

Four Worldviews of Spiritual Realities

1. Animistic Worldview:

- 1.1. Amoral spirits and a high god:
 - many earthly spirits, capricious, amoral, powerful, bother humans.
- 1.2. Human centered:
 - living, dead and unborn.
- 1.3. Ancestral influence:
- 1.4. Magical view of power:

2. Indo-European Worldview:

- 2.1 Moral dualism: God and evil as opposites. Evil ontologically real and ultimate.
- 2.2 Tri-level universe: heavens = gods, society = humans, nature = animals.
 - heavens - gods centered, determine levels below.
- 2.3 Top value is Order, evil is chaos.
- 2.4 Battle for order:
 - focus on power and control
 - focus on battle and conquest
- 2.5 Hierarchy is necessary and good to keep order.

3. Western Secular Worldview:

- 3.1 Dualism of Supernatural/Natural.
 - Supernatural is God centered, religion, cosmic and spiritual
 - Natural
 - human centered
 - science, public truth
 - historical, biographical
 - fact
 - amoral
 - secular, autonomous
 - Supernatural
 - Spirit centered (God, angels, demons)
 - religion, private truth
 - cosmological
 - faith, feelings
 - moral
 - sacred, transcendent
 - connection between them is prayer and miracles

- 3.2 Excluded middle: no spirits on earth.
- 3.3 Autonomous individual, human centered, freedom and rights.
- 3.4 Hierarchy is needed to maintain order
- 3.5 Stress on structure and synchronic analysis of natural order
- 3.6 Positivism

4. Biblical Worldview:

- 4.1 Contingent dualism:
 - creator and cration
 - spirits part of creation
 - creation dependent on God's providence for its ongoing existence.
 - God is all powerful, and has final authority
- 4.2 Evil is contingent, not eternal - rebellion against God, idolotry
- 4.3 Relationships are the basic value:
 - God-God, God-human, human-human, human-angels/demons), etc.
 - chaos is o.k.
- 4.4 Lordship of Christ is central issues:
 - discipleship, not our search for God, but his revelation to us.
- 4.5 Equality:
 - value service, respect and servant leadership. Footwashing, communion with God!. Signs of the church
- 4.6 Responsibility, not rights are the center:
 - community, covenant
 - knowledge is to know a person s/o. hermaneutics belongs to the community.
 - knowledge = cognition + feelings + response.
- 4.7 Battle with evil a question of legitimacy
- 4.8 History is the basis for knowledge and reality.
- 4.8 Critical realist

Towards a Biblical Worldview

1. Theology:

1.1 God the father

1.2 Jesus Christ

1.3 Holy Spirit

2. The Kingdom of God:

2.1 Perfect creation

2.2. Fall and demonic

- evil is not coexistent and eternal with God and righteousness. It is derived, a distortion of good.
- Satan and the fallen angels rebelled against God's rule
- humans chose voluntarily to rebel. They are coconspirators, not victims.
- humans construct systems of corporate rebellion against God: 1) social systems that keep people from converting through fear and violence, 2) cultural ideologies that blind people.

2.3 Spiritual warfare

- God is unconditioned love. He loved us when we rebelled. He loves Satan but not the rebellion.
- God remained righteous even though this meant dying. He did not use violence as the supreme tool to defeat Satan. The Cross the the supreme victory.
- We are called to love our enemies, to bear suffering rather than to inflict it, to see what potential God sees in them and not focus on what they did in the past. We are to be redemptive in our response to our enemies.

2.4. Soteriology

- sin is ultimately a question of allegiance, of idolatry, the worship of the self.
- fundamentally it leads to broken relationships, unwilling to live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. See. Norman Kraus
- the law was given later to deal with external violations, and to stop them by punishing them. This was the basis of the Trespass Offering in the O.T. It failed to do the job. Sin abounded.
- we need to be born anew, to have new inner spirits with no longing to sin. This is the Sin-Offering. If we are new, we no longer need the law because it is written in our hearts.

2.5 Ecclesiology

- not a club, corporation or a crowd. It is a covenant community.
- in it the people are a new people that leave behind ethnic, gender and class identities.
- in it people are all priests - equality. Hierarchy is the Indo-European myth
- leadership is servant leadership, putting the others before one's self, responsibility rather than rights.
- church and state: not Christendom (Catholic and Reformed), or two-kingdoms (Lutheran) but a counter cultural community (Hauerwas and Wilimon).

3. Eschatology.

- in the end God will restore his rule over all the earth and heaven. The Kingdom of God will continue to the end of time.

