

FIRST BAPTIST ACADEMY
COMMENCEMENT SERVICE
5-18-14 PM

First Baptist Academy Mission Statement: *First Baptist Academy exists to assist parents by providing a quality classical education that fosters a Biblical worldview, striving to equip students to impact the world for Christ.*

Romans 11:36 (NKJV) “For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.”

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV) “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Colossians 1:17 (ESV) “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Revelation 11:15b (NKJV) “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV) “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Philippians 1:20 (NKJV) “according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”

A worldview “is simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions.”
—Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey

“From my inmost soul I delight in the knowledge that God does or deliberately permits all things and causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28)...I saw that it was good for the Lord to take her, good indeed for her, and in his love He took her painlessly; and not less good for me who must henceforth toil and suffer alone—yet not alone, for God is nearer to me than ever. And now I have to tell Him all my sorrows and difficulties, as I used to tell dear Maria.”
—Hudson Taylor

“There is a God; He has spoken in His Word; He means what He has said; He will do all that He has promised.”
—Hudson Taylor’s Life Philosophy

I. A Biblical Worldview Requires That We Understand the Times

1 Chronicles 12:32a (NKJV) “of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...”

“A debilitating weakness in modern evangelicalism is that we’ve been fighting cultural skirmishes on all sides without knowing what the war itself is all about. We have not identified the worldviews that lie at the root of cultural conflict—and this ignorance dooms our best efforts. The cultural war is not just about abortion, homosexual rights, or the decline of public education. These are only skirmishes. The real war is a cosmic struggle between worldviews—between the Christian worldview and various secular and spiritual worldviews arrayed against it. This is what we must understand if we are going to be effective in evangelizing our world today...”
—Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey

A. Naturalism

Naturalism is the belief that natural causes alone are sufficient to explain everything that exists. There is nothing in the universe except matter (also called “materialism”).

B. Secularism

Secularism sees life without any relation to God or eternity.

Matthew 6:20a (NKJV) “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”

“The Christian must *distinguish* between the secular and the spiritual, but never *separate* them. To separate them is to deny the agenda of Christ.”
—R. C. Sproul

John 17:16-18 (NKJV) “¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

C. Humanism

Humanism is a man-centered philosophy that says the center of all things is man.

“Man is the measure of all things.”

—Protagoras

II. The Inclusiveness of a Biblical Worldview

The 7 C’s of a Biblical Worldview [Answers in Genesis]

A. Creation

B. Corruption

C. Catastrophe

D. Confusion

E. Christ

F. Cross

G. Consummation

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV) “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

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The Mission Statement for First Baptist Academy says: “First Baptist Academy exists to assist parents by providing a quality classical education that **fosters a Biblical worldview**, striving to equip students to impact the world for Christ.” In my address to this first graduating class, I want to focus in on the part of that mission that says “...fosters a Biblical Worldview...” Hopefully, most of what I say will be a review for these graduates, but reviews are needed often since a Biblical Worldview makes us counter cultural. When you get out in the college and work world, it is likely that your Biblical Worldview will not be shared by the overwhelming majority of the people you will be associated with. Unless the truths that I am going to share with you have reached the level of a conviction in your life that you are willing to follow whatever the consequences, your world view will drift from Biblical to the worldview of the this current postmodern world system that we live in.

Romans 11:36 gives us the foundation for a Biblical Worldview. **Romans 11:36 (NKJV)** “For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.” Everything that we say about a Biblical, truth based worldview stands on the glorious truth of this power-packed verse. By way of introduction let me focus on this foundational verse.

1. All things are ***of*** Him – That means that God created all that is. The very first verse of the Bible settles that! **Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” All creation was made by God from nothing *ex-nihilo*. Man creates nothing in the sense that God did; man just rearranges things created by God. All of creation in its immensity and its intricacy shows forth the glory of God. Since we are a part of creation, He created us to show forth His glory.

