

Tips in Our Witness To Others: How To Infiltrate Into Their Thinking



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Understand their particular perspective

Why is this important?

Because how we dialogue with them depends on where they are coming from!

Biblical examples: Mark 2:1-13

Verse 5

"And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

Your Sins...

Biblical examples: Mark 2:1-13

"But there were some of the scribes sitting there reasoning in their hearts, Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" (verses 6-7)

"But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sin, He said to the paralytic- I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." (verses 10-11)

Persuading them From the Law and Prophets

"...They came to him at his lodging in large numbers and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God; and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening" (Acts 28:23).

From the Law and Prophets

Paul's approach in Acts 28:23-24

The Apostles' aim was merely to show that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Messiah (Acts 28:23).

Persuading them From Nature

Paul's approach in Acts 17:16-34

"Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man."

Acts 17:29

Tips with Atheist

How we dialogue depends on where they are coming from!

With an Atheist we will start from a different place than a theist.

Atheist

Truth -> God -> Bible -> Jesus -> Salvation

Unconvinced Naturalist

Personal Example:

“Even if you could prove to me that Jesus rose from the dead, it does not prove that Jesus is God. In a naturalistic world Jesus’ resurrection would just be considered an anomaly.”

Grad Student, University of Texas at Austin

Tips with Hindus

Different people require different kinds of evidence:

With an Hindu we will start from a different place than someone who accepts the worldview of theism but is not a Christian.

Theistic God -> Bible -> Jesus -> Salvation

Tips With Muslims

With Muslims we will start from a different place than a Hindu or Atheist.

Muslim

Bible -> Jesus -> Salvation

Tips With Chinese

Personal Example:

With a Chinese person we will have to be careful about their blending of worldviews.

The Importance of Understanding What They Believe

“If I am to help people who are not interested in looking at Jesus because they are quite happy with what they believe, I must first set about understanding what it is that they believe.

I must do everything I can to understand their world view. Only then will I know what kinds of questions to raise with them.”

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p. 47

A. Worldview Definitions

James W. Sire:

A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world.

“Worldview”: Definitions

“A worldview is a way of viewing or interpreting all of reality. It is an interpretive framework through which or by which one makes sense out of the data of life and the world.”

Norman Geisler, *Worlds Apart*, p.11.

B. Some key ideas to remember about worldviews

1. Our worldview lens will **color** our conclusions!

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 - * What lens we choice to view the world can lead to important **differences** in our beliefs.

World view example

“For example, an orthodox Jew looks at the exodus of Israel from Egypt as a divine intervention.

He sees it as a miracle. A naturalist, on the other hand, would view the same event (if it really happened) as an anomaly, that is, as an unusual natural event.”

Geisler & Watkins, *Worlds Apart*, p.11.

B. Some key ideas to remember about worldviews

1. Our worldview lens will **color** our conclusions!
 - * What lens we choice to view the world can lead to important **differences** in our beliefs.
 - * Seeing through different worldview lenses can lead to disagreements!

“Besides lack of knowledge, different underlying philosophical assumptions when approaching a problem can account for disagreements.

A Hindu or a New Ager, who approaches reality from a pantheistic point of view, may believe that human problems arise from ignorance—ignorance of one’s own divinity or of the illusory nature of the physical world.

A Christian, however, sees sin and its consequent separation from a holy God as the source of the human problem.”