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Diachronic Worldview Themes

1. History

2. Story and Myth

“God reveals himself to us not in a metaphysical formulation or a cosmic fireworks display but in the kind of stories that we use to tell our children who they are and how to grow up as human beings, tell our friends who we are and what it's like to be human. Story is the most adequate way we have of accounting for our lives, noticing the obscure details that turn out to be pivotal, appreciating the subtle accents of color and form and sense that give texture to our actions and feelings, giving coherence to our meetings and relationships in work and family, finding our precise place in the neighborhood and in history. Story relishes sharp-edged, fresh-minted details; but story also discovers and reveals the substrate of meaning and purpose and design implicit in all the details. Small and large are accorded equal dignity and linked together in an easy camaraderie by means of story (Peterson 1997, 3-4).

- too often we read stories and extract ‘spiritual principles’ and ‘moral guidelines’ or ‘theological truths’ and the corset ourselves in them to force a godly shape on our lives. As we enter story we enter and imaginatively participate, and find ourselves in a more spacious, freer and more coherent world. Story brings us into more reality, not less. It sharpens both sight and insight. It is the primary means we have for learning what the world is, and what it means to be human in it. From our childhood we demand stories.

What do these stories tell us about living this human life well, living it totally? Primarily and mostly they tell us that it means dealing with God. It means dealing with a lot of other things as well: dangers and parents and enemies and friends and But always, at the forefront and in the background of the circumstances, events and people is God. . . . And the God with whom we have to do can never be dealt with in an antiseptic theological laboratory as a speciality of heaven, but only on this earth--’ (Peterson 1997, 4-5),

We can't be human without God. We can't get away from God: he's there whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not.

We have a harder time taking the human elements of Jesus' story seriously than the divine. We've had gods aplenty. We don't know what it means to be human. God in the flesh is too close for comfort. There are miracles and ecstasy and supernatural in the Christian life, but they're never an escape from our humanity, never a shortcut around our humanity. God reveals himself to us in our humanity.

3. Ritual and Drama

World view Comparisons

<u>Modern Worldview</u>	<u>Animistic Worldview</u>	<u>Biblical Worldview</u>
Naturalistic materialism: secular, science, public truth	God high and removed This world is full of spirits	contingent dualism. God and creation,
Supernatural: Private truth feelings, faith	amoral,	
Science and control illness and in the end extend life	Normal life is free from sickness infertility and death. All misfortune due to others attacking us	Before fall, life free from Since fall, under curse of sin sin. Misfortunes a normal part of this fallen world
	Misfortunes caused by specific agents. Witchcraft explains them	Misfortunes, good and bad, under the design of God who loves us and cares for us
	Fear: life is full of \fear of spiritual	Peace and protection If we are in Christ, the evil one cannot touch us I John 5:18
	Hostilities not resolved by direct confrontation but by witchcraft accusations	Resolve relations by speaking the truth in love
	Seek revenge:	Revenge is the Lord's work
	Humans are victims	Humans have choices
	Jealous, Envy, hatred expressed	jealousy, envy and hatred are renounced and forgiven
	Kindness out of fear of witchcraft accusations	kindness out of love for one
	Others are guilty, I am a victim	We need all to confess our sins.

GENDER AND WORLDVIEW

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WOMEN

Stress relationships

- egalitarian, negotiational

Concrete synthetic analysis

- storytelling
- allow for emotions
- decisions based on complex relational base

Sin

- relational, concrete, situational
- self centered: I am nothing

MEN

Value power and influence systems

- hierarchical, bureaucratic, run economy, decide wars, make laws, define knowledge

Abstract rational analysis

- try to be totally logical, rational, objective
- dispassionate judgments
- decisions based on proof and reason, dualistic thinking--either right or wrong

Sin

- universal, abstract
- self centered pride: I am god

The Secular Humanist, New Age and Christian World Views

	Secular Humanist	New Age	Christian
1. Metaphysics			
God and the world	Universe is self-existent, no God	God is the world, pantheism	Creator/creation distinction
Nature of God	God is a superstition	God is impersonal/amoral	God is personal/moral
Nature of world (<i>cosmology</i>)	Matter/energy, atomistic	All is spirit/consciousness, monistic	Creation of God upheld by God, interconnected but not monistic
2. Epistemology (<i>basis for knowledge</i>)	Man is measure of all things, reason and science	Man is all things, truth within	Truth revealed in the Bible
3. Ethics	Autonomous and situational (relative)	Autonomous and situational (relative)	Based on the revelation of God's will, absolute
4. Nature of Humans	Evolved animal	Spiritual being, a sleeping God	Made in the image of God, now fallen
5. Human Problem	Superstition, ignorance	Ignorance of true potential	Sin—rebellion against God and his law
6. Answer to Human Problems	Reason and technology	Change of consciousness	Faith in and obedience to Christ
7. History	Linear but chance	Cyclical	Linear and providential
8. Death	End of existence	Illusion, entrance to next life (reincarnation)	Entrance to either eternal heaven or hell
9. View of Religion	Superstition, some good moral teaching	All point to the One (syncretism)	Not all from God, teach different things
10. View of Jesus Christ	Moral teacher	One of many avatars (periodic manifestations of God-guru)	The unique God-Man, only Lord and Savior