, and share opinions with the entire world in real time.

My own children’s interactions with these online spaces, as well as their encounters with skeptics and competing ideologies, prompted me to think more deeply about what a worldview actually is and why it matters. I realized many people hold strong opinions without ever examining the assumptions beneath them.

Social media itself is not inherently religious or political. However, the ideas exchanged on these platforms often challenge deeply held beliefs about morality, truth, government, religion, and human nature. Political and religious convictions are frequently intertwined because what a person believes about God, humanity, and morality naturally shapes how that person views society and government.

American history itself demonstrates this connection. The Northwest Ordinance, one of the foundational documents influencing the early United States, declared:²

“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

This principle influenced many early state constitutions. The founders clearly believed that moral and religious ideas played a role in shaping a healthy society.

Whether one agrees with those conclusions or not, history repeatedly demonstrates that religion and politics are difficult to separate. From ancient civilizations to modern governments, belief systems influence law, culture, economics, and social behavior.

Even officially atheistic governments have often attempted to use religion as a political tool. During the Soviet era, for example, the Bolsheviks attempted to reshape Christianity into something that served communist ideology.³ While publicly hostile toward traditional religion, they simultaneously recognized the immense social power religion possessed.

This illustrates an important truth: worldviews matter because ideas shape behavior.

This book is not merely a religious apologetic in the narrow sense. It is better understood as a religio-political commentary that examines how beliefs about reality influence culture, politics, economics, morality, and everyday life. It assumes a broadly Judeo-Christian understanding of reality and natural law while engaging competing worldviews honestly and directly.

The purpose of this book is not simply to win arguments, but to encourage people to think critically about the assumptions guiding their lives.

Honest Questions and Intellectual Resistance

Many of the questions addressed in this book arise naturally from modern culture. Some are sincere and thoughtful. Others, however, function less as genuine inquiries and more as defenses against uncomfortable conclusions.

People sometimes ask questions not because they truly want answers, but because they wish to avoid reconsidering deeply held assumptions. Even when presented with evidence or logical arguments, they may immediately move to another objection without seriously engaging the response.

This is not unique to religion. Human beings are emotionally invested in their beliefs, and emotional commitment often affects reasoning.

As the authors of *Classical Apologetics* observed, intellectual systems alone do not guarantee that people will accept truth.⁴ Emotional prejudice and psychological resistance frequently interfere with logical conclusions.

The existence of God is not a neutral question. If God exists, then humanity is accountable to something beyond itself. Such a conclusion carries moral and personal implications, which explains why debates surrounding religion often become emotionally charged.

Christianity and the Question of Human Nature

The Christian worldview does not merely offer private spiritual comfort while remaining silent about public life. It speaks to human nature, morality, justice, freedom, economics, and society itself.

For example, as Christianity has spread throughout parts of China, many observers have noted that broader conversations about human dignity, freedom, and ethics have followed.⁵ Some Chinese intellectuals began asking whether capitalism itself rests upon deeper philosophical and moral foundations inherited from the West.

This raises an important point: ideas about human nature influence economics and politics.

Economist Thomas Sowell describes two competing visions of humanity: the constrained vision and the unconstrained vision.⁶

The constrained vision recognizes the limitations and imperfections of human nature. It assumes that people are flawed and that political systems must account for those flaws. The unconstrained vision, by contrast, tends to believe human problems can ultimately be solved through social engineering, education, or political restructuring.

One does not need to agree with every aspect of Sowell's framework to recognize the larger truth behind it: beliefs about human nature shape entire civilizations.

Pulitzer Prize-winning commentator Walter Lippmann summarized this idea well when he wrote:⁷

“At the core of every moral code there is a picture of human nature, a map of the universe, and a version of history.”

In other words, every worldview begins with assumptions about reality, humanity, morality, and purpose.

Why Worldviews Matter

Many people today have never seriously examined their worldview.¹³ They inherit assumptions from family, culture, media, education, or peer groups without ever testing whether those assumptions are coherent or true.

A worldview can generally be defined as the framework through which a person interprets reality.

It answers questions such as:⁸

- What is ultimately real?
- Does God exist?
- What is the purpose of life?
- What is right and wrong?
- Why does suffering exist?
- What happens after death?
- Can truth be known?

Every person, whether religious or secular, answers these questions in some way.

Philosopher James Sire defined a worldview as:¹¹

“A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions about the basic constitution of reality.”

That definition is important because it highlights something many people overlook: worldviews are built upon presuppositions.

Presuppositions are foundational assumptions about reality that shape how people interpret evidence, morality, and truth itself.

Ideas Have Consequences

The beliefs people hold about reality directly affect how they live.

If a person believes human beings possess inherent dignity and value because they are created in the image of God, that belief influences how they approach justice, charity, compassion, and human rights.

If, on the other hand, human beings are viewed merely as accidental products of impersonal forces, then concepts such as morality, purpose, and dignity become more difficult to ground objectively.

Ideas are never merely theoretical. They produce consequences.¹⁹

History repeatedly demonstrates this truth. Political systems, revolutions, economies, and social movements are driven by underlying philosophical assumptions.

Francis Schaeffer observed that people live more consistently according to their presuppositions than they often realize.¹² Their worldview becomes the lens through which they interpret every area of life.

Most people absorb these assumptions unconsciously from their surrounding culture. Few stop long enough to examine whether those assumptions are logically consistent.

The Importance of Logic

One essential principle in evaluating any worldview is the law of non-contradiction.²⁰

Simply stated, contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time.

For example, the statement “There is no absolute truth” defeats itself because it presents itself as an absolute truth claim.

Likewise:¹⁴

- “All truth is relative.”
- “There are no absolutes.”
- “What is true for you is not true for me.”

Each of these statements collapses under its own logic because it makes universal claims while denying the possibility of universal truth.

Contrary beliefs may exist, but contrary truths cannot both be true simultaneously.

Logic is not merely an academic exercise. Without logical consistency, meaningful communication becomes impossible.¹⁷

Science, Evidence, and Assumptions

Modern debates about religion and science often reveal hidden philosophical assumptions.

For example, some people define science strictly as the search for natural explanations.¹⁶ If one begins with the assumption that only natural causes exist, then any supernatural explanation is excluded before the investigation even begins.

But this does not prove the supernatural false. It simply reflects the assumptions built into the method.

This distinction is crucial.

Science is extraordinarily valuable for studying the natural world. However, questions concerning morality, meaning, consciousness, logic, beauty, and God often extend beyond what laboratory experiments alone can answer.

Historical claims, for instance, are not tested in laboratories.¹⁵ No one repeats the signing of the Declaration of Independence or Napoleon's battles under controlled scientific conditions. Instead, historians examine documents, eyewitness testimony, and evidence.

Christianity, at its core, presents itself as a historical faith rooted in claims about real events occurring in space and time.

The Battle of Ideas

Every powerful movement throughout history has been driven by ideas.

Political revolutions, philosophical systems, and religious movements all begin with assumptions about reality and human nature.

As John Stott once observed, every influential movement possesses a philosophy that captures the imagination and loyalty of its followers.¹⁸

The same remains true today.

Whether people realize it or not, they are constantly being shaped by worldviews through education, entertainment, media, politics, and technology.

This is why Christians cannot afford intellectual laziness. Faith should not fear examination. Truth withstands scrutiny.

The goal of this book is not merely to criticize competing worldviews, but to encourage readers to think carefully, honestly, and consistently about the beliefs guiding their lives.

Before discussing politics, morality, religion, economics, or culture, one must first answer a more fundamental question:

What is real?

How a person answers that question will shape nearly every other conclusion that follows.

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Chapter Two

The Logic of Reincarnation

“Is an impersonal force higher than a person? Is it higher to be something like electricity than to be something like Aristotle?” — Peter Kreeft¹

A recent visit by the Dalai Lama² once again brought to mind the ongoing collision between Eastern and Western worldviews. One useful way to evaluate any belief system is to examine the practical fruit it produces when lived out consistently within a society.

Too often in the West, people selectively borrow pieces from various religious traditions without fully considering the logical consequences of those beliefs. They take what sounds peaceful, spiritual, or compassionate, blending together ideas from Buddhism, Hinduism, New Age spirituality, and neo-paganism into a personalized religious mixture. Yet many of the concepts Westerners admire are often detached from the larger philosophical systems from which they originate.

One of the clearest examples of this is the doctrine of reincarnation.³

Whether found in Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age spirituality, or forms of neo-paganism such as Wicca, reincarnation is closely tied to the concepts of karma and the cosmic wheel of life.⁴ In Eastern thought, the soul is believed to wander through an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth until it finally escapes the burden of existence itself.

As one writer summarized:

“Every action has a consequence, and some consequences are so far-reaching that they must be played out over several lifetimes.”⁵

In the West, karma is often romanticized as a harmless spiritual principle of balance or justice. In the East, however, karma has traditionally been viewed as a burden from which one seeks liberation.⁶ The goal is not to continue reincarnating forever, but to escape the endless cycle entirely.

This belief system profoundly shapes how suffering, poverty, disease, and social status are interpreted.

Karma and the Caste System

Historically, the doctrine of karma became deeply connected to India’s caste system.⁷ According to this worldview, one’s current circumstances are the result of actions committed in previous lives.

