

# Evangelizing the Western Mindset - Part 4

by Winkie Pratney

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*The sermon warns against the erosion of absolutes in the Western world, leading to a loss of authority and leadership.*

**Duration:** 52:49

**Scripture:** Proverbs 29:18, Matthew 7:24-27, Romans 13:1-2, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 3:23-24

**Topics:** "Biblical Absolutes", "Cultural Influence"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the consequences of living without absolutes in a culture, exploring the loss of authority, creativity, and the shift towards dictatorship. It emphasizes the need for individuals to have convictions, authority, and discipline, highlighting the importance of biblical absolutes in fostering creativity and impactful cultural influence.

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## Transcript

We have been looking so far at philosophies or the kind of mindsets or the kind of glasses that people in the Western world particularly wear today. And as a departure point we've been looking at Matthew 11 and we looked at Jesus speaking to the crowd and asking them that when they confronted the phenomenon of John the Baptist what did they go out in the wilderness to see. We looked at three questions that Jesus asked the crowd.

First one, one we will try and finish off here and then get on to second whole division was what? A reed shaken by the wind. We gave a name to reed philosophy, reed of course is just a little piece of grass which is blown in whatever direction the wind blows. And we gave a name to this kind of philosophy.

Is it really a philosophy? I suppose it is, more or less a smorgasbord of philosophies. We call this person an eclectic, they just pick little bits out of everything. And today we want to explore a little bit more about the consequences of living as if there are no absolutes in the world.

One of the things we looked at in the last series, we said if there are no absolutes then that has a consequence in our thinking and in our practice. If there are no absolutes there are no? Starts with O? Opposites. No absolutes, no opposites.

See if we live practically as if there are no ultimate rights and wrongs in the universe you come up with a philosophy of no opposites. If there is no real right then there is no real wrong. Matter of fact one of the

most common symbols, and these symbols of course were put together being here for thousands of years in times when people understood the significance of shapes to express world views, the circle is probably one of the most fundamental, that's you know you can tell I'm not Michelangelo just by looking at that, but the circle really is a summary of a world view that encompasses everything and has nothing at its heart.

And a great deal of philosophy, Eastern thought form, you'll see could be summed up really by the circle. See it attempts to encompass everything, it has no beginning, no end, but there's nothing inside it. And there's no way to break out of that.

It's an endless loop. And that could be almost a statement of a whole way of living. We could do this to the circle and color one side of this.

And that's the Tao. See that right and wrong, both parts of the same reality, that good and evil are necessary in the universe. In other words if you didn't have any evil you wouldn't have any good.

If you didn't have any darkness you wouldn't have any light. And there are people who actually live like this. Many many people in the world believe that the right is only there because wrong is there.

And that ultimately reality consists of two equal and opposite, well not really opposites, they're actually component parts of the same reality. Now give me a modern series of movies in which the ultimate power or helpfulness is just like that. Star Wars.

The Force. The force is with you Luke. The dark side of the force and the light side of the force, that is a standard, we could call it an occult thought form, that right and wrong are actually the same reality.

Now you see when the good guys win in Star Wars everybody cheers. But they should equally cheer if Darth Vader should have blown up Luke Skywalker and the whole Rebel Alliance and turned R.T.D. 2 into a bunch of beeping bits of tin can and ripped off C-3PO's legs off. See why shouldn't you cheer there too if right and wrong aren't ultimately the same thing? And the idea here is that you can tap into this power, it's actually an amoral power, it just depends on, you can use it for good or you can use it for evil.

Now that all comes out of the rejection of opposites. When opposites, when absolutes vanish in a culture, so do opposites. There is no ultimate difference between right and wrong in that philosophy.

Francis Schaeffer one time had a, was speaking to a young Hindu philosophy student who was there, I don't know whatever, whether it was a library or some other place, and I think he tried to bring the consequences of this in a practical way. The man had been arguing very vehemently that there were no real, there's no ultimate difference between right and wrong, that ultimately all was one. Schaeffer picked up a pot of hot coffee from the thing and held it over his head and he said, what are you doing? He said, I'm going to pour this coffee over your head and he said, why? He said, there is no ultimate difference between right and wrong.

