

Dr. Francis Schaeffer has used the term “monolithic consensus” to describe the almost universal acceptance of what has become the humanistic worldview. The adoption of the humanistic worldview has come with a weakening Christian worldview. Perhaps you don’t set much importance in particular worldviews and this talk of a humanistic or a Christian worldview seems like a mental gymnastics. Withhold your judgment until we reach the end of this lesson—you may be surprised.

With the weakening of the “Christian-dominated consensus,” a “majority” of people adopted the personal values of “peace and personal affluence” to take its place. Personal peace is wanting to be left alone, not wanting to be bothered by others and their problems “to live one’s life with minimal possibilities of being personally disturbed.” It is a statement that fits well with the philosophy of the ‘me first’ generation. It says, “I want to live my life without the disturbing interruptions of others, regardless of what the result will be in the lifetimes of my children and grandchildren.” Affluence is a life of overwhelming prosperity and the increasing growth of personal wealth. Affluence is a life made-up of getting more and more material things, where one’s level of success is the number and quality of the “toys” one has amassed at their death, the more the better and the more successful one was.

With the coming mass media of education, movies, radio and two black boxes, television and personal computers, the baby boomer generation was the first generation to drown in “the teaching that reason leads to pessimism in regard to a meaning of life and with reference to any fixed values. “ Society, without a Christian consensus was in for a sudden, dramatic upheaval. It began simply enough with the loss of the Christian work ethic. The Christian work ethic that gave one’s labor to God for His glory, and accepting the fruits of one’s labor as from God Himself, was replaced with a work ethic with the single purpose to amass enough to satisfy one’s lust for material things. Work became work for the sake of work. Work without values was meaningless except what it could provide someone: enough toys to win the game.

In the mid-sixties, things began to come apart at an ever accelerating rate. It began in the schools, universities, and colleges, where generations of students had been introduced to the idea of man’s ultimate meaninglessness and that there were no absolutes in life. Those ideas brought forth their fruit in the form of violence and rebellion. It began with student disobedience on campus at Berkley in 1964 with the Free Speech Movement. This was a time of widespread student disobedience and it was also the time of the beginning of drugs as an ideology. The popularization of drugs by Aldous Huxley created a new, widespread phenomenon--drugs became a religion. People, students in particular, turned to drugs to find meaning. By giving up hope in finding objective truth they turned to drugs hoping that “drugs would provide meaning inside one’s head.” People such as Psychologists Timothy Leary and Gary Snyder, author-philosopher Alan Watts, and poet Allen Ginsberg were influential in making drugs an ideology and for some even a religion. “This drug-taking was really only one more leap, an attempt to find meaning in the area of nonreason.”

For many in this era there was a thought, or as Schaeffer suggests a “utopian dream of

the turned-on world,” that the problems of society and even civilization could be solved if enough people were on drugs. This even led to the idea of pouring LSD into the public drinking water of cities around the world. Schaeffer says: “This was not vicious, for the people suggesting it really believed that drugs were the door to Paradise. In 1964 and for some years after, the hippie world really believed this ideological answer.”

On August 15-17, 1969 on a 600 hundred-acre farm in White Lake, New York more than 400,000 people, hippies, druggies, whatever gathered to attend a rock music festival that has become synonymous with the drug culture of the day—Woodstock! It was to be the beginning of a new age—the Age of Aquarius. It was to be a time for leaving the empty, vapid values of their parents behind. “In the New Age we break free of centuries of false doctrines, destructive indoctrinations, absurd ideas, and children’s stories about God, education, medicine, and love. The corrupt foundations of false society crumble. This time of crises is not the signal of the end of the world. What comes is not the end, but the beginning. The dream humanity has lived for centuries ends and we awaken to a bright new day, a bright new way.” Yet it wasn’t long before the “new age” turned dirty and ugly and the ideology, the religion of drugs to bring about a new hope died. The drug taking continued to grow but it was no longer an ideology—it was just an escape.

College campuses became spawning grounds of student unrest, revolt, and drugs. What began as legitimate protests were hijacked by people with different political agendas who were interested only in sowing unrest and anarchy. The Anti-Viet Nam War movement gave rise to organizations like Students for A Democratic Society (SDS) which perhaps started with pure motives but on some campuses became part of the “New Left.” It is common today to have liberals speak of the Conservative right or radical right as those who are quick to blow up buildings or to take lives yet they forget the sixties and seventies. University buildings and government recruiting centers were considered fair targets by the “New Left.” The Weathermen, a more radical group of the SDS, turned to violence by bombing military and police targets here in the United States largely out of opposition to the Viet Nam War and supposedly to help militant blacks like the Black Panthers. In West Germany a similar group called the Red Army Faction were guilty of bombings, kidnapping and assassinations. It was guerilla warfare South American style.