If a person is born into wealth, privilege, or social influence, that condition is viewed as the reward for good karma accumulated previously. If another person is born into poverty, disease, deformity, or oppression, that suffering is understood as the consequence of bad karma from a prior existence.

Traditional Hindu society developed rigid social classes around these assumptions:

- Brahmins (priests)
- Ksatriyas (warriors and rulers)
- Vaisyas (merchants)
- Sudras (laborers and servants)
- Untouchables

The untouchables occupied the lowest position in society and were often treated as spiritually impure.⁸

The logic behind karma is straightforward: every action produces consequences that continue across multiple lifetimes. This process, called samsara, literally means “to wander across.”⁹ The soul endlessly migrates from one life to another until it achieves liberation.

Within this system, suffering is not fundamentally unjust. Rather, it is interpreted as deserved.

This creates a major philosophical problem.

The Problem of Suffering

If every act of suffering is ultimately deserved because of actions in previous lives, then attempts to relieve suffering may actually interfere with karma.

This helps explain why many Western observers have historically noticed a striking difference between the humanitarian impulses of Christian missions and the responses produced by many Eastern religious systems.

For example, Christian missionaries throughout history frequently built hospitals, orphanages, schools, shelters, and relief organizations in impoverished regions of the world. They did so because the Judeo-Christian worldview teaches that human beings possess inherent dignity as persons created in the image of God.

By contrast, karmic systems often interpret suffering as part of a cosmic balancing process.

Ron Carlson once recounted visiting refugee camps along the Cambodian border following the Khmer Rouge massacres and subsequent Vietnamese invasion. He observed that Christian organizations were overwhelmingly responsible for caring for the refugees.

When Carlson asked why Buddhist organizations were largely absent, one aid worker responded:

“If someone is suffering, that is his karma. You are not to interfere with another person’s karma because he is purging himself through suffering and reincarnation.”¹⁰

Whether one agrees entirely with that assessment or not, the example highlights an important point: worldviews shape moral behavior.

Ideas produce consequences.

The Moral Problem of Reincarnation

Consider the implications of karma taken seriously.

Suppose a man abuses his wife throughout his life. Within a karmic framework, one possible explanation would be that in a future life he may return as the abused person himself.

At first glance this may appear to provide moral balance. However, it actually perpetuates evil rather than solving it.

Why?

Because the system always requires another victim and another perpetrator.

The cycle never truly resolves injustice; it merely redistributes suffering endlessly across countless lives.

Even worse, karma can ultimately make compassion irrational.

If suffering is deserved, then why intervene?

If someone is starving, diseased, crippled, oppressed, or abused because of actions committed in previous lives, then relieving that suffering interferes with the karmic process.

This is one reason the Christian worldview differs so dramatically.

Christianity teaches that suffering exists because humanity lives in a fallen world, not because individuals necessarily deserve specific tragedies due to actions in previous incarnations.

Jesus healed the sick, fed the poor, defended the vulnerable, and commanded His followers to love their neighbors. Compassion is not interference with cosmic justice; it is obedience to God.

Human Value and Moral Contradictions

One of the deepest problems facing pantheistic and reincarnation-based systems is the question of objective moral value.

Many Eastern systems ultimately teach that individuality itself is an illusion. The self is not ultimately real; distinctions between persons are temporary or illusory manifestations of the greater cosmic reality.

But this creates enormous philosophical tension.

If individuality is an illusion, then who exactly suffers?

Who loves?

Who commits evil?

Who receives justice?

These questions become difficult to answer coherently.

A revealing dialogue between a Christian and a Buddhist illustrates this tension.

If morality is ultimately subjective or illusory, then on what basis can one condemn theft, abuse, rape, or murder as objectively wrong?

The Buddhist may naturally recoil at such acts — and rightly so — but that emotional reaction often conflicts with the philosophical implications of the worldview itself.

Something within us recognizes that evil is real.

Human beings instinctively understand that cruelty, abuse, and injustice are not mere illusions.

This creates a serious contradiction for systems that deny ultimate distinctions between good and evil.

Pantheism and the Laws of Logic

Pantheism broadly teaches that God is everything and everything is God.¹¹ Distinctions between persons, objects, and reality itself are often viewed as temporary illusions.

However, pantheism encounters major logical difficulties.

For example, many pantheistic systems claim that God is beyond logic and cannot be comprehended rationally.

But the moment someone states, “God is beyond logic,” they have already made a logical statement about God.

The claim defeats itself.

Likewise, statements such as:

- “All distinctions are illusions.”
- “Reality is ultimately unreal.”
- “The self does not exist.”

all collapse under logical examination.

One cannot meaningfully deny existence while simultaneously existing to make the denial.

As philosopher J. P. Moreland observed:

“The claim ‘there are no truths’ is self-refuting.”¹²

The same principle applies here.

If reality itself is illusion, then the statement asserting that claim must also be illusion.

But if the statement is illusion, then why trust it?

The worldview undermines itself.

Buddhism, Contradiction, and Meaning

I once engaged in an online discussion with a Zen Buddhist concerning self-defense, morality, and enlightenment. (See Appendix A at the end of this chapter.)

The discussion quickly revealed an unavoidable tension within the worldview.

If reality is ultimately without distinctions, then distinctions between enlightenment and non-enlightenment are also illusory.

If there is no true self, then who is becoming enlightened?

Who teaches?

Who learns?

Who loves?

Even Buddhist texts such as the *Diamond Sutra* acknowledge this tension when they speak of leading beings to enlightenment while simultaneously denying the ultimate existence of beings themselves.

This philosophical contradiction becomes impossible to escape.

The worldview relies upon distinctions while simultaneously denying that distinctions are ultimately real.

Evil Cannot Be Dismissed as Illusion

Pantheistic systems often attempt to solve the problem of evil by claiming suffering itself is illusion.

But this explanation collapses when confronted with reality.

Tell a parent grieving the death of a child that suffering is illusion.

Tell a starving refugee that pain is illusion.

Tell a victim of violence that evil is merely a misunderstanding.

Human experience testifies otherwise.

Even if someone insists evil is illusion, the experience of suffering itself remains undeniably real.

As Norman Geisler asked:

“If evil is not real, what is the origin of the illusion?”¹³

Pantheism ultimately cannot solve the problem because, if everything is God, then God becomes the source of evil itself.

Reality and the Human Condition

One story told by Ravi Zacharias illustrates this problem well.

During a lecture on Eastern philosophy, a professor argued that Western “either/or” logic should be abandoned in favor of Eastern “both/and” thinking.

Zacharias responded by asking:

“Are you telling me that when studying Hinduism I either use both/and logic or nothing else?”

The professor paused and admitted:

“The either/or does seem to emerge, doesn’t it?”¹⁴

Indeed it does.

No one consistently lives as though contradictions are equally true.

Even in societies deeply influenced by pantheistic thinking, people still look both ways before crossing the street.

Reality demands coherence.

Appendix A

Dialogue with “They Call Him James Ure”

The following exchange originally took place during an online discussion concerning Buddhism, logic, self-defense, and the nature of reality. I have preserved the substance of the conversation while lightly editing it for clarity, readability, grammar, and continuity.

The exchange is important because it illustrates a central tension within many Eastern philosophical systems: the simultaneous denial of ultimate distinctions while still relying upon distinctions in practice.

Initial Engagement

Author:

Does the idea of violence as either morally good or morally evil truly exist within the Buddhist worldview?

What I mean is this: according to major schools of Buddhism, distinctions within reality are ultimately considered illusory. Separate selves are viewed as false perceptions. Language itself is often regarded as something the enlightened person must eventually transcend because it creates artificial distinctions that do not ultimately exist.

For example, the statement “all statements are empty of meaning” appears self-refuting, because that statement itself would then also be meaningless.

So how can one begin with those assumptions and then meaningfully speak of self-defense, morality, or historical evil? When the Dalai Lama discusses issues such as war or justice, is he not implicitly relying upon distinctions grounded in classical logic?

In doing so, he appears to assume the very categories Buddhism often seeks to transcend:

- The Law of Identity
- The Law of Non-Contradiction
- The Law of Excluded Middle

Curious.

Response from “They Call Him James Ure”

James Ure:

You’re right that language is just a tool and, in the end, a limited one. But it is still necessary if we are going to teach others.

It is like carrying a lamp through the darkness. The lamp helps guide people toward the lighthouse — enlightenment, Nirvana, awakening, or whatever term one chooses.

Once someone reaches the lighthouse, the lamp itself is no longer necessary. However, if one chooses to help others, then the enlightened person returns into the darkness carrying the lamp again in order to guide others toward enlightenment.

My Response

Author:

But if reality is ultimately without distinctions, then the distinction between enlightenment and non-enlightenment must also be illusory.

Who exactly is doing the leading?

Leading whom?

Leading them where?

Even those categories require distinctions.

There still remains a difference being asserted between:

- knowing one is enlightened, and
- not knowing one is enlightened.

The *Diamond Sutra* illustrates this tension clearly:

“All beings must I lead to Nirvana, into the Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind; and yet, after beings have been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana.”

The text continues by insisting that if a Bodhisattva thinks in terms of “beings,” “souls,” or “persons,” then he cannot truly be called a Bodhisattva.

