

## Technology Junkies

“I suspect that most of the individuals who have religious faith are content with blind faith. They feel no obligation to understand what they believe. They may even wish not to have their beliefs disturbed by thought. But if God in whom they believe created them with intellectual and rational powers that impose upon them the duty to try to understand the creed of their religion. Not to do so is to verge on superstition.”<sup>1</sup>

The importance of knowing, defining, and dissecting worldviews in our electronic age is more important today than ever. The internet brings a myriad of religious and political opinions right into our living rooms daily. What we were able to confront, and if one so desired, to stop at their doorstep, is now with a touch of a button in our living rooms, children’s bedrooms, our cell phones, and the like, routing the old *filter* of that doorstep. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, all these words have entered our vocabulary in less than a decade and they offer a plethora of chances to encounter the world as never before.

My children’s interaction with some of these issues as well as interaction with skeptics prompted me to explain what a worldview is in a more in-depth manner and how to begin to dissect other worldviews. For those who do not know, MySpace and Face Book offers a place for people of all ages to interact with friends, make new friends, or simply engage others via the internet. Kids to adults set up a “page,” give biographical info, have the option to blog,<sup>2</sup> or merely leave friendly “hellos” on fellow MySpacer’s pages in the comment section. If a friend moves to another state, it is a more personable way to stay in touch with them rather than a *plain ol’ e-mail*. They offer venues for bands, organizations, and political figures to reach a new and upcoming generation of people.

Even our Government has recently taken an interest in the site Twitter. Twitter is an internet site where people can - from their cell phones - post short comments. The importance of such a site came to fruition during what has become known as the “2009 Iranian Revolution.” *Time* magazine marks the importance of this event in an article entitled “Iran Protests: Twitter, the Medium of the Movement:”

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<sup>1</sup> Morimer J. Adler, “A Philosopher’s Religious Faith,” in, Kelly James Clark, ed., *Philosophers Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of 11 Leading Thinkers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 207; Dr. Adler (1902-2001). He was Chairman and Cofounder with Max Weismann of the Center for the Study of The Great Ideas and Editor in Chief of its journal *Philosophy is Everybody’s Business*, Founder and Director of the Institute for Philosophical Research, Chairman of the Board of Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Editor in Chief of the *Great Books of the Western World* and *The Syntopicon: An Index to the Great Ideas*, Editor of *The Great Ideas Today* (all published by Encyclopedia Britannica), Co-Founder and Honorary Trustee of The Aspen Institute, past Instructor at Columbia University, Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago (1930-52).

<sup>2</sup> Almost like writing your own news column on whatever topic you wish.

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The U.S. State Department doesn't usually take an interest in the maintenance schedules of dotcom start-ups. But over the weekend, officials there reached out to Twitter and asked them to delay a network upgrade that was scheduled for Monday night. The reason? To protect the interests of Iranians using the service to protest the presidential election that took place on June 12. Twitter moved the upgrade to 2 p.m. P.T. Tuesday afternoon — or 1:30 a.m. Tehran time....

Twitter didn't start the protests in Iran, nor did it make them possible. But there's no question that it has emboldened the protesters, reinforced their conviction that they are not alone and engaged populations outside Iran in an emotional, immediate way that was never possible before. President Ahmadinejad — who happened to visit Russia on Tuesday — now finds himself in a court of world opinion where even Khrushchev never had to stand trial. Totalitarian governments rule by brute force, and because they control the consensus worldview of those they rule. ***Tyranny, in other words, is a monologue. But as long as Twitter is up and running, there's no such thing.***<sup>3</sup>



The importance of such venues should be apparent. These sites are not intended to be religiously or politically based, however, religious and political zeitgeists<sup>4</sup> are challenged by such sites. These religious and political views are debated and contrasted often in these sites. The two seem almost inseparable, that is, religion and politics. This is mainly due to the fact that one's religious convictions can often drive a person's outlook on life. As it should. In fact, the creation and passage

of the Northwest Ordinance<sup>5</sup> is one of the many proofs that religious philosophy, especially in America, is ingrained in the discussion of politics. For instance, one passage from the Northwest Ordinance reads as follows:

<sup>3</sup> Lev Grossman (Wednesday Jun. 17, 2009), article found online at: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1905125,00.html> (last accessed 8-7-09). *Time's* main website is: <http://www.time.com/time/> (emphasis added)

<sup>4</sup> *Zeitgeist* - "The spirit of the times.... The term was used by German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) to refer to a type of supra-individual mind at work in the world and manifest in the cultural worldview (see WELTANSCHAUUNG) that pervades the ideas, attitudes, and feelings of a particular society in a specific historical period. Used in this way, the term has a distinctly deterministic flavor. A *Zeitgeist* theory of history stresses the role of such situational factors as economics, technology, and social influences in contrast to the PERSONALISTIC APPROACH to history." *APA Dictionary of Psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007), cf., *zeitgeist*, 1010.

<sup>5</sup> The Northwest Ordinance is considered one of the four fundamental "laws" of our country's founding, the other three are the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution -- David Barton, *Original Intent: The Courts, the Constitution, & Religion*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Aledo, TX: Wallbuilders Press, 2004), 439 (note #72).

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Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.<sup>6</sup>

This Ordinance was used as a basis for many of the state constitutions that followed the founding of our nation. Ohio used it for example as a template for their constitution to express the importance of education as a means to encourage “religion” and its importance to both mankind and government:

Religion, morality, and knowledge being essentially necessary to the good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of instruction shall forever be encouraged by legislative provision.<sup>7</sup>



One should keep in mind after reading these early state constitutions that the same producers of the them and the Northwest Ordinance were also the authors of the First Amendment – the supposed separation of church and state *thingy*. You see, one cannot just take the Constitution as a secular document unless they forego the historical weight of the other three<sup>8</sup> *fundamental laws* (already mentioned), state constitutions, the Founders own writings, and the like. One would not be able to discuss these early documents without discussing religion, likewise, one cannot seem to discuss religious concepts without interjecting political science<sup>9</sup> into the conversation. The two do indeed seem inseparable and driven ultimately by a worldview. Worldviews that come into our home now daily mind you.

A poignant example of this comes from the Bolshevik Revolution. While this was an atheistic movement with a view of religion as “the opiate of the masses” used by a few powerful people to control said “masses,” the Soviets themselves tried to use religion to “control the masses.” One early attempt by the Bolshevik Revolution to take over the spiritual was through the *Renovated Church* (also known as the

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote #5.

<sup>9</sup> *Political Science* - “The study of the processes, principles, and structure of government and of political institutions,” *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed.* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), cf. political science, 1358.

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*Living Church Movement*<sup>10</sup>) which was meant to reinterpret the teachings of Christ and the Apostles towards a Soviet end. During one of the short-lived attempts here by the Soviets we find this official “statement of faith:”

- (a) The Soviet power does not appear as a persecutor of the Church.
- (b) The Constitution of the Soviet state provides full religious liberty.
- (c) Church people must not see in the Soviet state a power of the anti-Christ.
- (d) The Soviet power is the only one which tempts by state methods to realize the ideals of the Kingdom of God.
- (e) Capitalism is the “great lie” and a “mortal sin.”
- (f) The Soviet government is the world leader toward fraternity, equality, and international peace.<sup>11</sup>

My point here is that even the most “secular state”<sup>12</sup> known in modern history tried actively to *use* religion to control political outcomes. Again, my point is the two seem inseparable. From the ancient Egyptian and Grecian days until our own, religion is a powerful *social force*. People realize this often times without necessarily realizing this -- if that makes sense. Now... understanding that this book is an intertwining of the *two taboos* and that this work isn’t merely a “religious” apologetic.<sup>13</sup> Far from it. It would better be viewed as a religio-political apologetic or commentary, meaning: *that a theistic (i.e., Judeo-Christian-Western) view of nature is assumed which itself incorporates an understanding of Natural Law*<sup>14</sup> *as a force that must be “reckoned with” when one approaches religious or political questions*. This book should be viewed more properly as a polemic<sup>15</sup> for the conservative evangelical view of current affairs.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> A great short history of this movement can be found at the online here: Edward E Roslof, “Living Church Movement,” *Encyclopedia of Russian History*, The Gale Group Inc. 2004. *Encyclopedia.com*: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3404100764.html> (last accessed, 8-7-09)

<sup>11</sup> Edgar C. Bundy, *How the Communists Use Religion* (Wheaton, IL: Church League of America, 1966), 12.

- (I will put this caveat here; however, it applies to the whole: I will quote authors with whom I do not necessarily agree with. I often quote authors that are: atheists, pagans, fellow Christians, politicians, homosexuals, evolutionists, and the like... merely because I quote an author, this quotation does not mean that I support their work as a whole.)

