

Worldviews in Collision: The Coming Civil War

I. Introduction

- A. One hundred and fifty-five years ago our nation engaged in a civil war (1861-1865) that took the lives of 700,000. This represented over 2.2% of the country's population at that time. What caused this disastrous war was a clash of ideas about the power of the Federal government: who had the final authority, the states or the federal government (the main issue: who had the power to regulate slavery?).
- B. Currently in 2019, there are two distinct paradigms for worldview thinking that are at loggerheads. Polls and statistics put the population of these two paradigms at about 50-50. Consequently, there is much talk in the contemporary media about a second civil war in the United States. Judging from the current state of affairs something of that description seems inevitable. At the outset of the next presidential election in 2020, most are predicting that the loser will not accept the results with precipitous outcomes. Expect all hell to break loose!
- C. It is the view of this Briefing Outline that this civil war already began in the last 60's. It was about that time that a consensus was lost of the then dominating paradigm. That paradigm was the remnants of the Judeo-Christian Worldview combined with elements from the Enlightenment. In ensuing decades it became known as *the Cultural War*. The best and most brilliant analysis of this can be found in the book mentioned below by Robert Bork.
- D. A consensus of a certain worldview over a culture is held or maintained, if it controls the education of the next generation. This involves as well, the control of the media and the arts. To destroy a consensus then means to seize control over these important institutions. This battle has been going on for several decades.

II. The Definition of a Worldview

To completely understand this coming calamity we must understand the concept of worldview:

- A. **A worldview is a philosophy of life.** It is an attempt to explain life's most basic questions. A religion is a worldview, atheism is a worldview, postmodernism which denies all metanarratives (worldviews), is still, likewise, a worldview! Any distinct culture is the embodiment of the worldview that holds the consensus of the majority of its citizens.
- B. **More precisely**, a worldview is: *a system of beliefs; it is what we really believe about the world (universe) and ourselves and how we fit into the scheme of things, and it is these beliefs which influence our thought and action.*
- C. A major presupposition (starting assumption) of this briefing paper is that theoretically, **there can be only one worldview that accurately explains all reality.** In developing your own worldview you want to arrive at explanations that mirror the way life really is. There are always physical and spiritual consequences if any part of our worldview does not correspond to reality. For an absurd example: If your worldview denies the reality of gravity and you walk off a cliff you will die! Therefore: because of the laws of logic, you cannot have two (or more) worldviews that differ and both be correct. But note: they can however, both be false!

III. The Characteristics of the Two Major Paradigms in Collision

I am using the word *paradigm* here in a more general and broader sense than *worldview*. These two paradigms that are in collision are Modernism and Postmodernism.

- A. Modernism, with a remnant dose of the Judeo-Christian worldview: Modernism is synonymous with the humanist philosophy of the Enlightenment which began in the 17th Century, and according to some, ended with the fall of communism. In its very basic summation it was a movement that was optimistic about discovering universal truth that would explain all of life. Some of its tenets are congruent with the Judeo-Christian worldview. Some of its tenets are:
1. Rationalism: Because of the belief that there is a correspondence between our minds and the world it was believed that truth or principles existed that could be used to explain all of life. Knowledge was objective and good, its increase certain. It was believed that laws of logic had independent existence like the laws of the universe. The Christian would add the necessity of revelation as the ultimate authority.
 2. Freedom: Only a truly autonomous man was free to discover truth. Being in bondage to superstition, religion or political tyranny prohibited man from acquiring and experiencing the truth. Western Civilization experienced the greatest amount of freedom known in history because of its Christian base (*imago deo*).
 3. Progress and optimism: With the Enlightenment and its ensuing movements there existed an unbridled optimism about the human capacity to discover truth leading to governmental and social advancement. In other words, there was absolute faith in human rationality. Christianity, of course, did not share this faith in reason. Rationality was something that man shared with his Creator, but it was not seen as having ultimate authority.
 4. Immanence: The emphasis of the enlightenment was away from the spiritual and the transcendent. This led to the secularization of society (secular humanism) that we have witnessed in the Twentieth Century. There was no intrusion from the spiritual world, i.e., no people with halos, angels or demons. Again, this tenet was not shared by a biblical worldview.
- B. Postmodernism: *Postmodernism* refers to what comes after Modern. It suggests an era, or, maybe even more accurately a mood, that succeeds Modernism or the Enlightenment. After two world wars and two holocausts, postmoderns no longer shared in the optimism of the past that reason would provide a foundation for human progress. Some of tenets shared by postmoderns are:
1. There is no metanarrative, no objective base for critique. There is no one (true) worldview that explains all of life. There are only *stories*, or *narratives* that are valid only within a community. Knowledge is wholly subjective and is the result of culture and language. You can never be wrong about what you believe. (*Don't think, just let it happen.*) There is no universe, only multiverses.
 2. The repression of the past must be righted. All speech is a political power play; it must therefore be monitored and regulated. Since speech is oppressive you should communicate in other ways such as via physical instincts and bodily manifestations (have you seen any rock music videos lately?) Words are replaced by images. (Books to TV, DOS to Windows!).
 3. We should become a society of inclusion, tolerance, and multi-culturalism. As a result there is emphasis on differences. This has led to what some are calling the *new tribalism*.
 4. Man is an extension of culture, i.e., a denial of the individual self. Humans are social constructs; they are socially determined. Hence a postmodernist sees the group as more important than the

individual.