But this raises a serious philosophical problem.

If no persons ultimately exist, then ultimately there is no one to love, no one to save, and no one to guide toward enlightenment.

One scholar summarized the issue this way:

“Nirvana is neither a re-absorption into an eternal Ultimate Reality, nor the annihilation of a self, because there is no self to annihilate. It is rather an annihilation of the illusion of an existing self.”

This creates a contradiction within the worldview itself.

Final Observation

Author:

I never received a final response.

Which, in some ways, seemed fitting.

After all, if individuality itself is illusion, then who exactly would be responding to whom?

Would one mind merely be attempting to convince another mind that no minds actually exist?

That question remains at the heart of the issue.

Conclusion

The doctrine of reincarnation may initially appear spiritually profound or morally attractive, especially when simplified in Western culture. But when followed to its logical conclusions, serious philosophical and moral problems emerge.

Karma cannot truly solve evil because it perpetuates suffering endlessly.

Pantheism cannot ultimately explain individuality, morality, or logic because it dissolves the distinctions required to discuss those concepts meaningfully.

And the attempt to dismiss suffering as illusion collapses before the undeniable realities of human pain, injustice, and moral conscience.

Christianity, by contrast, affirms both the reality of suffering and the value of the individual person.

It teaches that evil is real, compassion matters, truth exists, and human beings possess dignity because they are created by a personal God.

Rather than escaping personhood, Christianity teaches redemption of the person.

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Chapter Three

Infinitely Finite: Mormon Materialism and the Limits of God

“We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take the veil away.” — Joseph Smith¹

One Saturday afternoon I found myself watching my nephews along with my own boys while my wife was out shopping. “Watching,” however, may not be the best description. It was more a matter of preventing catastrophic injury — something young boys seem naturally gifted at pursuing.

As my wife pulled into the driveway, she casually asked me a question:

“Who are the young men with the white shirts, ties, and name tags that go door to door?”

After nearly twenty years of discussing Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witness theology, with entire bookshelves lined with material on both subjects, I was surprised she even needed to ask.

“Mormon elders,” I answered.

“Well,” she replied, “they just walked around the corner toward our building.”

Instantly my mind started racing.

I had recently developed a new conversational approach for engaging Mormon missionaries — one I believed cut directly to the foundational assumptions of Mormon theology rather than merely debating isolated doctrines.

Sure enough, within moments there was a knock at the door.

After the usual introductions, polite conversation, and offering them something to drink, they asked whether I had any questions.

“I do,” I said.

I referenced a comment made during a presidential election cycle involving Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee. Huckabee had mentioned that Mormons believe Jesus and Lucifer are spirit brothers, a claim Romney publicly dismissed as an unfair attack.

Then I asked the question directly:

“So tell me — are Jesus and Lucifer brothers according to Mormon theology?”²

The young men answered more openly than I expected, though they stopped short of fully explaining the implications of the doctrine.

The issue is not merely that Jesus and Lucifer are viewed as spirit siblings. The deeper implication is that, according to historic Mormon teaching, Heavenly Father himself attained godhood through a process of exaltation after previously existing as a mortal being.³

In Mormon theology, Heavenly Father possesses a physical body, has heavenly wives, and through celestial procreation produces spirit children who are later born into mortality.

That means humanity, Jesus, Lucifer, Joseph Smith, and every other person who has ever existed are understood to be spirit offspring within the same cosmic family structure.⁴

The “God Was Once a Man” Problem

To avoid misunderstanding Mormon theology, I often read directly from official LDS educational materials.

One such source is *Achieving Celestial Marriage*, a seminary-level manual published by the Church Educational System.

The manual states:

“By definition, exaltation includes the ability to procreate the family unit throughout eternity. This our Father in heaven has power to do. His marriage partner is our mother in heaven. We are their spirit children, born to them in the bonds of celestial marriage.”⁵

The manual further includes section headings such as:

- “God Was Once a Mortal Man”
- “He Lived on an Earth Like Our Own”
- “God Is Now an Exalted Man with Powers of Eternal Increase”⁶

These are not anti-Mormon caricatures. They are statements drawn from Mormon teaching itself.

The implications are enormous.

If God was once a man who progressed into deity, then God is not eternally self-existent in the classical Christian sense.

Rather, God becomes part of an infinite regress of gods — each one born from previous gods in an endless chain stretching backward eternally.

In this framework, there is always:

- a father god before the current god,
- another world before this world,
- another generation before the current generation.

This fundamentally differs from historic Judeo-Christian theism.

The Difference Between Theism and Mormon Cosmology

Classical Christianity teaches that God created the universe *ex nihilo* — out of nothing.⁷

This means matter, energy, space, time, physical laws, and the universe itself all ultimately depend upon God for their existence.

God does not exist inside the universe as one being among many. Rather, He transcends creation entirely.

Mormon theology teaches something very different.

According to Mormon doctrine, matter is eternal. Space is eternal. Intelligence is eternal. Spirit itself is a form of matter.⁸

God did not create these realities; He organized preexisting eternal material.

James Talmage, a prominent Mormon apostle and theologian, wrote:

“The elements are eternal.”⁹

This means the Mormon concept of God exists within a preexisting cosmic structure governed by eternal laws and eternal matter.

In other words, laws of logic, mathematics, gravity, causality, biology, and even the material framework of existence itself all predate the Mormon god of this world.

That creates a serious philosophical problem.

A God Subject to Laws

If God Himself exists within an already established framework of eternal laws, then those laws become more fundamental than God.

The Mormon god does not create reality in the ultimate sense. He works within realities already present.

Francis Beckwith summarizes the issue this way:

“Since God Himself came into being as God... He cannot be the source and sanction of values. He Himself obeys laws and affirmed values for whose existence he is not responsible.”¹⁰

This means that in Mormon theology:

- matter exists eternally,
- time exists eternally,
- laws exist eternally,
- intelligences exist eternally,

- and gods themselves emerge within that system.

God therefore becomes contingent rather than ultimate.¹¹

This differs radically from biblical Christianity, where God is understood as the eternal, self-existent Creator upon whom all reality depends.

Why Atheists Rarely Debate Mormonism

At this point in conversations with Mormon missionaries, I often ask a simple question:

“Have you ever noticed that atheists almost never debate the Mormon concept of God?”

The missionaries usually look puzzled.

Then I explain why.

An atheist believes matter and the universe are eternal. Matter existed before human beings arrived and continues independently of them.

Natural laws such as gravity, entropy, causality, and physics existed before any individual human being was born.

Human beings are therefore products of an already existing material system.

But this closely resembles the Mormon view of deity.

In Mormon theology, Heavenly Father Himself emerges within a preexisting eternal cosmos governed by eternal laws.

He did not create matter from nothing.

He did not create space or time.

He did not author logic or the laws governing existence.

Instead, He exists inside that framework.

Thus both atheism and Mormon theology begin with eternally existing matter and eternal natural structures.

The difference is that Mormonism inserts exalted beings into the process.

Mormonism and Materialism

This becomes even more significant when examining Mormon scripture itself.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8 states:

“There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure.”¹²

This statement has led many scholars to observe deep conceptual similarities between Mormon metaphysics and philosophical materialism.

Beckwith notes:

“Mormonism... is committed to a thoroughgoing metaphysical materialism.”¹³

Parley Pratt similarly declared:

“Nothing exists which is not material.”¹⁴

That statement is remarkably close to classical materialist philosophy.

In fact, there are notable similarities between Mormon cosmology and certain forms of Soviet dialectical materialism.

Eternal Matter and Dialectical Materialism

Marxist dialectical materialism taught that matter is eternal, self-existing, and constantly evolving through conflict and motion.¹⁵

Soviet philosophy described matter as:

“self-moving and eternally developing.”¹⁶

Time, motion, and matter were all considered eternal realities.

Likewise, Mormon theology teaches eternal matter, eternal intelligences, eternal progression, and an infinite regression of gods.

Both systems reject the idea of creation from nothing.

Both systems deny that ultimate reality depends upon a transcendent Creator.

And both systems place all existence inside an eternally existing material framework.

Of course, Mormonism differs from atheistic materialism in that it still includes personal deities and moral structures. Nevertheless, the philosophical similarities remain striking.

Scientific Challenges to Eternal Matter

The problem for both atheistic materialism and Mormon cosmology is that modern cosmology increasingly points toward a universe with a beginning.

The development of Einstein’s theory of relativity, Hubble’s discovery of the expanding universe, and evidence supporting the Big Bang model all strongly suggest that space, time, matter, and energy had a beginning.¹⁷

Lee Strobel summarizes several major discoveries:

- Einstein's equations implied a non-static universe.
- Alexander Friedman and Georges Lemaître predicted expansion.
- Edwin Hubble observed galactic redshift.
- George Gamow predicted cosmic background radiation.
- Scientists later confirmed that radiation experimentally.

These discoveries dramatically undermined the older assumption of an eternal, static universe.

If the universe began to exist, then matter, time, and energy are not eternal after all.

And if matter is not eternal, then systems built upon eternal materialism face serious philosophical difficulties.

The Impossibility of an Infinite Regress

There is also a philosophical problem with the Mormon idea of an infinite succession of gods.

If an infinite number of prior historical events had to occur before the present moment could arrive, then the present moment could never actually arrive.