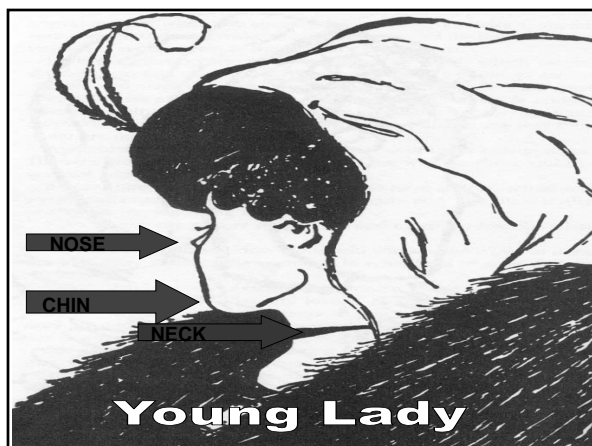
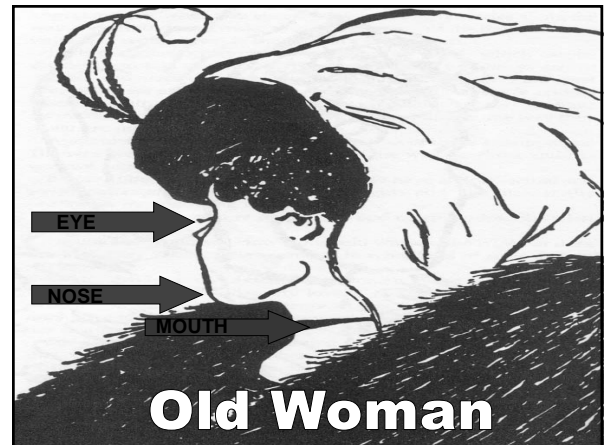
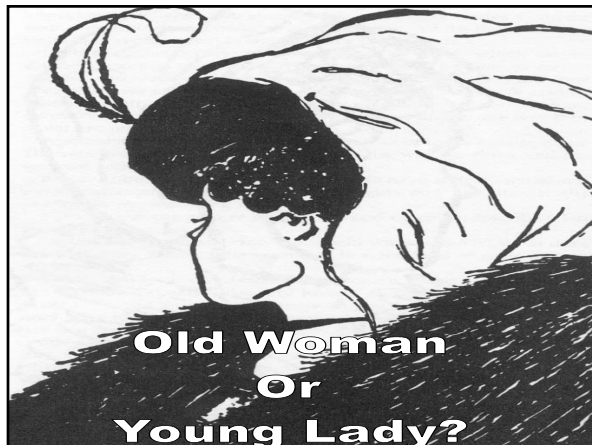
Paul Copan, *True For You, But Not For Me*, p.26.

Your Worldview Lens Can Color Your Conclusions

Harvard zoologist Richard Lewontin says that we Darwinist, “take the side of science (meaning Darwinistic 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, and in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so-stories, *because we have a prior 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, the materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in door.”^[1]

[1] Richard Lewontin, “Billions and billions of demons,” New York Review of Books 29 January 9, 1997), p. 31.



“Worldview”

- A pair of spectacles through which we see the world
- A way of life - inextricably linked to lived experience and behavior
- A vision for life – our view of life affects the life we live - governs both our unconscious actions and the actions we ponder before acting
- One’s worldview is fluid – when we experience a crisis or sudden insight or realization, our worldview could shift

How Do we Help Others?

We need to help people to see the world through Theistic lenses!

Then it makes it easier to build our case for Christianity

* Example: Hindu student

B. Some Key Ideas To Remember

2. If I can get an idea about their **worldview**, I can then choose the kinds of questions that will be most helpful in surfacing their discrepancies and giving them to the motivation to take one step closer to Christ.

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B. Some Key Ideas To Remember

2. If I can get an idea about their **worldview**....
 - a. One of the ways I can do this is by matching one's **behavior** to a worldview!
 - * Keep in mind that people are not always consistent behaving according to their beliefs!
 - b. Our goal should be to observe their behavior and determine from that which worldview more closely **resembles** how they live.

How do we determine which worldview they hold?

"Essentially this is a 'pattern-matching process.' I have in my mind a large number of contemporary worldviews and know the kinds of beliefs and values to which they lead."

Then I consider the beliefs and values being expressed by a person and I look for the best match (or selection of matches) to identify the underlying worldview or worldviews."

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p.50

3. Understanding some basic ideas associated with the major Worldviews can be even more helpful than having **specific knowledge** concerning many different kinds of religions

- * The fact is that some people hold to beliefs that are some what different than what their particular religion teaches!
- * One of the results of living in a postmodern world has been that beliefs have been more and more fragmented.

4. Identifying someone's worldview or worldviews is not **always easy** because people **pick and mix** their worldviews based on how they want to live.

"People believe what they want to believe, so they can do what they want to do!"

Worldview Confusion!