<sup>12</sup> I view atheism as a religious movement in that it makes grand metaphysical claims about God, the universe, and man’s relation to God and the universe.

<sup>13</sup> *Apologetic* - “a formal defense.” *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., cf. apologetic, 84; “From the Greek word *apologia* (‘to provide a defense,’ as in 1 Peter 3:15), apologetics is the art of defending a claim against objections. As applied to Christian belief, it involves a defense of the central truths of Christianity (e.g., existence of God, the deity of Jesus, the reliability of the Bible, the resurrection).” Kelly James Clark, Richard Lints and James K.A. Smith, eds., *101 Key Terms in Philosophy and Their Importance for Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004) cf. apologetics, 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Natural Law* – “a philosophical system of legal and moral principles purportedly deriving from a universalized conception of human nature or divine justice rather than from legislative or judicial action; moral law embodied in principles of right and wrong.” Brian A. Garner, ed., *Black’s Law Dictionary*, 7th ed. (St. Paul, MN: West Group, 1999), 1049.

<sup>15</sup> *Polemic* – “1. A controversial argument, especially one refuting or attacking a specific opinion or doctrine. 2. A person engaged in or inclined to controversy, argument, or refutation.” *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., cf. polemic, 1357.

<sup>16</sup> Much of my own thinking on Natural Law and the theistic worldview come from persons or from works by:

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This *polemic* examines how a conservative religious person may respond to some of the questions – honestly asked – bombarding us almost daily from friends, co-workers, family, or the media (in all its manifestations). I say “honestly asked” because often times people just ask questions to purposefully deflect their own understanding of the topic. Once you give a reasonably well thought out answer, the dishonest interviewer typically will not inculcate this response and consider changing his or her mind based on the new evidence you just gave them, they typically respond with another question. The problem is not with the topic or evidence that is being discussed, the problem might well be that the person in question just doesn’t want to re-think their position, no matter how much evidence he or she finds or is presented with. Let me explain with an example from the book, *Classical Apologetics*:

### Psychological Prejudice

But even a sound *epistemic system*,<sup>17</sup> flawless deductive reasoning, and impeccable inductive procedure does not guarantee a proper conclusion. Emotional bias or antipathy might block the way to the necessary conclusion of the research. That thinkers may obstinately resist a logical verdict is humorously illustrated by John Warwick Montgomery’s modern parable:

- Once upon a time (note the mystical cast) there was a man who thought he was dead. His concerned wife and friends sent him to the friendly neighborhood psychiatrist determined to cure him by convincing him of one fact that contradicted his beliefs that he was dead. The fact that the psychiatrist decided to use was the simple truth that dead men do not bleed. He put his patient to work reading medical texts, observing autopsies, etc. After weeks of effort the patient finally said, “All right, all right! You’ve convinced me. Dead men do not bleed.” Whereupon the psychiatrist stuck him in the arm with a needle, and the blood flowed. The man looked down with a contorted, ashen face and cried, “Good Lord! Dead men bleed after all!”

Emotional prejudice is not limited to dull-witted, the illiterate, and poorly educated. Philosophers and theologians are not exempt from the vested interests and psychological prejudice that distort logical thinking. The question of the existence of God evokes deep emotional and psychological prejudice. People understand that the question of the existence of God is not one that is of neutral consequence. We understand intuitively, if not in terms of its full rational implication, that the existence of an eternal

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Norman Geisler, Robert P. George, Alvin Plantinga, William P. Alston, Mortimer J. Adler, J.P. Moreland, William Lane Craig, Nancy Pearcey, James Sire, David Noebel, Richard Swinburn, Peter Kreeft, Francis J. Beckwith, J. Budziszewski, Louis P. Pojman, Colin Brown, John Warwick Montgomery, Gregory Koukl, John Finnis, and the like.

<sup>17</sup> *Epistemology* – “the branch of philosophy concerned with questions about knowledge and belief and related issues such as justification and truth.” C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 39.

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Creator before whom we are ultimately accountable and responsible is a matter that touches the very core of life.<sup>18</sup>

You see, the Christian-theistic worldview does not just offer answers in religious areas and is silent in the political arena, rather, it forces one to confront popular culture, which often times demands political or cultural change. This can cause religious and non-religious persons alike to become very intolerant, especially when the topic combines a person's religious views and that of current affairs. One such confrontation is taking place today in China where the Church is growing by leaps and bounds; on its heels is economic freedom, which typically follows religious freedom - causing a very intolerant response from this Communist based government. David Aikman makes the point that many Chinese have wondered if capitalism is "just a way of doing business, *or did it come with concrete ethical and philosophical foundations?*"<sup>19</sup> The author continues:

Christianity itself, which had been such a powerful, if not fully understood, ingredient in the global pre-eminence of Western civilization, may be a **worldview**, even a **metaphysic**<sup>20</sup> that could guide China's pathway into the twenty-first century. Perhaps it could provide a **lens** for Chinese to understand their own history with greater insight than ever before.<sup>21</sup>

Christianity is closely tied to the success of capitalism,<sup>22</sup> as it is the only possible ethic behind such an enterprise. How can such a thing be said? The famed economist/sociologist/historian of our day, Thomas Sowell, speaks to this in his book *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles*. He whittles down the many economic views into *just two categories*, the **constrained view** and the **unconstrained view**.

The constrained vision is a tragic vision of the human condition. The unconstrained vision is a moral vision of human intentions, which are viewed as ultimately decisive. The unconstrained vision promotes pursuit of the

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<sup>18</sup> R.C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 69-70.

<sup>19</sup> David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, D.C.: Regency, 2003), 16 (emphasis added).

<sup>20</sup> *Metaphysics* – "The study of ultimate reality, that which is not readily accessible through ordinary empirical experience. Metaphysics includes within its domain such topics as free will, causality, the nature of matter, immortality, and the existence of God." Louis P. Pojman, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 620.

<sup>21</sup> David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, 16-17 (emphasis added).

<sup>22</sup> See for instance: R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000 [originally 1926]); Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003 [originally 1904]); Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York, NY: Random House, 2005); Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: Regency, 2005).

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highest ideals and the best solutions. By contrast, the constrained vision sees the best as the enemy of the good— a vain attempt to reach the unattainable being seen as not only futile but often counterproductive, while the same efforts could have produced a more viable and beneficial trade-off. Adam Smith applied this reasoning not only to economics but also to morality and politics: The prudent reformer, according to Smith, will respect "the confirmed habits and prejudices of the people," and when he cannot establish what is right, "he will not disdain to ameliorate the wrong." His goal is not to create the ideal but to "establish the best that the people can bear."<sup>23</sup>

Dr. Sowell goes on to point out that while not "all social thinkers fit this schematic dichotomy... the conflict of visions is no less real because everyone has not chosen sides or irrevocably committed themselves." Continuing he points out:

Despite necessary caveats, it remains an important and remarkable phenomenon that how human nature is conceived at the outset is highly correlated with the whole conception of knowledge, morality, power, time, rationality, war, freedom, and law which defines a social vision.... The dichotomy between constrained and unconstrained visions is based on whether or not inherent limitations of man are among the key elements included in the vision.<sup>24</sup>

The contribution of the nature of man by the Judeo-Christian ethic is key in this respect. One can almost say, then, that the Christian worldview *demands* a particular position to be taken in the socio-economic realm.\* You can almost liken the constrained view of man in economics and conservatism as the Calvinist position. Pulitzer prize winning political commentator, Walter Lippmann (1889-1974), makes the above point well:

At the core of every moral code there is a picture of human nature, a map of the universe, and a version of history. To human nature (of the sort conceived), in a universe (of the kind imagined), after a history (so understood), the rules of the code apply.<sup>25</sup>

A free market, then, is typically closely tied with the Christian worldview with its concrete view of the reality of man balanced with love for your neighbor; some Chinese are catching on to this fact of life. While these types of reflections on current Chinese history and past Soviet history weigh in on the

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles* (New York, NY: basic Books, 2007), 27.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Walter lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York, NY: Freee Press, 1965), 80.

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religio-political and socio-economic arena of today's political mêlée, they are not of key importance to our walk with our Savior. True that we are not saved by whom we vote for, as humans, we have very divergent answers to the many areas of our political/economic lives. The answers proffered by the Judeo-Christian worldview are, however, important to understanding how we should view reality and respond to social issues that come from worldviews. Whether a Christian understands this or not makes this acting in the world based on views of reality *no less real because everyone has not chosen sides or irrevocably committed themselves* to understanding this. These ideas are key in responding likewise to religious views steeped in philosophical naturalism, new age'ism or neo-paganism, post-modernism, or even the new atheists (actually, old modernists<sup>26</sup>).