William Lane Craig summarizes the issue this way:

“The temporal series of events cannot be an actual infinite.”¹⁸

The idea is simple.

If an infinite number of events had to occur before today, then today could never be reached because there would always remain another prior event that needed to happen first.

An actual infinite cannot be completed through successive addition.

Thus the past cannot be literally infinite.

This creates a major difficulty for any worldview built upon an eternal chain of gods begetting gods without beginning.

The God Who Is Too Small

When speaking with Mormon missionaries, I sometimes summarize the entire issue this way:

“Your god is too small.”

The God of Christianity is not merely an advanced being living somewhere inside the cosmos.

He is not one god among many.
He is not bound by eternal laws outside Himself.
He is not progressing.
He is not contingent.
He is the eternal source of all reality.
He creates matter.
He creates time.
He creates space.
He creates the laws governing the universe.
Everything else depends upon Him.

That is a radically different concept of God than the one found in Mormon theology.

Conclusion

The differences between Christianity and Mormonism are not merely semantic.

They involve fundamentally different understandings of:

- God,
- matter,
- eternity,
- creation,
- morality,
- and reality itself.

Historic Christianity teaches an eternal, transcendent Creator who brings all things into existence and sustains them continually.

Mormon theology instead presents a finite god existing within an eternal material framework governed by realities greater than himself.

Ultimately, the issue becomes this:

Is God the eternal foundation of reality?

Or is God simply another being inside reality?

How one answers that question changes everything.

Notes

35. Joseph Smith, quoted in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345.
36. James A. Beverly, *Nelson's Illustrated Guide to Religions* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 368.
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38. Richard Abanes, *One Nation Under Gods* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002), 285–87.
39. *Achieving Celestial Marriage*, 129.
40. Ibid.
41. Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 722–23.
42. Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8.
43. James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1959), 465–66.
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48. Ibid.
49. A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, 2006), 498–99.
50. F. V. Konstantinov, ed., *Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), 76.
51. Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 105–12.
52. William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 103.

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Chapter Four

Against Nature

Epicureanism, Natural Law, and the Modern Moral Revolution

“For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.” — Romans 1:25¹

Writers who spent decades without ever discussing homosexuality suddenly found themselves accused of “homophobia” once they began addressing the issue publicly during the AIDS epidemic and the broader cultural debates that followed.²

Whether one agrees or disagrees with their conclusions is not the primary issue. The more important observation is how quickly moral disagreement itself became pathologized. Rather than engaging arguments substantively, critics were often dismissed psychologically.

This reflects a deeper cultural shift.

Modern society increasingly treats moral disagreement not as a conflict between competing worldviews, but as evidence of emotional dysfunction or intolerance. Yet throughout history, societies have always debated moral questions because ideas concerning human nature inevitably shape law, culture, and civilization.

The Apostle Paul recognized this nearly two thousand years ago when writing to the church in Rome.

Romans and the Question of Human Nature

Romans chapter one presents one of Scripture’s clearest arguments concerning the relationship between creation, morality, and human nature.

Paul writes:

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”³

Paul’s argument is grounded in the idea that creation itself reveals something about both God and humanity. Nature is not morally silent. Rather, it reflects an intelligible order rooted in the character of the Creator.

This concept became foundational to what later thinkers would call natural law.

Natural law refers broadly to moral truths embedded within human nature and accessible through reason, conscience, and observation of reality itself.⁴ While philosophers such as

Aristotle helped formalize aspects of this concept philosophically, the underlying principle long predated Greek philosophy.

The laws of logic, for example, were not invented by Aristotle any more than gravity was invented by Newton. Both merely described realities already present.

The same principle applies to natural law.

Biblical writers consistently appealed to an objective moral order grounded in creation itself. Elijah's challenge on Mount Carmel illustrates this clearly:

“If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.”⁵

Embedded within that statement are the assumptions behind the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle. God and Baal cannot both ultimately occupy the same position simultaneously.

Likewise, Paul assumes that human beings possess a nature that can either conform to or rebel against the created order.

This becomes central to his argument regarding sexuality.

Creation, Nature, and the Roman World

Paul wrote Romans into a Greco-Roman culture already deeply influenced by forms of Epicureanism, hedonism, and sexual permissiveness.⁶

Epicurus taught that pleasure and the avoidance of pain constituted the highest practical good.⁷ Over time, many strands of Greco-Roman culture increasingly treated sexuality not as something ordered toward family, covenant, and procreation, but as a means of personal gratification.

Yet even within the Roman world, many philosophers still regarded certain sexual practices as contrary to nature.

Craig Keener notes that both Jewish and Roman moralists often viewed homosexual behavior as violating the created order of human sexuality.⁸ Paul therefore was not inventing an entirely foreign moral category. He was speaking into an ongoing cultural debate already familiar to both Jews and Gentiles.

What distinguished Paul's argument, however, was its theological foundation.

For Paul, disorder in human sexuality was not merely a social problem. It reflected a deeper rejection of the Creator Himself.

He writes that humanity:

“exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.”⁹

This is the central issue.

According to Paul, moral disorder flows from theological disorder.

When humanity rejects the Creator, it eventually loses clarity regarding creation itself.

The Rejection of Nature

Paul's argument concerning same-sex behavior is inseparable from his larger understanding of creation.

He describes humanity as exchanging "natural relations" for what is "contrary to nature."¹⁰ The phrase "against nature" reflects the assumption that human beings possess an intended order grounded in creation itself.

This concept appears repeatedly throughout both Jewish and Christian thought.

Thomas Aquinas later expanded upon this idea by arguing that morality must correspond to humanity's created nature as rational and embodied beings.¹¹

The issue therefore is not merely religious prohibition.

The deeper issue concerns teleology — the idea that human faculties possess inherent purposes.

Eyes are ordered toward seeing.

Ears toward hearing.

Likewise, sexuality possesses an intelligible structure rooted in the complementarity of male and female.

The biblical understanding of marriage emerges from this framework.

Genesis describes man and woman becoming "one flesh,"¹² a union involving not merely emotional affection but biological, relational, and procreative complementarity.

Natural law thinkers argued that sexual ethics cannot be separated from these realities without fundamentally redefining human nature itself.

Instrumentalizing the Human Person

One of the strongest critiques offered by natural law philosophers concerns what Robert George calls the "instrumentalization" of the body.¹³

In this framework, sexuality becomes detached from covenant, procreation, and embodied complementarity, reducing the body to a tool for personal gratification.

Pleasure itself becomes the ultimate end.

This mirrors the logic of ancient Epicureanism.

The problem is not pleasure in itself. Christianity has never taught that pleasure is evil. Rather, the problem emerges when pleasure becomes detached from moral order and elevated into the highest good.

Once pleasure becomes ultimate, human relationships increasingly risk becoming transactional.

People become instruments for satisfying desire.

Anthony Hoekema warned that modern idolatry often transforms human beings themselves into objects of worship.¹⁴ Instead of idols carved from stone or wood, modern culture idolizes self-expression, autonomy, power, fame, wealth, and gratification.

This helps explain why modern debates surrounding sexuality are rarely confined to private behavior.

They become debates about identity, meaning, morality, and the nature of reality itself.

Materialism and Moral Relativism

Modern secular culture increasingly grounds human identity within philosophical naturalism — the belief that reality consists entirely of matter, energy, and impersonal processes.

Within such a framework, objective morality becomes difficult to ground.

If human beings are ultimately accidental products of blind evolutionary forces, then moral categories risk collapsing into social conventions, survival strategies, or personal preferences.

This does not mean atheists cannot behave morally. Clearly they can.

The deeper question is whether objective moral obligations can exist within a purely materialistic universe.

Nancy Pearcey summarizes the problem well:

“If nature is all there is, then morality becomes merely a byproduct of biological survival.”¹⁵

Some modern theorists have attempted to explain even destructive human behaviors in purely evolutionary terms.

This approach often treats morality not as objectively real, but as adaptive.

The danger is obvious.

If moral values are merely evolutionary products, then concepts such as justice, dignity, and human rights become increasingly unstable.

This concern lies beneath many contemporary debates regarding sexuality, family structure, and social ethics.

Foucault and the Collapse of Objective Truth

Few thinkers shaped modern sexual ethics more profoundly than Michel Foucault.

Foucault argued that truth itself is socially constructed through systems of power.¹⁶ Categories such as “normal” and “abnormal” were, in his view, political mechanisms used by societies to control individuals.

This perspective profoundly influenced postmodern thought.

If truth is constructed socially, then moral norms lose objective authority.

Sexuality becomes an arena for liberation from traditional structures rather than conformity to any enduring moral order.

Foucault rejected universal moral categories altogether.

As a result, distinctions between normal and abnormal sexuality increasingly became viewed not as objective realities but as social inventions.

This worldview has deeply influenced modern Western culture.

Today many people no longer ask whether a behavior is morally true, good, or ordered toward human flourishing.

Instead they ask whether society has the right to impose any moral framework at all.

But even postmodernism cannot escape moral assumptions entirely.

Every worldview ultimately smuggles moral categories back into its system.

The moment someone condemns oppression, injustice, or intolerance, they have already appealed to standards transcending mere personal preference.