2. All things are ***through*** Him – He not only created all that is, He sustains it. **Colossians 1:17 (ESV)** “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” The One who created all things, sustains them, holds them together, and knows how to fix them when they are messed up by man.

3. All things are ***to*** Him – All things find their consummation in Him. **Revelation 11:15b (NKJV)** "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" All of creation including man is to Him in the sense that we were made to give glory to Him.

4. All things find their ultimate purpose in glorifying Him – Another way of saying that is that everything is to ***magnify*** Him and His attributes, His excellencies, and His beauty. That is the purpose of prayer, your vocation, your material possessions, your marriage, your children and how you raise them, missions, discipleship, suffering, relationships, education, and even such mundane things as eating and drinking. **1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)** “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The verse I adopted years ago as my life verse is **Philippians 1:20 (NKJV)** “according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”

The foundation for a truth based Biblical worldview is to recognize and submit to the truth that all things are of Him, through Him, to Him, and for His glory.

Let’s delve a little more deeply into this concept of a worldview. Let’s focus on what a worldview is and then what a ***Biblical*** worldview is. I have read some very complicated definitions of worldview, but I like this simple definition by Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey in their book “How Now Shall We Live?” They say that a worldview “is simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions” [Page 14]. If I believe that man evolved by chance over billions of years, that makes a big difference in how I make my daily decisions. If I believe that things happen by chance in my daily life, it affects how I view life and how I make decisions. If I believe there is no personal God who created me for Himself, it affects how I view life and make decisions. If I believe that things happen based on the alignment of the stars and planets (astrology) it affects how I view life and

make decisions. If I believe that only that which is material is real, it affects how I view life and how I make decisions. If I believe that there is a personal God who created me and the reason I exist is for His glory and that this God loves me and is sovereign over all circumstances, it makes a difference in how I view life and how I make decisions. Your worldview is not just how you view “spiritual things” or religion; it is how you view every category of life. Here is what I mean by categories of life: the world around you, vocation, family, church, education, government, science, pain and suffering, and several other categories of life. Let me give you an example of how a worldview affects our lives in times of agony and grief. Hudson Taylor was a pioneer missionary from England to inland China in the mid-nineteenth century. Taylor’s life was filled with trials and heartache. He and his wife, Maria lost 2 of their 6 children to disease. They sent the other 4 children back to England with a trusted friend for their safety and education. A short time later, they had a 7th child but within a week cholera took the newborn’s life. A short time later, Maria (only 33 at the time) became very ill and died. Hudson Taylor, having lost 3 of his 7 children and now his beloved wife wrote this: “From my inmost soul I delight in the knowledge that God does or deliberately permits all things and causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28). ... I saw that it was good for the Lord to take her, good indeed for her, and in his love He took her painlessly; and not less good for me who must henceforth toil and suffer alone – yet not alone, for God is nearer to me than ever. And now I have to tell Him all my sorrows and difficulties, as I used to tell dear Maria” [Quoted in Warren Henderson, “Mind Frames”, page 101]. I submit to you that the reason Hudson Taylor could face such agony in victory and without anger or bitterness was a function of his Biblical worldview. Because he believed that God is sovereign, God is good, and God is love, he could continue on through the grief and agony of heart and go on to lead thousands of Chinese to Christ and begin an organization that God is still using to bring people to Christ 150 years later. I used to carry around in my wallet Hudson Taylor’s very simple life philosophy that led him to a Biblical worldview. He said: “There is a God; he has spoken in His Word; He means what He has said; He will do all that He has promised.”

What I desire in this address is to give an overview of a Biblical worldview.

