

## 2. A Survey of Worldview Options

Grove Christian Camp

Event Webpage: [www.worldvieweyes.org/Grove2020.html](http://www.worldvieweyes.org/Grove2020.html)

Resources: [www.roomfordoubt.com/recommended-resources](http://www.roomfordoubt.com/recommended-resources)

Richard Knopp, M.A., M.Div., Ph.D.  
Professor of Philosophy & Christian Apologetics  
Lincoln Christian University

Email: [rknopp@lincolnchristian.edu](mailto:rknopp@lincolnchristian.edu)  
Program Director, Room For Doubt  
Program Director, WorldView Eyes

### Introduction

- A. Importance of identifying and understanding the different “ISM’S.”
- B. Colossians 2:8 “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit ...”
- C. Watch for (a) the worldview, (b) a correlating symbol, and (c) an object illustration.  
(We’ll have a test at the end.) ☺

### I. Christian Theism (*theos* = Greek for “God”)

- 1. Overview ideas
  - a. **C** \_\_\_\_\_ CREATOR GOD
  - b. **S** \_\_\_\_\_ SAVING GOD
  - c. **I** \_\_\_\_\_ INCARNATE GOD
- 2. Basic theme: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”
- 3. Object illustration: A \_\_\_\_\_ CROSS.
- 4. A foundation and motivation for learning to \_\_\_\_\_ LOVE God.
- 5. Key terms: transcendent; immanent; monotheistic.

### II. Deism (*deus* = Latin for “God”)

- A. Overview ideas
  - 1. **C** \_\_\_\_\_ CREATOR \_\_\_\_\_ God.
  - 2. **A** \_\_\_\_\_ ABSENT \_\_\_\_\_ God.
  - 3. **N** \_\_\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_\_\_ revelation **ONLY**.
  - 4. **T** \_\_\_\_\_ TRANSCENDENT \_\_\_\_\_ **ONLY**.
- B. Basic theme: “God is gone. Use your own God-given reason.”
- C. Object illustration: \_\_\_\_\_ GRANDFATHER \_\_\_\_\_ CLOCK \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. Cultural connections
  - 1. Notable examples: Thomas Jefferson; Thomas Paine; Antony Flew, a recently converted famous atheist.
  - 2. Most American teens are “moral therapeutic deists” (Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, 2005, 2009).
- E. Biblical connections (2 Tim 3:5; Matt 22:29; 1 Cor 2:4-5).

F. Worldview implications:

1. God is NOT INCARNATE.
2. God is NOT IMMANUEL (see Matt. 1:23).
3. There are NO MIRACLES.

### III. Secular Humanism (“Modernism”)

A. Overview ideas

1. N NATURE **ONLY**.
2. O OPTIMISTIC.
3. S SCIENCE oriented.
4. E EVOLUTION by non-intelligent matter.

B. Basic theme: “We can do it!”

C. Object example: LEGOS.

D. Cultural connections: Charles Darwin; Richard Dawkins; Neil deGrasse Tyson (the newer “Cosmos” series; Bill Nye the science guy; Michael Shermer; Bill Maher; Ricky Gervais; the Titanic; *Mission Impossible*; *CSI* TV series; *Criminal Minds*).

E. Biblical connections (Hosea 12:6; Mark 10:23-25; Acts 17 Epicureans; Luke 12:15-23; Luke 15:11-14; Matt 16:26; Phil 3:18-19; Isa 5:21).

### IV. Nihilism (*nihil* = Latin for “nothing”)

A. Overview ideas

1. N NOTHING really matters.
2. A ABSURDITY of Life. (“I don’t care”; “I give up”)
3. P PESSIMISTIC.

B. Basic theme: “We got nothing, and we’re going nowhere.”

C. Object illustration: A TOILET.

D. Cultural connections: “Murder by Number”; “Final Destination”; “Bohemian Rhapsody”; Douglas Adams’ *Hitch Hiker* “trilogy”; John Cage; “Seinfeld” (show about nothing); Kurt Cobain, Columbine shootings; Samuel Beckett.

E. Biblical connections (Eccl 2:10-11).

### V. Atheistic Existentialism<sup>1</sup>

A. Background (Camus; Sartre)

B. Overview ideas

1. F FREEDOM and FEELINGS and FUN.
2. A ABSURDITY of life.
3. D DEFINE yourself.

<sup>1</sup> Existentialism can be *ATHEISTIC* (e.g. Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus) or *THEISTIC*. *Theistic* forms stress having a direct encounter and relationship with some higher power. They minimize or reject the importance of doctrine, scripture, or history in favor of personal experience and some direct communication with God.

- C. Basic theme: “Life is absurd. Be free, define yourself, and have fun.”
- D. Object illustration: Mr. POTATO HEAD
- E. Cultural connections: Friedrich Nietzsche; John Paul Sartre; Albert Camus; a lot of middle school, high school, and college youth! Ferris Bueller; the character “Jack” in the movie *Titanic*; *Groundhog Day*; *Dead Poets’ Society* (*carpe deum*); Hugh Hefner; purely subjective sexual identity (i.e., there is no human nature).
- F. Biblical connections (Phil 3:17-21; I Pet 4:1-5).

## VI. Postmodernism

- A. Overview ideas
  1. F FRAGMENTATION
  2. U UNCERTAINTY
  3. R RELATIVISM
- B. Basic theme: “Truth totally depends on your perspective.”
- C. Object illustration: A REMOTE CONTROL
- D. Cultural connections: Madonna; Britney Spears; *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; *The Truman Show*; *The Matrix*; *Lost*; *Inception*; Reality TV shows; *Modern* [Postmodern?] *Family*.
- E. Biblical connections (Deut 12:8; Isa 5:20).

## VII. Pantheism (and New Age) (pan = all) + (theism = God)

- A. Overview ideas
  1. A ALL is God.
  2. C CONNECT with the Oneness.
  3. T TECHNIQUES to use (e.g. meditating, yoga, mantras).
- B. Basic theme: “Connect with the oneness of the universe.”
- C. Object illustration: YIN YANG
- D. Cultural connections: Hinduism; Taoism; some forms of Buddhism (e.g. Richard Gere, Steven Segal); New Age (e.g. Shirley Maclaine; Rhonda Byrne, “The Secret”); Animism; Wicca; *Star Wars*; Scientology (e.g. John Travolta, Tom Cruise); Deepak Chopra; Eckhart Tolle; *Lion King*; Oprah.
- E. Biblical connections
  1. Gen 3 (The serpent and Adam/Eve).
  2. Acts 17:16-33 (The Stoic philosophers).
- F. Key terms: Pantheism; Monism (vs. monotheism); Atman (the true self) is *Brahman* (the One); Samsara (the wheel of rebirth = reincarnation); Karma (works-produced principle that determines future incarnations).

**VIII. Syncretism:** Selecting different beliefs and practices with little attention to whether they are consistent or coherent (fit together). It’s like a “worldview buffet!”

