

What's Your Personal Worldview?

Lesson #2: What is the Christian Worldview?

I. Introduction

First we are going to clearly lay out what is meant by a “Christian” Worldview. There are many people worldwide that claim the name of Christ, but that does not tell us whether or not they rest their faith on the “essentials” of the faith. Most don’t even know what the essentials of the faith are. I believe that most churches do not thoroughly and systematically teach the essentials of the faith.

Based on my study of Scripture, I believe that:

- Many who name the name of Christ are not in fact Christian.
- Many may hold some of the ideas contained within Christianity are not “in Christ”.
- Many have not been born anew by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Many Evangelical Christians are born again into Christ.
- It is likely that some who are in the non-evangelical denominations may have been born again.

It is clear that most born again Christians will largely not mature in the faith above what their pastors, and/or teachers lead them to.

II. Definitions / Scope

A Christian Worldview is a worldview that holds to the essentials of the faith on all points and that integrates those essentials into the “12 elements”* that define one’s worldview. In the following sections (III. & IV.) we will integrate these 11 essentials (section III. below “What is Christian Orthodoxy?”) into the 12 elements that define the scope of a worldview.

* As presented in Lesson #1, section III. “The 12 Elements of a Comprehensive Worldview”; p. 1 & 2.

III. Uniquely Christian Essentials (from “What is Christian Orthodoxy”)

The following list of essentials was compiled by myself a number of years ago (≈15 years ago) based on research into different creeds and confessions, trying to eliminate denominational distinctives. The criteria for these points was that if someone did not believe in these essentials, they would be “unbelieving” in important theological points that are critical to the faith based on Scriptural truths.

My final test of each and every one of these was, “When would I break Christian fellowship with a person based on his/her not holding that point as Scriptural truth?” I would actually still accept to be in joint Christian fellowship if they were young in the faith or significantly untrained in the doctrinal truth of Scripture, but would clearly encourage them to strive to become more mature in the faith.

There are a number of theological distinctives that I believe that I constantly refused to add to the list because although I believe them to be Scripturally true, nevertheless, I would not break fellowship with others over those things.

Statement Number	Doctrinal Essentials (Rev 6 1/27/20)
1 <u>Source of Truth?</u> - Epistemology	Believers who accept these doctrines should be considered brothers & sisters in the faith. <u>God has revealed Himself to man through General Revelation (cosmos & conscience) and through Scripture both of which is without error. Both can and often are misinterpreted by man resulting in error.</u> Ps 19:1-4; Ps 119:14-16; Matt 5:18; Jn 14:25-26; Acts 17:11; Rom 1:18-20; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:19-21
2 <u>Who is God?</u> - Theology	<u>There is one personal God who is all sovereign, all powerful, all knowing, both immanent in and transcendent over His creation.</u> Job 39; Is 14:27; Is 43:13; Is 57:15; Eph 1:18-23; 1 Tim 6:15-16

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3 <u>Who is God?</u> - <u>Theology</u>	This one God exists eternally in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and are absolutely one in essence and being. Gen 1:26; Is 63:7-10; Matt 3:16-17; Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14
4 <u>Who is God?</u> - <u>Theology</u> (<u>Christology</u>)	The man Jesus is the Christ of Scripture. He is one person of the God-head, eternally existent, fully God with all of the attributes of the Godhead, and fully man, having lived a life without any sin. Ps 42:1-4; Eph 1:18-23; Col 1:15-18; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 1:1-4; Heb 2:9-18; 1 Jn 4:2-3
5 <u>Redemption?</u> - <u>Theology</u> (<u>Christology</u>)	Jesus <u>is</u> eternally existent, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died on the cross, was buried, and bodily rose again the third day, <u>ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and He will judge all men.</u> Is 53; Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1 & 2; John 19 & 20
6 Man's condition? - <u>Anthropology</u>	Man apart from God is a being fallen from fellowship with God through his own sin and in his own natural state is motivated by a sin nature due to Adam's fall, and is incapable of knowing or serving God on his own. Is 64:6-7; Jer 17:9; John 3:18-19; Rom 3:9-23; Rom 5:12-14; Gal 3:21-22; Eph 2:1-3
7 God's gracious gift towards man - <u>Soteriology</u>	Man is brought back into fellowship with God entirely through the substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross. This provision is wholly a work of God's grace and mercy towards the believer. It is not of works nor man's merit in any way. Rom 5:6-9; Rom 10:9-10; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Gal 2:15-21; Eph 1:3-14; Col 1:13-22; Col 2:9-15; 1 Tim 1:15-17;
8 Man's adopted state - <u>Soteriology</u>	The Holy Spirit regenerates the lost man's heart, indwells the true believer, comforts, teaches, and empowers that believer to glorify God and enables conformity to the image of Christ. John 14:26; John 16:12-16; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 15:30; 1 Cor 6:18-20; Eph 4:30
9 Man's accountability - <u>Thanatology</u>	All men are accountable to God and will be judged by God. The lost to everlasting damnation in hell based on their own sin, the saved to eternal life in communion with the God-Head based on the effectual atoning work of Christ on the cross. Acts 10:42-43; Rom 6:22-23; 2 Thess 1:5-10; Heb 10:30-31;
10 God's <u>Agency</u> - <u>Ecclesiology</u>	The Church is God's immediate agency on the earth until Christ's return, representing the very Body of Christ with the gospel call to the world. Acts 20:28; Matt 16:17-19; Col 1:18; Col 1:24-29; Eph 3:8-12; Heb 12:22-24
11 Man's responsibility - <u>Teleology</u>	Christian's are to live their lives in conformity to the clear teachings of Scripture, in holiness, set aside for service to God in order to glorify Him. Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:22-24; Phil 4:8; Col 1:9-14; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 1 Pet 1:13-16