Natural Law and Society

The debate surrounding marriage is ultimately inseparable from broader questions concerning civilization and the common good.

Historically, societies recognized marriage not merely as a private emotional arrangement but as a foundational social institution tied to family, children, inheritance, stability, and social continuity.

Professor Michael Pakaluk summarizes several reasons societies historically protected marriage legally:

53. Families provide the primary environment for forming responsible citizens.

54. Children possess a natural interest in stable family structures.

55. Civil society depends upon citizens capable of self-restraint and moral responsibility.¹⁷

These concerns are not uniquely religious.

They are civilizational.

Historically, even many secular legal traditions recognized that societies possess a legitimate interest in regulating sexual behavior because sexual ethics profoundly affect family structure, social stability, and the wellbeing of future generations.

The Christian understanding of marriage therefore did not emerge merely from arbitrary religious commands.

It emerged from an understanding of human nature itself.

The Modern Moral Revolution

Modern Western culture increasingly rejects the existence of any fixed human nature.

Identity is now frequently understood not as something discovered within creation, but as something self-constructed.

This shift explains why contemporary moral debates often become so emotionally intense.

At stake are not merely policies, but rival understandings of what it means to be human.

Legal positivism — the idea that law derives purely from human decision rather than any higher moral order — increasingly dominates modern political thought.¹⁸

Under this framework, rights become social constructions untethered from any objective conception of human nature.

Natural law traditions, however, argue the opposite.

They maintain that rights exist because human beings possess an objective nature grounded in creation itself.

The American founders largely assumed such a framework when speaking of “unalienable rights” endowed by a Creator rather than granted merely by governments.

Christianity and Human Dignity

Christianity differs sharply from both ancient Epicureanism and modern materialism because it grounds human dignity in the image of God.

Human beings are not accidents.

They are not merely collections of appetites.

They are not instruments for pleasure.

Nor are they infinitely self-defining.

They are created persons possessing both dignity and moral accountability.

This is why Christianity simultaneously affirms compassion and moral order.

The Christian worldview teaches that every person bears God's image and therefore possesses immense value regardless of personal struggles, failures, temptations, or sins.

At the same time, Christianity insists that human flourishing requires conformity to truth rather than the redefinition of truth.

The solution to humanity's brokenness is not the abandonment of moral order, but redemption.

Appendix B

A Dialogue on Marriage, Sexuality, and Natural Law

The following exchange originally emerged from an online conversation concerning marriage, sexuality, and natural law. I have preserved the substance of the discussion while editing it for readability, structure, grammar, and continuity.

The exchange is valuable because it illustrates the philosophical foundation underlying the traditional natural law understanding of marriage — namely, that marriage is not merely an emotional or psychological arrangement, but a comprehensive bodily, relational, and moral union rooted in human nature itself.

The Question

John:

“If sexuality is not simply about attraction, desire, or acting upon what turns us on mentally and physically, then what defines our sexuality? What makes someone heterosexual?”

My Response

Author:

That is actually a very constructive question.

Conversations like this forced me to think more carefully about what people mean by terms such as *sexuality*, *marriage*, and *human nature*. They also forced me to clarify the deeper philosophical assumptions behind the traditional understanding of marriage.

At the outset, one important point must be acknowledged.

The claim that law ought to remain morally neutral regarding marriage or sexuality is itself a moral claim. It is therefore not neutral at all.

Every person enters this debate carrying philosophical assumptions about:

- human nature,
- morality,
- freedom,
- justice,
- the body,
- and the purpose of human relationships.

No one approaches these issues from a position of complete neutrality.

The central issue, then, concerns competing visions of what marriage *is*.

The Traditional Understanding of Marriage

The traditional natural law understanding of marriage has long been rooted not only in Jewish and Christian theology, but also in broader philosophical reflection concerning human nature itself.

Robert P. George summarizes this position well:

“Marriage is a two-in-one-flesh communion of persons that is consummated and actualized by acts that are reproductive in type, whether or not they are reproductive in effect.”¹

Under this understanding, marriage is not merely emotional companionship or shared affection.

It is a comprehensive union involving:

- bodily unity,
- emotional unity,
- relational unity,
- familial unity,
- and spiritual unity.

The bodily aspect of marriage is particularly important within natural law reasoning.

Human reproduction is unique in that the reproductive act is not performed by isolated individuals independently, but by a complementary male-female union functioning together as a single reproductive principle.

Germaine Grisez expressed this idea by arguing that while men and women remain complete individuals in most respects, reproduction uniquely involves bodily complementarity that forms an organic unity.²

This is what natural law thinkers historically meant by the biblical phrase “one flesh.”³

Sexuality and Instrumentalization

The natural law tradition therefore argues that sexuality possesses meaning beyond emotional gratification or personal fulfillment alone.

When sexual acts become detached from the comprehensive union symbolized within marriage, sexuality risks becoming instrumentalized.

In other words, bodies increasingly become tools for achieving external goals such as:

- pleasure,
- tension release,
- emotional validation,
- affirmation,
- or self-expression.

Robert George argues that this differs fundamentally from marital union because marital acts possess an intrinsic meaning connected to the good of marriage itself rather than functioning merely as instruments toward external ends.⁴

This distinction becomes central to the debate.

The traditional view does not argue that pleasure is evil.

Rather, it argues that pleasure alone cannot sufficiently define the meaning or purpose of sexuality.

Within marriage, sexual union is understood as expressing and actualizing an already existing covenantal and bodily union.

Outside that framework, sexuality increasingly risks reducing persons to instruments of desire.

Marriage, Unity, and Human Nature

Critics often respond by asking about infertility.

If reproduction is central to marriage, what about elderly couples or infertile spouses?

Natural law thinkers historically answered that the issue is not whether reproduction actually occurs, but whether the union itself is *reproductive in type*.

In other words, marriage remains rooted in the kind of bodily union that naturally corresponds to human reproduction even when conception itself does not occur.

This distinction historically shaped matrimonial law for centuries.

The marital act was understood not primarily as a biological production mechanism, but as an expression of a comprehensive bodily and relational union ordered toward family life.

Children, under this framework, are not viewed as manufactured products or objects of desire.

Rather, they are understood as gifts arising from the organic union established through marriage.

This understanding attempts to preserve the dignity of both marriage and the child.

The Deeper Worldview Conflict

Ultimately, the disagreement surrounding sexuality is not merely about behavior.

It reflects fundamentally different understandings of:

- what human beings are,
- what bodies mean,
- what marriage is for,
- and whether human nature possesses any objective moral structure at all.

The modern view increasingly defines identity in terms of psychological desire and individual self-expression.

The classical natural law view instead understands human freedom as flourishing within an objective moral order rooted in creation itself.

That is the deeper divide.

The disagreement is not simply over rules.

It is over reality.

Notes

1. Robert P. George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies: Law, Religion, and Morality in Crisis* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001), 78–81.
2. Ibid., quoting Germain Grisez.
3. Genesis 2:24.
4. George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies*, 79–81.

Appendix C

Questions About Homosexuality, Human Nature, and Christian Ethics

The following exchange emerged from a broader discussion concerning homosexuality, salvation, free will, and the natural law understanding of marriage and sexuality. I have

preserved the substance of the discussion while editing it for readability, tone, structure, and continuity.

The purpose of preserving this dialogue is not merely to revisit political controversies, but to demonstrate how worldview assumptions about human nature, morality, freedom, and creation shape the modern debate surrounding sexuality.

The Question

Question:

“What are your views on homosexuality? Are homosexuals bad people? Are they condemned? Are people born this way?”

My Response

Author:

The homosexual man or woman is no more a sinner than any other human being.

Christianity teaches that all people stand in need of grace.

Every person struggles with brokenness, temptation, selfishness, pride, or sin in one form or another. The Christian message is not that one category of people is uniquely condemned while everyone else is righteous.

The message of Christianity is that humanity itself is fallen and in need of redemption.

Concerning hell, I have often understood it in light of both human freedom and human dignity.

C. S. Lewis once remarked that hell is “locked from the inside.”¹ The point is that God does not force Himself upon people against their will.

Christianity teaches that salvation rests upon trusting in the finished work of Christ.

At the same time, genuine faith inevitably challenges a person’s life.

Christians are not instantly perfected.

People often spend years struggling through personal failures, addictions, emotional wounds, destructive behaviors, or deeply rooted habits.

The Christian life involves repentance, growth, prayer, spiritual guidance, and moral transformation.

In that sense, Christianity calls every person — regardless of the particular struggle involved — toward conformity to God’s design for human life.

Human Nature and the Created Order

The broader issue, however, concerns whether human nature itself possesses any objective order.

My argument for heterosexual marriage does not depend entirely upon specifically religious assumptions.

It can also be framed philosophically in terms of natural law.

The core claim is that male and female complementarity possesses an intrinsic structure rooted in human biology and reproduction.

To illustrate this idea, consider something like gold.

“...take gold as an example, it has inherent in its nature intrinsic qualities that make it expensive: good conductor of electricity, rare, never tarnishes, ease of use (moldability), and the like. The male and female have the potential to become a single biological organism, or single organic unit, or principle. Two essentially becoming one. The male and female, then, have inherent to their nature intrinsic qualities that two mated males or two mated females never actualize in their courtship... nor can they ever. The potential stays just that, potential, never being realized.....