Pick-and-mix-worldviews

"In my experience most people seem to have adopted their worldviews pragmatically (that is, they choose those which work for them). Doing it this way enables them to live how they want to.

Very rarely do I come across people who live in a certain way because of what they believe (bottom-up worldview). Rather most people seem to believe something because they want to live in a certain way (top-down).

They are attracted to a belief not because they see that it is true but because it justifies some behavior which they find particularly appealing.

Pick-and-mix-worldviews (cont.)

In turn, this pragmatism necessarily leads to a pick-and-mix adoption of worldviews. As people face different situations, they wish to behave in different ways. Consequently, they have to believe different things. So, instead of adopting one complete worldview, they pick bits of different ones and mix them together."

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p.39

Worldview Confusion! Pick-and-mix-worldviews

"Examples:

A student who is a scientific materialist. "She sees consciousness as some kind of illusion and love as simply an evolutionary mechanism that enables us to propagate the species. When she walks out the door to go on a date with her new boyfriend, however, does she still believe this? I don't think so."

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p.40

Person example:

A student who doesn't believe in an afterlife and yet they believe the terrorist are going to be held accountable for how they live.

Worldview confusion! Pick-and-mix-worldviews

How is it possible for someone to hold to one belief and add another which may be totally contradictory to the previous one?

"Given that our young person already holds a set of contradictory beliefs, it is not a problem for her to adopt one more, even if it makes absolute claims or demands, provided she is not alerted to this. She is already managing to ignore one set of contradictions, so one more is not going to make much difference."

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p.41

Eph. 4:18 says "they are ignorant because of their hardness of heart."

5. Getting others to change their worldview is not easy because their behavior **reinforces** how they see the world which reinforces how they behave!

Worldview Confusion

"As individuals develop, they do seem to adopt certain answers to the fundamental questions of life. These answers are put together into a comprehensive system- a view of the world.

At the same time, however, this view of the world becomes the way they view the world. It becomes the spectacles through which they look, the grid upon which they organize reality. This view affects the way they answer the fundamental questions of life, and so on.

If we understand worldviews this way, we can see why they are so hard to change. They tend to become firmly entrenched because they constantly reinforce themselves through the self-sustaining feedback loop."

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p. 35-36

Worldview Confusion Self-sustaining Feedback Loop

World View

- Answers to fundamental questions of life form our view of the world
- "Bottom-Up" induction

Influent



Behaviors

- People believe what they want to believe so that they can do what they want to do
- "Inside-Out" application



Reinforce

The Way We View The World

- How we look at & interpret the world, events, people, purpose, value, meaning
- "Top-Down" interpretation

Determine

The Three Major Religious World Views



God made all God is all No God at all

Naturalism

Naturalism asserts that matter exists eternally and is all there is. God does not exist. The universe is a closed system. Humans are "complex machines;" personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not yet fully understand.

The idea of human dignity derives from the evolutionary necessity of survival of our species. Death is the extinction of the individual. Human history is a linear system of events linked by cause and effect without any overarching purpose. Morality is ultimately decided by human beings and is relative, depending upon the survival needs of the individual and the human species.

Taken from *The Universe Next Door* by James Sire, IV Press, 1988

Nihilism

Nihilism is not a philosophy but a denial of philosophy, a denial of the possibility of knowing, a denial that anything is valuable or meaningful. Interestingly, Nihilism is the logical conclusion of Naturalism. It is a philosophy of despair and is unlivable. After denying God's existence, the nihilist goes on to question whether the explanations go far enough.

For example, if we are merely the products of random, directionless evolution, then how can we know for sure that our minds are coming to correct conclusions? Similarly, how can we as humans claim that we are any more valuable than rocks, since we are just matter with different organization. Morality is completely arbitrary and is therefore meaningless.

Taken from *The Universe Next Door* by James Sire, IV Press, 1988

Existentialism

Existentialism was the philosophical attempt to restore some meaning and purpose by rising above the gloomy conclusions of Nihilism. The existentialist does not oppose naturalism but rather seeks to go beyond it by saying that humans are unique in that they can and should create meaning and purpose for themselves. It seeks to explain how we as human beings can be significant in an otherwise insignificant world.