If, as a believer, many of your answers about life's big questions match up with naturalistic, post-modernism, new age answers -- then a "faith-check" may be in order.<sup>27</sup> You see, Christ did not claim to be *a way*, or put together *a religious philosophy* that works well. He, rather, claimed to be the Creator of the space-time continuum, unlike Buddha, Lao Tzu, Zarathustra, Muhammad, Confucius, Guru Nanak Dev, Joseph Smith, Aristotle, and others. This claim then, if true, is what separates Christian philosophy and the answers it gives from all the rest. Much like the apologists and apostles of days gone by whom responded to the worldviews that under-gird other's actions in their respective surrounding religio-cultural and socio-economic landscapes... so to should we understand the culture around us and offer a strong response guided by *our* worldview in the battle of ideas. In fact, most of what has been given to Christians as systematized theology or orthodoxy started first as apologetic responses to the surrounding challenges and confrontations to our faith. In fact, "the primitive church was not characterized by an explicit unity of doctrine; therefore heresy could sometimes claim greater antiquity than orthodoxy."<sup>28</sup> A defensive stance is often times beneficial, both historically as well as currently. A good place to start is by first defining (not necessarily defending) what a worldview is. This attempt herein should cause serious reflection on the issue of "how one views the world."

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<sup>26</sup> Josh and Sean McDowell define the "new atheists" quite well:

Renowned British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge once said that all news is nothing more than new people experiencing old things. Things may seem new, but that hardly means they really are new. When it comes to the New Atheism, there are no fresh discoveries in science, philosophy, or history that undermine Christianity. Most arguments of the New Atheists are recycled from older atheists such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Bertrand Russell. Still, there are a few characteristics that make the New Atheists unique. First, the New Atheism is less costly. Atheists of the past were well aware of the consequences of denying God. They realized that without God we inhabit a cold, dark, pointless universe. Many older atheists mourned the death of God because they realized it undermined the foundations of Western culture. Existentialist Albert Camus admitted that the death of God meant the loss of purpose, joy, and everything that makes life worth living. By contrast, the New Atheists actually celebrate the death of God. They think life can continue as normal (and even improve) if we simply abolish religion.

*More Than a Carpenter, revised and updated ed.* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 47.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you not recognize for yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless you fail the test."

<sup>28</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 70.



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- **Worldviews... What Are They? Do They Even Matter?**

Many people today do not realize what a worldview is or how it affects their every day life. Let us first define in a general sense what a worldview is. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines it this way:

1) The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world; 2) A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.

With these broad definitions, one can see that everyone is caught in a web of defining their relation to the universe and the world, even the atheist. However, this generation does not get much beyond this dictionary definition any longer, as this study shows:

Alexander W. Astin dissected a longitudinal study conducted by UCLA started in 1966 for the Review of Higher Education [journal] in which 290,000 students were surveyed from about 500 colleges. The main question was asked of students why study or learn? "Seeking to develop 'a meaningful philosophy of life'" [to develop a meaningful worldview] was ranked "essential" by the majority of entering freshmen. In 1996 however, 80% of the college students barely recognized the need for "a meaningful philosophy of life" and ranked "being very well off financially" [e.g., to *not* necessarily develop a meaningful worldview] as paramount.<sup>29, 30</sup>

This is quite eye opening. It says a lot about where a person's thinking is, or in the case of the younger generation, is not. A few decades ago most college students were looking to answer life's big questions and learn how to relate to them. Today? Not so much. What are these questions that everyone's worldview must answer? Below are the main ones that every viable worldview should answer:<sup>31</sup>

Ultimate Reality	What kind of God, <i>if any</i> , actually exists?
External Reality	Is there anything beyond the cosmos?
Knowledge	What can be known, and how can anyone know it?
Origin	Where did I come from?

<sup>29</sup> Alexander W. Astin, "The changing American college student: thirty year trends, 1966-1996," *Review of Higher Education*, 21 (2) 1998, 115-135.

<sup>30</sup> Some of what is here is adapted and with thanks to Dr. Stephen Whatley, Professor of Apologetics & Worldviews at Faith Evangelical Seminary... as, they are in his notes from one of his classes.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Richard Samples, *A World of Difference: Putting Christian Truth-Claims to the Worldview Test* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 21-22; Kenneth Richard Samples, "What in the World is a Worldview?" *Connections*, Quarter 1 Volume 9, (Number 1 2007), 7.

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Identity	Who am I?
Location	Where am I?
Morals	How should I live?
Values	What should I consider of great worth?
Predicament	What is humanity's fundamental problem?
Resolution	How can humanity's problem be solved?
Past / Present	What is the meaning and direction of history?
Destiny	Will I survive the death of my body and, if so, in what state?

Ravi Zacharias simplifies the above list by stating that a "coherent worldview must be able to satisfactorily answer four questions: that of origin, meaning, morality, and destiny."<sup>32</sup> He says that while every major religion makes exclusive claims about truth, "the Christian faith is unique in its ability to answer all four of these questions."<sup>33</sup> These questions are the bedrock of any worldview... that holds any weight at least. So before we go any further, let us define a bit more for clarity purposes what a worldview is. Norman Geisler has the best working definition that will help guide us through the maze of religious and non-religious worldviews we will encounter in our daily lives. He says:

A Worldview is how one views or interprets reality. The German word is Weltanschauung, meaning a "world and life view," or "a paradigm." It is a framework through which or by which one makes sense of the data of life. A worldview makes a world of difference in one's view of God, origins, evil, human nature, values, and destiny.<sup>34</sup>

Something is missing from this definition though. In it there is no relational comparison to show that merely knowing of one's worldview doesn't, "presto," make it somehow true. The following definition raises the bar a bit more as to what is at stake:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold

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<sup>32</sup> Ravi Zacharias, *Deliver Us From Evil* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishers, 1997), 219–220.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 785-786.

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(consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about *the basic constitution of reality*, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our well being.<sup>35</sup>

This definition starts the person off at the most crucial point, which is this: *what constitutes reality*. You see, people haven't poked their fingers into their presuppositions<sup>36</sup> enough in order to test their own fundamental beliefs. The first place one should start is to define "what is real" -- the reason being is that this definition will shape what surely follows.

- **"Ideas Have Consequences"**<sup>37</sup>

For instance, if someone were to think that every tangible object or person they see around them is merely an illusion, then suffering is an illusion as well. The consequences of presupposing reality as illusory is that holy men steeped in Eastern philosophy will walk right by those who are dying of starvation, maimed, in need of clothing, medical attention as well as education, and simply ignore them. It takes a person from another worldview that starts out with the presupposition that what we see around us is in fact a concrete reality, the actions that follow such a belief is -- for example -- that Mother Theresa adopts the city of Calcutta as her own and those who are in need are fed, clothed, educated, and medical attention is given to those who need it (just one example). All this takes money of course, and it is provided by the many Catholics who likewise accept this worldview (another example). I wish to illustrate further with some personal dialogue between some aid workers and author Ron Carlson during the Cambodian massacre under Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in the mid-70's (which is known as the "Killing Fields") and then subsequently by the invasion of the Vietnamese at the end of the that decade.

While speaking in Thailand, Ron Carlson was invited to visit some refugee camps along the Cambodian border. Over 300,000 refugees were caught in a no-man's-land along the border. Here in this Buddhist country of Thailand, with Buddhist refugees coming from Cambodia and Laos, there were no Buddhists taking caring for their fellow believers. There likewise were no Atheists, Hindus, or Muslims taking care of these people. The only people there, taking care of these 300,000[+] people in this no-man's land were Christians from Christian mission organizations and Christian relief organizations. One of the men Ron Carlson was with had lived in

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<sup>35</sup> James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 122.

<sup>36</sup> *Presuppose* – to require something as a prior condition; to make something necessary if a particular thing is to be shown to be true or false. The sentence "Fred loves his daughter" presupposes that Fred has a daughter. (This is with thanks to Ray Comfort: <http://raycomfortfood.blogspot.com/>)

<sup>37</sup> Title based on the book by Richard m. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1948). Another book that plays off this original title from Weaver's book is a book by R. C. Sproul, *The Consequences of Ideas: Understanding the Concepts that Shaped Our World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000).

