

DBU Worship Formation Program
Calvin Institute for Christian Worship Lily Grant
Questions on *The Transforming Vision*, chps 6-9

Instructions:

- Pick a leader who will also serve as a spokesperson for your group
- Focus on the questions on your designated chapter and then work your way through as many additional questions as possible
- Jot down key insights
- Be prepared to share these insights with the whole group at the end of our meeting

Questions for Chapter Six: The Problem of Dualism

1. What do you think the authors Walsh and Middleton mean by the heading to the first main section of chapter six when they ask: “Is the ‘Christian’ worldview biblical?” How might it be possible to have a “Christian” but unbiblical worldview? 93
2. What is dualism? What is the distinction between dualism and duality? Why do Walsh and Middleton think that dualism is “the fundamental worldview problem”? 95-96
3. How is dualism manifested in typical Christian attitudes toward work? 97-100
4. How is dualism expressed in typical Christian attitudes toward culture? 100-103
5. How does dualism influence how Christians read and interpret the Bible? 103-105
6. Can you think of other areas or other ways in which dualism can be detected in Christian thinking or living? How does it show up in your own life? Have you heard dualism taught from the pulpit, in Sunday School classes, or in chapel at DBU? Give examples.

Questions for Chapter Seven: The Development of Dualism

1. How did Plato’s dualistic philosophy, especially his views of the forms and the soul and the body, influence the church and its understanding of Christianity? 108-110
2. What role did St. Augustine’s thought, especially his view of the eternal and the temporal, play in inserting dualistic thinking and living into the church?

3. How did Thomas Aquinas, who followed Aristotle, also contribute to the Church's dualistic mindset with his views of nature and grace?
4. What 3 big consequences did dualism have upon the church as a whole? 114-115. Hint: (1) extreme asceticism; (2) irrelevant gospel; (3) double allegiance
5. How did dualism prepare the way for the secularization of Western society in which God's revelation and rule are excluded from culture? 115-116
6. Can you think of any other sources of dualism than the ones mentioned in this chapter? How might the fall of humanity into sin be a source of dualism?

Questions on Chapter Eight: The Rise of the Secular Worldview

1. When did "secularism" begin? What do the authors mean by this term? Why do the authors call this the modern period, or modernity, or modernism? 117-118
2. How did changes in what it meant to be a human being (*homo autonomus*) contribute to the rise of the secular worldview? 118-120
3. What were Francis Bacon's views of science and how did his perspectives contribute to the rise of secularism? 120-122
4. What were Rene Descartes' views of science and how did his perspectives contribute to the rise of secularism? 122-124
5. What did those who contributed to the scientific revolution, especially Bacon and Descartes, hope to accomplish as a result of their scientific endeavors? In what sense was the scientific revolution a religious vision? 124-126
6. How did both Greek thought and Christian theology give birth to modern science? 126-128
7. How has humanity come to regard itself as "God" in the secular worldview? What is the outcome of this self-deification in biblical terms? 128-129
8. When you hear the word "secular" and its variations, what do you understand that term to mean? How would your view differ from the one we have just learned about from our book?

Questions for Chapter Nine: The Gods of Our Age

1. Is the modern secular world a religious age after all? Why and how do Walsh and Middleton use terms like gods, idolatry, ultimate fulfillment, polytheism,

deities, orthodoxy, secular religion, religious commitments, unholy trinity, etc to describe the modern world? 131-132.

2. In what way has *science* become an idol of modern worship? 132-133
3. In what way has *technology* as the source of power become an idol of modern worship? 133-136
4. In what way has *technology* as the source of profit become an idol of modern worship? 136-138
5. In what way has the *economy* with its goal of increasing affluence become the *chief* idol of modern worship? 138-139 (It's the economy, stupid!)
6. How is the modern worship of the gods of science, technology, and the economy as an unholy trinity a secular version of redemptive history? Have these gods succeeded or failed us? What does Canadian singer/song writer Bruce Cockburn have to say (or sing) about this? 139-140
7. How or in what way do Christians and the church participate in the worship of the idols of science, technology, and the economy? Read and comment on 1 John 5: 21.
8. Why has it been so very difficult for secular modernism to relinquish the idols of its worship? What is it about idolatry that makes it so hard to let them go? 140-141
9. How have the modern secular gods of science, technology and the economy failed to deliver what they promised? What have they delivered instead? 142-143. In what three specific ways has the *economic* god failed specifically? 144-146
10. Walsh and Middleton believe that the failures of the modern gods have resulted in a crisis of secularism as a worldview, and that a change of worldviews is coming. What worldview do our authors hope to see become more influential as a source of healing in our culture? Has that happened? (Remember, this book was written in 1984) 146

Questions for Chapter Ten: A Christian Cultural Response

1. Is there a "schizophrenia" in the way many evangelical Christians respond to the current cultural crisis by renouncing aspects of modern culture (say, abortion), but still embracing the idols of scientism, technicism, and economism? 149-150

2. If a Christian cultural vision is the healing response to the current breakdown in our world, why and how should it be a comprehensive vision?
3. What are the false ways, and what does it really mean to renounce the idols of scientism, technicism, and economism? 151-152
4. What does it mean that life as God has designed it is multi-dimensional? Given that this is true, what other aspects of life besides the scientific, the technological, and the economic ought to be considered when responding to various social and cultural issues? 153-155
5. What is normal? How might God's norms and normality differ from our culture's norms and normality? How do these two versions of normality differ in child birth, or in perhaps, eating meals? If people ignore ordering their lives by God's norms, and insist only on independent self-interest, what could be the political implications of this neglect? What are some of God's norms that we need to be attentive to, especially in the areas of economics and social justice? 155-159
6. What role should the Christian community, especially the church, play in sustaining a Christian cultural witness? How is worship central to Christian communal life? 159-161

Questions for Chapter Eleven: Worldview and Scholarship

1. Why do Walsh and Middleton believe that the college or university is such an important place where a Christian cultural witness needs to be developed? In what way is the university the theological seminary for the high priests of scientism? 163-166
2. Have someone read the section titled "A Christian Academic Witness" on pp. 166-167 out loud and discuss its contents. What are the important insights and applications from this important passage?
3. What is scientism and why must it be rejected if Christians students are to be developed? 167-169
4. Why isn't scholarship, teaching, and learning a neutral, objective process according to James Sire, Thomas Kuhn, and Arthur Holmes? 169-170 How are worldview, philosophy, and academic discipline all properly related according to Walsh and Middleton? 170-172 Is faith always integrated with learning? Why or why not? 172