It is not the norm to find things like this happening in democratic societies, with organized structures available for the expressing of contrary views. What is happening when civil unrest is caused by the hands of well-educated middle, upper-middle, or upper-class students with seeming nothing to gain by such actions and everything to lose? Schaeffer explains: “So some young people began in 1964 to challenge the false values of personal peace and affluence, and we must admire them for this.”

The Sixties were a time when young people were fighting against their parents, and their “parents impoverished values of personal peace and affluence.” Humanism began with man looking for all the answers within himself and to do that he had to destroy the basis for the old values and after destroying the old values he realized that he could not

find a “way to generate with certainty any new values.” It was into this vacuum that “the impoverished values of personal peace and affluence had come to stand supreme.” And now, for the majority of the young people, after the passing of the false hopes of drugs as an ideology and the fading of the New Left, what remained? “The young people wanted more to life than personal peace and affluence. They were right in their analysis of the problem, but they were mistaken in their solutions.”

Looking back on the sixties and early seventies, one might ask what has happened to the young radicals? They gave up hope and, ironically, they have settled for the very things that they tried so hard to reject in their youth—they have accepted the same “values as their parents—personal peace and affluence.” They grew up to be just like that which they so despised—perhaps more so. We call this “apathy supreme.” The young accept values of the older generation: their kind of personal peace and affluence, though living a different lifestyle.

Schaeffer spends time addressing the pseudo-ideals of Marxism and Maoism that we will gloss over. An unjust summary of Schaeffer’s remarks might look like this. Idealistic communism was another form of a leap into the area of nonreason. As history has proven, Communism has neither a philosophic nor a historical base for freedom; there is no base for “communism with a human face.” And while many in the West might be willing to accept Communism if it appears to give peace and affluence—it never has and never will.

The reason for giving such short shrift to Communism is to give ample space to the many practical problems that developed in the United States from “man’s desire to be autonomous from God’s revelation—in the Bible and through Christ.” One of the major developments from man’s desire to be autonomous was “relativistic law.” Lex Rex (law is king) was no longer the basis for law which allowed man to be ruled by law, absolute law. In it’s place we have a legal system that is given over to “the arbitrary judgments of men.” How long can there be freedom without chaos under a legal system that is based on man’s arbitrary judgments? To the degree that our legal system still functions is due in large part to “the sheer inertia of the continuation of the past principles.” Yet, “good fortune” will not continue for long.

One of the understated dangers of our society is that without the base for nonarbitrary law (the Bible), our legal system will become sociological law instead. An argument could be made that this has already taken place. How would you interpret the following quote? “Truth is the majority vote of that nation that could lick all others.” This quote is from one of our nation’s preeminent jurists, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841-1935). One interpretation of this quote would be that “law is based on experience.” Holmes later writes in a 1926 letter John C. H. Wu, a prominent Chinese author and lawyer, who incidentally converted to Christianity in 1937; “So when it comes to the development of a corpus juris the ultimate question is what does the dominant forces of the community want and do they want it hard enough to disregard whatever inhibitions may stand in the way.” As Francis Schaeffer points out, “majority vote” is a far cry from the biblical basis of Samuel Rutherford’s Lex Rex. Quoting Frederick

Moore Vinson (1890-1953), a former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Schaeffer continues to build a case that we are being governed by sociological law: "Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there is no absolute." If there are no absolutes, except the absolute that there are no absolutes, then "All is relative; all is experience."

During the Enlightenment, men like Rousseau and Goethe attempted to make "nature the base for law." This was called Natural Law. Jurists of the day thought that a "complete and perfect system of law" could be discovered and developed by reason alone and based on the "principles of natural law." Yet nature alone does not offer a "sufficient base for either morals or law, because nature is both cruel and noncruel." Man's attempt to develop a system of law based on reason and nature has failed. Law, without absolutes, based on nature has "only a variable content."

Today we have witnessed that much of our modern law "is not even based on precedent; that is, it does not necessarily hold fast to a continuity with the legal decisions of the past." In many courts across our nation, the Constitution of the United States has been twisted and stretched to say what the courts want it to say. The Constitution is shaped to support the court's "decision as to what the court feels is sociologically helpful at the moment." Law is no longer nonarbitrary, the law is "fluid" and in the hands of the jurists "the arbitrary judgments of men are king." The courts of the land now not only interpret the laws that the legislators make, but now they even make law. Whatever is interpreted as a sociological good is now law.

Arbitrary absolutes are an integral part of communist rule, the same is becoming true in the United States today. Arbitrary absolutes allow for the government to make immediate and wide-sweeping changes while the "the majority of the people tend to accept them without question--no matter how arbitrary the changes are or how big a break they make with past law or past consensuses." Schaeffer uses Roe versus Wade as an example. It is well worth the effort to follow his argument here as it goes well beyond just abortion.