* Note the subtle but important contrast with theism: Both identify meaning, morality, value, etc., but while the theist looks to God for an absolute standard, the existentialist looks to himself alone.

Taken from *The Universe Next Door* by James Sire, IV Press, 1988

Existentialism

The existentialist divides the world into two parts: The Objective world is the domain of science, natural laws, cause and effect, death, etc. The second is the world of the Subjective where humans are free to create meaning, purpose, value, morality, etc. In fact, say the Existentialists, it is the duty of the "authentic" person to rebel against the absurdity and despair of Naturalism/nihilism and create value. Of course, since each individual is the ultimate determiner of value, truth is no longer absolute but relative to every person in the universe.

Taken from *The Universe Next Door* by James Sire, IV Press, 1988

Postmodernism

Postmodernism- a world in which truth is socially constructed. In the postmodern view, there is no longer a single story, a metanarrative (i.e., worldview) that holds Western culture together. With postmodernism, no metanarrative can have more credibility than any other. All stories are equally valid.



"I define postmodern as incredulity toward meta-narratives,"

Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, 1984, xxiv

“ Deriving a Worldview”:

James W. Sire:

“A world view is essentially derived from the answers to these 7 questions:.”

Sire's Seven Basic Questions

1. **What is prime reality—the really real?**
e.g., God, matter.
2. **What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?**
3. **What is a human being?**
4. **What happens to a person at death?**
5. **Why is it possible to know anything at all?**
6. **How do we know what is right and wrong?**
7. **What is the meaning of human history?**

Theism

- A. *God exists beyond and in the world.*
- B. *The world was created ex nihilo.*
- C. *Miracles are possible and have occurred.*
- D. *Man is made in God's image.*
- E. *There is a moral law.*
- F. *Man is immortal.*
- G. *Man will be rewarded or punished.*

Theism

1. **What is prime reality - the really real?**

* *God is infinite and personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign, good, and the ultimate reality.*

Theism

2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?

* God created the cosmos from nothing (ex nihilo), is ordered, and remains open to God's constant, intimate involvement with it.

Theism

3. What is a human being?

Human beings are created in the image of God and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, and creativity. Human dignity is grounded in God, the fact that he made us and bestows dignity upon us.

Human beings were created good, but through the Fall the image of God became defaced, though not so ruined as not to be capable of restoration; through the work of Christ, God redeemed humanity and began the process of restoring people to goodness, though any given person may choose to reject that redemption.

Theism

4. What happens to a person at death?

For each person death is either the gate to life with God and his people [heaven] or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill human aspirations [hell].

Theism

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?

Human beings can know both the world around them and God himself because God has built into them the capacity to do so and because he takes an active role in communicating with them.

Theism

6. How do we know what is right and wrong?

Because we are made in God's likeness our moral nature is not based on man's standard but on the character of God as good (holy and loving). This moral law is revealed partly through the human conscience but more clearly through divine revelation.

Theism

7. What is the meaning of human history?

History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes for humanity.

Pantheism

1. What is prime reality - the really real?
 - A. Atman is Brahman; that is, the soul of each and every human being is the Soul of the cosmos.
 - * Atman (the essence, the soul, of any person) is Brahman (the essence, the soul, of the whole cosmos, i.e., God).

Pantheism

1. What is prime reality - the really real?
 - B. God is the one, infinite-impersonal, ultimate reality. God is the cosmos. God is all that exists; nothing exists that is not God.
 - C. If anything that is not God appears to exist, it is *maya*, illusion, and does not truly exist. Anything that exists as a separate and distinct object—this chair, not that one; this rock, not that tree; me, not you—is an illusion. It is not our separateness that gives us reality, it is our oneness—the fact that we are Brahman and Brahman is the One.

Pantheism

1. What is prime reality - the really real?
 - D. Ultimate reality is beyond distinction; it just is.
 - * This is the antithesis of Western thought. To distinguish is to think. The laws of logic demand distinction. To know reality is to distinguish one thing from another, label it, catalog it, recognize its subtle relation to other objects in the cosmos. In the East to “know” reality is to pass beyond distinction, to “realize” the oneness of all by being one with the all.

