WORLDVIEWS IN CONFLICT

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WORLDVIEWS

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Introduction

Comparative religion studies are the traditional means to compare and contrast the major world religions.

A worldview is defined as a conceptual scheme to interpret reality and to make judgments.

Criteria for any worldview:
1. Consistent
2. Believable
3. Reliable
4. Coherent
5. Simple
6. Livable

How to judge any worldview:
1. The world must be viewed as real, not an illusion.
2. The stated moral beliefs must be true.
3. There must be a believable answer for the problem of evil.
4. The mysteries of the world must be accepted.
5. Predictions and prophecies must come true.

Observations concerning worldviews:
1. Everyone has exactly one worldview.
2. No one can hold more than one worldview and remain consistent.
3. Not deciding on a worldview is a worldview.
4. Worldviews are based upon pre-suppositions which are either true or false.
5. People are committed to their own worldview.
6. Conversion from one worldview to another is difficult.

Any worldview must explain:
1. The fellowship between God and man.
2. The relationship of man to man based on human worth and virtue.
3. The relationship of man to the world where the curse is restrained by grace.

-Immanuel Kant coined the term “worldview” in 1790.

-The first use in the English world was in 1858.

-Worldviews structure the beliefs and behaviors of a people group.

-Worldviews are most often formed by one’s location and time.

Worldview declaration:
1. Proclaim the truth-evangelism.
2. Live the truth-discipleship.
3. Defend the truth-apologetics.
4. Instruct the truth-worldview.

Basic worldview questions are:
1. Where did I come from?
2. What is wrong with the world?
3. What can fix it?

Areas of inquiry are:
1. Creation
2. The Fall
3. Redemption

“It really is more natural to believe a preternatural story that deals with things we don’t understand, than a natural story that contradicts things we do understand.”

Father Brown Mysteries by G. K. Chesterton

Christian pre-suppositions:
1. World religions understand God as a judge.
   Christianity proclaims God to be our Father.

2. World religions offer teachers and prophets.
   Christianity offers Christ as Savior.

3. World religions offer works as a remedy for human sin.
   Christianity offers grace based upon Christ’s work.

4. World religions teach separation from unbelievers.
   Christianity teaches outreach to win unbelievers to belief in Christ.

5. World religions understand life as cyclical.
   Christianity understands life to be linear ending in eternity.

6. World religions expect humans to reach toward God.
   In Christianity God reaches out to humans.

Worldview and Religion Origin Timeline

THEISM:
- Christianity- 33 A.D.
- Judaism- 1800 B.C.
- Islam- 620 A.D.

Distinctives of theism regarding God:
1. There is one God-monotheism.
2. God is infinite.
3. God is personal.
4. God is transcendent and immanent.
5. God communicates moral absolutes.
6. Miracles are both possible and actual.
7. God is separate from but involved with the world.

Distinctives of theism regarding man:
1. Body and soul are immortal.
2. Man’s nature is morally depraved.
3. Man’s destiny is either heaven or hell.

The three religions of theism are Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

- The primary differences between the three are the authority of Jesus Christ as God, man, or prophet and the personal vs. impersonal nature of God.

Scriptural support of theism:

Creation is guided by Providence.

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,” Ephesians 1:11

Christianity

Distinctives of Christianity:
1. Christ died.
   - He is God.
   - He was Virgin born.
   - He is fully God and fully human.
   - He exists as one Person of the Trinity.
   - He was resurrected from death to everlasting life.

2. Christ died for our sins.
   - We have a fallen sin nature.
   - We all actively sin.
   - Sin is disbelieving God and disobeying His laws.
   - Christ paid the penalty for our sins.

3. Scripture in the original is the inerrant Word of God.
   - Scripture contains absolute truth.
Philosophical principles under Christianity:
1. The physical world is real, not an illusion.
2. Nature is good but it is not divine.
3. Nature is orderly and predictable.
4. Knowledge is gained by reason, observation, and experiment.
5. Order in nature is mathematically precise.
6. Science can discover causes from effects until the First Cause is reached.
7. God exists outside the natural order.
8. God is causally active in the natural order.
9. God is the necessary Being, nature is a contingent creation.
10. Moral law is based upon absolute standards.
11. The universe exhibits design.

Judaism

Distinctives of Judaism:
1. Belief in one God-Jehovah.
2. Obedience to the O.T. laws.
3. Promise of a future Messiah.