In Summary, on January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court determined that any woman in the United States "has the right to an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy, with no discussion." Abortions during the second and third trimesters were also allowed if the state believed it necessary for the health of the mother. "During the last three months the fetus does not have effective protection under the law, because the word health (of the mother) has been given a very wide meaning." To quote Joseph P. Witherspoon, a professor of jurisprudence at the University of Texas School of Law, in the Texas Tech Law Review, Volume six, 1974-1975: "In this 1973 decision the Court . . . held that the unborn child is not a person within the meaning and protection of the term 'person' utilized in the fourteenth amendment so as to strip all unborn children of all constitutional protection for their lives, liberty, and property." The definitions of person and nonperson has historical roots in our legal system that make this interpretation of the law very interesting, at the least.

This decision was totally arbitrary. It is medically arbitrary in that there is no consensus when life begins, that is when the fetus becomes viable. Some biologists might suggest that "human life started at the moment of fertilization when the sperm and the ovum merge" The medical community draws some quite fuzzy lines in the sand. On one hand most favor abortion, yet some would argue for assistance of a premature baby outside the mother's womb. "Assistance for the premature baby would, by most, be considered one of the basic duties of society. If so, then how should we see the abortion of a four-and-one-half-month-old baby?" Would we say that the baby "has the full genetic potential for becoming a human being?" How then should we understand the official Supreme Court Reporter (Vol. 410) that says: "the unborn are not recognized in the law as persons." This is certainly arbitrary.

The decision was also legally arbitrary. The court established an arbitrary absolute when it decided to disregard "the intent of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution." Quoting Professor Witherspoon again:

"Thus, the failure of the Court in *Roe v. Wade* [the abortion case] to have examined into the actual purpose and intent of the legislature in framing the fourteenth amendment and the thirteenth amendment to which it was so closely related and supplementary thereof when it was considering the meaning to be assigned to the concept of 'person' was a failure to be faithful to the law or to respect the legislature which framed it. Careful research of the history of these two amendments will demonstrate to any impartial investigator that there is overwhelming evidence supporting the proposition that the principal, actual purpose of their framers was to prevent any court, and especially the Supreme Court of the United States, because of its earlier performance in the *Dred Scott* case, or any other institution of government, whether legislative or executive, from ever again defining the concept of person so as to exclude any class of human beings from the protection of the Constitution and the safeguards it established for the fundamental rights of human beings, including slaves, peons, Indians, aliens, women, the poor, the aged, criminals, the mentally ill or retarded, and children, including the unborn from the time of their conception."

This arbitrary ruling of the Supreme Court "invalidated the law on this subject of abortion of almost every one of the states in the Union." It not only invalidated state laws but it also went against centuries of Christian consensus regarding abortions. The Early Church was known for their protection of infants. Often, unwanted babies would be left to die in the streets and they would be rescued and raised by Christians. Both Old and New Testaments admonished believers to care for the widows and orphans and prisoners. In other words, to care and protect those who could not care and protect themselves. Schaeffer cites the facts that: "In 314 the Council of Ancyra barred from the taking of the Lord's Supper for ten years all who procured abortions or made drugs to further abortions. Previously the Synod of Elvira (305-306) had specified excommunication till the deathbed for these offenses."

This goes beyond abortions. Here we have an example of the Supreme Court ignoring a long-standing consensus of history as well as past law. If this works in the case for

abortion what would prevent the Court from deciding "that arbitrary absolutes in regard to such matters as authoritarian limitations on freedom be equally accepted as long as they were thought to be sociologically helpful? We are left with sociological law without any certainty of limitation." Historically, and in this country in particular, there has been righteous indignation against the view of blacks as nonpersons. Yet today, "by an arbitrary absolute brought in on the humanist flow, millions of unborn babies of every color of skin are equally by law declared nonpersons." If one reads the debates for and against slavery in this country, from say 1830 to 1861 and substitutes the word abortion for slavery one cannot help but be struck by the similarity of the arguments. If the courts can arbitrarily "separate 'aliveness' from personhood" in fetus, "why not arbitrarily do the same with the aged? So the steps move along, and euthanasia may well become increasingly acceptable. And if so, why not keep alive the bodies of the so-called neomorts (persons in whom the brain wave is flat) to harvest from them body parts and blood, when the polls show that this has become accepted to the majority?"

With the death of Christian Consensus, we are not left with many viable sociological alternatives. Schaeffer suggests there are only three possibilities. First there is "hedonism, in which every man does his own thing." It won't take long for chaos to become the rule. Schaeffer gives us the example of: "One man can live on a desert island and do as he wishes within the limits of the form of the universe, but as soon as two men live on the island, if they are to live in peace, they cannot both do simply as they please. Consider two hedonists meeting on a narrow bridge crossing a rushing stream: each cannot do his own thing."