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Thailand for over twenty-years and was heading up a major portion of the relief effort for one of these organizations. Ron asked him: “Why, in a Buddhist country, with Buddhist refugees are there no Buddhists here taking care of their Buddhist brothers?”<sup>38</sup> Ron says he will never forget the answer to his question:

Ron, have you ever seen what Buddhism does to a nation or a people? Buddha taught that each man is an island unto himself. Buddha said, “if someone is suffering, that is his karma.” You are not to interfere with another person’s karma because he is purging himself through suffering and reincarnation! Buddha said, “You are to be an island unto yourself.” - Ron, the only people that have a reason to be here today taking care of these 300,000 refugees are Christians. It is only Christianity that people have a basis for human value that people are important enough to educate and to care for. For Christians, these people are of ultimate value, created in the image of God, so valuable that Jesus Christ died for each and every one of them. You find that value in no other religion, in no other philosophy, but in Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup>

I hope the reader can see what is at stake here in the battle of ideas. Joseph R. Farinaccio, author of *Faith with Reason: Why Christianity is True*, starts out his excellent book like this:

This is a book about worldviews. Everybody has one, but most individuals never really pay much attention to their own personal philosophy of life. **This is a tragedy because there is no state of awareness so fundamental to living life.**<sup>40</sup>

Again, “no state of awareness is so fundamental”! Ronald Nash supports this idea by saying that intellectual maturity is closely linked with one’s awareness about worldviews,<sup>41</sup> which may explain the lack of intellectual maturity with graduate students today.<sup>42</sup> You must understand that,

Every subject we think about is filtered through our worldview. The picture of reality we hold in our minds is what we use at the most basic level to answer every question in life. This is especially true of big questions,

<sup>38</sup> Ron Carlson & Ed Decker, *Fast Facts on False Teachings* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994), 28.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>40</sup> (Pennsville, NJ: BookSpecs Publishing, 2002), 10 (emphasis added).

<sup>41</sup> Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity In a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 9.

<sup>42</sup> Something Allan Bloom aptly points out:

There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students’ reaction: **they will be uncomprehending**. That anyone should regard the proposition as not self-evident astonishes them. ... The relativity of truth is ... a moral postulate, the condition of a free society, or so they see it. ... The danger they have been taught to fear is not error but intolerance. Relativism is necessary to openness; and this is the virtue, the only virtue, which all primary education for more than fifty years has dedicated itself to inculcating. Openness — and the relativism that makes it plausible — is the great insight of our times. ... The study of history and of culture teaches that all the world was mad in the past; men always thought they were right, and that led to wars, persecutions, slavery, xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism. The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all.

*The Closing of the American Mind* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 25 (emphasis added).

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like those pertaining to man's origin, ethics, life's meaning and ultimate destiny. This makes faith central to every aspect of our lives and being. The bigger question, of course, is whether or not the picture of reality we have is actually true.<sup>43</sup>

An illustration that works well to show the divergence of worldviews is one of prescription. I am sure you have at some point in your life put on a pair of prescription glasses from a family member or friend. The distorted view one gets when putting on these prescription strength glasses is like a worldview. What one accepts as truth will effect all aspects of their life. Another application of this thinking comes from a story told by Norman Geisler and Peter Bocchino:

**Professor:** "Miracles are impossible, don't you know science has disproved them, how could you believe in them [i.e., answered prayer, a man being raised from the dead, Noah's Ark, and the like]."

**Student:** "for clarity purposes I wish to get some definitions straight. Would it be fair to say that science is generally defined as 'the human activity of seeking natural explanations for what we observe in the world around us'?"

**Professor:** "Beautifully put, that is the basic definition of science in every text-book I read through my Doctoral journey."

**Student:** "Wouldn't you also say that a good definition of a miracle would be 'and event in nature caused by something outside of nature'?"

**Professor:** "Yes, that would be an acceptable definition of 'miracle.'"

**Student:** "But since you do not believe that anything outside of 'nature' exists [materialism, dialectical materialism, empiricism, existentialism, naturalism, and humanism – whatever you wish to call it], you are 'forced' to conclude that miracles are impossible"<sup>44</sup>

The professor had a worldview that presupposed *naturalism*, or, *materialism*, which is defined as "the philosophical belief that reality is composed solely of matter and that all phenomena can be explained in terms of natural causes." This presupposed belief that guided the professor caused him to be unable to

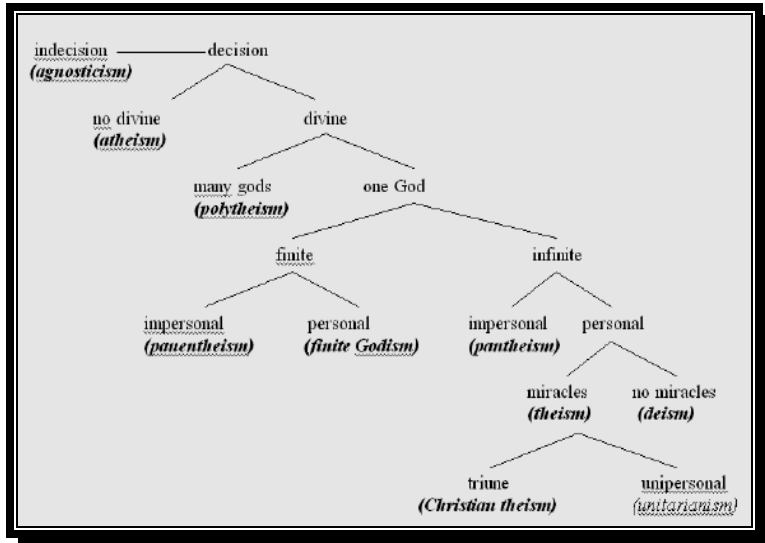
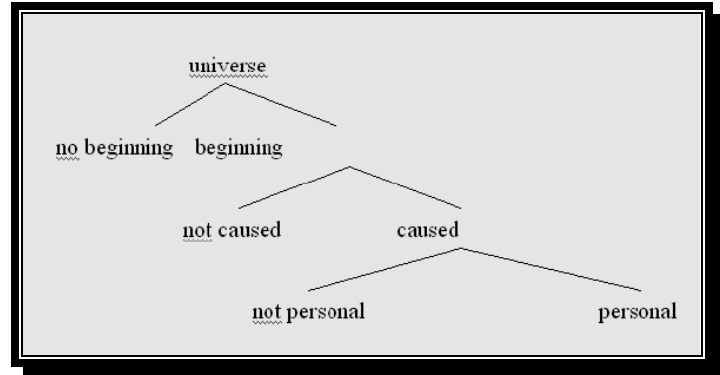
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<sup>43</sup> Joseph R. Farinaccio, *Faith with Reason*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Norman L. Geisler & Peter Bocchino, *Unshakeable Foundations: Contemporary Answers to Crucial Questions About the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2001), 63-64.

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even consider a non-natural event as an *actual event*, he begged the question.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, Jesus *couldn't have* risen from the grave by definition, ergo, Christianity is false! Via circular reasoning<sup>46</sup> that is. The following charts<sup>47</sup> are an excellent way to visualize the mutually exclusive claims embedded in worldviews:



<sup>45</sup> William Sahakian gives a great working definition of “circular reasoning/begging the question”:

PETITIO PRINCIPII (BEGGING THE QUESTION). Perhaps no other fallacy has so many different names as petitio principii, which consists of several forms, such as reasoning in a circle, failing to prove the initial thesis propounded, and using the original thesis as proof of itself. Common terms for this fallacy are circular reasoning, circle in the proof, and arguing in a circle. In order to prove that A is true, B is used as proof, but since B requires support, C is used in defense of B, but C also requires proof and is substantiated by A, the proposition which was to be proved in the first place. Thus we see that what was to be proved in the first place is offered ultimately in defense of itself. Reasoning becomes completely circular, so that the initial question is begged. “Gentlemen prefer blondes.” “How do I know?” “A gentleman told me so.” “How do you know he is a gentleman?” “I know for the simple reason that lie prefers blondes.” “Books on religion are better than books on atheism.” “How do you know that?” “The experts all concur that religious books are better than atheistic ones.” “Who are the experts?” “They are the ones who maintain that religious books are better than atheistic ones.”

William S. Sahakian and Mable Lewis Sahakian, *Ideas of the Great Philosophers* (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 20-21.

<sup>46</sup> *Circular Reasoning*

The Fallacy of Circular Argument (Begging the Question, *Petitio Principii*) -- the fallacy is committed when one assumes among one's premises what one is supposed to prove. Three thieves are arguing over the division of seven very fine pearls. One of them hands two to the man on his right, then two to the man on his left. “I,” he says, “will keep three.” The man on his right says, “How come you keep three?” “Because I am the leader.” “Oh, but how come you are the leader?” “Because I have more pearls.”

William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999), 225.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity: An Apologetic Handbook* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001), 112 & 118.