IV. The Essential Elements of the Christian Worldview

A truly Christian Worldview is the most accurate depiction of reality as revealed to us by General Revelation (the world, the cosmos, and the conscience) and by Special Revelation (inspired Scripture).

General Revelation is evidentiary in nature and Special Revelation is propositional in nature. By that we mean that General Revelation displays the evidence that God and reveals His transcendence and sovereignty over His creation. Special Revelation reveals propositional truths about God, His purposes, His works, and His expectations of man.

The reason the Christian worldview is the most accurate is simple, it comes to us from God (YHWH - Yahweh) by whom all of the universe was created in accord with His own principles and laws. It cannot be wrong in its purest God given state. Man can misinterpret one or both, but neither can be wrong!

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Worldview Element	Definition	Christian Belief Regarding that Element
1. Epistemology	Beliefs of source of, nature of, limits of, and validity of truth.	Truth is an absolute characteristic of reality that actually exists, created by God for His own purpose. Our knowledge of truth is derived from the study of General Revelation with great integrity and from the reading of Scripture, likewise with great integrity to honor the One True God. Scripture is verbally and plerarily inspired and inerrant in all that it affirms. (WCO*; Item #1)
2. Metaphysics	Beliefs of the ultimate nature of, characteristics of, and meaning of reality.	The whole of reality that we experience includes a spiritual realm in addition to and apart from the physical world in which we live. Our God is a spiritual being while His Son in His incarnation manifested the nature of God to man. (WCO*; Item #2, 3, & 4)
3. Theology	Beliefs regarding the existence, nature of, and attributes of divinity [god(s)].	There is one personal triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who is all sovereign, all powerful, all knowing, both immanent in and transcendent over His creation. (WCO*; item #2 & 3)
4. Cosmology	Beliefs of the origins, nature of the world and the universe.	The whole material universe and all that it contains (matter, energy, dimensions of space and time, and the laws of Physics) was created by the God-Head "ex-nihilo" (meaning: out of nothing.) (Gen 1:1) & (WCO*; item #2)
5. Anthropology	Beliefs of the origins, nature of mankind and his role and function in reality.	Man is a direct creation of God, created in a state of innocence and in fellowship with God. Eve (& Adam) were deceived by Satan resulting in the corruption of man and his ability to have relationship with the holy, righteous, and just God resulting in man's "fall" into a sinful state. (WCO*; item #6)
6. Teleology	Beliefs about the meaning and purpose of the universe, its design, inanimate elements and its inhabitants.	Man was created by God with a immanent and a transcendent purpose. God's works are primarily recovering man from his fall into sin and corruption. The cosmos was designed by God to enable Him to bring forth a people of His own. (WCO*; items #9, 10, & 11)
7. History	Beliefs about the nature of human history and its relevance to humans regarding their role in historical events.	All of human history is sovereignly controlled by God in minute detail such that God will fully accomplish His purposes for the creation. History is linear, heading to a finish of God's own purpose. History and the cosmos have a final end. (WCO*; items #9, 10, & 11)
8. Theodicy	Beliefs of the origin of, nature of, and meaning/purpose of evil in the world.	The wicked serve the sovereign God in and through their wickedness. Although God is certainly not the author of evil, yet He manages and directs evil that men choose to do, for His own purpose. (WCO*; items #6, 7, & 18)