Gold possesses intrinsic qualities that make it valuable:

- conductivity,
- rarity,
- durability,
- and malleability.

Likewise, male and female bodies possess complementary reproductive capacities that allow them to unite biologically in a way two males or two females cannot.

Natural law thinkers historically described this as an “organic unity.”² Analogously,

“....Think of a being or animal or even an insect that reproduces, not by mating, but by some act performed by individuals. Imagine that for these same beings, movement and digestion is performed not by individuals, but only by the complementary pairs that unite for this purpose. Would anyone acquainted with such beings have difficulty understanding that in respect to movement and digestion, the organism is a united pair, or an organic unity? They thus become an entirely new organism when joined together — fulfilling what was only ‘potential’ when apart”

The idea is not merely emotional attraction.

Rather, the argument is that the male-female union uniquely forms a reproductive-type unity grounded in human nature itself.

This is why natural law theorists argued that marriage is not merely a legal contract or emotional arrangement, but a comprehensive bodily and relational union.

The state historically recognized this union because it forms the foundation of family structure, childbearing, and social continuity.

Nature, Freedom, and Moral Meaning

Whether one believes humanity was created by God or emerged through evolutionary processes, the natural law argument maintains that human nature still possesses intelligible structures.

The disagreement ultimately concerns what those structures mean morally.

The Christian worldview argues that freedom is not merely the ability to pursue desire without restraint.

Rather, genuine human flourishing emerges when freedom aligns with truth and moral order.

This principle applies broadly across human behavior.

Desire alone does not determine moral goodness.

Human beings regularly experience desires that may be harmful, destructive, selfish, or disordered.

Civilization itself depends upon learning self-restraint, moral responsibility, and the proper ordering of desire.

Trauma, Experience, and Human Complexity

Questions concerning sexual orientation are deeply personal and emotionally complex.

Many individuals describe experiences involving trauma, abuse, confusion, isolation, rejection, or painful developmental experiences.

Others describe their attractions as deeply ingrained and longstanding.

Human experience is rarely simplistic.

I have known homosexual individuals whom I deeply respected and cared about personally.

One former coworker openly shared that he had experienced sexual abuse at a very young age and believed those experiences profoundly shaped his later sexual development.

Stories like this highlight the complexity surrounding human sexuality and caution against simplistic explanations.

At the same time, acknowledging emotional or psychological influences does not eliminate moral questions.

Christianity historically has maintained that compassion and moral conviction must coexist.

People deserve dignity, kindness, honesty, and care regardless of disagreement.

The Political and Cultural Conflict

Modern debates surrounding sexuality increasingly extend beyond private relationships into broader questions concerning:

- education,
- family structure,
- law,
- public morality,
- and cultural identity.

This explains why these discussions often become so emotionally charged.

At stake are competing visions of human nature and moral authority.

Some activists argue morality should be rooted primarily in individual autonomy and self-expression.

Natural law traditions instead maintain that freedom must remain connected to objective truths about human nature.

Tammy Bruce — herself openly lesbian and politically progressive in many respects — nevertheless warned that modern culture increasingly treats all moral distinctions regarding sexuality as oppressive or intolerant.³

Her larger concern was that moral relativism eventually dissolves society's ability to distinguish between healthy and destructive behaviors altogether.

Whether one agrees fully with Bruce or not, her observations illustrate that these concerns are not limited solely to conservative religious voices.

Christianity, Compassion, and Truth

The Christian worldview insists upon two truths simultaneously.

First, every human being possesses immense dignity because every person bears the image of God.

Second, human beings flourish most fully when living in harmony with God's created order.

Christianity therefore rejects both hatred and moral indifference.

The Christian call is neither cruelty nor affirmation of every desire.

It is truth joined with grace.

That balance is difficult.

Yet Christianity insists both are necessary.

Notes

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 127–28.
2. Robert P. George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies: Law, Religion, and Morality in Crisis* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001), 78–81.
3. Tammy Bruce, *The Death of Right and Wrong: Exposing the Left's Assault on Our Culture and Values* (Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing, 2003), 35, 92, 206.

Conclusion

The conflict described in Romans chapter one remains deeply relevant today.

Modern society increasingly mirrors many of the same philosophical assumptions present within the ancient Roman world:

- pleasure elevated as the highest good,
- truth reduced to social construction,
- morality detached from creation,
- and human identity separated from any fixed nature.

Paul's argument ultimately centers upon one foundational claim:

Human beings cannot reject the Creator without eventually losing clarity regarding creation itself.

The Christian worldview maintains that morality is not arbitrary because reality itself possesses meaning, order, and purpose grounded in God.

Natural law therefore is not merely a religious construct.

It is the recognition that creation itself reflects truths about human nature.

And when societies abandon those truths, confusion inevitably follows.

Yet Christianity also offers hope.

The gospel does not merely condemn disorder.

It offers restoration.

Human dignity, meaning, morality, and redemption are all ultimately grounded not in shifting appetites or political movements, but in the eternal Creator who made humanity in His image.

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Chapter Five

Gnostic Feminism

Revisionist Christianity and the Rejection of Orthodoxy

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” — John 1:14¹

Recently, one of the actresses involved with *The Vagina Monologues* contacted me regarding a column I had written criticizing the play. She explained that she found my critique “offensive” and “hurtful.” I responded by asking whether the large illuminated “vagina” sign displayed publicly in front of the university might likewise be considered offensive by the nearby Greek Orthodox and Baptist congregations situated directly across the street. Her answer was blunt: she “didn’t care” what they thought.²

That exchange illustrates something increasingly common within modern ideological discourse. Moral disagreement is often treated not as a legitimate conflict between competing worldviews, but as evidence of intolerance or emotional dysfunction. Yet such reactions frequently reveal deeper philosophical assumptions already operating beneath the surface.

Understanding the political, philosophical, and theological assumptions underlying modern feminist reinterpretations of Christianity helps explain why so many revisionist readings of Christian history emerge today.³

I encountered similar assumptions firsthand during a Philosophy 101 course in college. The professor — who approached religion through a blend of Eastern spirituality and postmodern feminism — wrote on the board, “Women philosophers believe there are no absolutes.” Yet when challenged concerning whether that very statement functioned as an absolute claim, she defended it absolutely.

Such contradictions are not uncommon within postmodern thought.

The rejection of objective truth frequently reintroduces absolutes selectively, usually in the service of ideological commitments. This becomes particularly relevant when modern writers reinterpret Christianity through contemporary assumptions concerning gender, power, authority, sexuality, and identity.

One of the most influential scholars associated with this reinterpretive movement is Elaine Pagels, Harrington Spear Paine Professor of Religion at Princeton University. Pagels became widely known through her work on Gnostic writings discovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt.⁴

Pagels correctly acknowledges that neither orthodox Christians nor Gnostics held entirely uniform views regarding women.⁵ Nevertheless, she argues that women generally occupied a more favorable position within Gnostic communities than within orthodox Christianity.⁶ Her broader thesis suggests that the suppression of Gnostic traditions represented not

merely a theological disagreement, but the triumph of patriarchal institutional power over alternative spiritual movements.

This argument has profoundly influenced popular culture.

Books such as *The Da Vinci Code*, various documentaries, modern feminist theology, and numerous revisionist histories of Christianity frequently present orthodoxy as politically constructed while portraying Gnosticism as spiritually liberating and intellectually suppressed.

But do the historical facts support such conclusions?

Nag Hammadi and the Rise of Modern Gnostic Revisionism

For centuries, most knowledge concerning Gnosticism came through the writings of the early church fathers — particularly Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen — who wrote extensively against Gnostic teachings.⁷

That changed dramatically in 1945 when Egyptian peasants discovered a collection of ancient codices near Nag Hammadi, approximately three hundred miles south of Cairo along the Nile River.⁸

The discovery included fifty-two surviving Coptic texts, among them:

- the *Gospel of Thomas*,
- the *Gospel of Philip*,
- and numerous other Gnostic writings.⁹

These documents generated enormous excitement among scholars and popular writers alike because many believed they revealed alternative forms of Christianity allegedly suppressed by the institutional church.

Dan Brown popularized this narrative in *The Da Vinci Code*, claiming that the Vatican systematically suppressed “true” Christian documents that contradicted orthodox theology.¹⁰ Brown suggested that the divinity of Christ itself was largely a later political invention designed to consolidate ecclesiastical authority.

Although Brown’s work is fiction, he publicly insisted that the historical claims underlying the novel were substantially accurate.¹¹

Yet these claims collapse under serious historical examination.

What Gnosticism Actually Taught

The word *Gnosticism* derives from the Greek term *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.”¹²

While Gnostic systems differed significantly from one another, most shared several common characteristics:

- salvation through secret knowledge,
- radical dualism between spirit and matter,
- hostility toward the physical world,
- rejection of bodily existence,
- and belief that material creation resulted from an inferior or corrupted deity often called the *demiurge*.¹³

This worldview sharply contradicted historic Christianity.

The biblical worldview affirms that creation itself is fundamentally good because it originates from God. Genesis repeatedly describes creation as “good.”¹⁴ Christianity affirms:

- embodiment,
- marriage,
- family,
- bodily resurrection,
- incarnation,
- and the goodness of the created order.