You can't really live like that, though you can try. And another thing that comes out of this, if there are no opposites, then not only is good and evil the same reality ultimately, but male and female are the same. And I believe, and Schaeffer's pointed this out too, that opposites in a culture are actually testimonies to biblical absolutes.

And you'll notice that when people throw away absolutes in their life, very often all of these opposites become blurred in actual practice. So you have what we could call philosophical homosexuality, no

difference between male and femaleness. And it's significant that Sai Baba, who was one of the most powerful occult Eastern figures in the world, is bisexual.

He'll have sex with either sex of his disciples and to him there's no difference. And that is a living extension of a philosophy. There's no difference between maleness and femaleness.

Then you could see this reflected in the ambiguity of sexes today. Michael Jackson is a classic example. Boy George, another, both of these very gentle sort of people, you know.

But no, Michael Jackson to look at is a very unusual person. He had a nose job, got his nose changed, actually modeled like Diana Ross's nose. So his face doesn't look male or female, it's an androgynous face.

Same with Boy George. Boy George just does it with make-up. I mean, you know, he couldn't afford a nose job.

England is a little more hard up. But you see, this is reflected in a culture that is scared, too, of harshness. And so gravitate to that sort of gentle ambiguity, that not one hard this or one hard that.

This is a culture that's very afraid of absolutes and opposites. One of the things that happens if you lose this, however, the idea of absolutes, is that you lose convictions. You don't have any great and burning dreams.

The smorgasbord philosophy, the eclectic philosophy, the reed-shaped blown by the wind does not change. It doesn't blow anything, it just gets blown. And when a huge chunk of people in the Western world live like this, they become targets of whatever dictatorships begin to dominate that culture.

They become not only victims of their culture, they become victims of whoever rules that culture. If we wanted to express the exact opposite of this, we could not do any better than across. And across, as G.K. Chesterton points out, is the exact opposite of the circle.

First, it is two lines intersecting that radiate out in all directions. It is a radical statement. That cross is a statement of a philosophy that radiates out in all directions.

If you put it in the center of a circle, it breaks out of it. It stands for the breaking out of the circle in all directions. It has conflict at its heart.

Right in the heart of it is conflict. This is so mellow and laid back and easy. It's just, see, all is one and one is all.

This thing has, boom, it has tension right in the heart and then it goes, boom, out in all directions. I always thought that when Israel marched through the wilderness, there is a description in the Scriptures of those tribes, the 12 tribes and the way they marched. And it says that three tribes were to the north and three to the south and three to the east and three to the west.

I took the trouble one time to add up, because it gives you a detailed number of how many were in each tribe. And I thought, well, you know, usually they're laid out like this, see? And that's, of course, you could start a church, a four-square church right out of that. And they put the tabernacle in the middle and that would be one, I suppose, one way of lining them up.

But if they all lined up in a line and moved like that, you'd find an interesting thing. This top lot is quite long, it wouldn't really be a nice square. The bottom one is longest of all.

Put all the tribes side by side. These two on the side are about the same, so it would look quite a funny-looking square. Another possible way of putting them north, south, east, west would be this, with the longer one, the longest one, and these two ones that are about equal in number, like that, and then put the Levites in the middle.

And that would be another possible way of marching through the wilderness. And if that was so, in those early days, what you would have seen going through the wilderness was a giant cross with a tongue of fire there during the night and a pillar of cloud in the day. It would have also, you imagine how scary that would be, a living sign on the desert that had radical stuff in the center that broke out from the circle in all directions.

And it would perhaps give meaning to the time when a war was going on and Moses was told to stand and to hold his hands out like this. And as long as he kept his arms out, the battle went in their direction. And if you'd looked up on the hill, what you would have seen is something like this, and standing in front was young Joshua.

Joshua's name originally was Oshi, and God had spoken to Moses and said, I'm going to send my angel before you and my name is in him. That's what he said to Moses. Shortly after that, Moses takes this young man called Oshi and changes his name to Joshua.

