

**BLAMIRE'S FOR DUMMIES:
THE SUPERNATURAL ORIENTATION OF
THE CHRISTIAN MIND**

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Communication Theory and Worldview

The Supernatural Orientation of the Christian Mind

*Abstract: One of the defining features of the Christian mind is that it develops the long view; this life is not all there is, there is another eternal life to follow, either in heaven or hell. In this way the Christian view of human life and culture is diametrically opposed to the secular way of thinking. In the Christian mind, right thinking is inseparable from right acting—what is in the heart and mind comes out in behavior. Jesus himself stated that loving God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your **mind**... is the first and greatest commandment” (Mat 22:37-38)*

The Christian mind sees all of human life and history in God’s hands. The natural universe is maintained by God’s ongoing activity and displays God’s power and love. Everything that exists in space or time is a small blip in eternity, and this life is a preparation for the eternal life to come. The secular mind sees this present life as all there is, with nothing to follow. For this reason, secularism makes present happiness and welfare the most important end for people to work for. The only reality that exists is the reality that can be lived and experienced now.

This difference in underlying assumptions makes a clash between a Christian worldview and a secular worldview unavoidable. God’s revelation through Scripture teaches that He supernaturally broke into time and history when He sent His Son in a human body, and He continues to do so every time He acts in love and power in the life of individuals. Reality for the Christian mind lies in the invisible as well as the visible; an external reality actually exists, a God who is greater, outside of and beyond human beings and their limited understanding. The secular mind acknowledges the existence of nothing greater than the human mind, human experience, and resulting reflections and interpretations of life and experience.

When these worldviews collide, either the Christian will expand the secularist’s vision, or the secularist will drag the Christian down to living and acting as though this life

is all there is, or not tying the future life into one's behavior in this life. This often comes about because Christians want to be tolerant and get along with secularists in cooperating to accomplish tasks that are important and worthwhile in this life. In the process, they stop being different, they stop reflecting the value system that God wants them to demonstrate to those Christians and secularists who are watching, they stop demonstrating that their activities are part of the conflict between supernatural forces of good and evil at work in the world. They stop thinking and acting Christianly, and are indistinguishable from the secularists with whom they work, leading others to conclude that Christianity has nothing to offer to the solutions of this world's problems.

For Christians, this way of thinking leads to compartmentalizing life. They have their Christian activities—Bible study and devotions, church and its related activities—in which they attempt to think Christianly, and the rest of life in which their Christian beliefs and supernatural perspective have no influence and make no difference. It results in a silence, so that those watching in secular contexts may not even know that someone is a Christian.

This is even true of church leaders. They may be selected to positions on secular committees due to their leadership position, though as the secularization of American society becomes more complete, even this kind of recognition is decreasing. Since they want to get along and not be ridiculed or viewed as a trouble-maker, they push their eternal perspective to the background and think secularly. Or, his or her presence on the committee communicates that people of faith have been consulted and included, so the decisions reached have the implied stamp of approval of a Christian leader.

The Christian mind is far removed from popular culture. Magazines, the tabloids, movies, and television all present a worldview that caters to entertainment and self-improvement by personal effort. There is no hint of a supernatural conflict between good and evil, angels and demons; no message of hope for people in need of a merciful God who created them, cares for them, loves them, and died for them. The secular world is self-sufficient: humans can solve all problems through discussion, tolerance, and research, given enough time. Things are constantly improving, and any problems along the way are merely a bump in the road. Life is a materialistic sequence of acquisitions—car, house, appliances, bigger cars and houses. Advertisements show only beautiful, slim models, and people don't age or get sick, or if they do, they can be cured by the newest medicine.

Those Christians who aren't caught up in the rat-race of secular life feel powerless to make a difference in the secular world, so they become ingrown. Their lives revolve around activities with their Christian friends and contacts. They focus on their own spiritual life, or problems or activities at church.