Pantheism

2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
 - A. ***Some things are more one than others. Many (if not all) roads lead to the One.***
 - * *Reality is a hierarchy of appearances. Some “things,” some appearances are closer to being at one with the One. There is a hierarchy in Eastern thought. Matter pure and simple is the least real; then vegetable life, then animal; then humanity. But humanity is also hierarchical; some people are closer to unity than others. The Perfect Master, the Enlightened One, the guru are the human beings nearest to unity and pure being.*

Pantheism

2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
 - B. *Getting to oneness with the One is not a matter of finding the one true path. There are many ways from maya to reality. Each individual must be correctly oriented on his own path to oneness. Orientation is not as much a matter of doctrine.*

This makes sense, since distinction is not an aspect of Eastern thought. Ideas are not finally important. Eventually all religions lead to the same end. Realizing oneness with the One is more a matter of technique, and techniques also vary.

Pantheism

2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
 - C. *Different gurus and different Eastern religions, and different sects of each religion, advocate different techniques for achieving oneness. Many advocate chanting a mantra, such as Om or meditating. Both of these are intellectually contentless activities, since their purpose is to pass beyond thought and distinction. Others advocate yoga, good works, or even sex to achieve oneness.*

Pantheism

3. What is a human being?

- * *To realize one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond personality.*
- 1). *Remember, Atman is Brahman; Brahman is one and impersonal. Therefore, Atman is impersonal. So, human beings in their essence—their truest, fullest being—are impersonal. Personality is part of maya.*
- 2). *This notion is diametrically opposed to the theistic view of man.*
- 3). *For one to "realize" our being and our oneness with Brahman is to abandon our complex personhood and enter into the undifferentiated oneness of Brahman.*

Pantheism

4. What happens to a person at death?

- * *Death is the extinction of personality and individuality but the soul, Atman, is indestructible.*
- 1). *Human death is the end of an individual embodiment of Atman, and the end of the person. But the soul, Atman, is indestructible.*
- 2). *No human being (individual or person) survives death. Atman survives, but Atman is impersonal. When Atman is reincarnated, it becomes another person. Thus, Hinduism does teach immortality of the soul, but not personal and individual immortality. Remember, personality is part of maya.*

Pantheism

- * *Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.*
- 3). *In death, nothing valuable perishes, for only Atman is eternal and valuable.*
- * *This sheds light on why the Eastern world puts low priority on Individual embodiments of life—this man, that woman, you, me—are of no value. But in essence they are all of infinite value, for in essence, they are infinite.*

Pantheism

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?

- a. *To realize one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond knowledge. The principle of non-contradiction does not apply where ultimate reality is concerned.*
- b. *From the statement that Atman is Brahman, it follows that human beings in their essence are beyond knowledge. Knowledge, like personality, demands duality—a knower and a known. But the One is beyond duality; it is sheer unity. Thus, language cannot convey the truth about ultimate reality. Language only applies to maya.*

Pantheism

6. How do we know what is right and wrong?

- * *To realize one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond good and evil; the cosmos is perfect at every moment.*
- 1). *Brahman is beyond good and evil; the distinction between good and evil vanishes when contemplating ultimate reality.*

Pantheism

- 2). *But in this world of maya, acts appear to be good or evil. Here the principle of karma comes into play. Karma is the notion that one's present fate is the result of a past action, typically from a former existence. Karma is tied to the notion of reincarnation, which follows from the general principle that nothing that is real (i.e., no soul) ever passes out of existence. It may take centuries to be rejoined to the One, but it will always exist, for it is eternal. On the way back to the One, however, it goes through whatever series of illusory forms its past action requires according to karma. One's karma determines where they will come back on the Eastern hierarchy (this is the theoretical basis for India's caste system).*

Pantheism

- 3). The principle of karma gives the Eastern worldview the appearance of a moral universe. That is helpful, for it is impossible for people to act as if there is no difference between right and wrong. Failing to give account for this would be devastating to Hinduism and other pantheistic views. But there are two things that belie this appearance of a moral universe.
 - a. The basis for doing good is not to benefit the other person. Karma demands that every soul suffer for past "sins," so there is no value in alleviating suffering. The soul so helped would have to suffer later. So there is no agape-love, giving love, nor would it benefit the recipient. Doing good is merely working off your own karma.
 - b. All actions are merely part of maya. Ultimate reality is beyond good and evil. In ultimate reality, there is no distinction between good and evil.