I. A Biblical Worldview Requires that We Understand the Times

We read in **1 Chronicles 12:32a (NKJV)** “of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...” I so want these graduates and indeed every student in First Baptist Academy to have an understanding of the times in which we live to know what we ought to do. One Christian pollster says that 25% of American adults say that their worldview is inherently founded on Biblical principles, yet when asked to describe the content of their worldview or how they arrived at their understanding of it, less than 10% of that 25% of American adults could give an answer. Having this understanding of our times can help us understand that the people we rub shoulders with and many times even go to church with, say nice things about the Bible, but the Bible doesn’t form their worldview. Most professing Christians in America see the Bible as little more than interesting stories and moral lessons, but not **connected to** and **authoritative over** all of life. Most American’s worldview is a hodgepodge of fragmented ideas borrowed from pop culture with just enough Bible thrown in to make it sound a little spiritual. No one drifts into a truly biblical worldview that relates the Scriptures to all of life. If you will have a Biblical worldview, it will be intentional.

To truly understand the times you need to understand three philosophies that all end with “ism” that are mixed together to give the typical American worldview. The overwhelming majority of those who hold worldviews influenced by these three overlapping philosophies are not even aware of what they mean. Nevertheless, these philosophies control how they see the world, moral issues, and all of life. Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey tell us why we often miss the boat because we do not understand the times. “A debilitating weakness in modern evangelicalism is that we’ve been fighting cultural skirmishes on all sides without knowing what the war itself is all about. We have not identified the worldviews that lie at the root of cultural conflict – and this ignorance dooms our best efforts. The cultural war is not just about abortion, homosexual rights, or the decline of public education. These are only skirmishes. The real war is

a cosmic struggle between worldviews – between the Christian worldview and various secular and spiritual worldviews arrayed against it. This is what we must understand if we are going to be effective in evangelizing our world today...” [“How Now Shall We Live?” Page 17].

A. Naturalism

Naturalism is the belief that natural causes alone are sufficient to explain everything that exists. There is nothing in the universe except matter (also called “materialism”). Perhaps the best known statement of naturalism is from Carl Sagan in his famous 10 part series entitled “Cosmos” on Public Television. Sagan said, “The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be”. Naturalism had been declining, but is now making a comeback in our times. If naturalism is one’s worldview, it controls how he views everything. There is no room for a personal, sovereign God; there is no room for creation, no room for heaven or hell, no room for religion of any kind that involves a supernatural unseen being.

B. Secularism

Actually secularism is a subset of naturalism (or some would say naturalism is a subset of secularism). Secular refers to what is of this present world. Secularism sees life without any relation to God or eternity. The location where life takes place is in this present world. Secularists don’t necessarily deny that there is an afterlife (a heaven, or a hell); they just believe that this world is **all we can know**. For the secularist, all reality is restricted or limited to the now. Don’t you see how this is opposite of a Biblical worldview? Secularism says all that matters is what makes me happy and gives me fulfillment now. Secularism is a philosophy of the immediate. The secularists of Jesus’ day (the Epicureans) said, “Eat, drink, and be merry. For tomorrow you die.” Jesus said in **Matthew 6:20a (NKJV)** “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” One way this philosophy has affected Christianity is that it has brought about the false teaching of “dualism”. Dualism separates the sacred and the secular. The secular is seen as evil or neutral at best and the sacred is all that God is interested in. The Lordship of Christ covers sacred and secular. R. C. Sproul said it well: “The Christian must *distinguish* between the secular and the spiritual, but never *separate* them. To separate them is to deny the agenda of Christ” [R. C. Sproul, “Lifeviews”, page 40]. The agenda of Christ is that we go into the world (the area of the secular) and be salt and light and make disciples. This present world is where disciples are made. The teacher, janitor, technician, laborer, engineer, Nurse, or garbage collector who is surrendered totally to the Lordship of Christ is no less “spiritual” than the pastor or vocational missionary. According to the Scriptures, the task of the vocational Christian worker, specifically the Pastor / Teacher, is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Some of that work takes place in the church, but much of it takes place in the world (the realm of the secular). Jesus said in **John 17:16-18 (NKJV)** “¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

