"Ours is an age of religious cacophony, as was the Roman Empire of Christ's time. From agnosticism to Hegelianism, from devil-worship to scientific rationalism, from theosophical cults to philosophies of process: virtually any worldview conceivable is offered to modern man in the pluralistic marketplace of ideas. Our age is indeed in ideological and societal agony, grasping at anything and everything that can conceivably offer the ecstasy of a cosmic relationship or of a comprehensive Weltanschauung [worldview]." ~ John Warwick Montgomery¹

There are 10,000 religions in the world, how do you learn to address all these beliefs unless you lived as long as the patriarchs listed in Genesis. Fortunately, it is not as hard as you think. You can take all those 10,000 religions and break them down into 7-worldviews. They are as follows:²

- 1. **Atheism:** *No God exists beyond or in the universe.* Atheism claims that the physical universe is all there is. No God exists anywhere, either in the universe or beyond it. The universe or cosmos is all there is and all there will be. All is matter. It is self-sustaining. A few of the more famous atheists were Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean-Paul Sartre.
- 2. **Theism:** An infinite, personal God exists beyond and in the universe. Theism says that the physical universe is not all there is. There is an infinite, personal God beyond the universe who created it, sustains it, and who acts within it in a supernatural way. He is transcendently "out there" and immanently "in here." This is the view represented by traditional Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- 3. **Pantheism:** *God is the All/Universe*. For a pantheist, there is no transcendent Creator beyond the universe. Creator and creation are two ways of denoting one reality. God is the universe or All, and the universe is God. There is ultimately one reality, not many different ones. All is mind. Pantheism is represented by certain forms of Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, and Christian Science.

¹ Faith Founded on Fact: Essays in Evidential Apologetics (Newburgh, IN: Trinity Press, 1978), 152-153.

²Geisler, Norman L.: *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Books, 1999 (Baker Reference Library), S. 787

- 4. **Panentheism:** *God is in the universe, as a mind is in a body.* The universe is God's "body." It is his actual pole. But there is another "pole" to God other than the physical universe. He has infinite potential to become. This view is represented by Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and Shubert Ogden.
- 5. **Finite Godism:** A finite God exists beyond and in the universe. Finite godism is like theism, only the god beyond the universe and active in it is limited in nature and power. Like deists, finite godists generally accept creation but deny miraculous intervention. Often God's inability to overcome evil is given as a reason for believing God is limited in power. John Stuart Mill, William James, and Peter Bertocci hold this worldview.
- 6. **Polytheism:** *Many gods exist beyond the world and in it.* Polytheism is the belief in many finite gods, who influence the world. They deny any infinite God stands beyond the world. They hold that the gods are active, often believing that each has its own domain. When one finite god is considered chief over others, the religion is called henotheism. Chief representatives of polytheism include the ancient Greeks, Mormons, and neopagans (for example, wiccans).
- 7. **Deism:** *God is beyond the universe, but not in it.* Deism is theism minus miracles. It says God is transcendent over the universe but not immanent in it, certainly not supernaturally. It holds a naturalistic view of the operation of the world. In common with theism, it believes the originator of the world is a Creator. God made the world but does not work with it. He wound up creation and lets it run on its own. In contrast to pantheism, which negates God's transcendence in favor of his immanence, deism negates God's immanence in favor of his transcendence. Deists have included Francois-Marie Voltaire, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine.

Religious and non-religious foundations [worldviews] helps us approach the world's 10,000 [or so] religions³ by boiling these religious beliefs down to their basic beliefs is imperative, and leaves us with a more manageable number to study and compare predictions with experiences.⁴ Ravi Zacharias

³ 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.

⁴ 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,

simplifies the above by stating that a "coherent worldview must be able to satisfactorily answer four questions: that of origin, meaning, morality, and destiny." 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." 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.⁷

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 (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 wellbeing.⁸

Why even care about worldviews? Are we called as Christians to defend our views against those of other views? Yes, we are.

1 Peter 3:15-16

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).