Pantheism

7. What is the meaning of human history?

- * *To realize one's oneness with the One is to pass beyond time. Time is unreal. History is cyclical.*

Atheism

1. What is prime reality - the really real?

- * *Matter exists eternally and is all there is. God does not exist.*

Atheism

1. What is prime reality - the really real?

- A. *The cosmos is primary and ultimate, for now, with no eternal Creator-God in the picture*

The cosmos itself becomes eternal—always there, though not necessarily in its present form (in fact, certainly not in its present form). Matter is eternal. In some form, the matter of the cosmos has always been.

"The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be."

Carl Sagan,

Atheism

1. What is prime reality - the really real?

- B. *Reality (i.e., the universe) is ultimately monistic. The universe is composed of one substance with various modifications: matter. It is not composed of two substances, such as matter and mind. There is no aspect of the universe that is not material. The universe has no relationship to any Supreme Being or God, either transcendent of the universe or immanent within it.*

Atheism

2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?

The cosmos exists as a uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system.

Atheism

3. What is a human being?

Human beings are complex "machines"; personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not yet fully understand.

Atheism

4. What happens to a person at death?

Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.

Atheism

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?

Good question!

Who are you asking? - No one to ask

Atheism

6. How do we know what is right and wrong?

* *Ethics is related only to human beings.*

Naturalists say that both consciousness and self-determination came with the appearance of human beings, and so ethics also came then. Therefore no natural law is inscribed on the cosmos.

Atheism

7. What is the meaning of human history?

History is a linear stream of events linked by cause and effect but without an overarching purpose.

- IV. Developing a strategy for getting others to reconsider whether their worldview is strong enough to build their lives upon.

A. Speak to them in a way that encourages them to question whether their foundation is adequate.

"If they are currently comfortable with their hodgepodge of different worldviews, we must help them become uncomfortable with it. We must encourage them to step outside their worldview feedback loops and ask themselves the difficult questions."

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, 42.

Removing
Illusions
and
Distortions

Sometimes people may not be motivated to change until they see the problem!

- A. Speak to them in a way that encourages them to question whether their foundation is adequate



- * **Speak to them in a way that encourages them to question whether their foundation is adequate.**

"I have some information which I want to communicate to them. I want to do it in such a way that I encourage them to think, question and come to their own conclusion.

This usually means giving them information in the form of a question rather than a statement. There is no set, pat approach, but I often use phrases such as, 'I can see a lot of truth in that, but have you thought about...?'"

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p.77

Illuminate

Two criteria for helping others to determine the value of a particular worldview

1. Is the worldview meaningfully affirmed.
2. Is it livable

Illuminate

Two criteria for helping others to determine the value of a particular worldview

1. Is the worldview meaningfully affirmed.

- * If it can not be affirmable, it can not be true!

Consistently Affirmable

What do we mean by affirmable?

To affirm means "to say something and be willing to stand by its truth: declare positively

Webster's American Dictionary, p. 15

- * The difference between sayable and affirmable

The Difference Between Sayable And Affirmable

Something is unaffirmable, if I can't affirm the statement without denying the very statement I am trying to affirm by making the statement.

Test for Truth

"No statement is true if, in order to make it, the opposite would have to be true.

Geisler & Watkins, *Worlds Apart*, p. 266.

Beliefs that are unaffirmable

Reality is not rational

You can't know anything about ultimate reality

Nothing of value exists (Total Nihilism)

Why is Nihilism unaffirmable?

Doesn't the Nihilist at least value the right to express his or her beliefs?

Worldviews that are unaffirmable?

Pantheism - Why is it unaffirmable?

God exists but I don't

Atheism – There is no ultimate reality

Why is Atheism unaffirmable?

"One can not meaningfully affirm that reality has no ultimate meaning (as in God) without thereby making the claim that his statement is ultimately meaningful about reality."

Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 233

Affirming The Truth Of Theism

Ultimately, every other worldview apart from Theism is unaffirmable!

