

“If Not Christianity, then What?”

High School Mid-Winter Retreat – Lake Springfield Christian Assembly - 2023

Event Webpage: <https://richknopp.com/retreat-lsca/>

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Intro:

- A. Big human questions; different “worldview” answers.
- B. **Colossians 2:8** “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” (ESV)
- C. If you ever walk away from Christ and the church, where are you going to go, and what are you going to get?

I. Secular Humanism (*Optimistic Atheism*)

- A. **Emphasis:** No God, but *optimistic* – based on **REASON** and **SCIENCE**.
- B. Symbol: **HAPPY FACE**.
- C. Object illustration: **LEGOS**
- D. Examples: Richard Dawkins; Neil deGrasse Tyson; Bill Nye the science guy.

II. Nihilism (*Pessimistic Atheism*)

- A. **Emphasis:** No God, and *pessimistic* – nothing matters.
- B. Symbol: **FROWNY FACE**.
- C. Object illustration: **TOILET**.
- D. Examples: Friedrich Nietzsche; “Bohemian Rhapsody”; senseless shootings; some suicides (Kurt Cobain).

III. Existentialism

- A. **Emphasis:** No God, but *optimistic* – based on **FEELINGS** and **FREEDOM**.
- B. Define yourself (Jean-Paul Sartre).
- C. Symbol: **FROWNY AND SMILEY FACE**.
- D. Object Illustration: **MR. POTATO HEAD**.
- E. Examples: Jean-Paul Sartre; Albert Camus; many teenagers.

IV. Postmodernism

- A. **Emphasis:** Truth totally depends on your **PERSPECTIVE**.
- B. Symbol: **TWO FACES** looking at each other.
- C. Object Illustration: **SUNGLASSES**.
- D. Examples: Jean-Francois Lyotard; *Matrix* movies; *Inception*; *WandaVision*.

V. Deism

- A. **Emphasis:** God creates but **DOES NOTHING** within the world.
- B. Symbol: **CLOSED Box** around a circle.
- C. Object Illustration: **GRANDFATHER CLOCK**.
- D. Examples: Thomas Jefferson; William Paine; American teens and their “moral therapeutic deism” (see Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*).

VI. New Age Pantheism

- A. **Emphasis:** Experience **ONENESS** with the universe (= God).
- B. Symbol: **CIRCLE in triangle**.
- C. Object Illustration: **YIN YANG**.
- D. Examples: Hinduism, Buddhism, Wicca, Star Wars; Deepak Chopra; *Lion King*; use of crystals, chants, yoga, and meditation.

VII. Biblical Christianity

- A. **Emphasis: CSI:** Personal **CREATOR**, loving **SAVIOR**, **INCARNATE** God.
- B. Symbol: **TRIANGLE PENETRATING CIRCLE**.
- C. Object Illustration: **HEART**.
- D. Biblical Christianity: Historic teachings of “THE faith” (Jude 1:3; 2 Cor. 13:5; Col. 1:15-23; 2:7; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 4:1-2; 6:12, 20-21)
- E. **VS. “Progressive Christianity”:** Reinterpret Scripture to adapt to modern beliefs and values. Warnings against: Matt. 7:15; 24:11; 2 Peter 2:1-2; Jude 1:4.

Reflections and Commitments

- A. **1 Peter 5:8** “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- B. **Commit to God’s Truth** (John 14:6).
- C. **Compare the options.**
- D. **Consult good Christian resources:**
 - 1. www.roomfordoubt.com/recommended-resources/.
 - 2. Rebecca McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask (and Answer) about Christianity*.
 - 3. Alisa Childers, *Live Your Truth and Other Lies*.
 - 4. Richard Knopp, *Truth About God: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* See www.richknopp.com/truth-about-god/. Six videos also available.
 - 5. Michael Kruger, *Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student on Keeping the Faith in College*.