The Greek way you say Joshua is this. It's the same name, Savior, Deliverer. So Moses takes this young man called Oshi and calls him Jesus, puts him in the head of the cross as they march on through the land.

And he would have stood there on the hill to direct the battle in front of this living cross made by Moses' outstretched hands. And finally, as Moses' arms dropped, then the battle started to be lost. It's very interesting, but the swastika is actually the cross turning back into a circle.

As the arms drop, you get this thing shifting back into that. So there's great power in symbols. And people who work in the occult world understand that.

That's why pentagrams are drawn and stuff like that. Some people believe that symbols had power to concentrate psychic energies, and that's the pyramid power thing, and the whole standing in the center of a pentagram and all that. But we need to understand that these symbols, the swastika, the cross, are ancient things.

They go way, way back. And people who had a profound knowledge of expressing a whole lifestyle in a single statement, a mandala or a mantra or a word, a sound, or something like that, they were not just things thought up overnight. They were part and parcel of an entire expression.

So the cross is a genuinely radical symbol. It is the exact opposite of a huge chunk of the world's thought form. Conflict in its heart, stretching out to eternity in all directions.

And it really sums up what it means to be a Christian. Death in the center looks the exact opposite, and going out forever from that point. Matter of fact, if you were to look at a new Christian's life and compare it with a non-Christian's life, at first glance, they may look exactly the same.

If I did it like this, in spirals now, instead of cross, they would look almost exactly the same. The only difference would be that when the cross is at the heart there, then the spiral points outwards. Because it comes in, kills the center of the life, and then begins to spiral outwards.

It gives yourself away to an infinite source. The other one, when a person sits at the center, the spiral is still there, only it goes inwards. And the practical result of both lives is that this one gets larger.

It is possible, having died and lived again, to fall into the ground like a grain of corn and die, and then bring forth much fruit, to grow, to expand, to find yourself doing things you never dreamed were possible before. But when selfishness rules the center of the life, then the more life goes on, the more self-centered and more closed in you become. The practical result is that a self-centered person will find themselves pulled more and more away from other lives.

The whole world begins to revolve just around you. And not only that, we can even say this. This is like a whirlpool.

Those who have been caught in one, I understand that if you're going down, you don't realize you're in one because they're pretty big. For a while, everything looks fine. You're going there, and then it seems like the boat slows down.

And you don't notice a slight change until you realize you're heading back upstream. You think, boy, that's weird. And then you come around again.

The second time you go around, it's tighter. And it's faster. And the third time you go around, it's really starting to spin until finally your boat is just going like this.

And when you hit the center, you just go. And you're gone. That's what life is like.

You get under that spiral. It gets faster and faster. That's what they call a lily in the fast lane.

And when you hit the center, you're sucked down just like somebody pulled the plug on a very deep bath. It's the eclectic philosophy then, the reed shaken by the wind. Here are some of the consequences.

Now, you've all seen people like this. You may have been a person like that yourself. People who change their loyalties, who change their commitments, who change what they believe, not because of truth, but because of whatever people think or whatever.

Kids are peculiarly prone to be reed shaken by the wind. Junior high school or intermediate school kids, they are very, very pressured by the crowd. When you first get to high school and you see what everybody else is like and how they dress and how they act, there's tremendous pressure to conform, to become whatever the crowd around you does.

Some kids, of course, in English schools, it's usually uniforms. Same with most Australian things in New Zealand. But in American schools, if you dress different from the way everybody else dresses, then it always was an amazement to me how that in the 1960s everybody went out and dressed in blue jeans to show they were different.

Jesus never spoke like this. He spoke with absolutes. Matter of fact, He spoke like a child.

Have you ever noticed that one of the characteristics of children is that they are black and white, they are right and wrong people. They haven't yet learned what compromise means. They don't know what that word means yet.

All they see is that this is good or it's bad. Little kids will say, was he a good guy or was he a bad guy? They haven't come up to the concept of a good bad guy or a bad good guy. It's adults who think like that.

Children think in absolutes. It's right or it's wrong. It's good or it's bad.