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Another way to see this “begging the question” is in the following example[s]:

- **Premise:** Since there is no God,  
**Conclusion:** all theistic proofs are invalid.
- **Premise:** Since the theistic proofs are invalid,  
**Conclusion:** there is no God.<sup>48</sup>

I hope one can see how a worldview (pair of prescription glasses) can warp a person’s view of the world around them, or in the case above, even the universe and beyond. A further example of the above comes from an ex-schoolmate of mine (albeit a bit older than me) Brian Flemming, from Village Christian,<sup>49</sup> who produced a documentary *The God Who Wasn't There*.<sup>50</sup> This is an amateur attempt to show that Jesus did not exist historically, something very few in the history of skepticism have tried to defend.<sup>51</sup> In the section entitled “From Village Christian to Village Atheist,” Brian goes back to Village Christian under false pretenses and interviews on camera the current principle, Dr. Ronald Sipus, as part of his weaving his biographical loss of faith in with his main thesis. During the interview Brian’s true intentions came out when he asked this question of Dr. Sipus: “What hard, scientific evidence do you have that the world works this way?” This assumption, *that hard scientific evidence need confirm one’s faith*, is one I wish to dissect a bit more in-depth.



On the surface this may seem like a reasonable question, however, Mr. Flemming brings some biases and assumptions to the table that once revealed may help the reader to confront similar challenges to their faith. Recalling the conversation a few pages back with the student and the professor, Brian’s starting point may be the issue, and not his particular question. Let us see if we can ferret out Mr.

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<sup>48</sup> Robert A. Morey, *The New Atheism: And the Erosion of Freedom* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1986), 57.

<sup>49</sup> If anyone wishes to know, I was expelled from Village Christian for -- among other things, fighting. Yes, my testimony doesn’t end at getting kicked out of most of the schools I went to, as, I am a three-time felon *convert back* to my faith.

<sup>50</sup> (Beyond Belief Media, DVD, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> I am not going to defend the historicity of Jesus’ life here; there are other books that make apparent that these claims are false. Some that come to mind are: Norman Geisler and Paul Hoffman ed., *Why I Am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001); Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Resources, 2004); Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, *Evidence for the Resurrection: What it Means for Your Relationship with God* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2009).

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Flemming's starting premise with an interview with Dr. Dean Kenyon,<sup>52</sup> Assistant Professor of Biology at San Francisco State University (Emeritus), when he was asked this question: "What are the general presuppositions that scientists make who study the origin of life?" Dr. Kenyon responded:

"Well, I think there are two general kinds of presuppositions that people can make, one is that life, in fact, did arise naturalistically on the primitive earth by some kind of chemical evolutionary process. The second presupposition would be that life may or may not have arisen by a naturalistic, chemical process. Now, if you have the first presupposition, then the goal of your research is to work out plausible pathways of chemical development to go to the bio-polymers, then to the protocells; and what would be likely pathways that you could demonstrate in the laboratory by simulation experiment. If you have the second presupposition, your still going to be doing experiments, but you're going to be more open to the possibility that the data, as they [or, it] come[s] in from those studies may actually be suggesting a different explanation of origins altogether."<sup>53</sup>

The logical position, what I would say is the truly scientific way to look at these issues, is to say what Kenyon just did: "life *may or may not* have arisen by a naturalistic, chemical process." He, in other words, did not beg the question. This embedded philosophy<sup>54</sup> is what the fervor was over in Kansas a few years back. The Kansas Board of Education caused a firestorm by hearing the drafting board's proposal to change one word in the working definition of science. The original drafting commission defined science as:

"Science is the human activity of seeking **natural** explanations for what we observe in the world around us."

The Kansas board of education drafting committee defined science as,

"Science is the human activity of seeking **logical** explanations for what we observe in the world around us."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Kenyon received a B.Sc. in physics from the University of Chicago in 1961 and a Ph.D. in biophysics from Stanford University in 1965. In 1965-1966 he was a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Chemical Biodynamics at the University of California, Berkeley, a Research Associate at Ames Research Center. In 1966, he became Assistant Professor of Biology at San Francisco State University. He has been Emeritus at San Francisco State University since 2000.

<sup>53</sup> *Focus on Darwinism: An Interview with Dean H. Kenyon* (Focus on Origin Series, Access Research Network, DVD, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> I will give yet another example that makes my point for me: "Even if all the data point to an intelligent designer, such an hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic." Kansas State University immunologist, Scott Todd, correspondence to *Nature*, 410 [6752], 30 September, 1999.

<sup>55</sup> Phillip E. Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 68 (emphasis added).



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This simple word change, and the subsequent fervor it caused, illustrates the embedded philosophy in current science.<sup>56</sup> So the first thing that Principle Sipus should have asked of Brian is for *him* to define what science is and the type of evidence his definition of science produces. After getting his definition he should have asked this:

Since the evidence you are asking for is excluded by your definition of empirical science, aren't you "begging the question" Brian? Likewise I could ask of you to disprove by the scientific method God's existence, and, by your definition of science -- which excludes anything metaphysical -- I would be setting *you up* for failure, because science (at least as you [Brian] define it) is incapable of proving or disproving God."

What Brian is assuming and saying is this:

**Premise:** Science is "the human activity of seeking *NATURAL* explanations for what we observe in the world around us";

**Conclusion:** Science excludes then, by definition, metaphysical realities.

**Premise:** God is a metaphysical reality;

**Conclusion:** Therefore, science disproves God's existence.

In order for the final conclusion to be valid, it should read: "Therefore, science cannot determine whether God exists or not." I would argue that God's existence *is* metaphysical but that knowledge of Him is found through logical arguments (philosophy), natural evidences (Intelligent Design/natural revelation), and non-natural avenues (experience and divine revelation). This aside however, Brian is not understanding what type of evidence he is asking for.

Brian Flemming would not be able to, for instance, find out what Napoleon did at the battle of Austerlitz by asking Mr. Bonaparte to come and fight it again in a "laboratory with the same combatants, the same

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<sup>56</sup> i.e., scientism, materialism, empiricism, existentialism, naturalism, and humanism – whatever you want to call it... it is still a *metaphysical position* as it assumes or presumes certain things about the entire universe. D'Souza points this *a priori* commitment out:

Naturalism and materialism are not scientific conclusions; rather, they are scientific premises. They are not discovered in nature but imposed upon nature. In short, they are articles of faith. Here is Harvard biologist Richard Lewontin: "We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a *a priori* commitment, a commitment -- a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Dinesh D'Souza points to this in his recent book, *What's So Great about Christianity* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2007), 161 (emphasis added).

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terrain, the same weather, and in the same age.... You have to go to the records. We have not, in fact, proved that science excludes miracles: we have only proved that the question of miracles, like the innumerable other questions, excludes laboratory treatment.”<sup>57</sup> And Christianity claims to be a historical belief. The resurrection of Jesus was an historical event, one that cannot be repeated in the laboratory. So how, then, do we deal with the historic claims of Christianity? Like any other historical event, we go to the records:

“What are the distinctive sources for our beliefs about the past? Most of the beliefs we have about the past come to us by the testimony of other people. I wasn’t present at the signing of the Declaration of Independence. I didn’t see my father fight in the [S]econd [W]orld [W]ar. I have been told about these events by sources that I take to be reliable. The testimony of others is generally the main source of our beliefs about the past.... So all our beliefs about the past depend on testimony, or memory, or both.”<sup>58</sup>

“In advanced societies specialization in the gathering and production of knowledge and its wider dissemination through spoken and written testimony is a fundamental socio-epistemic fact, and a very large part of each person’s body of knowledge and belief stems from testimony.”<sup>59</sup>

“... it is clear that most of what any given individual knows comes from others; palpably with knowledge of history, geography, or science, more subtly with knowledge about every day facts such as when we were born.”<sup>60</sup>

I used the above examples dealing with the naturalist/atheistic views of reality not to refute them explicitly; rather, I used them to express the idea of just how important a, or your, worldview can be in producing honest questions or one’s with the answer built in them, dishonest questions. Once someone has a good idea of what worldview has more reliable presuppositions, whether by **a**) investigation, or by, **b**) bias, they then live out their lives according to those *principles presupposed* – logically or illogically. Theism, in my educated opinion, adheres better to the principles discussed throughout this work than its competing worldviews. As John Stott explains, the power of worldviews in the bringing forth of actions into the external world, thus influencing it:

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<sup>57</sup> C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 134.

<sup>58</sup> Tom Morris, *Philosophy for Dummies* (Foster City, CA: IDG Books; 1999), 57-58.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Audi, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 1999), 909.