Distinctives of Judaism:
1. People are basically good.
2. Truth comes from the oral and the written law.
3. Salvation results from good works and moral ethical behavior.
4. The pursuit of social justice is emphasized.
5. Most Jews believe in an afterlife.
6. It is a religion with an unbroken history.

Seven branches of Judaism:
1. Secular-emphasis on cultural or national identity.
2. Kabbalah-emphasis on mysticism.
3. Reconstruction-emphasis on social work.
4. Reform-emphasis on liberal theology.
5. Conservative-emphasis on traditional culture and liberal theology.
6. Orthodox-emphasis on conservative theology
7. Hasidic-emphasis on ultra-conservative theology

Demographics of Judaism:
1. Descendants of Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
2. For much of its history, Judaism is exclusive and is based upon being a chosen people.
3. There are 15 million Jews in the world today.
4. Messianic Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah.

Islam

Distinctives of Islam:
1. Belief in one God-Allah.
2. Obedience to the Koran and Hadith.
4. Submission to the will of Allah is essential.
5. Salvation is based on works and obedience.
6. Sharia law regulates all of life.
7. Jihad is a key method of conversion or death.
8. Practice of Five Pillars of the Faith.
9. Rejection of Jesus deity, the resurrection, the Trinity, original sin, and the personal nature of God.

Demographics of Islam:
1. Descendants of Shem, Abraham, Ishmael, and Esau.
2. Began with the prophet Muhammad in 610 A.D.
3. There are 1.7 billion Muslims in the world today.

Worldview and Religion Origin Timeline

DEISM
- Christian Scientist- 1879
- Unitarian- 1784
- Scientology- 1952

Distinctives of deism regarding God:
1. There is one God-monotheism.
2. God is infinite.
3. God is impersonal.
4. God is transcendent but not immanent.
5. God communicates moral absolutes.
6. Miracles are possible in the past but not in the present.
7. God is separate from and not involved in the world.
8. God governs the universe only through the laws of nature.
9. God can only be known by man through human reason.

Distinctives of deism regarding man:
1. The body is mortal but the soul is immortal.
2. Man’s nature is subject to corruption but may be perfected in this life.
3. Man’s destiny is annihilation or reward.

What deism rejects:
1. Church dogma.
2. Religious belief based upon revelation.
3. Jesus deity.
4. The existence of evil.
5. Biblical inerrancy.
6. The observance of any sacrament.

Scriptural refutation of deism:

God is the First cause of the universe.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

Deism became a leading worldview in the 17th century in England and in the 18th century in America.

Leading deists include:
- Thomas Paine-The Age of Reason 1795.
- Thomas Hobbes-Leviathan 1651.
- Benjamin Franklin-Letter to Ezra Stiles 1790.
- Thomas Jefferson-The Jefferson Bible.

Three prominent religions holding deistic beliefs are Christian Scientist, Unitarian, and Scientology.

Christian Scientist

Distinctives of Christian Scientist belief:
1. God is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation (which is impersonal).
2. There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter.
3. Sin, sickness and death also do not exist.
4. Jesus is divine but not God.
5. The Holy Spirit is Divine Science.
7. Heaven and hell are states of mind.
8. Spiritual healing is preferred for disease.
9. Baptism is purification of all error.
10. Sacramental communion is spiritual in the Mind.
11. The Trinity consists of the three natures of God (not three Persons).
12. The Bible is accepted as authoritative based only upon the interpretation of Mrs. Eddy.
13. Body and soul are mortal and unreal but the spirit is immortal.
14. Sin and death are illusions.

Demographics of Christian Scientist:
1. Founded in 1879 in Boston by Mary Baker Eddy.
2. There are about 150,000 members in 2300 congregations in 60 countries.
3. Contemporary religious leaders influenced by these beliefs include: Norman Vincent Peale, Bishop Fulton Sheen, and Robert Schuller.


Unitarian

Distinctives of Unitarian belief:
1. God exists in one Person (not Three).
2. The Holy Spirit is not a Person.
3. Human reason and experience determines spiritual truth.
4. Jesus is the son of God as a man or prophet but not deity.
5. Human depravity and original sin do not exist.
6. The Bible is not inerrant and is subject to error due to human authorship.
7. There is no hell as all will receive rewards or punishments in the afterlife.
8. Man can choose to be good or evil.