And Jesus spoke like that. He said there is a straight and narrow road that leads to life and few there be that find it. There's a broad road that leads to destruction and many go in that way.

He didn't say and then there's sort of a middle class freeway for those who can't hack either. He said, you know, no man can serve two masters. He will either love the one and hate the other or hold to the one and despise the other.

He said a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit and an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. It was a very absolute thing. Later on James picks up the same thought.

He says, can a fountain bring forth sweet water and bitter at the same source? They were mutually exclusive things. He talked as if there were some real absolutes, some real rights and some real wrongs. And we are witnessing in the Western world particularly a tremendous erosion of absolutes.

It already exists in a lot of other philosophies outside of the West. No real opposites. A huge chunk of the people you speak to will practically live like that.

Here are the consequences of it. First you lose authority. You become not sure of anything.

Now what's the consequence of the loss of authority? Well first of all you lose leadership. Leadership drops out. And the great danger then is that when a country loses its leaders other people may come in to fill the gap who have their own ideas of right and wrong outside of biblical things.

And I want to show you a little thing that may be of value to you. Could you draw a little triangle like this? And you can sort of put a dot down the bottom if authority doesn't belong in this. I want to show you a little thing.

It's based in the book of Romans where it speaks... We won't come back to Matthew for a little while so you want to buzz over just to the book of Romans. In Romans 13 scripture says, Let every soul be subject to the higher powers for there is no power but of God or authority. The authorities that be are ordained of God.

Strange sort of verse. King James has power, I think he has his authorities. And the questions often ask, what do you mean by authority? Now if you've made your triangle big enough I want you to draw three lines like that parallel to the baseline and just leave enough room to put in some labels in there.

And if you've got a triangle this big you might decide I'd better draw a bigger one unless you write very tiny. At the top of this put Romans 13 and put this statement somewhere. You don't have to write it on your triangle, maybe underneath.

God gives a nation the kind of government it deserves. God gives a nation the kind of government it deserves. That's a radical... Basically essentially that's what it says.

It says that the kind of government or the kind of authority that is in a country and we'll see this actually prides much more broadly than just to a country is the one given to it or allowed by God for that thing. Which sounds a bit strange. I mean why would God allow a country to have Marxist dictatorship for instance? Why would God allow... Why shouldn't everybody be into democracy or something like that? But I believe... See these little two on the end? I believe that God evaluates a nation by the following two things.

First by its practical... Boy this board is eating my chalk. If the people are wise and virtuous, good. See? If the people on the whole in a nation are both wise and when I mean wise I don't mean smart, I mean wise.

I mean the difference between just simply informed or educated and wise means that I'm using biblical wisdom here. When people order their lives by principles of reality that their lives match what God says and when the people are committed not only do they understand what rights and wrongs are but they are willing to commit themselves to the carrying out of that in the nation God could trust them with some kind of democracy. I don't know if a true democracy has ever existed at least in any major way in history but a democracy is supposed to be a government of the people, by the people and for the people but you can see that it doesn't really work unless you got people that are wise and good.

You can't have a bunch of people who are anarchists making a democracy because they don't care about anybody else except their own ideas. There was a movement in the 1960s, mid-60s called the free speech movement but it never got off the ground because they couldn't agree who would be free to speak. There is authority in a democracy.

The reason why I've given it to you as kind of a pyramid or a triangle here is because the further up the triangle you go the more power that resides in the less people. Now the next one up here would be what we could call an oligarchy or perhaps another word would be a republic. The United States of America is supposed to be a republic.

It was supposed to be, it's not really a democracy, it's supposed to be a republic. But in a republic like Plato's Republic or an oligarchy the people pick out people who are considered generally wiser and more able to administrate for the good of the nation and they pick those people out to run the nation. They become sort of a group of philosopher kings or something.

They are the ones chosen to administrate the government. Now let's say the people aren't so wise or not so good then you need somebody with even greater authority and again it's going to get smaller here. We go now to a monarchy which is what Britain is supposed to be.