* Unaffirmability can be used as a test for the falsity of a worldview.

Now, If there are only seven major worldviews to describe reality and six of them are unaffirmable, then the seventh view must be true!

Furthermore Theism as a worldview is actually undeniable.

Illuminate

Two criteria for helping others to determine the value of a worldview

1. Is the worldview meaningfully affirmed.
2. Is it livable

Beliefs That Are Unlivable?

The view that Ultimately reality is beyond good and evil is certainly unlivable.

"One day I was talking to a group of people in the digs of a young South African in Cambridge. Among others, there was present a young Indian who was of Sikh background but a Hindu by religion.

He started to speak strongly against Christianity, but did not really understand the problems of his own beliefs. So I said, "Am I not correct in saying that on the basis of your system, cruelty and non-cruelty are ultimately equal, that there is no intrinsic difference between them?"

Quote by Francis Schaffer cited in Norman Geisler in *False Gods of our time*, p. 85-86

Beliefs That Are Unlivable?

The view that Ultimately reality is beyond good and evil is certainly unlivable.

He agreed...the student in whose room we met, who had clearly understood the implications of what the Sikh had admitted, picked up his kettle of boiling water with which he was about to make tea, and stood with it steaming over the Indian's head.

The man looked up and asked him what he was doing and he said, with a cold yet gentle finality, "There is no difference between cruelty and non-cruelty." Thereupon the Hindu walked out into the night."

Quote by Francis Schaffer cited in Norman Geisler in *False Gods of our time*, p. 85-86

Beliefs that are unlivable?

I can't really say that what Hitler did was wrong? Student,
University of Texas at Austin

Response:

It must be hard to live your life that way, huh? (using and indirect approach)

Beliefs That Are Unlivable?

Nihilism

Nobody can live a life consistent with nihilism.

Remember from meaninglessness, nothing at all follows, or rather, anything follows.

Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900

"God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves?"

The Gay Science, 125

God

A Christian Worldview

"O Lord, Our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet; all flocks and herds, and the beast of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

(Psalm 8)

Identify the Worldview?

"...all aspects of reality are subject to evolution. From atoms and stars to fish and flowers; from fish and flowers to human societies and values; indeed, that all reality is a single process of evolution. In 1859 Darwin opened a passage leading to a new psycho-social level, with a new pattern of ideological organization, an evolution centered organization of thought and belief. Man's destiny is to be the sole agent for the future evolution of this planet. In the evolutionary pattern of thought there is no longer either need or room for the supernatural... The evolutionary vision is enabling us to discern, however incompletely, the lineaments of the new religion, that we can be sure will arise to serve the needs of the coming era."

(Julian Huxley, Keynote address at Centennial Celebration of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 1959).

Identify the Worldview

"If I created my own reality, then - on some level and dimension I didn't understand - I had created everything I saw, heard, touched, smelled, tasted; everything I loved, hated, revered, abhorred; everything I responded to or that responded to me.... I was therefore responsible for all there was in my reality. If that was true, then I was everything.... I was my own universe. Did that also mean I had created God and I had created life and death? To take responsibility for one's own power would be the ultimate expression of what we called the God-force. Was this what was meant by the statement I AM THAT I AM?"

(Shirley MacLaine, *It's All in the Playing*)

Questions for the Naturalism

1. If matter and energy is all there is, how do you escape the following conclusions: morality is meaningless; there is no purpose in life; humans have no intrinsic value?
2. By naturalism, the law of the jungle (survival of the fittest) is supreme. Yet if the government adopted a policy of doing away with the old, the weak and the infirm for the sake of a stronger species (as Hitler did), on what basis could you oppose this using naturalism as a basis for your reasons?

Questions for the Nihilism

1. Nihilism claims we can't know anything to be true. If you can't know anything for sure, how does the Nihilist know that his way of looking at the world is the correct one?
2. Is Nihilism as a worldview truly livable?
3. If one lived out the implications, would there be any place for love, justice, or anything we call virtue?
4. How could we conclude that moral choices were anything other than random preferences like the preference for certain kinds of ice cream?
5. Do you really believe this and do your actions bear this out? Was Hitler wrong or just different?