Demographics of Unitarianism:
1. Migrated from England to Boston in 1784.
2. Membership in America is 150,000.
3. First religious leader in America was James Freeman.

Scientology

Distinctives of Scientology belief:
1. Life sources from a cosmic spiritual life force.
2. A person’s individual personal life force is continually reborn in new bodily persons.
3. The individual mind consists of two parts: an emotion store of painful experiences and an analytical store of rational consciousness.
4. Spiritual progress involves survival of pain and trauma.
5. Improvement is gained through counseling to rid a person of negative characteristics.
6. Levels of knowledge are learned based upon how much is paid monetarily to acquire the knowledge.
7. The beliefs incorporate karma and reincarnation from Hinduism, special knowledge limited to the few from Gnosticism, and psychological counseling methods.
8. Influential precursor persons to Scientology are Will Durant-history, Baruch Spinoza-philosophy, and Sigmund Freud-counseling.

Demographics of Scientology:
1. Founded in 1952 by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.
2. Successor to his self-help program called Dianetics.
3. There are about 25,000 members in America.

Practices of Scientology:
1. Members resist use of drugs for healing as harmful to the person.
2. Current members are paid a commission for recruiting new members.
3. Cutting off contact with anyone antagonistic toward Scientology.
4. Use of an e-meter to detect negative reactions to questions electrically.

Influential members: Tom Cruise, John Travolta, Juliette Lewis, Isaac Hayes, Kirstie Alley, Catherine Bell, Nancy Cartwright, Kelly Preston, Elisabeth Moss, Erika Christensen, Jason Lee, Anne Archer.

WORLDVIEW AND RELIGION ORIGIN TIMELINE

Pantheism
-Hinduism- 1500 B.C.
-Buddhism- 500 B.C.
-New Age (modern)- 1970
PANTHEISM

Distinctives of pantheism regarding God:
1. God is the unity of all gods.
2. God is infinite.
3. God is impersonal.
4. God is the world.
5. All morality is relative.
6. Miracles are not possible.
7. Matter is an illusion.
8. God is spirit which is reality.
9. God can only be experienced by mystical union.

Distinctives of pantheism regarding man:
1. The body is mortal but the soul is immortal.
2. Man’s nature is based on karma.
3. Man’s destiny is reincarnation and then nirvana.
4. Man’s soul is an extension of the universal soul.

Definitions in pantheism:
1. reincarnation- reborn into a new material body.
2. karma- reborn into a higher station based upon good moral choices in the preceding station.
3. nirvana- becoming one with the universe.
4. dharma- the universal law of the order of all things.
5. Avatar- God traveling to Earth to restore order.

What pantheism rejects:
1. Jesus deity.
2. The existence of evil.
3. All aspects of Christian beliefs and practices.

Scriptural refutation of pantheism:

Spiritual realities do exist and can be experienced.

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:24

Pantheism entered Western thought through the work of Baruch Spinoza entitled Ethics in 1675.

Pantheists support environmentalism, conservation of nature, divinity of the cosmos, and the threat of global warming.

Three religions holding pantheistic beliefs are: Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Age.

Hinduism

Distinctives of Hinduism belief:
1. There are two primary gods (Vishnu and Shiva) but there are 330 million other lesser gods.
2. God is in everything.
3. The purpose of life is union with the Brahmin.
4. The material world is temporary, unreal, and an illusion.
5. Hindu’s are born into castes.
   (1) priests
   (2) rulers and warriors
   (3) craftsmen and farmers
   (4) laborers and servants
   (5) outcasts
6. Reincarnation is the means of moving through temporal life toward infinite life.
7. Movement in the cycle of life is based upon the individual’s works, knowledge, and devotion.
9. Deeds (works) done in the person’s current life determine one’s status in the succeeding life. (This is one’s karma).
10. Each person is god in spirit.
11. Hinduism is an amalgamation of many religions.

What Hinduism affirms:
1. All suffering is an illusion.
2. Salvation is the release from the cycle of reincarnation.
3. God is an impersonal force.
4. There is no sin nature.
5. There is no evil.
6. Self-denial rituals are beneficial.
7. Meditation and recitation lead to enlightenment.
8. The sanctity of plant, animal, and human life which incorporates an individual’s soul.
9. Second chances in the cycle of life are unlimited.