Now a king, regardless of kings in these days, kings in the old days had a lot more authority and power than most kings today. Kings in the old days if they said jump on the way up you asked how high. You know it was a lot more power in those days.

When you think of guys like Nebuchadnezzar and even the pharaohs and stuff they were much, much more power invested in them. So you can see if the people aren't as clued up as a whole or as wise you couldn't trust them with this. You've got to put more and more power in less people.

Now the king had a court he could ask advice. He even had a jester there in medieval days. The jester's job was not just to be funny.

His job was to satirize and parody every suggestion that the court gave the king. So the court all came and say there were a bunch of yes men and they all said yes king whatever you think is wonderful lest they lose their heads. The jester's job was to take all of those ideas given to the king and parody them.

He was to be a Benny Hill or a Monty Python to the king. And the king would laugh and he'd also see the other side of the story. But the king's word was still law.

What he said, he could listen to his court take advice but what he said was it. And then you go to the top you have a totalitarian structure. You have a dictatorship and this could be actually a benevolent thing.

It could be benevolent. It's quite possible to have a benevolent dictator who tells everybody this is the way it's going to be but he really can he's the only one smart enough or good enough to. It's also possible to have the exact opposite to have an evil dictatorship.

Somebody just rules everything with the right of way but you can see as you go up the triangle now the power is concentrated in just one or most one or two people. Maybe the guy and his wife or whatever that's it. Now I've given you this in governments because I believe God actually changes nation's governments depending on what happens with their people.

That he will give a nation the kind of government it deserves. Classic examples in our time have been America goes into Vietnam and tries to establish a democracy which is really a very dumb thing because Vietnam functioned and operated on graft and vice and all kinds of things. They did not last there.

They were finally kicked out and in came the communists who weren't going to mess around with these democratic forms. Came in and when the Americans were there prostitution was legalized. When the communists came in prostitution finished overnight.

24 hours there were no more prostitutes. It was very simple. They just said if you're a prostitute we'll kill you.

There were a few and they killed them. Everybody else repented. Not in a biblical way but stop being prostitutes.

Now though this was not the way Christians would do it, you know, we'd have a revival and then make everybody a democracy. But what has happened is, can you see there was a change? We could say well that was terrible. How can you say that was good? A classic example would be China.

Missionaries went into China for centuries and just died there. The problems with China were humongous. They had thousands of little dialects and everybody talked different ones.

You'd go there spend all your life just translating the dialect. Then you died and you had to wait for another century before somebody else could come in and pick up where you left off. There were no transport into those back places.

There was no communication systems. It was a nightmare. And the hardest thing was that the major worship there was ancestor worship.

It was very hard to get a guy to give up loving his mother even if she's been dead. Then came communism. What happened? Well, did five things.

First, got rid of all the dialects. Only five good things Mao did was he unified the language, taught everybody to read and write. Missionaries worked on that for three centuries.

Taught everybody to read and write. One simplified Mandarin dialect. Put roads right through the whole place.

You can get way into the back. They're not always good roads but they're there. Put communication systems in universally right through the whole nation.

So villages don't even have hot and cold running water. Got TV sets for propaganda purposes. And the only other thing he did was eliminate all religion.

Especially ancestor worship. Plowed over the graves of the ancestors. That was an awful thing to happen to all that culture.

But as a consequence, what has happened? Now we're looking back. Mao died, you know, the god that was buried. Little red books gone out of fashion.

People thought, this doesn't work too well. But all that's been left now is that the five things which have prepared the nation for evangelism on a scale that has never been possible before. And you can't keep up with what's happening in the church in China.

When I did the book revival and I first looked at the statistics, it was, you know, 10 million believers. And by the time I got the editing finished, it was 20 million. And by the time I went to print, I had to revise it again.

It was close to 40 or 50. And I don't know what's happening in China. Whole communes are getting saved.

Whole areas are getting saved. There's a, I heard a story last year of a friend of mine, David Wong from Hong Kong, was asked by somebody to take in a Bible and give it to a doctor, a communist doctor in the inland of China. And he said, why? He said, well, this guy's asked for one.