The second possibility is the "absoluteness of the 51 percent vote." With the passing of Christian culture the possibility of one man with a Bible calling society to accountability, or standing in the face of the majority based on "absolute law" by which to judge is gone. "In the days of a more Christian culture, a lone individual with the Bible could judge and warn society, regardless of the majority vote, because there was an absolute by which to judge. There was an absolute for both morals and law. But to the extent that the Christian consensus is gone, this absolute is gone as a social force." Slavery, euthanasia, abortion, loss of property, all could be legal with the absoluteness of the 51 percent vote. If the popular vote becomes the "absolute" then "no voice could be raised against it." Ancient Greece "found that society--the polis--was not a strong enough final authority to build upon, and it is still not strong enough today. If there are no absolutes, and if we do not like either the chaos of hedonism or the absoluteness of the 51 percent vote, only one other alternative is left: one man or an elite, giving authoritative arbitrary absolutes." The scary situation is that if there are no universal absolutes by which society is judged then the only absolute is society.

Society is going to be left with either a person or an elite group of people to fill the void "left by the loss of the Christian consensus. In communism, the state is guided by an elite, and law is what that elite determines it to be. While it may be easy to dismiss the thought that we could ever become a Communist country, we may be only an election away from finding ourselves governed by an elite. Then John Kenneth Galbraith "suggested an elite composed of intellectuals (especially the academic and scientific

world) plus the government." In 1975 Socioeconomist Robert Theobald "endorsed the concept of sapientary authority, a social structure in which wise men selected by merit would be deeply involved in the governmental decision-making process. It's naive, declared Theobald, "to deny the necessity for some kind of competent elite." Daniel Bell, a former professor of sociology at Harvard University, sees an elite composed of select intellectuals. He believes that "in the final analysis the whole state--its business, its education, its government, even the daily pattern of the ordinary man's life--becomes a matter of control by the technocratic elite. They are the only ones who know how to run the complicated machinery of society and they will then, in collusion with the government elite, have all the power necessary to manage it."

In our time, we have sociologically "destroyed the base which gave him (man) the possibility of freedoms without chaos. Humanists have been determined to beat to death the knowledge of God and the knowledge that God has not been silent, but has spoken in the Bible and through Christ--and they have been determined to do this even though the death of values has come with the death of that knowledge." Society cannot tolerate chaos. There will always be a person or an elite that will be willing to offer us arbitrary absolutes.

Schaeffer believes that there are at least two effects from the "loss of meaning and values" in our culture. "The first is degeneracy." Travel to a large city in almost any country and one can see the visible effects of the loss of values: "degeneracy, decadence, depravity, a love of violence for violence's sake."

The second effect is less obvious but is more chilling--man, like Esau, will sell his birthright for porridge. Without real meaning and real values, man is left only with his values of personal peace and affluence. Will man willingly risk his life for these--no. Schaeffer asks: "With such values, will men stand for their liberties? Will they not give up their liberties' step by step, inch by inch, as long as their own personal peace and prosperity is sustained and not challenged, and as long as the goods are delivered?" Said another way, if it is not worth dying for, then is it worth living for? If we fear fighting and dying for freedom then how can we expect to be able to live free? Without the solid foundation of biblical absolutes and the meaning and values that come from them what is worth the sacrifice of life? It is certainly not worth shedding blood for the values of personal peace and affluence. Today, many would, and are willingly giving up their liberty for that bowl of porridge, a porridge of personal peace and affluence.

In our country, we have lost the leadership of men who know and understanding the biblical absolutes. Be it politics or the church, but those in leadership positions are practicing appeasement. They give people what they want and people want their personal peace and affluence, all they want is their porridge, their birthright--they willingly give up. And guess what, like Jacob, there is the elite, the authoritarian, that are all too willing to take their birthright.

Examine the empty promises of politicians today and what they are promising are personal peace and affluence at the "low cost" of our freedom. "And since personal

peace and affluence are so often the only values that count with the majority, politicians know that to be elected they must promise these things. Politics is no longer a matter of ideals--increasingly men and women are not stirred by the values of liberty and truth--but of supplying a constituency with a frosting of personal peace and affluence." If we value our freedoms so little, if real meaning and values are no longer important, if biblical absolutes have become meaningless, we will someday wake and wonder, "Where have all the flowers gone?"--in our very own gulag?

Schaeffer closes with this: "Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788) said that the following five attributes marked Rome at its end: first, a mounting love of show and luxury (that is, affluence); second, a widening gap between the very rich and the very poor (this could be among countries in the family of nations as well as in a single nation); third, an obsession with sex; fourth, freakishness in the arts, masquerading as originality, and enthusiasms pretending to be creativity; fifth, an increased desire to live off the state. It all sounds so familiar. We have come a long road since our first chapter, and we are back in Rome." Amen!