C. Humanism

You don’t hear as much about humanism as you did 25 or 30 years ago, but it is still just as dangerous and just as prevalent. Humanism can be traced to ancient Greece where the philosopher Protagoras coined the motto, “Man is the measure of all things”. Humanism is a “man-centered” philosophy. The center of all things is man. If God exists, He exists for man. The whole human potential movement is a derivative of humanism. We hear and some even use all sorts of statements that often are not even recognized as being unbiblical and humanism based. An example is, “You can do anything that you set your mind to!” Every time someone becomes angry with God because He allowed some tragedy in their life or failed to “come through when I needed Him” gives evidence of having a worldview based on humanism. While all humanists do not claim to be atheists, humanism is actually the flip side of atheism. Atheism says “down with God” while humanism says “up with man”. The end result is the robbing God of the glory He is due by putting man where only God should be.

When we have a basic understanding of our times, we see why we are in the mess we are in. The root problem is that most people in the world, and certainly in America, have a worldview that is unbiblical. We have now brought those worldviews into the church with our shallow distorted presentation of the gospel and our failure to truly disciple those say they have received Christ. Because we have not taught a

truly Biblical worldview in most churches, the members have a hodgepodge of naturalism, secularism, and humanism with a little Bible thrown in on the side.

II. The Inclusiveness of a Biblical Worldview

I have already dealt some with this in the introduction, but let me go just a little deeper with it. A Biblical worldview covers all of life. I am not saying that the Bible has a specific word for every subject or that the Bible contains all that we need to know. I am saying that through command or principle or example, the Bible speaks to every general area of life and that when the Bible speaks, it is authoritative. Only through a Biblical worldview can we understand history, the present, and the future. Ken Ham and the scholars at *Answers in Genesis* have come up with what they call “The 7 C’s of History”. It actually is the 7 C’s of history, the present and the future. This is an example of the inclusiveness of a Biblical worldview. The 7 C’s of History are:

1. Creation – God created all that is.
2. Corruption – Through Adam sin came into the world and man and all creation fell and spiritual death is the condition of every descendent of Adam.
3. Catastrophe – The evil of men became so great that God sent a global flood to judge their sin and only Noah, his wife, his 3 sons, and their wives were all that survived. This explains the fossil record and much of geology.
4. Confusion – Noah’s descendents refused to obey God and built a tower at Babel in defiance of God and as a result God confused their language and they scattered throughout the earth. This explains the existence of diverse people groups (falsely called “races”) and languages today.
5. Christ – God sent forth His only begotten Son in the fullness of time to become man without ceasing to be God.
6. Cross – On the cross Jesus took the curse of sin, the death sin brought, and the wrath of God for sin upon himself that whoever repents of sin and believes on Him would be made a new creation, forgiven, receive Christ’s eternal life, be restored to a right relationship with God, and glorify God for all eternity.
7. Consummation – Jesus Christ will return a second time to judge the world and bring about a new heaven and a new earth and provide for His own a life where we are told in **Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)** “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Only from a Biblical perspective does history make sense. We see that history truly is His story. Only from a Biblical perspective does the present make sense. We see that God is at work reconciling people from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation to Himself. We see that in individual’s lives he is at work conforming us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29). Only from a Biblical perspective can we look at the future with confidence and hope. We know that God is bringing all things about according to His sovereign plan and there is no panic in heaven – only plans. A Biblical worldview is inclusive! When we disciple others we must teach them and model for them a Biblical worldview that affects all of life.

CONCLUSION

Seniors, strive to develop and deepen your Biblical worldview. It is not a one time thing that we accept and then move on. We are continually seeing how the Scriptures affect all of life. Develop and deepen in a Biblical Worldview of origins, man, work, family, science, education, possessions, race, government, suffering, relationships, peace, and war – every issue of life.

The Bible is not just an ancient book of literature. It is truth; it is the very words breathed out by God for us. Only when the Bible is applied to every area of your life does life begin to make sense and fit together. Only when you have a Biblical Worldview will you fulfill your purpose for existing here on planet earth.