<sup>60</sup> Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 869

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Every powerful movement has had its philosophy which has gripped the mind, fired the imagination and captured the devotion of its adherents. One has only to think of the Fascist and the Communist manifestos of this century, of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* on the one hand and Marx's *Das Kapital* and *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* on the other.<sup>61</sup>

Which points us towards the apparent problem of there being 10,000 [or so] religions in the world;<sup>62</sup> boiling these religious beliefs down to their basic beliefs is imperative and leaves us with a more manageable number to study and compare,<sup>63</sup> in fact, Francis Schaeffer said this:

People have presuppositions, and they will live more consistently on the basis of these presuppositions than even they themselves may realize. By "presuppositions" we mean the basic way an individual looks at life, his basic worldview, the grid through which he sees the world. Presuppositions rest upon that which a person considers to be the truth of what exists. People's presuppositions lay a grid for all they bring forth into the external world. Their presuppositions also provide the basis for their values and therefore the basis for their decisions. "As a man thinketh, so he is," is really profound. An individual is not just the product of the forces around him. He has a mind, an inner world. Then, having thought, a person can bring forth actions into the external world and thus influence it. People are apt to look at the outer theater of action, forgetting the actor who 'lives in the mind' and who therefore is the true actor in the external world. The inner thought world determines the outward action. Most people catch their presuppositions from their family and surrounding society the way a child catches measles. But people with more understanding realize that their presuppositions should be chosen after a careful consideration of what worldview is true. When all is done, when all the alternatives have been explored, "not many men are in the room" – that is, although worldviews have many variations, there are not many basic worldviews or presuppositions.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> From a radio sermon. Also found at *Stand To Reason's* website:

J.P. Moreland writes, "John Stott has reminded us of the importance of intellectual activity for sparking revival. History testifies to the power of people's thoughts to shape their actions. People die for ideas. Says Stott," Says Stott, "Every powerful movement has had its philosophy which has gripped the mind, fired the imagination and captured the devotion of its adherents. One has only to think of the Fascist and Communist manifestos of this century, of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* on the one hand and Marx's *Das Kapital* and *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* on the other." Moreland continues, "Stott is right on the money. It is no accident that the flourishing of evangelistic activity in the 1960s and 1970s was woven around the writings of C. S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, and Francis Schaeffer. Today we need a revival of evangelistic fervor and spiritual power. And an absolutely crucial element that must take place before we will see this revival is a renaissance of apologetics and intellectual activity in the evangelical church. My prayer is that I will live to see that renaissance become a reality."

Posted by: Kyl, 8-18-06 at: [http://str.typepad.com/weblog/2006/08/youth\\_apologeti.html](http://str.typepad.com/weblog/2006/08/youth_apologeti.html) (last accessed 8-7-09).

<sup>62</sup> David B. Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4-8.

<sup>63</sup> Theism, atheism, deism, finite godism, pantheism, panentheism, polytheism, see for instance: Doug Powell, *The Holman Quick Source Guide to Christian Apologetics* (Nashville, TN: Holman Publishers, 2006); and Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers); Others still reduce it further: Idealism, naturalism, and theism. See L. Russ Bush, *A Handbook for Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991). C.S Lewis dealt with religious worldviews much the same way, comparing philosophical naturalism (atheism), pantheism, and theism - see: C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: Macmillan Inc, 1943).

<sup>64</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Crossway Books; 1976), 19-20.

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All this should make you want to jump in, and engage life in full stride, this is what L. Cohen did. Dr. Cohen is a mathematician, researcher and author who chose to *jump in*. He is a member of the New York Academy of Sciences and officer of the Archaeological Institute of America. In his book, *Darwin was Wrong: A Study in Probabilities*, Cohen writes:

In a certain sense, the debate transcends the confrontation between evolutionists and creationists. We now have a debate within the scientific community itself; it is a confrontation between scientific objectivity and ingrained prejudice - between logic and emotion - between fact and fiction.... In the final analysis, objective scientific logic has to prevail -- no matter what the final result is - no matter how many time-honored idols have to be discarded in the process.... after all, it is not the duty of science to defend the theory of evolution, and stick by it to the bitter end -- no matter what illogical and unsupported conclusions it offers... if in the process of impartial scientific logic, they find that creation by outside superintelligence is the solution to our quandary, then let's cut the umbilical cord that tied us down to Darwin for such a long time. It is choking us and holding us back.... ...every single concept advanced by the theory of evolution (and amended thereafter) is imaginary and it is not supported by the scientifically established facts of microbiology, fossils, and mathematical probability concepts. Darwin was wrong.... The theory of evolution may be the worst mistake made in science.<sup>65</sup>

By using his worldview backed by logic, science, and math, based in sound presuppositions, Cohen rejected Darwinian evolution. This type of rejection holds more weight when witnessing to a Grecian culture<sup>66</sup> rather than when asked, "why we believe something," simply referring to either the Bible or our personal testimony.<sup>67</sup> These are very important as well, but often times with people who reject the Judeo-Christian worldview one must start from "scratch," so-to-speak. So what example can be given of an "ingredient" that every worldview should have as an integral part of its base assumptions. It is this: *the law of non-contradiction*.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> I. L. Cohen, *Darwin was Wrong: A Study in Probabilities* (New York, NY: New Research Publications, 1984), 6-7, 8, 214-215, 209, 210.

<sup>66</sup> 1 Corinthians 1: 22-23.

<sup>67</sup> The Apostle Paul never gave his testimony when witnessing to non-believers; he usually presented a well-thought out, almost linear case for the historicity of God's involvement in mankind, from creation to Pentecost. When he did personalize his experience, it was always in a letter to believers.

<sup>68</sup> Here is a great working definition:

*Contradictory Premises* - Self-Contradictions are necessarily false; consequently, when an argument contains premises which contradict each other, no conclusion is possible. Any conclusion would involve the *fallacy of contradictory premises*; that is, it would constitute a *self-contradiction*. When contradictory premises are present in an argument, one premise cancels out the other. It is possible for one or the other of the two premises to be true, but not for both to be simultaneously true. Note the contradictory premises in the following questions: "If God is all-powerful, can he put himself out of existence, then come to life with twice the power he had originally?" "Can God make a stone so heavy that he cannot lift it?" "Can God make a round square?" "What would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable object?"

William S. Sahakian and Mable Lewis Sahakian, *Ideas of the Great Philosophers*, 23.

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- **Laws of Logic**

This law is often referred to as the most important of the first principles, Aristotle makes the point that,

every science begins with them and are the foundations upon which all knowledge rests. First principles are the fundamental truths from which inferences are made and on which conclusions are based. They are self-evident, and they can be thought of as both the underlying and the governing principles of a worldview.<sup>69</sup>

The law of non-contradiction is one of the most important laws of logical thought, in fact, one textbook author goes so far as to say that this law “is considered the foundation of logical reasoning.”<sup>70</sup> Another professor of philosophy at University College London says that “a theory in which this law fails...is an inconsistent theory.”<sup>71</sup> A great example of this *inconsistency* can be found in the wonderful book *Philosophy for Dummies* that fully expresses the crux of the point made throughout this work:

- **Statement:** There is no such thing as absolute truth.<sup>72</sup>

By applying the law of non-contradiction to this statement, one will be able to tell if this statement is coherent enough to even consider thinking about. Are you ready? The first question should be, “is this an absolute statement?” Is the statement making an ultimate, absolute claim about the nature of truth? If so, it is actually asserting what it is trying to deny, and so is self-deleting – more simply, it is logically incoherent as a comprehensible position<sup>73</sup> as it is in violation of the law of non-contradiction. Some other examples are as follows, for clarity’s sake:

“All truth is relative!” (Is that a relative truth?); “There are no absolutes!” (Are you absolutely sure?); “Its true for you but not for me!” (Is that statement true just for you, or is it for everyone?)<sup>74</sup> In short, contrary *beliefs* are possible, but contrary *truths* are not possible.<sup>75</sup>

Many will try to reject logic in order to accept mutually contradictory beliefs; often times religious pluralism<sup>76</sup> is the topic with which many try to suppress these universal laws in separating religious

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<sup>69</sup> Norman L. Geisler & Peter Bocchino, *Unshakeable Foundations*, 19.

<sup>70</sup> Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text with Readings* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), p. 51.

<sup>71</sup> Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (New York, NY: Oxford Univ Press, 1995), p. 625.

<sup>72</sup> Tom Morris, *Philosophy for Dummies*, 46.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 40.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

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claims that are mutually exclusive. Professor Roy Clouser puts into perspective persons that try to minimize differences by throwing logical rules to the wayside:

The program of rejecting logic in order to accept mutually contradictory beliefs is not, however, just a harmless, whimsical hope that somehow logically incompatible beliefs can both be true... *it results in nothing less than the destruction of any and every concept we could possess.* Even the concept of rejecting the law of non-contradiction depends on assuming and using that law, since without it the concept of rejecting it could neither be thought nor stated.<sup>77</sup>

Dr. Clouser then goes on to show how a position of psychologist Erich Fromm is “self-assumptively incoherent.”<sup>78</sup> What professor Clouser is saying is that this is not a game. Dr. Alister McGrath responds to the religious pluralism of theologian John Hick by showing just how self-defeating this position is:

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<sup>76</sup> *Religious Pluralism* – “the belief that every religion is true. Each religion provides a genuine encounter with the Ultimate.” Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 598.