⁵ Ravi Zacharias, *Deliver Us from Evil* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishers, 1997), 219–220.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Norman L. Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 785-786.

⁸ James W. Sire, Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 122.

But set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give a *defense* to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. However, do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame.

There are three important aspects of apologetics that help the Christian in his or her walk, they are:⁹

- Correct belief (truth) is important.¹⁰
- Christianity necessitates an apologetic response.¹¹
- People deserve proper respect.¹²

According to Scripture, salvation demands more than personal sincerity. It also requires the objective correctness of the belief(s) in which a person places his faith. Doctrinal correctness matters, for false doctrine shipwrecks faith and imperils the soul. Faith in a false God or a false Christ or a false gospel simply cannot result in salvation. It is necessary to salvation to have faith in the genuine Lord and Savior; to place trust in Christ's true person, nature, and work.

Believers may not fully comprehend or may have genuine misunderstandings or even limited exposure to and about Christian truth, but there are doctrinal parameters outside of which a person cannot cross without suffering apostasy and divine judgment. Embracing a false Christ and/or a false' gospel leads to dire consequences. Paul's warning to the Galatian church concerning a different gospel dramatically underscores the importance of sound (biblical) doctrine:

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:8-9)

The world's religions draw people toward false gods, false Christs, and false gospels. The ultimate spiritual watershed is a person's response to Jesus Christ. As the apostle John declares, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36).

¹¹ To guide people past faith barriers and expose fallacious religions for the danger they represent, Christians bear a responsibility to study the teachings and perspectives of the world's religions and offer a sound, respectful critique (Acts 17:22-31; 2 Cor. 10: 4-5; Titus 1:9;1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3).

Christian apologists must take the religions of the world seriously. To do so requires diligent study of religious history and origins, sources of authority, categories, teachings, arguments, and worldview orientation. The effective apologist will come to know other religions and their adherents with an insider's mastery. Only then can he or she graciously expose a given religion's flaws in light of essential Christian truth.' Not an easy task for the apologist, a well-done expose can have a powerful effect. This endeavor seems to be what Scripture calls for in terms of the apologetics enterprise. "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). The serious challenge posed by the world's non-Christian religions deserves Christianity's best apologetic effort in response.

¹² Because all people bear God's own image, the Christian must show people of other religions proper personal respect (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; James 3:9).

As creatures of God, all people bear the imago Dei and therefore have inherent dignity and moral worth. Every person consequently deserves respectful treatment regardless of race, sex, social class, or religious belief. Christians are called by God to guard the individual right of others to believe what they choose, whether their particular beliefs are wrong, absurd, or contrary to Christian truth. This regard basically amounts to respecting human personhood, Volition, and individual moral responsibility. Christians should even tolerate the practices (religious and otherwise) of others, so long as those practices are legal, moral, and

⁹ Kenneth Richard Samples, *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 178-180

¹⁰ Salvation depends on the objective correctness, the truth, of what a person believes (John 3:36, 8:24; 2 Cor. IIA; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 1:3-4, 18-19; 6:3; Titus 1:9, 2 Pet. 2: 1; 1 John 2:22-23, 4:1-3; 2 John 7-11; Jude 3-4).

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Some other examples of the faith being defended in the New Testament are as follows:

Acts 22:1

Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you.

Philippians 16b

... knowing that I am appointed for the *defense* of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is without foundation, and so is your faith. In addition, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified about God that He raised up Christ—whom He did not raise up if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Therefore those who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have placed our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

What does the word "Defense" mean in the Greek? Some notes from my study bible should clear up some of its meaning from 1 Peter, Colossians, Jude and Philippians.

1 Peter 3:15

but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

prudential. However, respecting another person's beliefs must not be misconstrued as approving those beliefs. Christians are responsible to use their powers of persuasion to convince to convince others of truth, especially the ultimate truth of, Jesus Christ. While being socially tolerant, Christians must at the same time be intellectually intolerant of conflicting truth-claims (see chap. 17 oil the issue of tolerance).