Demographics of Hinduism:
1. There are 900 million Hindu’s.
2. Hare Krishna is a branch of Hinduism which focuses upon chanting and has 1.25 million followers.
3. Hinduism dominates the Indian sub-continent.
4. Related systems include: Spiritualism, Eastern Mysticism, Transcendentalism, and New Age.

Influential followers are: Aldous Huxley, the Beatles, Gandhi, J.D. Salinger, Ben Kingsley, Deepak Chopra, and M. Night Shyamalan.

Buddhism

Distinctives of Buddhism:
1. There is no god.
2. All life shares a common essence.
3. The purpose in life is to reach nirvana.
4. The world is real and suffering is part of it.
5. Karma and reincarnation are the step-by-step goals in life.
6. It is spiritualistic and pantheistic.

Distinctives of Buddhist belief:
The four noble truths:
(1) All creaturely existence is marked by pain, an agonized bondage to the meaningless cycle of rebirths.
(2) The cause of this agony is ignorance of the illusory nature of existence.
(3) The removal of ignorance and desire for phenomenal life will break the causal sequence and so precipitate final salvation.
(4) For this purpose the proper Yoga is the “eightfold path,” an integral combination of ethics and meditation. This leads to the attainment of wisdom, to enlightenment, and to nirvana; the final release from the incarnational cycle.

Distinctives of Buddhist belief:
The eight fold path:
1. Right View (Understanding)
2. Right Intention (Thought)
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration.

Beliefs which separate Buddhism from Hinduism:
1. Hindu literature does not lead to salvation.
2. Man’s soul is not connected to a universal soul.
3. Rejection of the caste system.
4. Rejection of the priesthood system.
5. Rejection of the Hindu gods.

Demographics of Buddhism:
1. There are 300 million followers.
2. It was founded about 500 B.C.
3. The founder was Sidhārtha Gautama.
4. He is known as the Buddha (one who has reached enlightenment).
5. Buddhism began in Nepal but spread to India, Myanmar, China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Tibet, Taiwan, and South Korea.
6. Zen Buddhism is an offshoot.

Influential followers:
Steven Seagal, Kate Bosworth, Richard Gere,
Tina Turner, Orlando Bloom, Tiger Woods, Jackie Chan, Penelope Cruz, Kate Hudson, Steve Jobs, George Lucas, Oliver Stone, Sharon Stone, and Naomi Watts.

New Age

Distinctives of New Age belief:
1. God is in all things and all things are God.
2. God and the universe are one.
3. God is necessarily impersonal.
4. God can only be experienced by mystical union.
5. Evil is not real.
6. All life and history is cyclical.
7. Truth is unknowable.
8. All religions lead to God, salvation, and heaven.
9. All of life is a forward progressive reincarnation.
10. The universe is a life force.
11. All morality is relative.

Similarities of New Age with other beliefs:
1. It is pantheistic.
2. It incorporates spiritualism.
   - All religions are of human origin.
   - All religions are the same.
   - All religions are true.
   - All religions are beneficial.
3. It supports religious pluralism.
4. It is compatible with post modernism.
5. It includes the holistic health movement.
6. It is monistic (all is one).
7. It is polytheistic (all is god).
8. It is universalistic (all claims to truth are true).
9. It has roots in Theosophy originated by Madame Blavatsky and Alice Bailey.

What New Age belief denies:
1. A Supreme Being.
   “You made us for Yourself, and our hearts find no peace until they rest in You.” Augustine
2. Christ’s deity.
   “To be always relevant, you have to believe things which are eternal.” D.A. Carson
   “If there is no God, then everything is permitted.” Fyodor Dostoyevsky Brothers Karamazov
4. Objective truth.
   “Every human being is incurably religious.” John Calvin
5. Original sin.
   “The goal of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents.” John Milton
6. Existence of a real heaven or hell.
   “Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” John Donne

Demographics Of New Age belief:
2. Political aspirations are: one world leader, one world government, one world religion.
3. Social aspirations are: environmentalism, vegetarianism, nuclear free, combat global warming, non-fossil energy, animal rights, and population control.
4. Economic aspirations are: end depletion of natural resources, end capitalism, and redistribution of wealth.

Influential followers: Brad Pitt, Shirley MacLaine, Oprah Winfrey, and Demi Moore.