So could you take him in one? So when David got to talk to this guy, it turned out that he was a doctor in a hospital that was close to this whole community, commune there of workers. And a woman was brought in that had been injured in a rock slide. Rocks had fallen and crushed her ribs.

The ribs had punctured the lung. They knew they couldn't do anything in the little village dispensary thing. So they rushed to the hospital.

He took x-rays and it was hopeless. Her lungs were punctured. They were filled with blood.

That was it. There's nothing he could do. And so his thought was, I'll make her as comfortable as I can.

She'll be dead in the morning. He gave instructions for the woman not to be fed or anything because it would only accelerate their death. And so he thought that's it.

And when he was sort of checking her out, she seemed to be moaning and he got close and she was saying, Jesus, heal me. And he got afraid. He was a Christian apparently.

Calling out, Jesus, heal me. So he thought, oh, you know, these superstitious full-on communists. And following morning, he came back and got an awful fright.

She was sitting up in bed eating breakfast. And he said, what are you doing? And she said, oh, I'm sorry, doctor. I'm sorry I'm eating, but I was so hungry.

He didn't say you're supposed to be dead, but he took x-rays and totally healed lungs, totally healed ribs. Overnight. He had both x-rays.

The ones before, the ones after. She took the x-rays, took them back to the commune, held them both up before, after. Jesus, almost the entire commune got saved.

80% of them gave their lives to the Lord that same day. Now, this is dangerous stuff. If we could step back out of history a little bit and see that the things which people in the West would sometimes say, boy, that's terrible, you know, what happened there.

We don't know what God has allowed to happen in situations. And sometimes short-term horrors, which come about simply by the wrong and rotten choices of man, God overrules for good. Scripture does say here, God gives a nation the kind of government that it has.

He allows that kind of structure. He's not talking about the personalities in it, but the form of authority or structure. Now, the reason I give you this is because you will also minister in churches.

In this same pattern, I believe it's true. We could say this. God gives a church the kind of pastor it deserves.

If the people... We could change these now. We could put instead of democracy, we could put... These are structures of church now, congregational. Instead of a republic, an oligarchy, we could put a Presbyterian.

I'm not talking about doctrinal here, just the structure of that particular church. Under monarchy, we could put Anglican. Under dictatorship, we could put Roman Catholic.

When the people on the whole are wise and good, God can trust them with a more congregational type structure. If they're less wise and less good, perhaps a more Presbyterian form will be better. A group of elders chosen to minister the thing.

You see, there's authority in each one of these. When you get to the top, perhaps they're not quite as wise or as good, then give them an Anglican form of government. Again, not doctrinal things.

We're looking at structure of a church. If the people really don't know anything at all about God and are selfish as the day is long, you may need to put in a Catholic type structure. You understand, as a missionary, when you go into a country, we're not talking about the form that we put, just the structure of it.

If I came to a group of young people that knew nothing whatsoever about God and I was setting up some kind of structure or church, I would set up that one first. I would. It would be very militant.

It would be very authoritative. I would say, you do that. I do that.

Don't you? Look here, when you have a baby, how do you govern a baby? You don't ask its advice. You say, don't do that. You tell them.

You become big dictator. Don't put those scissors in that socket. Eat.

It's what you do. You're just a dictator. You can be a benevolent dictator, but you're still out.

When you have a child, sometimes you listen. You may even allow yourself to be swayed by advice sometimes. When you get a young man or woman here, then you become more like a Presbyterian.

You're still the boss, but... And then one day, that young man may become a father himself. See that? That's life. And what is true with individuals is also true with nations and with structures.

So if I was coming into a brand new area and everybody was ignorant concerning the things of God and the selfishness of day is long, the effective structure would be a dictatorship. I would just say, look, this is the way it's going to be done. If you want to follow Jesus, do it this way.

If you don't, go somewhere else. You know, I like that with kids. I tell them, you want to follow Jesus? Then do this.

I don't say, what do you think you should do? I tell them. They get saved, then I become a king for a little while. Read your Bible.

Pray. No, no, no, no, no. You can't do this.

See? Later on, I may become more of a president. One day, I may become one of the boys. But see that? This is life.