How people are treated leaves a powerful and lasting impression—for or against the gospel witness. The Bible calls believers to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) motivated by love and expressing love in words, actions, and attitude.

3:15 answer. "Answer" is the Greek apologia, from which we get our word "apologetics," meaning the careful, logical defense of the Christian faith against the attacks of its adversaries and showing its validity as the true saving gospel of God, our Creator and Savior. In effect, Peter is admonishing believers to be always prepared to give an apologetic for the faith, especially when confronted by those who deny it and would destroy it if they could. This surely means that there is an effective apologetic that can be given, and it is each Christian's responsibility to study (2 Ti 2:15) and be ready to give it when needed. In contrast, the unbeliever is "without excuse" (Ro 1:20), "without an apologetic." His faith is strictly based on credulity and wishful thinking, not historical and scientific evidence like that for the Christian faith. See Philippians 1:7,17 on the "defense" (same word) of the gospel.

3:15 a reason. "Reason" is the Greek logos, from which we derive our word "logical." We do, indeed, have logical, factual reasons for our hope in Christ (on "hope," note 1:3,13,21).

3:15 meekness and fear. Note that our apologetic is to be given not with boasting or pride, but "with meekness and fear" (compare 2 Ti 2:24-26). The Christian should not be ignorant in his "answer," but neither should he be arrogant.

Colossians 4:6

Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

4:6 speech. "Speech" here is the Greek logos, often translated "word." In addition to being gracious and tasteful (i.e., "seasoned with salt"), the speech of the Christian should be "sound" (Tit 2:8), "edifying" (Ep 4:29), meaningful (Ma 12:36), "quiet" (1 Th 4:11), trustworthy (3:9), and clean (3:8).

4:6 with grace. If we have "grace in [our] hearts" (Colossians 3:16), we can exhibit grace in our speech.

4:6 answer. The word "answer" is the Greek apokrinomai. In its 250 occurrences in the New Testament, this is the only place where it is not used as a simple narrative statement (e.g., "he answered and said"). In other words, we can know just how to reply to every statement or question in any conversation, and to do so graciously and tastefully. It is different from the word "answer" in 1 Peter 3:15 ("be ready always to give an answer"); there the word is apologia, meaning "systematic defense." When the Christian faith is attacked, we need to be able to give an "apologetic" in its defense. In ordinary conversation, on the other hand, we need to have a gracious and helpful reply to whatever is being said or asked.

Jude 3

Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write and exhort you to *contend for the faith* that was delivered to the saints once for all.

- 3 needful. The word "needful" suggests a sense of urgency. Jude had been planning to write a straightforward exposition of the doctrines associated with the "common salvation"—that is, the great salvation held in common by all who had been "sanctified," "preserved," and "called" (v. 1). Instead, however, the Holy Spirit compelled him to write in defense of the faith which even then was under intense satanic attack.
- <u>3 earnestly contend.</u> Used only once in the New Testament, "earnestly contend" is from the Greek *epagonizomai*. It was used of athletes intensely agonizing in the grueling training for a coming contest. Jude thus graphically stresses the urgency of defending the faith. Note also Philippians 1:7,17; 1 Timothy 6:19-20; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:9; 1 Peter 3:15. The defense of the gospel is no indifferent matter to be left to a few specialists, but one to which all believers should be trained and committed.
- 3 *the faith.* "The faith" is not in reference to the simple trust which we place in Christ in salvation, but to the entire body of Christian truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.
- 3 once delivered. That is, the faith that was delivered once and for all to the saints (that is, to all true believers) for guarding and keeping safe. As Paul wrote Timothy, "Keep [that is, guard] that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Ti 6:20).

Philippians 1:7

It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the *defense* and establishment of the gospel

1:7 *defence.* "Defence" is the Greek *apologia*, a legal term referring to a formal defense as in a courtroom. Many modern evangelicals think the gospel does not need to be defended, just preached. Paul and Timothy knew better. The gospel was under attack in their day and is even more so now, and it does need a sound defense. See also Philippians 1:17.

Presuppositions and guesses guide uninformed worldviews.