WORLDVIEW AND RELIGION ORIGIN TIMELINE

Naturalism
- Atheism (modern)- 1566
- Nihilism- 1800
Distinctives of naturalism concerning God and nature:
1. There is no God.
2. Morals are situational and relative.
3. Miracles are an impossibility.
4. Nothing exists outside of the material, mechanical natural order.
5. Matter is eternal.
6. The universe developed into order by a blind, timeless random process.
7. Nature has always existed.
8. The natural order is regular and uniform.
11. Science is the only source of truth.
12. Life has no purpose.
13. The universe has no purpose.
14. The universe (cosmos) is eternal and infinite.

Distinctives of naturalism concerning man:
1. The body is mortal but the soul is non-existent.
2. Man has a good nature.
3. Man has no destiny beyond this life.
4. Man has no free will and has no power of independent action.
5. Man is progressing in society.

What naturalism denies:
1. Jesus deity.
2. Religion is only subjective opinion.
3. There is no heaven or hell.
4. There is no original sin.
5. There is no need for salvation.
6. The existence of any concept of spirit.

Scriptural refutation of naturalism:

Matter operates by design and in a fixed pattern.

“The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the
Wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.” Eccl. 1:5-7

History of naturalism:
- It is a philosophy that denies a Creator with a purpose and substitutes a material creation without purpose.
- It has earliest roots in the Greek philosopher Thales.
- In the modern era naturalism formed the themes of the literature of: Edith Wharton, Emile Zola, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London.
- Famous scientists include: John James Audubon, Charles Darwin, Stephen Jay Gould, Dian Fossey, Jane Goodall, Rachel Carson, and Carl Sagan.

The six worldviews which hold naturalism beliefs are: atheism, nihilism, Marxism, Darwinism, existentialism, and secular humanism.

Atheism

Distinctives of atheism:
1. There is no God.
2. Belief in God is a human invention.
3. There is not enough evidence to prove the existence of God.
4. There is no devil.
5. There is no supernatural realm.
6. There are no miracles.
7. There is no sin.
8. Ethics are situational and morals are relative
9. Evolution is a scientific fact.
10. The universe is materialistic and measurable.

Scriptural refutation of atheism:

“To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.” Jude 25

“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Psalm 14:1

Refutation of atheism:
1. God makes sense of the origin of the universe.
(1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
(2) The universe began to exist.
(3) Therefore, the universe has a cause.

2. God makes sense of the fine tuning of the universe to sustain intelligent life.
   (1) The fine tuning of the universe is due to either law, chance, or design.
   (2) It is not due to law or chance.
   (3) Therefore, it is due to design.

3. God makes sense of objective moral values in the world.
   (1) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
   (2) Objective moral values do exist.
   (3) Therefore, God exists.

4. God makes sense of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
   (1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ to life is based on established facts.
   (2) The belief that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead is the best explanation of these facts.
   (3) Therefore, Jesus was resurrected to life.

5. God can be immediately known and experienced.
   (1) Man seeks fellowship.
   (2) God is benevolent and personal.
   (3) Therefore, man can know and experience God.

The Problem of Evil.
If God exists why does He allow evil in the world?
1. God created an orderly universe subject to natural laws.
2. God is good, benevolent, and personal.
3. God created man with free will and moral freedom.

The Problem of Evil.
If God exists why does He allow evil in the world?
4. Man chose to disobey God causing evil in the world.
5. God’s purpose was to fellowship with man and for man to glorify Him.
6. God has provided a way to fellowship and glory through Jesus Christ.

“God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil at all. “ Augustine

Modern defenders of atheism include: Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, and Sam Harris.

Demographics of atheism:
1. There are 1.1 billion atheists in the world.
2. There are 2.4 million atheists in America.
Influential past atheists: David Hume, Voltaire, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Bertrand Russell, Mark Twain, Sigmund Freud, Katherine Hepburn, George Carlin, and Madalyn Murray O’Hair.

Influential current atheists: George Clooney, Natalie Portman, Bruce Willis, Stephen Hawking, Woody Allen, Bill Maher, and Jodie Foster.

Movies depicting belief in atheism:

Nihilism

Distinctives of nihilism:
1. There is no God.
2. Life is meaningless.
3. Moral values do not exist.
4. Knowledge is not possible.
5. Reality does not exist.
6. There are no norms, rules, or laws to be obeyed.
7. There is no right or wrong.
8. There is no difference between good and evil.
9. Meaning is based on one’s perspective.
10. Truth is created by man.