Gnosticism moved in the opposite direction.

The body became something to escape rather than something possessing inherent meaning and dignity.

In many ways, ancient Gnosticism represented a rejection of creation itself.

This becomes particularly relevant when examining Gnostic views concerning women.

Despite modern romanticizing of Gnostic feminism, many Gnostic texts actually contain deeply negative assumptions regarding womanhood and embodiment. One of the clearest examples appears in the *Gospel of Thomas*, where Simon Peter says concerning Mary:

“Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.”¹⁵

Jesus allegedly responds:

“I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁶

Far from presenting a liberating view of women, the text reflects the Gnostic tendency to associate femininity with materiality and spiritual inferiority.

The irony is striking.

Modern revisionists frequently portray orthodoxy as oppressive toward women while simultaneously celebrating texts that explicitly diminish womanhood itself.

Why the Early Church Rejected Gnosticism

Modern revisionist accounts often imply that orthodox Christianity achieved dominance primarily through political suppression rather than theological legitimacy.

Elaine Pagels frames the issue largely in these terms, suggesting that competing Christianities coexisted during the second century until ecclesiastical power structures eventually suppressed alternative traditions.¹⁷

But this reconstruction ignores several critical historical realities.

First, the canonical Gospels were written substantially earlier than the major Gnostic texts.¹⁸

Second, the New Testament writings circulated widely throughout the Roman world long before formal canon discussions emerged.¹⁹

Third, the early church fathers rejected Gnostic writings not because they feared alternative ideas, but because these texts contradicted the apostolic tradition already publicly known throughout Christian communities.

Irenaeus is particularly important here because he stood only one generation removed from the apostles themselves. He was discipled by Polycarp, who in turn had been discipled by the Apostle John.²⁰ This chain of transmission matters historically because it demonstrates continuity between the apostolic church and the early defenders of orthodoxy.

The issue was not institutional conspiracy.

The issue was apostolic continuity.

Christianity proclaimed a public faith rooted in:

- historical events,
- eyewitness testimony,
- incarnation,
- crucifixion,
- and bodily resurrection.

Gnosticism instead promoted secret revelations accessible primarily to spiritual elites.

These were fundamentally different worldviews.

The Dating Problem

The popularity of the *Gospel of Thomas* depends heavily upon assigning it an extremely early date.

Some scholars, including Elaine Pagels, argue for dates as early as A.D. 80–90.²¹ More conservative estimates place its composition no earlier than the mid-second century.²²

Why does this matter?

Because the later the Gnostic writings become, the weaker the claim that they preserve authentic apostolic Christianity.

The canonical Gospels, by contrast, possess strong evidence for early circulation.

Fragments discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls and related archaeological finds have intensified this discussion. Some scholars have argued that several Qumran fragments may contain allusions to New Testament writings dating prior to A.D. 68, when the Roman Tenth Legion destroyed the area during the Jewish revolt.²³

Although debate continues regarding certain fragment identifications, the broader significance remains important: the New Testament documents circulated extraordinarily early.

The Magdalen Papyrus fragments of Matthew likewise pushed some scholars toward much earlier dating than previously assumed.²⁴ Carsten Peter Thiede argued that portions of Matthew may date within the lifetime of eyewitnesses themselves.²⁵

Likewise, Paul's letters are universally recognized by critical scholarship as first-century documents.²⁶

Even more important is the creedal material embedded within Paul's writings.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3–7, Paul explicitly states that he is passing along earlier tradition already received concerning:

- Christ's death,
- burial,
- resurrection,
- and post-resurrection appearances.²⁷

Most scholars date this creed within only a few years of the crucifixion itself.²⁸

This destroys the claim that belief in Christ's divinity or resurrection evolved centuries later through ecclesiastical manipulation.

The core claims of Christianity emerged immediately.

The Historical Reliability of the New Testament

The New Testament also possesses manuscript support unmatched by virtually any other work of antiquity.²⁹

There exist:

- thousands of Greek manuscripts,
- thousands more early translations,
- and tens of thousands of quotations preserved by early church fathers.³⁰

By contrast, many ancient historical works accepted routinely by historians survive in only a handful of manuscripts copied centuries after their original composition.

For example:

- Tacitus survives in very limited manuscript tradition,
- portions of Livy are lost entirely,
- and works such as Caesar's *Gallic Wars* possess manuscript gaps of nearly one thousand years.³¹

Yet historians still consider these works substantially reliable.

The New Testament stands on far stronger textual footing.

Even if every New Testament manuscript disappeared entirely, nearly the whole text could be reconstructed through quotations found within the writings of the early church fathers alone.³²

The evidence is overwhelming.

The problem for revisionist theories is not lack of data.

It is too much data.

Women in Early Christianity

Ironically, orthodox Christianity often elevated the status and dignity of women in ways deeply countercultural for the ancient world.

Paul frequently referred to women as fellow laborers in ministry.³³ Phoebe is described as a *diakonos* and *prostatis* in Romans 16, terms implying substantial leadership and patronage responsibilities.³⁴

Priscilla helped instruct Apollos in Christian doctrine.³⁵ Lydia hosted the Philippian church within her home.³⁶ Philip's daughters prophesied.³⁷

Christianity also rejected many degrading practices common within pagan culture:

- infanticide,
- abandonment of infants,
- exploitative sexual systems,
- and widespread double standards regarding morality.

Ben Witherington notes that Christianity's treatment of women represented a dramatic departure from many surrounding religious systems.³⁸

This does not mean church history is free from failures or abuses.

It is not.

But the simplistic narrative that orthodoxy oppressed women while Gnosticism liberated them collapses historically under closer examination.

Neo-Gnosticism and the Modern World

Ancient Gnosticism did not disappear.

Its assumptions increasingly reappear in modern ideological movements.

At its core, Gnosticism separated identity from embodiment.

Modern culture increasingly does the same.

Identity is now frequently treated as psychologically self-constructed rather than rooted within any objective created order. The body becomes secondary to internal desire, subjective consciousness, or personal self-definition.

This mirrors ancient Gnostic dualism in striking ways.

The body becomes something to transcend, reshape, redefine, or escape.

Technology intensifies this tendency through:

- transhumanism,
- virtual identity,
- genetic engineering,
- and radical autonomy movements detached from embodied human nature.

Modern neo-Gnosticism increasingly rejects:

- nature,
- biological meaning,
- creation order,
- and historical rootedness.

Christianity stands directly opposed to this worldview.

Christianity and the Goodness of Creation

The Incarnation itself represents Christianity's ultimate rejection of Gnosticism.

The Christian faith proclaims not merely that God communicated ideas, but that:

- God entered history,
- took on flesh,
- suffered bodily,
- died physically,
- and rose bodily from the grave.³⁹

Matter is not evil.

The body is not meaningless.

Creation is not a prison.

Rather, creation is fallen yet redeemable.

Christianity therefore affirms:

- embodiment,
- history,
- marriage,
- morality,
- family,
- resurrection,
- and human dignity.

The gospel is not about escaping creation.

It is about redeeming it.

Conclusion

The modern fascination with Gnosticism reveals less about ancient Christianity than about contemporary culture itself.

Modern society increasingly desires:

- spirituality without authority,
- identity without nature,
- morality without absolutes,
- and truth detached from historical revelation.

Gnosticism offers precisely that kind of spirituality.

Christianity does not.

Christianity insists that truth is grounded in reality itself:

- in creation,
- in history,
- in embodiment,
- and ultimately in the person of Christ.

The conflict between Christianity and Gnosticism therefore remains deeply relevant today.

At stake is not merely ancient church history.

At stake is the meaning of human nature itself.

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Chapter Six

Emergency

Investigating Postmodernism and the Emerging Church

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” — John 17:17¹

There was a period in my younger Christian life when I believed almost every conspiracy theory imaginable.

If someone claimed:

- the United Nations was secretly preparing a one-world government,
- microchips were the mark of the beast,
- the Illuminati controlled world events,
- or black helicopters were circling somewhere overhead,

I was probably willing to believe it.

Part of that mindset came from immaturity. Part came from fear. And part came from the fact that I lacked the tools necessary to evaluate evidence critically and consistently.

Ironically, that period of my life ultimately helped me become far more cautious intellectually.

Over time, I began noticing that many of the books, speakers, and sensational teachers making extraordinary claims often relied upon:

- weak evidence,
- selective quotation,
- emotional manipulation,
- speculation,
- or circular reasoning.

That realization forced me to reconsider not merely particular conspiracy theories, but the larger issue of how truth itself should be evaluated.

The experience became unexpectedly valuable.

It taught me the importance of evidence, context, intellectual humility, and careful reasoning.

Ironically, those lessons later shaped how I approached both apologetics and theology.

The Rise of the Emerging Church

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, a movement commonly called the “Emerging Church” or “Emergent Church” began gaining influence within segments of evangelical Christianity.²

The movement was never entirely unified. Some participants rejected the label altogether, while others differed significantly concerning doctrine, philosophy, and practice. Nevertheless, several common themes frequently emerged:

- skepticism toward certainty,
- suspicion of traditional evangelicalism,
- emphasis upon conversation over doctrine,
- postmodern critiques of objective truth claims,
- and efforts to reconstruct Christianity for a changing culture.