<sup>77</sup> Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2005), 178 (emphasis added).

<sup>78</sup> A small snippet for clarity's sake:

Fromm's position is also an example of this same dogmatic selectivity. He presents his view as though there are reasons for rejecting the law of non-contradiction, and then argues that his view of the divine (he calls it "ultimate reality") logically follows from that rejection. He ignores the fact that to make any logical inference — to see that one belief "logically follows from" another — means that the belief which is said to "follow" is required on pain of contradicting oneself. Having denied all basis for any inference, Fromm nevertheless proceeds to infer that reality itself must be an all-encompassing mystical unity which harmonizes all the contradictions which logical thought takes to be real. He then further infers that since human thought cannot help but be contradictory, ultimate reality cannot be known by thought. He gives a summary of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist expressions of this same view, and again infers that accepting their view of the divine requires him to reject the biblical idea of God as a knowable, individual, personal Creator. He then offers still another logical inference when he insists that:

- Opposition is a category of man's mind, not itself an element of reality.... Inasmuch as God represents the ultimate reality, and inasmuch as the human mind perceives reality in contradictions, no positive statement can be made about God.

In this way Fromm ends by adding self-referential incoherency to the contradictions and self-assumptive incoherency already asserted by his theory. For he makes the positive statement about God that no positive statements about God are possible.

*ibid.*, 178-179. In this excellent work Dr. Clouser shows elsewhere the impact of logic on some major positions of thought:

As an example of the strong sense of this incoherency, take the claim sometimes made by **Taoists** that “Nothing can be said of the Tao.” Taken without qualification (which is not the way it is intended), this is self-referentially incoherent since to say “Nothing can be said of the Tao” is to say something of the Tao. Thus, when taken in reference to itself, the statement cancels its own truth. As an example of the weak version of self-referential incoherency, take the claim once made by **Freud** that every belief is a product of the believer's unconscious emotional needs. If this claim were true, it would have to be true of itself since it is a belief of Freud's. It therefore requires itself to be nothing more than the product of Freud's unconscious emotional needs. This would not necessarily make the claim false, but it would mean that even if it were true neither Freud nor anyone else could ever know that it is. The most it would allow anyone to say is that he or she couldn't help but believe it. The next criterion says that a theory must not be incompatible with any belief we have to assume for the theory to be true. I will call a theory that violates this rule “self-assumptively incoherent.” As an example of this incoherence, consider the claim made by some philosophers that all things are exclusively physical [**atheistic-naturalism**]. This has been explained by its advocates to mean that nothing has any property or is governed by any law that is not a physical property or a physical law. But the very sentence expressing this claim, the sentence “All things are exclusively physical,” must be assumed to possess a linguistic meaning. This is not a physical property, but unless the sentence had it, it would not be a sentence; it would be nothing but physical sounds or marks that would not) linguistically signify any meaning whatever and thus could not express any claim — just as a group of pebbles, or clouds, or leaves, fails to signify any meaning or express any claim. Moreover, to assert this exclusivist materialism is the same as claiming it is true, which is another nonphysical property; and the claim that it is true further assumes that its denial would have to be false, which is a relation guaranteed by logical, not physical, laws. (Indeed, any theory which denies the existence of logical laws is instantly and irredeemably self-assumptively incoherent since that very denial is proposed as true in a way that logically excludes its being false.) What this shows is that the claim “All things are exclusively physical” must itself be assumed to have nonphysical properties and be governed by nonphysical laws or it could neither be understood nor be true. Thus, no matter how clever the supporting arguments for this claim may seem, the claim itself is incompatible with assumptions that are required for it to be true. It is therefore self-assumptively incoherent in the strong sense.

*ibid.*, 84-85 (emphasis added).

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The belief that all religions are ultimately expressions of the same transcendent reality is at best illusory and at worst oppressive – illusory because it lacks any substantiating basis and oppressive because it involves the systematic imposition of the agenda of those in positions of intellectual power on the religions and those who adhere to them. The illiberal imposition of this pluralistic metanarrative<sup>79</sup> on religions is ultimately a claim to mastery – both in the sense of having a Nietzschean authority and power to mold material according to one’s will, and in the sense of being able to relativize all the religions by having access to a privileged standpoint.<sup>80</sup>

As professor McGrath points out above, John Hick is applying an *absolute religious claim* while at the same time saying there *are no absolute religious claims* to religious reality. **It is self-assumptively incoherent.** Anthropologist William Sumner argues against the logical position when he says that “every attempt to win an outside standpoint from which to reduce the whole to an absolute philosophy of truth and right, based on an unalterable principle, is delusion.”<sup>81</sup> Authors Francis Beckwith and Gregory Koukl respond to this self-defeating claim by showing that Sumner is making a strong claim here about knowledge:

He says that all claims to know objective moral truth are false because we are all imprisoned in our own cultural and are incapable of seeing beyond the limits of our own biases. He concludes, therefore, that moral truth is relative to culture and that no objective standard exists. Sumner’s analysis falls victim to the same error committed by religious pluralists who see all religions as equally valid.<sup>82</sup>

The authors continue:

Sumner’s view, however, is self-refuting. In order for him to conclude that all moral claims are an illusion, he must first escape the illusion himself. He must have a full and accurate view of the entire picture.... Such a privileged view is precisely what Sumner denies. Objective assessments are illusions, he claims, but then he offers his own “objective” assessment. It is as if he were saying, “We’re all blind,” and then adds, “but I’ll tell you what the world really looks like.” This is clearly contradictory.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Metanarratives, or, Grand Narratives* – “big stories, stories of mythic proportions – that claim to be able to account for, explain and subordinate all lesser, little, local, narratives.” Jim Powell, *Postmodernism for Beginners* (New York, NY: Writers and Readers, 1998), 29.

<sup>80</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Passion for Truth: the Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), 239.

<sup>81</sup> William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* (Chicago, IL: Ginn and Company, 1906), in Francis Beckwith and Gregory Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Planted firmly in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 46-47.

<sup>82</sup> Francis Beckwith and Gregory Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Planted Firmly in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 47.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 48

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Philosopher Roger Scruton drives this point home when he says, “A writer who says that there are no truths, or that all truth is ‘merely negative,’ is asking you not to believe him. So don’t.”<sup>84</sup> Another example comes from the belief that that all morality can be explained in naturalistic, evolutionary means for survival of the fittest. Paul Copan points out quite adeptly that all one has to do is show how the critic’s position collapses on its own premises:

A couple of years ago, on a plane to Boston I sat next to a rather hard-nosed atheist. He spoke to me in a rather condescending tone, as though belief in God were old-fashioned and quaint -- though intriguing. When I talked with him about objective moral values, he maintained that they do not exist. He said, “What we call morality is nothing more than an attempt to survive and reproduce. In fact, all that we do is nothing more than our struggle to survive and reproduce.” I replied, “Does this mean that your atheistic beliefs are nothing more than an attempt to survive and reproduce? If you take this route, then you’ll have to admit that both your atheism and my theism spring from the same underlying instinct to survive and reproduce, and there’s no way to tell which of us is correct -- or if we’re both wrong.”<sup>85</sup>

After showing the futility of such a position I would then assume the skeptics position to be true in order to show the *backfiring aspect* that lends to the strength of the theistic position over that of the atheists position. Ask:

Assuming the validity of the “underlying instinct to survive and reproduce” then, out of the two positions (belief and non-belief) available for us to choose from which would better apply to being the *most fit* if the fittest is “an individual... [that] reproduces more successfully...”?<sup>86</sup> The woman that believes in God is less likely to have abortions and more likely to have larger families than their secular counterparts.<sup>87</sup> Does that mean that natural selection will result in a greater number of believers than non-believers?<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *Modern Philosophy* (New York, NY: Penguin, 1996), 6. Found in: John Blanchard, *Does God Believe in Atheists?* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2000), 172.

<sup>85</sup> Paul Copan, *That’s Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 2001), 43.

<sup>86</sup> From my son’s 9<sup>th</sup> grade biology textbook: Susan Feldkamp, ex. ed., *Modern Biology* (Austin, TX: Holt, Rineheart, and Winston, 2002), 288; “...organisms that are better suited to their environment than others produce more offspring” *American Heritage Science Dictionary*, 1st ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), cf. natural selection, 422; “fitness (in evolution) The condition of an organism that is well adapted to its environment, as measured by its ability to reproduce itself” *Oxford Dictionary of Biology, New Edition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), cf. fitness, 202; “fitness In an evolutionary context, the ability of an organism to produce a large number of offspring that survive to reproduce themselves” Norah Rudin, *Dictionary of Modern Biology* (Hauppauge, NY: Barron’s Educational Series, 1997), cf. fitness, 146.