Outcomes of nihilism:
1. God is dead therefore anything is permissible.
2. The “will to nothingness.”
3. The “will to power.”
5. Devaluation and emptiness in art, literature (Anton Chekhov), music (Shostakovich), and heavy metal music (Marilyn Manson).
6. “Might makes right.”
7. Terror and destruction are permitted to achieve one’s goals.
8. Rejection of authority of the family, church, and state.
9. Recommends the creation of a race of Supermen elite.
10. Recommends eugenics for the defective.
11. Recommends euthanasia for the aged and infirm.
Demographics of nihilism:
1. Originated about 1800.
2. A product of Russian and German thinking.

A student was asked whether ignorance or apathy was worse, answered, “I don’t know and I don’t care.”

Scriptural refutation of nihilism:

“And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.” Acts 10:42

Early influential nihilists: Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Martin Heidegger.


Marxism

Distinctives of Marxism:
1. There is no God.
2. The mind is a function of matter only.
3. Consciousness is determined by life experiences.
4. Revolution is the means to transform society.
5. Capitalism helps the bourgeois (middle class) to suppress the proletariat (working class).
6. Ideologies are the product of materialism and social relations.
7. Abolish all private property.
8. Dialectic materialism is the only normative way of conceiving reality.
9. A class struggle is needed to change society for the benefit of all.
10. The belief that religion is the opiate of the people.

“Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless circumstances.” Karl Marx

“What was taken from the East by force (truth, individual freedom, and moral law) is being rejected in the West by its own free will.” Alexander Solzhenitsyn
What Marxism denies:
1. The existence of God.
2. Christ’s deity.
3. The value of capitalism.
4. The value of democracy.
5. The importance of the individual above the state.
6. The value of any religion.
7. Freedom of religion, the press, and assembly.

Marxism is based on: Darwinism, Materialism, Atheism, Totalitarianism, Socialism, and Communism.


G.F.W. Hegel’s dialectic:


For example: If (A) my idea of freedom conflicts with (B) your idea of freedom then (C) neither of us can be free until everyone agrees to be a slave.

The Soviet Union was based on the Hegelian dialectic, as is all Marxist writing.

J.J. Rousseau’s Social Contract:

“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.”

-Human nature is good in its natural state but people are corrupted by society.

-Individuals surrender some of their freedom to live secure under the state.

Marxism

Outcomes of Marxism: The Russian Revolution, The Chinese Revolution, the Cold War, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, etc.


Recent influential Marxists: Bill Ayers and Dashiell Hammett.
Darwinism

Distinctives of Darwinism:
1. There is no God.
2. Jesus is not deity.
3. Life originated in eternal matter.
4. Life evolves from protein to cells, to animals, to humans.
5. Life survives based upon natural selection, survival of the fittest, random chance, and natural laws.
6. The scientific method is the route to all truth.
7. The scientific method consists of observation and experience.
8. There is no free will.
9. There is no afterlife.
10. There is no purpose to life.

“We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man with all his noble qualities...still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin.” Charles R. Darwin

“Man is the measure of all things.” Protagoras

“It is only fishes who survive the Deluge.” Antony of Padua

Refutation of Darwinism:
- Evidence of the evolution of a new species with intermediate stages has never been found.

- “And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:11-12

- “So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:21

- “And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds,
and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”

Genesis 1:24-25

Outcomes of Darwinism: support for racism, colonialism, eugenics, and exploitation of industrial workers.

Darwinism is based on: atheism, naturalism, moral relativism, and materialism.


Movies that depict Darwin’s evolution theory:
Tron, Planet of the Apes, Xmen, Jurassic Park, Star Trek, The Lazarus Experiment, Creature from the Black Lagoon, Noah, and The Blob.

Existentialism

Distinctives of existentialism belief:
1. Chance over destiny.
2. Freedom over rules.
3. Experience over reason.
4. Despair is a way of life.
5. There is no meaning or purpose to life.
6. Everyone creates his own meaning (relativism).
7. Existence precedes essence.
8. The past does not determine the future.
9. There is no reality.
10. There is no self.
11. The individual has free will to make decisions that cause meaning for himself.