"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." ¹³

These presuppositions have consequences, there is a story told by Ravi Zacharias that makes this point:

Have you ever heard the story of a man who used to go to work at a factory and every day would stop outside a clockmaker's store to synchronize his watch with the clock outside? At the end of several days the clockmaker stopped him and said, "Excuse me, sir, I do have a question for you. I see that every day you stop and adjust your watch with my clock. What kind of work do you do?" The man said, "I'm embarrassed to tell you this; I keep the time at the factory nearby, and I have to ring the bell at four o clock every afternoon when it is time for the people to go home. My watch doesn't work very well, so I synchronize it with your clock." The clockmaker says, "I've got bad news for you. My clock doesn't work very well either, so I synchronize it with the bell that I hear from the factory at 4:00 every afternoon." If you'll pardon the grammar, what happens when two wrong watches correct themselves by each other? They will get wronger and wronger all the time. Even a clock that doesn't work may show you the right time twice a day...but it's not because it's keeping time!¹⁴

One author puts it thusly:

"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

¹³ Francis A. Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture (Crossway Books; 1976), 19-20

¹⁴ Ravi Zacharias, "Address to the United Nations' Prayer Breakfast."

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is especially true of big questions, 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.... 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."¹⁵

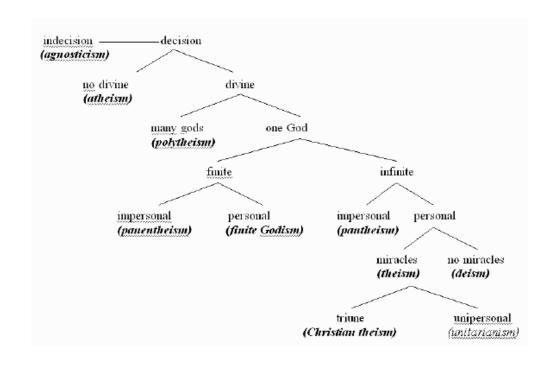
Again, "no state of awareness is so fundamental"! Ronald Nash supports this idea by saying that intellectual maturity is closely linked with one's awareness about worldviews. 16

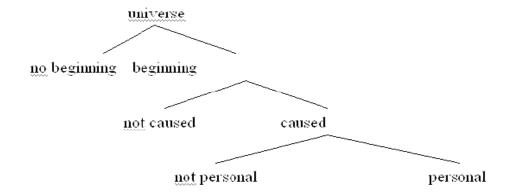
What follows are some helpful charts:

¹⁵ Joseph R. Farinaccio, Faith with Reason: Why Christianity is True (Pennsville, NJ: Book Specs, 2002), 9, 10.

¹⁶ Ronald H. Nash, Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 9.