The supernatural perspective is the most important mark of the Christian mind for those who are interested in the clash between Christian and secular thinking. Christians must live with the realization that our present actions affect our future as well. The things we do shape what we become, and we are responsible in every action or choice to live a life that pleases God. The way we think affects, and even determines, our actions, so what we think about and the way we think is vitally important. God calls us to think about eternal values, beyond the limitations of space and time, and the corrupting influence of sin.

The Church has to a large extent neglected or downplayed the importance of the mind, and has often been characterized by a fear of or opposition to intellectual pursuits.

We forget that Jesus told his disciples that loving God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your **mind**... is the first and greatest commandment” (Mat 22:37-38, emphasis added). In some places, the church is growing, pastors are leading and caring for people and helping them grow morally and spiritually, but in the midst of all this flurry of activity, the growth of the Christian mind is often overlooked. This neglect can lead to a loss of relevance in any Christian contribution to society. The goal of Christians should not be solely to convert, but to be a conduit of truth to people who are losing sight of what truth is. The “Christian mind should be recognized for what it is: something different, something distinctive, something with depth, hardness, solidity; a pleasure to fight with and a joy to be beaten by” (Blamires, 1963, p. 79).

If Christian thinking is lost in the marketplace of ideas, Christian impact on culture evaporates. Christian silence in the places where thinking is formed—in the media, in politics, in academia, in the conduct of business—leads inescapably to a loss of relevance, and ultimately to the point where the effects of Christian salt to arrest decay and light to dispel the darkness are no longer felt.

The fragmentation of people’s lives into unrelated compartments leads to a loss of unity and coherence within people’s minds. This disintegration leads to mental illness, and the Church has contributed to this by relegating itself to caring only for the domain of the spiritual, ignoring the whole person. The Church’s proper role is to meet the needs of whole people, developing Christians whose bodies, souls, minds, and spirits are committed to serving God and furthering His mission on earth. God has placed Christians to be models of His incarnation, so that people who see the Church will see what God is like.

The Christian mind affects many areas of life, including tragedy and death: “war, capital punishment, euthanasia, suicide,” life support, abortion, and medical ethics in general take on a new dimension when viewed as the transition to another, eternal life. An eternal perspective changes our view of suffering, disease, and failure, because it means that the human view of fairness and significance are not all there is. A Christian can acknowledge that there are things he or she does not understand in this life, things that will make sense when viewed in eternity. It also changes the perspective on good things: happiness, success, wealth, possessions, and pleasure. Those things which consume our lives and attention will also have no importance in the life to come. The eternal perspective brings into sharp focus those things in this life which do carry over into the life to come: the things we do for others, words we say of witness for God, reconciliation and peacemaking (Howard & Lash, 1998). There are things more important in this life than mere personal happiness, especially at the cost of broken promises and broken lives. The eternal perspective also gives the Christian mind a different framework in which to evaluate life, both in its joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, health and sickness. It gives Christians something to say in the marketplace of ideas, in areas of public debate.

The Christian and secular minds are not always in opposition. Christians are not called to be Luddites. Technological solutions are appropriate for some problems, as in cases of medical improvements. Modern science is based largely on the efforts of thinking Christians to discover and explain what God was doing in the world. The conflicts between Christians and science often lie in areas where scientists have departed from the goals of science and moved into philosophical speculation, such as questions of origins. (If science is the attempt to discover and explain phenomena by studying what is observable and

repeatable, then areas of knowledge are not open to observation lie outside of the realm of science; though they may be of interest, any hypotheses will remain unprovable.) Areas of conflict generally are those in which there is an underlying opposition of values or morality.

Christians should be engaged in this dialogue with secularists and not cede their relevance in the society in which God has placed us. We should fearlessly and lovingly shed God's light on human problems from the perspective of eternity, without the dogmatism and lack of compassion that would cause our listeners to reject God's grace.

References

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Chosen.