“These devils always try to make us helpless by making us hopeless.” Father Brown Mysteries by G.K. Chesterton

“The world is all there is, our existence is all we have.” Jean-Paul Sartre

"Anxiety, or the sense of anguish, a generalized uneasiness, a fear or dread which is not directed to any specific object. Anguish is the dread of the nothingness of human existence."-Soren Kierkegaard

Scriptural refutation:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”
Deuteronomy 6:4
Influential existentialist authors: Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Bertrand Russell, Jacques Monad, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and, Ernest Hemingway.


Secular Humanism

Distinctives of secular humanism:
1. It relies upon reason and observation to determine truth.
2. It is worldly.
3. It is man centered.
4. It is focused on the betterment of the human condition.
5. Religion is outdated, irrelevant, and harmful to society.
6. Humans are perfectible.
7. Man is self-sufficient.
8. All truth is relative.
9. There are no moral absolutes.
10. Ethical norms depend upon the situation.

What secular humanism denies:
1. The existence of God.
2. The immortality of the soul.
3. The sin nature and the consequences of heaven and hell.

The Humanist Manifesto I (1933):
FIRST: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.
SECOND: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process.
THIRD: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.
FOURTH: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded by that culture.
FIFTH: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relations to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

SIXTH: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought".

SEVENTH: Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation--all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

EIGHTH: Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

NINTH: In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

TENTH: It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

ELEVENTH: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

TWELFTH: Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

THIRTEENTH: Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.
FOURTEENTH: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

FIFTEENTH AND LAST: We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.


Famous Hollywood secular humanists: Norman Lear, Charles Schulz, Rod Serling, Peter Ustinov, and Gore Vidal.

Consequences of human law not reflecting the moral order created by God:
The loss of moral authority in the law:
1. Removes restraints on individual behavior.
2. Means the government is reduced to utilitarian procedures.
3. Forfeits the rule of law to arbitrary human rule.
4. Means moral debate is disallowed.

WORLDVIEW AND RELIGION ORIGIN TIMELINE

Pluralistic relativism
- Modernism- 1884
- Postmodernism- 1968

PLURALISTIC RELATIVISM

Distinctives of pluralistic relativism:
1. No religion can claim superiority over any other.
2. Salvation may be by other means than Christ.
3. Religious tolerance of any non-exclusive idea is promoted.
4. There is no objective truth.
5. Eventually all humans will be saved (universalism).
6. All religions are created equal.
7. Enhanced self-esteem is a sought after goal.
8. Every issue becomes a win-lose proposition.
9. Justice is based on equal results rather than equal opportunity.
10. Religious exclusivists are perceived as arrogant and contradictory.

All roads lead to heaven.

Outcomes of pluralistic relativism:
1. Pluralism decentralizes segments of society into people groups.
2. The loss of reason is a by-product.
3. Religion is denied a voice in the public arena.

“There are many angles at which you can fall, but only one angle at which you can stand straight.” G.K. Chesterton

“He who marries the spirit of the age soon becomes a widower.” D.A. Carson

Refutation of pluralistic relativism:
1. Ideas have an expiration date on thrills, only the glory of a Person (Christ) is inexhaustible.
2. Removing a virtuous worldview will always be replaced by an unvirtuous worldview.
3. Society has been led to believe that one need not feel guilty when wrong is committed.
4. When a nation becomes gullible, it cannot discern objective truth nor right from wrong.
5. Universal truth is not based upon personal experience.

Paul’s apologetic of the Christian gospel from Acts:

- His audience has no OT background.
- He pointed out the many idols (worldviews) 17:16.
- He is courteous 17:22.
- He appeals to their interests (unknown god) 17:23.
- He denotes two prevalent philosophies (worldviews) 17:18.
- He defines God as sovereign and transcendent from the universe 17:24.
- He notes God's providential rule 17:25.
- He links the human race to God 17:26.
- He describes humanity's purpose is to pursue God 17:27.
- He declares God as judge of a fallen race 17:29-30.
- He describes history as linear flowing toward a purpose 17:31.
- His solution is a resurrected Christ 17:32.

Influential pluralists and relativists: Aristotle, Montaigne, James Madison, Alexis de Tocqueville, Harold Laski, Edmund Burke, Isaiah Berlin, Adam Smith, and David Hume.

Movies depicting pluralistic relativism: Dead Poet’s Society, Toy Story, Titanic, and Pleasantville.

