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Overcoming Visionless Christianity

“Is there anything worse than being blind?” Helen Keller (1880-1968) was asked. At the tender age of nineteen months, she suffered an illness that destroyed her ability to see, hear, and speak. “Yes,” she replied. “A man with sight and no vision.”

Blindness is a devastating condition. Even worse, in Keller’s estimation, are people who can literally see, but who lack the perception of a deeper purpose in the world around them. Singer/songwriter Kate Campbell acknowledges something similar in the chorus to her song, “The Strangeness of the Day,” in which she marvels at the mysteries of life surrounding her:

Most of our moments we live unaware,
While miracles happen around everywhere.
No matter what theories you choose to believe,
Still it’s amazing you’ll have to agree.
(*Monuments* CD, Large River Music, 2001)

Many Christians, unfortunately, are in this condition described by Keller and Campbell: As Jesus described it, invoking the words of Isaiah, “though seeing, they do not see” (Matthew 13:13). They have gained some spiritual insight through faith in Christ. But somehow, somehow they have failed to develop a deeply biblical vision of the world. They are living without an awareness of the profound Christian meaning of things.

The Church must correct this problem. Instead of the typical *mélange* of biblical bits and pieces, she must impart to the saints a coherent, illuminating view of life and the world. What is needed today is a biblically based metaphysics, or concept of reality, rooted in the truth of Scripture.

Such a lofty vision entails a grasp of the greatness of the infinite-personal, trinitarian God who is there. It recognizes the world as His creation, shot through with His presence and glory. It regards people as God’s image and likeness, crowned with honor and majesty. It comprehends the dynamic narrative of God’s words and deeds in redemptive history. It marvels at the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God and His work of salvation. It celebrates the presence of the kingdom-rule of God that has defeated evil. It apprehends the splendor of the Church as the people of God who have received the eschatological hope that is both present and future. It demands a transformation of life commensurate with this vigorous Christian vision so that the Church squelches its reputation as “a safe place to escape the awful demands of God” (Madeleine L’Engle).

How, then, can church leaders ever hope to convey such a transforming perspective to parishioners, one that overcomes visionless Christianity? The Wilberforce Forum — Prison Fellowship’s worldview ministry—has produced a new resource that is designed specifically to help in this task. It is a monthly e-mail publication called the “Worldview Church E-Newsletter.” Each installment will contain regular features, such as commentaries on a biblical worldview, cultural analyses, a layman’s take on worldview issues, pertinent book reviews and bibliographies, sermon outlines, reviews of relevant films and music, stimulating quotes and illustrations, curriculum resources, notices about conferences, and more! A team of scholars from several Churches, seminaries and Christian universities will contribute to this endeavor. The first installment was released last month. To receive this publication, contact breakpoint@breakpoint.org.

Our goal is to help church leaders teach their congregations to think and live in accordance with a biblical worldview. May God help us to avoid the calamity of possessing sight, but lacking Christian vision!

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Dr. Naugle, a Fellow of the Wilberforce Forum, is a professor of philosophy at Dallas Baptist University. His book, *Worldview: A History of the Concept* (Eerdmans, 2002), is available from our BreakPoint Resource Center. Call 1-800-995-8777 or visit www.BreakPoint.org to order.