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Review: Lifeviews: Understanding the Ideas that Shape Society Today

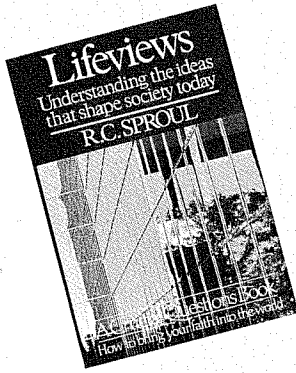
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LIFEVIEWS: UNDERSTANDING THE IDEAS THAT SHAPE SOCIETY TODAY
by R. C. Sproul

R. C. Sproul sounds a clarion call to the entire Christian community to fulfill its mission in the world today. "Our job is to make the invisible reign of Jesus visible," he declares. But then he goes on to admit: "I doubt if there has ever been a period in all of Christian history where so many Christians are so ineffec-

tual in shaping the culture in which they live as is true right now in the United States."

This poignant volume is written to help the reader understand our contemporary culture and how that culture affects Christianity. Thus, the author looks critically at secularism, existentialism, pragmatism, pluralism, and hedonism as the major shapers of American culture in our time. He observes that secularism and its cohorts are a post-Christian phenomenon in our society that have surfaced despite the presence of the church.

Sproul looks at each philosophical issue as it relates to our popular culture. He talks about the "me generation," and the "now generations." He examines the influence of television and movies on our cultural values. He takes

a hard look at the irrationality of "sentimental humanism" and the short-term solutions of self-serving pragmatism.

The second half of this book deals with the Christian's role in society. In this section, Sproul calls for a biblically based Christian response to the issues of economics, science, art, literature, and government.

Sproul's final chapter deals with the Christian's responsibility to and involvement in government. Here he argues that human government is a God-given institution and that the abdication of Christians from political and governmental responsibility is a total capitulation to evil. He observes that civil obedience is a religious obligation in Scripture, and he advocates Christian involvement at every level of the political and social process.

The importance of this book is its subject matter; its value is in its readability. Never before has a book on such a complex issue been written so simply. It informs, convicts, and challenges the reader at every turn of the page. Those who want to stick their heads in the sands of social tradition will be disturbed by this volume. Those who sense the blowing winds of social change, and who want to do something about it for the cause of Christ, will find real help in this powerful book. (Fleming H. Revell, 1986, 220 pp., \$13.95)

■ Ed Hindson

An excerpt from LIFEVIEWS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL AWARENESS

In all of life's situations we are to be His witnesses. Our job is to *make the invisible reign of Jesus visible*. The world is shrouded in darkness. Nothing is visible in the dark. No wonder then that we are called to be the light of the world. Every single one of us has a mission. We have all been sent to bear witness to Christ. That means simply that we are all missionaries . . .

Let's assume that we are missionaries to the United States. What is needed for our preparation? It's not enough simply to know the content of the Gospel. It is also important that we understand the society in which we are acting out our role as missionaries.

It would be a dreadful mistake for us to assume that our culture is a predominantly Christian one. Yet our



country doesn't deserve the term "pagan" either. Our country has been strongly influenced by Christianity and by Christian values. Some have suggested that we have been influenced in the same way people are "influenced" when they receive an inoculation to prevent a disease. They are given a small dose of the disease, just enough of it to be immune to the real thing. Perhaps that is what has happened in our American culture: just enough Christianity has penetrated our society to make us "immune" to the Gospel. ■

BOOKNOTES

PARENTS' RIGHTS
by John W. Whitehead

Parents have rights and so do children. Attorney John Whitehead sees the growing issue of children's rights as a pernicious and carefully planned attempt by many in government and public education to usurp parental power over children.

The family is put forth in this book as the one thread that binds civilized people together and as one of the primary contributions of early Christianity. Proper parenting skills are taught best by living