

WORLD VIEW¹

Definition: *World view is a set of presuppositions we hold of the basic make-up of the world.*

Definition explained:

- *set of presuppositions*—true, partially true, or entirely false assumptions; revealed in answering questions such as, Does God exist? Is time circular or linear?
- *we hold*—whether consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently
- *basic make-up*—revealed in answering questions such as, What is reality? How does one know anything?

Seven Questions Revealing World View:

- Q1 = What is reality? (God, gods, material cosmos)
Q2 = What is the nature of the world around us? (created/autonomous, chaotic/orderly, matter/spirit)
Q3 = What is a human being? (machine, sleeping god, naked ape, image of God)
Q4 = What happens to a person at death? (extinction, transformation, shadow)
Q5 = Why is it possible to know anything at all? (revelation, rationality, consciousness)
Q6 = How does one know right from wrong? (impetus for survival, moral God, usefulness for a purpose)
Q7 = What is the meaning of human history? (meaningless, divine purpose)

Post-Reformation Modifications of the Naturalistic World View:

Reformation = *Theistic*—the presupposition of God, an open system, and God immanently involved

18/19th Cent. = *Deistic*—the presupposition of God, an open system, but God not involved

Modern = *Rationalistic*—the presupposition of natural law, a closed system, and no God

Postmodern = *Pluralistic*—the presupposition of pluralism, no system, and any God²

Other Modern World Views:

- *Nihilism*—the quest for meaning yields only further meaninglessness
- *Existentialism*—conquering meaninglessness through creating value
- *Eastern Pantheistic Monism*—attaining oneness with the cosmos beyond personality, knowledge, good, evil
- *New Age*—eschatological movement anticipating the dawn of an entirely new configuration for human existence on a higher plane
- *Pluralism*—Socially, changing world demographics merging peoples and cultures has generated complex societies in which pluralism becomes a cherished value eventually elevated to creedal status to the point that any ideological or religious claim to be intrinsically superior is considered necessarily wrong. Philosophically, objective reality does not exist; all we can know is relativised by our individual perspectives, which are themselves just constructs of our social experiences; no interpretation has

¹Material developed from James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic World View Catalog*, Updated and Expanded Edition (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

²Material on pluralism developed from D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), Chapter 1, “The Challenges of Contemporary Pluralism,” pp. 13–54.

any unique worth that makes it inherently more valid than another; language and meaning are socially constructed; thus, “reason” itself is no more than a tool of social domination (contrast Marxist and capitalist historiography). Religiously, all religions are saying the same thing; all provide salvation with equal power; any exclusivity claim necessarily must be false, a naive modernist illusion about objective reality.