5. One of the prime virtues of human beings is their ability to interpret. For a PM everything is a text, and only subjective interpretation is possible. One can never know the intent of the author. We never arrive at universal or objective knowledge. But while we can never know the author's true meaning, you can be sure that the author's words are meant to have repressive effect. This explains the trashing of the western canon of literature.
 6. For the most part, the PM denies transcendence. While there is some talk of gods they are generally referring to the gods within (immanence). The PM mentality makes for a fertile ground for new age religious movements, *and in particular, progressive Christianity.*
 7. Because of the above belief in immanence PM are ardent activists for the environmental movement. Rather than conquer nature they believe humans (their term) should cooperate with nature. And because of their opposition to rationalism and modern science there is an increasing wackiness to this movement (all creatures of the evolutionary ladder have equal rights!).
 8. A predominant theme in postmodernism is Marxist economics and eschatology. Marx believed (from Hegel) that violence always led to a higher order (it was predestined). Thesis verses antithesis led to another thesis that always advanced toward utopian outlook. It was Marx's view of redemption. With this in mind, this paradigm sees violence as a means to an end. This battle is not just for the country but is global as well.
- C. Summary: The polarization of the culture in the U.S. appears to have reached the boiling-over point. One side wants globalization as opposed to nationalism, open borders as opposed to walls and security, complete and absurd relativism to the point where a person can identify as whatever he conceives. No truth exists; arguments cannot be settled on the basis of facts or logic. No one can agree on a set of laws since interpretation is relative to who does the interpreting. Humans have no inherent dignity, hence their value is based on relative factors. History is disparaged; it's not taught, monuments are torn down, founders are viewed as the worst offenders of civil rights. Radical egalitarianism is elevated as the highest value (even including animals). We could go on and fill up the page! The sad thing is this state of polarization will not be settled at the ballot box. On a purely human level it will never end till one side wins the consensus and the other side loses. Fortunately, we don't have to look at it from a purely naturalistic perspective. Some scholars think we are already in the middle of a revival. I'm not quite there yet, but I'm praying for a great movement of the Holy Spirit!

IV. How Will a Second Civil War Play Out?

- A. It will most likely not resemble the first Civil War. That war consisted of regular troops battling in the old Napoleonic manner of battle.
- B. Similar to that war, however, the states will be pitted against each other. Perhaps not in open violence (clashes of troops) but in the areas economic and commercial. Blue states will boycott Red states and *vice-versa*. We Are already seeing some of this. (Trying to eliminate the electoral College)
- C. Court decisions of the Federal Govt. will be ignored. Attempts will be made to force adherence but will meet armed, irregular, opposition. And of course, this is why one side wants to eliminate the private ownership of guns.

- D. We can expect a complete breakdown of law and order. The Constitution is already seen as a living and breathing document. That means it can mean whatever a judge decides.
- E. Terrorist acts can be expected. Sabotage of public utilities will result in food shortages, etc.
- F. The public outcry will be for more security as the expense of personal freedom.
- G. Expect religious freedom to be curtailed. Expect freedom of assembly to be restricted.
- H. Elections results will be contested and not accepted as valid by the losers. Expect rampant corruption of the electoral apparatus.
- I. The economic ramifications will be enormous. Think devalued currency.
- J. As the country moves toward chaos expect foreign rivalry and world power struggles, i.e., wars.

V. Conclusion:

- A. **On a purely human level** one cannot be optimistic. There will be not a relenting in this battle of worldviews until one or the other side gains the ascendancy, and ultimately a consensus. When that happens, order will be restored. Only question is: will the consensus revert back to freedom and constitutional rule or tyranny?
- B. The proper response to the precipitous decline of Christianity in Western culture is not withdrawal or hopelessness but faith-enriched, bold, uncompromising Christianity. Throughout history God has delighted to send revival and reformation at the darkest moments, and he may choose to do it again. The only question is whether we will be at the forefront, intrepidly blazing the light, or cowering in unbelieving, culture.
- C. What God's plan is we do not know. We can petition Him and we must stand and not waver on the authority of Scripture and the worldview it reveals. When He moves, He can move swiftly and bring revival. We must pray for it, but be prepared to suffer as we are instructed in Peter's First Epistle.

VI. For Further Study:

Brownstein, Ronald. *The Second Civil War*.
 Bork, Robert H. *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*.
 Colson, Charles. *Burden of Truth*.
 Colson, Charles, and, Pearcey, Nancy. *How Now Shall We Live?*
 George, Robert P. *The Clash of Orthodoxies*.
 Himmelfarb, Gertrude. *On Looking into the Abyss*.
 Horowitz, David. *Dark Agenda*.
 Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order*.
 Johnson, Paul. *Modern Times*.
 Limbaugh, David. *Persecution*.
 Phillips, Melanie. *The World Turned Upside Down: The Global Battle over God, Truth, and Power*.
 Schaeffer, Francis. *A Christian Manifesto*.
 Schaeffer, Francis. *The Great Evangelical Disaster*.
 Scruton, Roger. *Fools, Frauds And Firebrands: Thinkers Of The New Left*.
 Tinker, Melvin. *The Hideous Strength: How The West Was Lost*.