Modernism

Distinctives of modernism:
1. It focuses upon the individual to improve human life through science, technology, and experimentation.
2. Areas of improvement are art, music, literature, and architecture.
3. Society can be made better.
4. Reason is the basis for understanding and advancement.
5. Human beings are self-perfectible.
6. It followed the Enlightenment which produced societal change in America in 1776 and France in 1789.
7. It seeks to be free of the church, the monarchies, and the aristocracies in society.
8. Favorite terms include change, reform, progress, and transform.
9. It leads to secular humanism and atheism.
10. The Russian Revolution (1917), World Wars I & II challenged the lack of success in human social advancement and societal betterment.
11. It is optimistic and utopian.

“The definition of an optimist- Someone who tells you to cheer up when things are going his way.” Edward R. Murrow

“All utopian illusions to a perfect society are based on denying original sin.” Chuck Colson

Expressionism

Refused direct representation of reality.

Favors expressing an inner vision, emotion, or spiritual reality.

The Scream by Edvard Munch evokes a whole realm of spiritual agony.

Surrealism

Aim to bring a fuller awareness of human experience—both conscious and unconscious states.

Modernism


Postmodernism

Distinctives of postmodernism:
1. Truth is relative.
2. No religion is universally valid.
3. Religious exclusivity claims are considered to be intolerance.
4. There is no God.
5. Moral standards are conditioned by a given society.
6. Beliefs are conditioned by one’s culture.
7. Each person creates his own reality.
8. All beliefs are equal.

Methods of postmodernism:
1. Uses literary criticism.
2. Focuses on political and social justice.
3. Uses deconstruction to determine meaning based on linguistic differences.
4. Reason is not a final determinant of right and wrong.
5. Practice political correctness.

Results of postmodernism beliefs and methods:
- In government, American exceptionalism is rejected.
- In law, the dominant ideology of the courts is pragmatism, social justice, non-discrimination, political activism, cultural change, and political correctness.

Results of postmodernism beliefs and methods:
- In education, replace the Eurocentric, male dominated culture with multiculturalism, ridicule Christianity, replace learning with outcomes based results, replace morals and ethics with values clarification training, universities are radicalized, and use quotas to improve admission numbers by less qualified students in higher education.

Results of postmodernism beliefs and methods:
- In economics, greed is an unacknowledged virtue, class warfare and gender warfare is used to create equality of results, and socialism is a fair and viable system replacing the defects in capitalism.

Results of postmodernism beliefs and methods:
- In politics, all issues are a win/lose proposition while refusing to compromise, moral authority derives from the consent of the consenters, learn to be crowd pleasers, appeal to public opinion and wants, spread an addiction to the concepts of choice and change, distrust all authority, deny individual freedom, move away from self-government, and use identity politics to advance the interests of a specific group based upon victimization claims.

Results of postmodernism beliefs and methods:
- In morality, biology does not determine gender, choice does, traditional family and marriage institutions are rejected, push a feminist agenda, rewrite history to emphasize victimhood of past oppressions, and the person in a debate who speaks longest and loudest wins.

Compatible movements with postmodernism:
- The environmental movement.
- The animal rights movement.
- The global warming movement.
- The abortion rights movement.
- The population control movement.
- The feminist movement.
- The cultural diversity movement.
- The globalization movement.

Targets of postmodernism:
- Racism.
- Sexism.
- Materialism.
- Determinism.
- Capitalism.
- Imperialism.
- Colonialism.
- Traditionalism.
- Homophobia.

New concepts as a result of postmodernism:
- Open borders.
- Rights and entitlements.
- Group think.
- Blame America first.
- Sensitivity training.
- Anger management.
- Expert opinion (information, pundits, consultants, and therapists).
- Competition in academics and athletics is judgmental and unfair.
- Admitting guilt is denied.

Trends in the postmodern church:
- Cater to what secular people like.
- Change the name of the church.
- Discontinue use of Biblical terms.
- Preach feel good messages.
- Focus on growth over salvation.
- Offer therapy.
- Teach health and wealth prosperity.
- Teach Christ only as an example.
- Teach heaven is open to all and never mention hell.

“To be wise is to know reality and then accommodate yourself to it.” Alvin Plantinga

“Gratitude is the mother of all virtues.” G.K. Chesterton

Scriptural refutation of postmodernism:

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and
he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ. I Corinthians 2:13-16

“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”” Matthew 22:37

“…but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,” I Peter 3:15

Influential postmodernists: Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, Tim Keller, Rick Warren, and Brian MacLaren.