That's the way it is. Now, when absolutes drop out of a society, authority breaks down in all of these areas. And the scary thing is this.

When people become, we'll say, stupid and selfish, taking the exact opposite of wise and good, then they automatically, the culture begins to move towards the top. See that? If they can't govern themselves, then the whole culture is pressured towards the top. So Schaeffer said, the kind of world we've got now is being set up for a dictatorship.

A totalitarian regime. Now, whether it's the scientists in line with the military or, you know, whatever forms that is, it could be benevolent. It could come from the right.

It could come from the left. See? There's right dictatorships. There's left dictatorships.

But I believe, I've witnessed, at least in the Western world, a real trend towards that way. In America, for instance, I believe the interest Americans have with the monarchy, especially with Diana and Charles thing, is actually a hunger for the royalty thing. The same kind of charisma that the Kennedy clan had in the early days.

But it's more than that. It's a desire for more power and leadership. And Ronald Reagan, of course, in the presidency there, really the movie stars in America are the royalty of the nation.

And he's an ideal president, you know, a movie star president. But do you see that? That hunger for that somebody with more power and more charisma and not just one of the boys, but a guy there that... Do you

see that? That's a hunger. It's a hunger in the culture.

So the whole world is moving towards that thing. You could easily see a one-world system set up under one dictatorship. God, on the other hand, His ultimate form of government, that's why I left this dotted one free here, is a family.

It is a... There is leadership there. There is a father of that family, but it is a family. And it is a family not of babies, but of a mature bride.

Christ has a bride. She's holy, spotless. And He's going to fill the universe with that family.

That's why we're in training to rule and reign with Him now. That's what the whole Christian discipling thing is about. So you've got then a great hunger in the world for family, for that closeness and stuff.

That's why cell groups work so well, when you can be close to people and get friendship. It's not just the idea of a cell. The whole idea that these little groups, the closeness of them, each under the father.

That's why communism, borrowing from the cell group principle, grew so fast. No one cell knows about the other cells, but all of them are under the same and replace the father with a party line. Not anywhere near as good, but still effective.

So there, that pattern's worth looking. When absolutes drop out, culture loses its authority. It becomes not sure of anything.

And being not sure of anything, it becomes prey to those who speak with authority. Whether they're a Jim Jones, or whether they're an Idi Amin, or Gaddafi, or you name it. That's where Nazi Germany rose.

With a nation that felt themselves helpless, and beaten up, and economically falling apart, and looking for somebody who would come in and tell them, this is, you know, giving vision and giving charisma. And that was Adolf Schickelgruber, the paper hanger. The little mustache that turned the whole nation around and made it the scariest thing in the world at that time.

A man like this. Very, very dangerous man. But our times are becoming like that.

Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, was being interviewed one time by Tom Snyder on one of these late night talk shows. And Snyder asked Roddenberry, why the enormous popularity of Star Trek? He said, you know, I mean, they have conventions with 30,000 people that come out. To this, everybody dressed as salt vampires or different things.

And Trekkies, you can throw a frame up, a single slide, that can tell you what episode that came from, when it was first aired, and how many minutes and seconds into that episode that frame is taken from. I mean, we're talking devotion here. A thing that, having gone off the networks, came back with a much higher watching audience than when it left.

The only series in history that has ever happened like that. And spawned since three in a fourth movie, just by popular demand. Sometimes 30,000 letters a week.

And so Tom Snyder asked Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, why is this interest? Why this resurgence after 20 years? Why is this? And Roddenberry said this, he said, I believe that people are hungry for people, somebody who believes in something strongly enough to die for it. A hero, an ideal. He

said, there's an enormous hunger for that right now.

And he said, a little later, he said, I believe the times are right for a messiah or a phony or both, I suppose. And I said, brother, thou art close to the kingdom in your understanding. So that's a broad look at the culture.

What does that suggest to you then in terms of ministry? How, what would that suggest to you in the way you preach, in the way you present the gospel, in the way you witness? It seems to me we need to be men and women of authority. We need to be people with convictions. That's why early communism took off so well.