<sup>87</sup> Dinesh D’Souza points to this in his recent book, *What’s So Great About Christianity*:

Russia is one of the most atheist countries in the world, and abortions there outnumber live births by a ratio of two to one. Russia’s birth rate has fallen so low that the nation is now losing 700,000 people a year. Japan, perhaps the most secular country in Asia, is also on a kind of population diet: its 130 million people are expected to drop to around 100 million in the next few decades. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand find themselves in a similar predicament. Then there is Europe. The most secular continent on the globe is decadent in the quite literal sense that its population is rapidly shrinking. Birth rates are abysmally low in France, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, and Sweden. The



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According to the atheists *own stated position*, which of the two beliefs are more advantageous? You see, the believer doesn't need in this case to quote a Scripture or insert something into another's belief system. All the believer has to do is show how a person's idea or belief or statement destructs under its own weight. This idea will come up again, but this is a good introduction to what a worldview is and some of the principles that every worldview must first assume, that is, *first principles*. One last example of a self-refuting/incoherent worldview comes from *A Handbook for Christian Philosophy*, by L. Russ Bush. After giving a basic definition of what a worldview is,<sup>89</sup> Dr. Bush goes on to explain how differing worldviews can interpret reality and then he applies some first principles to the matter:

... most people assume that something exists. There may be someone, perhaps, who believes that nothing exists, but who would that person be? How could he or she make such an affirmation? Sometimes in studying the history of philosophy, one may come to the conclusion that some of the viewpoints expressed actually lead to that conclusion, but no one ever consciously tries to defend the position that nothing exists. It would be a useless endeavor since there would be no one to convince. Even more significantly, it would be impossible to defend that position since, if it were true, there would be no one to make the defense. So to defend the position that nothing exists seems immediately to be absurd and self-contradictory.<sup>90</sup>

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nations of Western Europe today show some of the lowest birth rates ever recorded, and Eastern European birth rates are comparably low. Historians have noted that Europe is suffering the most sustained reduction in its population since the Black Death in the fourteenth century, when one in three Europeans succumbed to the plague. Lacking the strong religious identity that once characterized Christendom, atheist Europe seems to be a civilization on its way out. Nietzsche predicted that European decadence would produce a miserable "last man" devoid of any purpose beyond making life comfortable and making provision for regular fornication. Well, Nietzsche's "last man" is finally here, and his name is Sven. Eric Kaufmann has noted that in America, where high levels of immigration have helped to compensate for falling native birth rates, birth rates among religious people are almost twice as high as those among secular people. This trend has also been noticed in Europe." What this means is that, by a kind of natural selection, the West is likely to evolve in a more religious direction. This tendency will likely accelerate if Western societies continue to import immigrants from more religious societies, whether they are Christian or Muslim. Thus we can expect even the most secular regions of the world, through the sheer logic of demography, to become less secular over time.... My conclusion is that it is not religion but atheism that requires a Darwinian explanation. Atheism is a bit like homosexuality: one is not sure where it fits into a doctrine of natural selection. Why would nature select people who mate with others of the same sex, a process with no reproductive advantage at all?

(17, 19.). Some other studies and articles of note: Mohit Joshi, "Religious women less likely to get abortions than secular women," *Top Health News*, Health News United States (1-31-08), found at: <http://www.topnews.in/health/religious-women-less-likely-get-abortions-secular-women-2844> (last accessed 8-13-09); Anthony Gottlieb, "Faith Equals Fertility," *Intelligent Life*, a publication of the *Economist* magazine (winter 2008), found at: <http://www.moreintelligentlife.com/story/faith-equals-fertility> (last accessed 8-13-09); W. Bradford Wilcox, "Fertility, Faith, & the Future of the West: A conversation with Phillip Longman," *Christianity Today*, Books & Culture: A Christian Review (5-01-2007), found at: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bc/2007/mayjun/4.28.html?start=1> (last accessed 8-13-2009); Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3-32, esp. 24-29 -- I recommend this book for deep thinking on the issue.

<sup>88</sup> Adapted from a question by a student at a formal debate between Dr. Massimo Pigliucci and Dr. William Lane Craig during the Q&A portion of the debate. (DVD, Christian Apologetics, Biola University, apologetics@biola.edu, product # WLC-RFM14V).

<sup>89</sup> "A worldview is that basic set of assumptions that gives meaning to one's thoughts. A worldview is the set of assumptions that someone has about the way things are, about what things are, about why things are." L. Russ Bush, *A Handbook for Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 70.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

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Take note that Dr. Bush did not pit Christian theism against pantheistic Hinduism, it wasn't East vs. West, he merely enlightened the reader to the self-refuting nature within Eastern thinking itself... it was East vs. the East. While this chapter was not expressly a chapter to refute any particular philosophical or religious position, the adept reader will find – for sure – some great offensive explanatory power herein.

\* THE BELOW IS TAKEN FROM WAYNE GRUDEM, *POLITICS ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE* (GRAND RAPIDS, MI: ZONDERVAN, 2010), 261-263.

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### A. PRIVATE PROPERTY

According to the teachings of the Bible, government should both document and protect the ownership of private property in a nation.

The Bible regularly assumes and reinforces a system in which *property belongs to individuals*, not to the government or to society as a whole.

We see this implied in the Ten Commandments, for example, because the eighth commandment, “You shall not steal” (Exod. 20:15), assumes that human beings will own property that belongs to them individually and not to other people. I should not steal my neighbor’s ox or donkey because *it belongs to my neighbor*, not to me and not to anyone else.

The tenth commandment makes this more explicit when it prohibits not just stealing but also *desiring* to steal what belongs to my neighbor:

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s” (Exod. 20:17).

The reason I should not “covet” my neighbor’s house or anything else is that *these things belong to my neighbor*, not to me and not to the community or the nation.

This assumption of private ownership of property, found in this fundamental moral code of the Bible, puts the Bible in direct opposition to the communist system advocated by Karl Marx. Marx said:

- The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: abolition of private property.

One reason why communism is so incredibly dehumanizing is that when private property is abolished, government controls all economic activity. And when government controls all economic activity, it controls what you can buy, where you will live, and what job you will have (and therefore what job you are allowed to train for, and where you go to school), and how much you will earn. It essentially controls all of life, and human liberty is destroyed. Communism enslaves people and destroys human freedom of choice. The entire nation becomes one huge prison. For this reason, it seems to me that communism is the most dehumanizing economic system ever invented by man.

Other passages of Scripture also support the idea that property should belong to individuals, not to “society” or to the government (except for certain property required for proper government purposes, such as government offices, military bases, and streets and highways). The Bible contains many laws concerning punishments for stealing and appropriate restitution for damage of another person’s farm animals or agricultural fields (for example, see Exod. 21:28-36; 22:1-15; Deut. 22:1-4; 23:24-25). Another commandment guaranteed that property boundaries would be protected: “You shall not move your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in the inheritance that you will hold in the land that the **LORD** your God is giving you to possess” (Deut.

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19:14). To move the landmark was to move the boundaries of the land and thus to steal land that belonged to one's neighbor (compare Prov. 22:28; 23:10).

Another guarantee of the ownership of private property was the fact that, even if property was sold to someone else, in the Year of Jubilee it had to return to the family that originally owned it:

It shall be a Jubilee for you, when *each of you shall return to his property* and each of you shall return to his clan (Lev. 25:10).

This is why the land could not be sold forever: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me" (Lev. 25:23).

This last verse emphasizes the fact that private property is never viewed in the Bible as an *absolute* right, because all that people have is ultimately given to them by God, and people are viewed as God's "stewards" to manage what he has entrusted to their care.

The earth is the **LORD'S** and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein (Ps. 24:1; compare Ps. 50:10-12; Hag. 2:8).

Yet the fact remains that, under the overall sovereign lordship of God himself, property is regularly said to belong *to individuals*, not to the government and not to "society" or the nation as a whole.

When Samuel warned the people about the evils that would be imposed upon them by a king, he emphasized the fact that the monarch, with so much government power, would "take" and "take" and "take" from the people and confiscate things for his own use:

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day" (1 Sam. 8:10-18).

This prediction was tragically fulfilled in the story of the theft of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite by Ahab the wicked king and Jezebel, his even more wicked queen (see 1 Kings 21:1-29). The regular tendency of human governments is to seek to take control of more and more of the property of a nation that God intends to be owned and controlled by private individuals.