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9. Thanatology	Beliefs about the nature of and purpose of human death.	All men are assigned to death in accordance with God's plan and purpose. We serve God during this life as faithful servants or we serve God unwillingly, out of our own nature of wickedness. But we all serve an entirely sovereign God. (WCO*; items #9, 10, & 11)
10. Ethics	Beliefs about the requirements of human conduct and the source and role of moral values.	The faithful are to live their lives in conformity to the clear teachings of Scripture, in holiness, set aside for service to God in order to glorify Him. Character matters. Humbleness before the face of God must be exercised. A willingness to do for others is essential. (WCO*; items #9, 10, & 11)
11. Values	Beliefs about non-moral values, non-moral behavior, and non-moral goals in life.	In becoming Christ-like, righteous men must also conform to the loving (agape) and caring aspects of the customs of their particular culture and fulfill the Royal commandment of Christ through every element of their own behavior. (WCO*; is not applicable. Many Scripture passages apply.)
12. Aesthetics	Beliefs & preferences about beauty, taste, music, art, etc.	God in His great providence has given man many (non-spiritual) gifts to enjoy, including beauty, nature, music, art, hobbies, constructive interests, books, etc. We must not use these gifts inappropriately nor accept corrupted forms of them for our own use. (WCO*; is not applicable.)

* WCO – What is Christian Orthodoxy? ⁰⁴⁴²

V. Concluding Remarks

So this is the Christian Worldview. These specific answers listed above to the 12 generic elements of all worldviews, if “seriously held” by a born again individual will have an immense effect on that person’s daily decisions, responses, behaviors, and purpose in life. These 12 answers are radical and life changing! There is nothing remaining of the old values of the world.

A non-Christian, not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, could not “seriously hold” these values (Christian beliefs) listed in the table above! For a born again Christian to “seriously hold” these values would require that person to live an “examined life”.

Such a life would be one of continuous review of one’s own integrity with regard to holding these radical beliefs. It would require such a person to daily review their own decisions, responses, behaviors, and purposes to affirm that one is in fact living in accordance with these radical concepts. The indwelling Holy Spirit will illuminate your personal analysis and convict you of sin (your shortcomings). This is the process of sanctifying oneself before the face of God! (Corum Deo)

Important Quotations

I remember Mama standing in front of me, her hands poised on her hips, her eyes glaring with hot coals of fire and saying in stentorian tones, “Just what is the big idea, young man?” Instinctively I knew my mother was not asking me an abstract question about theory. Her question was not a question at all - it was a thinly veiled accusation. Her words were easily translated to mean, "Why are you doing what you are doing?" She was challenging me to justify my behavior with a valid idea. I had none.

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Recently a friend asked me in all earnestness the same question. He asked, "What's the big idea of the Christian life?" He was interested in the overarching, ultimate goal of the Christian life. To answer his question, I fell back on the theologian's prerogative and gave him a Latin term. I said, "The big idea of the Christian life is *coram Deo*. *Coram Deo* captures the essence of the Christian life." This phrase literally refers to something that takes place in the presence of, or before the face of God. To live *coram Deo* is to live one's entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.

R. C. Sproul; from blog of 1/11/13

If we listen carefully to the world and to those trapped in the world, with its futility and sin, we can hear the cry of the lost behind the cacophony of false ideas and twisted worldviews. That can awaken our empathy and compassion in such a way that we can effectively do what the Apostle calls for: "Always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you . . . with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). **Gene Edward Veith**; *TableTalk of January 2013*; p. 23

Because of the mindlessness of our culture, people do not persuade others of their views (religious or otherwise) on the basis of argument and reason, but rather, by expressing emotional rhetoric and politically correct buzzwords. Reason has given way to rhetoric, evidence to emotion, substance to slogan, the speech writer to the makeup man, and rational authority to social power. The way we reach decisions today, the manner in which we dialogue about issues, and the political correctness we see all around us are dehumanizing expressions of the anti-intellectualism in modern society when it comes to broad worldview issues. Rhetoric without reason, persuasion without argument are manipulation. Might - it is wrongly believed - makes right. **J. P. Moreland**; *Love Your God with All Your Mind*; p. 145