Those young communists went out with stars in their eyes. They said, we're going to change the world. We've found a philosophy that'll keep us moral, keep us clean, that will change nations, will eliminate selfishness from society.

They really believed that in those early days. They stood and gave testimonies. I have a little story of a young man who was witnessed to by his friend in the factories.

Told him, I've found a whole new meaning in life and purpose. Then he met some of his friends and they shared with him the great dream they had. Whole new world that was going to be built.

And then he sat in the back of the room and he listened to them as they gave testimonies. I used to be a prostitute and I'd given it all up. Now I've given myself to the building of a whole new world.

And his eyes filled with tears. And he finally stood and he joined in the singing of the Communist International. And it was just like a testimony.

That's why people in the early days, and we'll look at Marxism later and see, because it's a very key philosophy, especially in Europe, in its various forms. Let's see why it took off with such power. Now, how much time we got? We got ten, five? About five.

Okay. I'll give you one more thing on this and then we'll quit. Creativity.

Another thing that happens in a smorgasbord culture is a loss of creativity. See, true creativity is not sitting there just studying your navel at length and getting great thoughts. It functions in discipline.

Some of the most... There's got to be a tension between what they call in philosophy form and freedom. If you have all freedom and no form, there's no output. If you just mellow and lay back and do everything, nothing ever gets done.

If you have all form and no freedom, there is stifling there. But genuine creativity functions within discipline. You can't put out unless there is some form of control and discipline in the light.

You're going to be a great painter. You don't get there by just picking up a paintbrush one time and just wandering over, and there's your first masterpiece. The discipline it takes.

You're going to be good at anything. You're going to be a creative basketball player. It takes hours and hours of dedicated work, etc., on any level.

Sports? Nadia didn't get to be Nadia by just poking around a few times. She worked as a little girl, trained, browbeaten into 300 more press-ups, you know, until... Now, when you pull absolutes out of a culture, you lose ultimate sense of discipline with order in it, see, because you replace a creative discipline with this kind of force thing. You will perform or you will go to Siberia, you know, which is not really conducive to great creativity.

The loss of creativity takes place in a culture that begins to lose absolutes. It has no great dreams anymore. It has no great visions anymore.

That is why I believe that God could give society to the Christian church if it would seriously take the kingdom mandate. You understand? If you were to give yourselves to the Word of God, we would see again a rebirth. There was a time in this, especially in Europe, where you could hardly find one great thinker or painter or artist who was not a Christian.

You think of the great works of art that have come out over the years, and a huge chunk of them were fed. You talk about Bach. You talk about Handel.

You talk about Milton. You talk about Dante. You talk about the painters.

All of them drew huge reams, even guys like Michelangelo and others. They drew huge reams from biblical truth. They were creative people.

Look at the Wesley's I have in New Zealand, my Methodist library there. I've got a 10-volume set of the poetical works of John and Charles Wesley. Each one is that thick.

Incredible thoughts. Have you picked up a hymn book and read some of the hymns the last couple of hundred years and seen the content in those things? The huge, tremendous thoughts they had about God and the world, and they were imaged out. Now we think so shallow today.

We think Mickey Mouse thoughts about God. We think Mickey Mouse thoughts about people. We don't have great dreams.

You lose the absolutes and the concentration on absolutes, and it filters down into blindness in the culture. No great art. No great poems.

No great dreams. I believe that one of the things God does is we're brought back to biblical authority and biblical absolutes is that are flowing out into the culture of creativity. I believe Christians should be the best filmmakers.

They should be the best poets, the best artists. I was 10 days ago in New Zealand. I was privileged to be part of a media workshop there, and look, 50 leaders there, each one with a dream on changing the media.

One guy took over a little magazine. Today it's made a family magazine, Christian Guy. It outsells Reader's Digest.

It goes to more homes in our major city than any other magazine. It's tremendous. They're running 98 to 2 positive mail from it.

It's done by Christians. The 2% come from disgruntled religious people who wonder why there's not a Bible verse on each page. Anyway, let's close at this point, and we'll pick this up in our next session.

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