Questions for the Existentialism

1. Who says you are of value? You may say so, but what if another decides otherwise and treats you that way?
2. What if they decide to value a certain race or sex less than their own?
3. If value is not absolute, but arbitrary, determined by each of us, then who are you to stop that person from carrying out their values?
4. If you say that society determines what is valuable, is that not another way of saying that might makes right?
5. Would you say then that it was right for Hitler to kill 6 million Jews since he had the might to do so?

Questions for the Existentialism

6. If we all determine our own moral standard, then is not good everything and yet nothing? For my bad could be your good.
7. On what basis is there to say that one *should* do the good. Does not the word "Should" imply an absolute standard?
8. Is it not true that to say that "people should be allowed to believe or do what they want as long as it doesn't hurt anybody," is just another way of imposing an arbitrary value on others?
8. If I choose not to value some people what would be wrong in that?

Questions for the Existentialism

9. If you say that values, truth and morals are relative, do you live that way? Or do you insist that some things are true, and that some morals are absolute (like torturing babies or taking another man's wife are wrong)?

Problems With Postmodernism

1. The rejection of all metanarratives is itself a metanarrative. Again, this is self-refuting.
2. The idea that we have no access to reality (there are no facts, no truths of the matter) but that we can only tell stories about it is self-referentially incoherent.

It claims to tell us something true about reality, i.e., that it is unknowable and inaccessible to us. This idea cannot account for itself, for it tells us something, that on its own account, we can't know. Likewise, when Nietzsche says "truth is a mobile army of metaphors" or conventional "lies," he is making a charge which implicitly claims to be true but on its own account can't be.

Problems with Atheism

He must assume that the personal arose from the impersonal, that matter plus time and chance give rise to mind.

Does it not seem more reasonable to believe in the existence of a Mind who created matter *and* minds?

Questions for the Atheist

1. Is it more reasonable to believe that the personal came from the personal, or that the personal came from the impersonal?
2. "It is easier to believe that infinite mind can make matter than it is that finite matter can produce mind that can contemplate the infinite."^[1]

[1] Norman Geisler, *Knowing the Truth About Creationism*, Ann Arbor Michigan: Servant Books, 1989. p.7

Problems With Pantheism

Absolute pantheism is self-defeating. God is the changeless absolute. Man, however, must go through a process of change. Enlightenment, before he reaches this awareness that he is God.

Some pantheists attempt to escape this dilemma by allowing that man has some reality, whether it be emanational, modal, manifestational, or otherwise. But if we are really only modes of God, then why are we not conscious of being so? How did this metaphysical amnesia arise and come to pervade and dominate our whole experience? If we are being deceived about our consciousness of our individual existence, how do we know the pantheist is not also being deceived when he claims to be conscious of reality as ultimately one?

Questions For the Pantheist

1. If the world is really an illusion, then how can we distinguish between reality and fantasy?
2. Do you think that Pantheism really solves the problem of evil?
3. Don't you think that to pronounce evil as an illusion is not only frustrating and hollow to those experiencing it, but is also philosophically inadequate?
4. If evil is an illusion, what is the origin of this illusion? Why has man perceived it for so long, and why does it seem so real?

Questions For the Pantheist

5. Is it not true that if God is all and all is God, then evil is an illusion, and therefore there cannot be no absolute right or wrong?
6. If there is no ultimate distinction between good and evil deeds then wouldn't any foundation for morality be totally destroyed by this view?
7. Doesn't Pantheism's conception of God seem to be incoherent?

To say that God is infinite and yet somehow shares its Being with creation is to raise the question of how the finite can be infinite.

Questions For the Pantheist

8. If reincarnation is true and there are more and more people who eventually are reaching nirvana, why is the population of the world increasing?
9. If everyone is striving to be better and better with each reincarnation in order to reach nirvana, then why is the world not becoming a better or kinder place to live in?
10. If everyone's suffering is ultimately a result of a past life of sin, Can you tell me how suffering begin in the first place?
11. Why do people accumulate bad karma if their "evil" actions were only illusory.

Tips in Our Witness To Others:
How To Infiltrate Into Their Thinking



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