| | THEISM | ATHEISM | DEISM | FINITE CODISM | PANENTHEISM | PANTHEISM POLYTHEISM | POLYTHEISM |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| GOD | One. infinite. | None | One, infinite, | One, finite, personal | 1 | One, infinte, | Two or more, |
| | personal | | personal | | infinite, actually finite, personal | impersonal | finite, personal |
| WORLD | Created ex nihilo Finite, temporal | Uncreated, Eternal (material) | Created ex nihilo Finite, temporal | Created ex materia, or ex nihilo, eternal | Created ex materia and ex deo | Created ex deo, eternal immaterial | Created ex materia, eternal |
| GOD/WOR LD RELATION | God beyond and in world | World only | God beyond world and not in it miraculously | God beyond and/or in world | God beyond world potentially and in it acturally | God is world | God in world |
| MIRACLES | Possible and actual | Impossible | May be possible but not actural | May be possible but not actural | Impossible | Impossible | Not possible, supernormal events only |
| MAN'S NATURE | Soul-body, immortal | Body only, mortal | Body mortal, soul immortal | Body mortal, soul immortal | Body mortal, soul immortal (some advocates) | Body mortal, soul immortal | Body mortal, soul immortal |
| MAN'S DESTINY | Resurrection to reward or punishment | Extinction | Reward or punishment of the soul | Rewards and/or punishment | Live on in God's memory | Reincarnation, merging with God | Divine reward or punishment |
| ORIGIN OF EVIL | Free choice | Human Ignorance | Free choice (and/or ingnorance | In God's internal struggle | Necessary aspect of God | An illusion | In struggles between gods |
| END OF EVIL | Will be defeated by God | Can be defeated by man | Can be defeated by man or God | Can be defeated by man or God | Con's be defeated by God or man | Will be reabsorbed by God | Will not be defeated by gods |
| BASIS OF ETHICS | Grounded in God | Grounded in man | Grounded in nature | Grounded in God or man | Grounded in a changing God | Grounded in lower manifestations of God | Grounded in gods |
| NATURE OF ETHICS | Absolute | Relative | Absolute | Relative | Relative | Relative | Relative |
| HISTORY AND GOAL | Linear, purposeful, God appointed end | Linear or cyclical, purposeless, endless | Linear, purposeful, endless | Linear, purposeful, endless | Linear, purposeful, endless | Circular, illusory, endless | Circular, purposeful, endless |
| REPRESEN TATATIVE | Judaism, Christianity, Islam | David Hume, Friedrich Nietzche, Antony Flew | Voltaire, T. Jefferson, Thomas Hobbes, | John Stuart Mill, William James, Peter Bertocci | Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, Schubert M. Ogden | Hinduism, Transcendentalis ts, Spinoza, | Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, Mormonism |
| Chart is reprodicalifornia, 198 | Chart is reproduced from Geisler, Norn California, 1984. ISBN 0-89840-073-2 | orman and William W | atkins Perspectives, U | Chart is reproduced from Geisler, Norman and William Watkins Perspectives, Understanding and Evaluating Today's World Views, Here's Life Publishers, Inc. San Bernardino, California, 1984. ISBN 0-89840-073-2 | g Today's World Views, He | re's Life Publishers, I | nc. San Bernardino, |





COMPARING COMPETING WORLDVIEWS

| POST- MODERNISM | Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida, Rorty | Atheism | Anti-Realism | Cultural Relativism | Punctuated Evolution | Socially-Constructed Selves | Sexual Egalitarianism | Critical Legal Studies | Leftism | Interventionism | Historicism |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| COSMIC HUMANISM | MacLaine, Spangler, Chopra, Walsch | Pantheism | Non-Naturalism | Moral Relativism (Karma) | Cosmic Evolution | Higher Consciousness | Non-Traditional Family, Church, State | Self-Law | Self-Government (New World Order) | Universal Enlightened Production | Evolutionary Godhood |
| MARXISM- Leninism | Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao | Atheism | Dialectical Materialism | Proletariat Morality | Punctuated Evolution | Monism (Behaviorism) | Classless Society | Proletariat Law | Statism (Communist World Gov't) | Scientific Socialism | Historical Materialism |
| SECULAR HUMANISM | Humanist Manifestos I, II, III | Atheism | Naturalism | Moral Relativism | Neo-Darwinian Evolution | Monism (Self-Actualization) | Non-Traditional Family, Church, State | Positive Law | Liberalism (Secular World Gov't) | Interventionism | Historical Evolution |
| ISLAM | Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah | Theism (Unitarian) | Supernaturalism (Faith and Reason) | Moral Absolutes | Creationism | Mind/Body Dualism (Un-fallen) | Polygamy, Mosque, Islamic State | Shari'ah Law | Islamic Theocracy (Global Islam) | Stewardship of Property | Historical Determinism (Jihad) |
| CHRISTIANITY | Bible | Theism (Trinitarian) | Supernaturalism (Faith and Reason) | Moral Absolutes | Creationism | Mind/Body Dualism (Fallen) | Traditional Family, Church, State | Divine/Natural Law | Justice, Freedom, Order | Stewardship of Property | Creation, Fall, Redemption |
| | | Тнеогосу | Рицоѕорну | ETHICS | Biology | Рѕусногобу | Sociology | LAW | POLITICS | ECONOMICS | HISTORY |