

The Kingdom Seminar™

Notes for Three Presentations

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Session #1- The Storyline of Christendom

Christians have discussed many times the idea that we need to "know the story" of God's work with His creation. It struck me some years ago that it would help to know the main characters of *The Story*. Isn't this what we always do with any story we read? In pursuing this idea, I settled on nine key characters as revealed in the Scripture. They were as follows:

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah and Paul.

Obviously there are several other major figures revealed in the Bible. If ten people created such a list independently, we might have ten different list of names. For me, the above nine were the "biggies." These were the men whom God used in very special ways to accomplish major historical events.

I then began to notice a very peculiar thing about when these nine individuals appeared "in the story." While there are differing views of when Adam actually lived (when creation took place) there does not appear to be much controversy around when the others lived. I noticed that beginning with Noah at roughly 2,500 BC, all the others appeared at 500 year intervals give or take a few decades, with David and Solomon being at same time as well as with Ezra and Nehemiah. That struck me as significant.

This led to my creating a timeline chart and plotting when each of the nine appeared on the scene (when they showed up in the play!). And then, continuing on in the N.T. era, I discovered the same pattern was occurring, with these individuals:

- Augustine, d. 430 AD
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux, d. 1153
- Luther/Calvin, d. 1564

Again, others may choose different Church history figures, but I consider these four men to be of most significance in the works of Judeo-Christian history.

I added them to my timeline where it was now showing the following:

- Beginning with Noah (when God decided to "start over"), there are eight key period of times appearing at very close to 500-year intervals, with a total of 12 individuals.

- I then had the thought to expand the chart content to identify four particular perspectives of the unfolding of the story:
 - Eternity (seeing that time itself is somewhat of a parenthesis in God's Story)
 - Historical Eras (now identified by historians as Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Post-Modern)
 - Key Works of God
 - Key Individuals used of God for key works

After that I added the really big ideas: Creation, Crucifixion and Consummation.

It also struck me that here we are, living at another 500-year interval. If this pattern continues, roughly as it has for 4,500 years, we can expect another major work of God, with one or two key individuals being raised to the task; probably a 5-year old boy in some remote part of the world who may get tapped for the job!

Perhaps there are other aspects of what we could learn about God's Story from this exercise, but we should start by learning this much of it, very well.

I have found this chart useful in presenting the "big picture" to believers and unbelievers alike. It is hard to argue with the facts of history.

Session #2- The Worldview of Youth

This session reviews the **PEERS Trend Chart** showing the worldview position held by high school youth in America (from Christian homes) over a 30-year period, based on a worldview assessment tool called the PEERS Test. PEERS is an acronym, meaning:

P- Politics (civil government)

E- Economics

E- Education

R- Religion

S- Social Issues

The PEERS Test consists of 70 test statements, 14 in each category, answered with the Lykert scoring system. Here are a few sample test items:

- Government should rest as directly as possible on the will of the people.

- An individual can share in the divine nature of God through many avenues other than a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- A democratic government should guarantee unemployment benefits and retirement income to all its citizens.
- Unemployment is primarily caused by a lack of demand for goods and services.

The test rates an individual into one of four general worldview categories based on the following scale:

70-100	Biblical Theism
30 - 69	Moderate Christian
0 - 29	Secular Humanism
< 0	Socialism

The PEERS Test was evaluated by an outside firm using a panel of experts (5 Christian and 5 non-Christian) to determine its validity and reliability. The findings were very positive; report available upon request.

This **PEERS Trend Chart** reveals both good and bad news for America.

The bad news? At least 90% of youth from Christian homes are increasingly abandoning the Judeo-Christian worldview in favor of some brand of a secular, anti-Christian worldview. We couldn't do worse if we tried. America is looking more and more like Europe, where less than 10% of the population is in Church on any given Sunday of the year. *If a church does not teach its own posterity to "observe all things that I have commanded you," how can it possibly be expected to accomplish Christ's command to make disciples of all nations?*

But there is also some *good* news on the **Trend Chart!** In a small percentage of Christian schools students are in fact learning and embracing a mature biblical worldview. The question is: How are they doing this and *will your school/church be one of them?*

A new DVD-based worldview program, called **The Worldview Course** (TWC) is being release by Nehemiah Institute in Spring 2016. TWC is designed for adults in local church groups. Its purpose is to aid in reversing the downward trend of worldview held by our youth. See preview of course at: www.worldviewcourse.com.

Session #3- History of American Education/Culture

This chart was initially established by Dr. Gerald Stiles, professor at Liberty University. It was a study of the nature of American culture looking at six distinct eras of our short history. Its purpose was to show the gradual elimination of the Judeo-Christian influence in America, especially in the sphere of education.