Many younger Christians found the movement attractive because it appeared intellectually honest, culturally aware, and less rigid than forms of Christianity they had previously encountered.

In some respects, the movement raised legitimate concerns.

Certain churches had indeed become:

- overly political,
- shallow intellectually,
- commercially driven,
- or disconnected from historical Christian thought.

Some Christians had reduced faith to simplistic slogans while avoiding difficult philosophical or theological questions altogether.

The Emerging Church often reacted against those problems.

But reactions themselves can create new problems.

Postmodernism and the Crisis of Truth

The deeper philosophical issue underlying much of the Emerging Church involved postmodernism.

Postmodernism is notoriously difficult to define precisely, but broadly speaking it involves skepticism toward:

- universal truth claims,
- metanarratives,
- objective meaning,

- and stable foundations for knowledge.³

Truth increasingly becomes viewed as:

- socially constructed,
- culturally conditioned,
- linguistically mediated,
- or shaped primarily through power relationships.

This perspective profoundly affected modern theology.

Rather than asking: > “Is Christianity objectively true?”

many discussions shifted toward questions such as:

- “How does Christianity function within communities?”
- “How do narratives shape identity?”
- “How does language construct meaning?”
- “Can any interpretation claim final authority?”

These questions are not entirely illegitimate.

Human beings certainly interpret reality through cultural and linguistic frameworks.

The problem emerges when skepticism becomes so radical that objective revelation itself becomes unstable.

Once truth becomes infinitely elastic, doctrine eventually follows.

Christianity and Objective Revelation

Historic Christianity has always rested upon the conviction that God has revealed Himself objectively within:

- history,
- Scripture,
- creation,
- and ultimately the person of Christ.⁴

The Christian faith is not grounded merely in private mystical experience or evolving communal interpretation.

It is rooted in historical claims.

For example:

- Jesus either rose bodily from the dead or He did not.
- The apostles either witnessed the resurrection or they did not.

- Christ either claimed divine authority or He did not.

These are historical propositions open to investigation.

Christianity therefore differs fundamentally from purely subjective spirituality.

The Apostle Paul himself acknowledged this when he wrote:

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”⁵

Paul grounded Christianity in historical reality.

That distinction matters enormously.

My Own Journey Through Theological Immaturity

One reason I remain cautious about attacking Christians too harshly is because I recognize how much theological immaturity existed within my own life for many years.

I spent countless hours absorbed in:

- prophecy speculation,
- conspiratorial literature,
- end-times obsession,
- and fringe teachings.

I consumed books and tapes indiscriminately simply because they sounded dramatic or spiritually intense.

Yet through time, debate, reading, and interaction with other believers, many of those immature ideas gradually collapsed under closer examination.

That process taught me something important: there is a difference between:

- being wrong,
- being immature,
- and being deceptive.

Christians grow gradually.

Very few believers emerge from conversion with perfectly formed theology.

This is why the church must remain a place where:

- learning,
- correction,
- patience,
- and growth

can occur together.

Ravi Zacharias and Doctrinal Maturity

I once heard Ravi Zacharias explain this distinction carefully.

He argued that there are different categories concerning:

- salvation,
- church fellowship,
- and teaching authority.⁶

A person may genuinely belong to Christ while still possessing:

- theological confusion,
- doctrinal immaturity,
- incomplete understanding,
- or inconsistent beliefs.

Sanctification is progressive.

Growth takes time.

At the same time, teachers occupy a different category of responsibility.

James warns:

“Let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”⁷

Why?

Because teachers shape doctrine, worldview, and spiritual formation for others.

The issue therefore is not whether Christians may struggle, question, or grow.

The issue becomes whether Christianity itself retains any stable doctrinal boundaries at all.

Rob Bell and the Elasticity of Doctrine

Rob Bell became one of the most recognizable voices associated with emergent Christianity.

In *Velvet Elvis*, Bell described Christian doctrine using the metaphor of a trampoline.⁸ The springs represented doctrines, while the jumping surface represented faith itself. Bell argued that Christians often become overly preoccupied with defending individual springs rather than preserving the larger experience of faith.

At first glance, the analogy sounds compelling.

But the metaphor raises serious questions.

Which doctrines remain essential?

Which doctrines are optional?

And who decides?

Bell frequently emphasized uncertainty, openness, and flexibility concerning traditional theological formulations. Critics argued that this approach gradually destabilized core Christian doctrines themselves.

For example, Bell questioned traditional understandings concerning:

- hell,
- judgment,
- exclusivity,
- and eternal punishment.⁹

Other emergent writers similarly challenged:

- substitutionary atonement,
- biblical inerrancy,
- propositional revelation,
- and historic formulations of orthodoxy.

Again, asking questions is not inherently wrong.

Christianity has a long intellectual tradition involving:

- debate,
- philosophical reflection,
- and doctrinal development.

The problem emerges when doctrinal elasticity becomes so expansive that Christianity itself loses definitional coherence.

The Problem of Infinite Elasticity

Every belief system possesses boundaries.

Even movements claiming radical openness eventually exclude something.

A person cannot meaningfully identify as Christian while simultaneously denying:

- Christ,
- the resurrection,
- or the existence of God altogether.

At some point, theological elasticity breaks.

This becomes particularly important concerning the nature of revelation.

If Scripture possesses no stable meaning, and if doctrines remain infinitely revisable, then Christianity eventually becomes little more than a mirror reflecting contemporary cultural preferences.

That danger increasingly appeared within portions of the emergent movement.

Theological formulations often shifted depending upon:

- social concerns,
- cultural pressure,
- political trends,
- or emotional resonance.

But Christianity historically claimed something more than evolving spiritual conversation.

It claimed revelation.

The Virgin Birth and Historical Christianity

One revealing example involved discussions surrounding the virgin birth.

Certain progressive theologians suggested that belief in the virgin birth should not function as a necessary doctrinal boundary.¹⁰ Others implied that mythic or symbolic interpretations might suffice.

But this raises an obvious question:

If Christianity's central historical claims become negotiable symbols rather than historical realities, what remains of historic Christianity itself?

The Incarnation is not merely inspirational poetry.

It is a truth claim about reality.

Christianity historically teaches:

- God entered history,
- took on flesh,
- lived physically,
- died physically,
- and rose physically.

Once these become merely symbolic narratives, Christianity transforms fundamentally into something else.

Christianity and the Knowability of Truth

One of the greatest weaknesses within radical postmodernism is that it ultimately undermines its own truth claims.

The statement: > “No interpretation can claim objective authority”

itself functions as an objective truth claim.

Likewise: > “All truth is socially constructed”

becomes self-refuting if the statement itself is also socially constructed.

The laws of logic remain unavoidable.

People may deny objective truth philosophically while simultaneously relying upon it practically every day:

- in science,
- mathematics,
- medicine,
- communication,
- and moral reasoning.

Even postmodern critiques depend upon rational coherence in order to communicate their arguments.

Christianity historically affirmed that human beings can possess genuine — though not exhaustive — knowledge because reality itself is grounded in a rational Creator.¹¹

Truth therefore is not infinitely fluid.

Reality places boundaries upon interpretation.

The Emerging Church and Universalism

One major concern surrounding portions of the Emerging Church involved increasing openness toward forms of universalism or religious pluralism.

Some emergent writers suggested that explicit faith in Christ may not ultimately be necessary for salvation.¹² Others emphasized ambiguity regarding judgment, hell, or eternal separation from God.

Again, compassion and humility matter deeply.

Christians should never approach these subjects arrogantly or gleefully.

At the same time, Christianity historically has proclaimed that truth matters precisely because eternity matters.

Jesus Himself made extraordinarily exclusive claims:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”¹³

The apostles proclaimed the same message publicly despite persecution and death.

If Christianity is true, then doctrinal questions cannot simply be reduced to personal preference or evolving communal interpretation.

Truth and Humility Together

One false dichotomy increasingly dominates modern religious discussion:

- either certainty becomes arrogant dogmatism,
- or humility requires perpetual uncertainty.

But historic Christianity rejected both extremes.

Christians can affirm objective truth while simultaneously recognizing:

- personal fallibility,
- limited understanding,
- and the need for ongoing growth.

The existence of counterfeit interpretations does not eliminate the existence of truth itself.

Likewise, the misuse of certainty does not eliminate the possibility of genuine knowledge.

Christianity calls believers toward both:

- conviction,
- and humility.

Truth without humility becomes harsh.

Humility without truth becomes directionless.

Both are necessary.

Conclusion

The deepest issue surrounding the Emerging Church was never merely worship styles, cultural relevance, or conversational theology.

The deeper issue was revelation itself.

Can God speak authoritatively?

Can truth be known?

Can doctrine possess stable meaning?

Can Christianity remain historically rooted while still engaging modern culture thoughtfully?

These questions remain profoundly important.

Modern culture increasingly pressures Christianity toward:

- doctrinal fluidity,
- moral relativism,
- psychological spirituality,
- and endless reinterpretation.

But Christianity historically has proclaimed something far more grounded.

It proclaims that truth ultimately rests not in cultural construction, but in God Himself.

Christianity therefore is not merely:

- a conversation,
- a social construct,
- or an evolving narrative.

It is a truth claim about reality.

And if that claim is true, then it changes everything.

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