

Chp 1 Identifying the Powers

Wink's *Powers* are a part of God's good creation. Each have a spirit dimension and divine vocation.

"...spiritual reality is at the heart of everything, from photons to supernovas, from a Little League baseball team to Boeing Aircraft. [This book] sees spirit – the capacity to be aware of and responsive to God – at the core of every institution, every city, every nation, every corporation, every place of worship." p13

○ This thesis is foundational to what follows in this book. Do you embrace it, reject it, are you open to it?

WORLD VIEWS

"Understanding worldviews is key to breaking free from the ways the Powers control people's minds."

"A worldview ...dictates the way whole societies see the world. ... a picture of the nature of things... what is visible and invisible, what is real and unreal." p14

Biblical (Ancient) world view: Every material (earthly) reality has a spiritual (heavenly) dimension (and vice versa) conflict on earth = conflict in Heaven Every material reality has a spiritual dimension and vice versa

Spiritualist world view: (2nd cent CE) Heaven is good and perfect, earth (creation) is broken and fallen. Spirit is trapped in and corrupted by our bodies. Our goal is the "rescue our spirit from the flesh and these Powers..."

Materialist world view: (18th cent CE) there is no heaven, no spiritual world, no intrinsic meaning. "...people have to create values, purposes, and meanings for themselves" create right and wrong

Theological world view: heaven, the spiritual exists but cannot be known by the senses.

"Science tells us *how* the world was created, religion tells us *why*."

Wink complains "[One loses] a sense of the whole and the unity of heavenly and earthly aspects of existence. The earth reveals the glory of God, and scientists uncover God's majesty. Science and religion cannot be separated." p19

Integral world view: "... spirit at the core of every created thing. ...inextricably related to a physical manifestation" God is within me and within everything, everything a part of God.

○ Can you identify with one of these world views? More than one of them? Would you suggest alternatives?

In Chapter 10 we will return to these world views and consider what PRAYER means in each.

SPIRIT

Biblical writers identify spiritual realities as "...angels, demons, principalities and powers, Satan..." p23

"The Powers That Be are not... simply people and their institutions... They also include the spirituality at the core of those institutions and structures. **If we want to change those systems, we will have to address not only their outer forms, but their inner spirit as well.**" [my emphasis] p4

"There is nothing, from DNA to the United Nations, that does not have God at its core. Everything has a spiritual aspect. Everything is answerable to God." p5

"...the angel of an institution is not just the sum total of all that an institution is... ; it is also the bearer of that institution's divine vocation." p5

"...demons as the actual spirituality of systems and structures that have betrayed their divine vocations."

"... social change does not depend on casting out the demon, but recalling its angel to its divine task." p6

- What about responding to Racism by addressing both its physical reality and its spirit... its demon?

“Powers such as a lumberyard or a city government possess an outer, physical manifestation ... and an inner spirituality corporate culture, or collective personality.” p24

Wink engages in a lengthy defense of referring to the spiritual personality of an organization or community.

“As the soul of systems, the Powers in their spiritual aspect are everywhere around us. ... not whether we believe in them but whether we can learn to identify them...” p29

“When a particular Power becomes idolatrous... (when it pursues a vocation other than the one for which God created it and makes its own interests the highest good) then the Power becomes demonic.” p29

“The spiritual task is to unmask this idolatry and recall the Powers to their created purposes...” p29

- Wink says the Church, “ekklesia,” has a spiritual task of unmasking idolatry and recalling the Powers to their divine vocations. Even though the church is “as fallen and idolatrous as any other institution in society.” p29
What do you think of that?

Evil is not just personal but structural and spiritual. It is not simply the result of human actions, but the consequence of huge systems over which no individual has full control. Only by confronting the spirituality of an institution **and** its physical manifestations can the total structure be transformed. Any attempt to transform a social system without addressing both its **spirituality** and its **outer forms** is doomed to failure.” p31

TRANSFORMING THE POWERS

The spirit (angel) of a body is more than “the sum total of all it is”, it is also “what it ought to be” p30

According to the writings of Adam Smith; businesses exist to serve the general welfare not to make a profit. “[Businesses] belong to the God who ordains sufficiency for all.”

“The Powers are good.	(created by God)
The Powers are fallen.	(they put their own interests higher than God’s creation)
The Powers must be redeemed.”	(what has fallen can/must be redeemed)

Next week

A Domination System: when “... an entire network of Powers becomes integrated around idolatrous values”