I have expanded the chart with a seventh era which I argue will be characterized by either a return to the Judeo-Christian worldview, or a slide into a new dark era of human history. I

make the case that the choice is up to the people, either being led by a secular-minded education/government system or by a biblical worldview pulpit. I see no other options.

Here are key points for the seven eras:

Period I- Colonial Education Era (1620-1776) 155 years

This covers the period from the landing of the Pilgrims and Puritans to the War of Independence. While not everyone was a Christian, it is clear from numerous sources such as personal letters, diaries, speeches, books and sermons, that the dominate ethos of that time was based on the Christian life. People commonly referred to themselves as “Christians seeking the new city on a hill.” Many Christian institutions were established including higher education, Harvard, Yale, etc.

Period II- Early National Era (1789 – 1870) 80 years

We had now become a “nation” in our own right. People began to refer to themselves as ‘the new nation’ more than simply the people of God. Science became an acceptable way of knowing truth, though not equal with God and Christ. Reason was put on the same level as the Bible for how we know what we know. Being a good citizen was deemed an acceptable condition for having the good life.

Period III- State-School Era (1870 – 1918) 50 years

People now were quick to identify themselves as Americans first, then Christian. Science was made equal with God in ability to determine what was real. The scientist could be trusted to tell the truth. Reason was viewed as the primary means of determining what man could/should know. Being a good citizen was considered as the first test of the good life, but the Christian life was still considered important.

Period IV- Remaking of Society Era (1918 – 1963) 45 years

People now began to think of themselves as belonging to a democracy, rather than to a Constitutional Republic, as given by the Founding Fathers. The political mindset was based on *we the people* rather than the will of God as expressed in Biblical law and constitutional law. This shift in political thinking laid the foundation for the Me-Generation which showed up in the next shift in culture, Period V. Reason and individual desires were viewed as the basis of what we know, more than the Bible. Being a good citizen, possessing a moral life, and embracing the self-actualized life, (humanistic psychology) was the basis of having the good life.

Period V- Post-Christian Era (1963 – 1993) 30 years

A major shift was now underway in America. The 60’s kicked in and almost overnight people could sense a new day was dawning. Nearly everyone new that something was happening to America, few understood why. Even fewer understood the consequences of where this would lead our nation. One who did see the cause and the consequences was Francis Schaeffer. The Me-Generation was in full bloom with youth expressing rebellion against traditional authority, particularly on the college campuses. Science along with technological Eastern religion, called *New Age*, became the focus of what was real. Individual desires, reason and experience were the dominate basis for determining what we can know.

Gone almost entirely was any public expression or acknowledgement of God, Christ, and the Bible. Christianity was at best one of many views of life. Elvis Presley, the Beatles and the assassination of President Kennedy (all in the 60's) had a profound impact on the soul of America.

Period VI- New World Order Era (1993 - 2018) 25 years

Postmodernism became the rage of the campuses in America. Objective truth was gone, man-made ethics was in. The church began mimicking the world more than confronting it. "Give them what they want" became the mantra for much of evangelicalism; get them into the building! The good life was (an is!) characterized by a new virtue- tolerance. America adopted *political correctness* as the basis for the good life, even respecting/promoting amoral behavior such as the gay lifestyle.

Period VII- 2020- ? Lightness or Darkness

Given the history of our nation, especially in political and educational realms, we can now expect one of two national identities to develop. It is near certain that we will either slide into barbarianism (as many cultures have done) OR restore a thoroughly Biblically-based culture. Barbarianism is a topic of concern to many conservative evangelicals. A good book on this subject is *Slouching Toward Gomorrah* by Thomas Bork, 1996. Two other excellent reads are: *The Dying of the Light*, James Burtchaell, 1998 and *Suicide of the West*, James Burnham, 1985.

Although uncertain as to when this may begin, the cultural shift by youth into Humanism /Socialism as identified by Nehemiah Institute's PEERS Test, the trend of the past 25+ years, gives evidence that by 2020 (if trend continues at same rate) we will have a full generation of Americans who will strongly reject Christianity and formally embrace Socialism. The American experiment will be over.

The direction we take will largely be determined by the Church of our time. The under-shepherds (pastors of local churches) have an enormous task upon their shoulders. Will they do it? Will community leaders, of all spheres, help them do it?

These charts are being presented by Dan Smithwick to make the case for the need of a focused worldview program among conservatives in America, delivered in various forums. The charts are intended to give reason for adoption of a new worldview course being offered by Nehemiah Institute for families and churches. An overview of the course may be seen at: www.worldviewcourse.com.

To receive further information on bringing this half-day seminar to your community, call 1-800-948-3101.