

Dr. Francis Schaeffer, A Christian Manifesto, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, 1982
Clip #1

You must realize that when we speak of man being the measure of all things under the Humanist label, the first thing is that man has only knowledge from himself. That he, being finite, limited, very faulty in his observation of many things, yet nevertheless, has no possible source of knowledge except what man, beginning from himself, can find out from his own observation. Specifically, in this view, there is no place for any knowledge from God.

But it is not only that man must start from himself in the area of knowledge and learning, but any value system must come arbitrarily from man himself by arbitrary choice. More frightening still, in our country, at our own moment of history, is the fact that any basis of law then becomes arbitrary—merely certain people making decisions as to what is for the good of society at the given moment.

Now this is the real reason for the breakdown in morals in our country. It's the real reason for the breakdown in values in our country, and it is the reason that our Supreme Court now functions so thoroughly upon the fact of arbitrary law. They have no basis for law that is fixed, therefore, like the young person who decides to live hedonistically upon their own chosen arbitrary values, society is now doing the same thing legally. Certain few people come together and decide what they arbitrarily believe is for the good of society at the given moment, and that becomes law.

The world view that the final reality is only material or energy shaped by pure chance, inevitably, (that's the next word I would bring to you) mathematically -- with mathematical certainty -- brings forth all these other results which are in our country and in our society which have led to the breakdown in the country -- in society -- and which are its present sorrows. So, if you hold this other world view, you must realize that it is inevitable that we will come to the very sorrows of relativity and all these other things that are so represented in our country at this moment of history.

~~~~~DISCUSS~~~~~

Create two columns on the screen or board. Give one of them the heading "ARBITRARY" and the other the heading "FIXED." Schaeffer himself uses these exact words in his presentation. Ask participants to name synonyms for each word and list each one in the appropriate column. Here are some suggestions:

**Arbitrary:** subjective, random, erratic, unstable, inconsistent, unpredictable, haphazard, ungrounded, fluid.

**Fixed:** Stable, predictable, grounded, solid, unchanging, consistent, reliable, objective, stationary.

**Ask and Discuss:**

1. To what is Dr. Schaeffer referring when he speaks of that which is arbitrary and that which is fixed?
2. What are the consequences of arbitrary laws and arbitrary rule? **Add participants' responses to the other words in the ARBITRARY column.** These might include: tyranny, force, coercion, violation of God-given rights, totalitarianism.
3. **Emphasize** that the contrasts between arbitrary and fixed are analogous to the contrasts between sand that is used as a foundation and a foundation of bedrock. You may recall that Jesus talked about the differences between these two types of foundations, including the costs of choosing sand and the rewards of choosing bedrock, at the end of His sermon on the mount (see Matt. 7:24-27).
4. What are the results when a government recognizes God's fixed standards and laws? **Add participants' responses to the other words in the FIXED column.** These might include: freedom within appropriate limits (limits that protect the God-given rights of all), recognition of human worth, affirmation of human freedom to make choices, recognition of property rights and other unalienable rights, including the right to life, even for the vulnerable. **Explain: When a government recognizes God's fixed standards and laws, it affirms each of the themes we have studied as we have examined the principles on our ten item list: Ordered Liberty (principles 1 & 2), Human Dignity (principles 3 & 4), Individual Choice (principles 5 & 6), and Property Rights (principles 7 & 8). It also recognizes the Divine Guardrails we're discussing in this session (principles 9 & 10). In other words, it affirms the core principles of capitalism.** Further, it recognizes its failures when it applies these principles inconsistently and takes steps to correct those failures, as occurred in American history when the country engaged in a great civil war to end slavery and when it subsequently guaranteed civil rights regardless of race or ethnicity.
5. **Say:** What we have noted in item 3 is the very reason the Founders wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."