Introduction

A. Definitions:

1. A “WORLDVIEW” is “a way of life guided by basic beliefs and priority values that are expressed in preferred behavior.”

2. A “CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW” is “a way of life with basic beliefs, priority values, and preferred behavior that are consciously directed by a love for God and His Word for humanity.”

B. Fundamental facts about a worldview.

1. ___________ has a worldview.

2. It is initially adopted and often held ________________.

3. It is a set of assumed answers to the ________________
   ________________
   ________________

C. BIG questions.

1. By TOPICS or “categories” (James Sire, The Universe Next Door).
   a. God or Prime Reality (e.g. Is there a God or not? What kind of God/god is it? What is the relationship between this God/god(s) and the physical world and humanity?)
   b. Nature (e.g. Is the universe eternal? self-generating? created? real or illusion? self-operating? purposeful or accidental?)
   c. Humanity (e.g. Origin? purpose? value? unique?)
   d. Knowledge (e.g. Can we truly know anything? How much? How? Is there any revelation from a supernatural source? What kind?)
   e. Ethics (e.g. What is the basis for judging right/wrong, if anything? Are there any “absolutes”?)
   f. Death (e.g. What happens afterward? Judgment? Reincarnation? Nothing?)
   g. History (e.g. Is there any overall purpose? Endless cycle? Any miracles or providence?)

2. Using a PROBLEM/SOLUTION scheme (see Nancy Pearcey’s Total Truth).
   a. Creation (e.g. Where did we come from?)
   b. Fall (e.g. What’s wrong with us?)
   c. Redemption (e.g. How can we ‘fix’ it?)

D. Various lists of different worldviews.

1. James Sire’s “catalog” of WVIs (see The Universe Next Door, 5th ed.)

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© Dr. Rich Knopp, “Understanding Alternative Worldviews”

Nancy Pearcey: “Like so many young people, I had learned my Bible but had not clue how to relate biblical doctrine to the realm of ideas and ideologies. When I first encountered the broader intellectual world beyond the circle of family and church, I was an easy target…. Before they leave home, they [Christian teens] should be well acquainted with all the “isms” they will encounter, from Marxism to Darwinism, to postmodernism. It is best for young believers to hear about these ideas first from trusted parents, pastors, and youth leaders, who can train them in strategies for analyzing competing ideologies” (*Total Truth*, pp. 124, 126).

E. Biblical principles for encountering other worldviews.

1. **Col 2:8** “See to it that no one takes you ________________ through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” (NASV)

2. **2 Cor 10:5** “We are ____________________ speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God ….”

3. **Titus 1:9-11** “… able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to __________________ those who contradict.”

4. **Rom 1:21** “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became __________________ in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

5. **Romans 1:18-32**
   
a. All have a ______________________ of God.

b. Some ______________________ the knowledge of God.

c. Some ______________________ alternatives to God.

d. Some ______________________ something else for God.

e. God may ______________________ His influence.

I. **Worldviews in the Bible**

A. Adam/Eve vs. the serpent (Gen 3).

1. The serpent questioned their ETHICS (“Has God said, ‘You shall not eat …?’”).

2. The serpent questioned their view of DEATH (“You surely will not die”).

3. The serpent questioned their view of KNOWLEDGE (“… you will become like God, knowing good and evil”).

4. The serpent questioned their view of GOD and HUMANITY (“… you will become like God …”).

B. Biblical creation accounts vs. Egyptian, Babylonian, and Sumerian creation accounts (Genesis 1–3).

C. Moses vs. Egyptian deities (Ex. 1-4; 7-11).

1. Many gods (e.g. of sun, joy, war, air, earth, water) were worshipped, including Pharaoh.
2. The ten plagues involved God's judgment on “all the gods of Egypt” (Ex. 12:12).

D. Elijah vs. false prophets of Baal (I Kings 18).

E. Daniel vs. Babylonian religion (Daniel 1-4) and Persian religion (Daniel 5:30-31; 6:1-28).

F. The apostle Paul vs. the Greek philosophies of the Epicureans and Stoics (Acts 17:16-34).

1. The Epicureans had a philosophy that denied God’s existence (only “atoms” exist) and emphasized the pleasures of this physical world. They were much like today’s Naturalists or Atheists (see below).

2. The Stoics accepted a kind of impersonal “force” that permeates the universe; everything is God. They were much like today’s Pantheists (see below).

II. Worldviews Today

A. Christian Theism (theos = Greek for “God’)

1. Overview ideas
   a. C ________________________________
   b. S ________________________________
   c. I ________________________________

2. Basic theme: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

3. Object illustration: A __________________________.

B. Deism (deus = Latin for “God’) 

1. Overview ideas
   a. C ________________________________
   b. A ________________________________
   c. N ________________________________
   d. T ________________________________

2. Basic theme: “God’s gone. Let’s reason it out ourselves.”

3. Object illustration: __________________________ ________________

4. Cultural connections
   a. Notable examples: Thomas Jefferson; Thomas Paine; Antony Flew, a recently converted famous atheist.

5. Biblical connections (2 Tim 3:5; Matt 22:29; 1 Cor 2:4-5)
C. **Pantheism** (and **New Age**)
(cosmos = Greek for “world” or “universe”; (pan = all) + (theism = God)
1. **Overview ideas**
   a. A ____________________________ is God.
   b. I ____________________________ of this world.
   c. M ____________________________ awareness.

2. Basic theme: “Connect with the oneness of the universe.”
3. **Object illustration:** ____________________________
4. Specific concepts and terms: *Atman* (the true self) is *Brahman* (the One); *Samsara* (the wheel of rebirth = reincarnation); *Karma* (works-produced principle that determines future incarnations).
5. Cultural connections: Hinduism; Taoism; some forms of Buddhism (e.g. Richard Gere, Steven Segal, Phil Jackson); New Age (e.g. Shirley Maclaine); Animism; Wicca; Yoda in *Star Wars*; Scientology (e.g. John Travolta, Tom Cruise); Deepak Chopra; Eckhart Tolle; *Lion King*; Oprah.
6. Biblical connections
   a. Gen 3 (The serpent and Adam/Eve)
   b. Acts 17:16-33 (The Stoic philosophers)

D. **Secular Humanism** (“Modernism”)
1. **Overview ideas**
   a. N ____________________________
   b. O ____________________________
   c. S ____________________________
   d. E ____________________________

2. Basic theme: “We can do it!”
3. **Object example:** ____________________________
4. Cultural connections: Charles Darwin; Carl Sagan; Berenstein Bear’s *Nature Guide*; Richard Dawkins; Michael Shermer; Bill Maher; Spock from *Star Trek; The Titanic; Mission Impossible*; *CSI* TV series; *Numb3rs*; PBS “Cosmos” TV series; *Criminal Minds*.

E. **Nihilism** (nihil = Latin for “nothing”)
1. **Overview ideas**
   a. N ____________________________ really matters.
   b. A ____________________________ of Life (“I don’t care”; “I give up”)
   c. P ____________________________ outlook.
2. Basic theme: “We got nothing, and we’re going nowhere.”
3. Object illustration: A ____________________

F. **Atheistic Existentialism**
1. Background (Camus; Sartre)
2. Overview ideas
   a. **F** ____________________
   b. **A** ____________________
   c. **D** ____________________
3. Basic theme: “Life is absurd. Be free and have fun.”
4. Object illustration: Mr. ____________________ ____________________
5. 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.

G. **Postmodernism**
1. Overview ideas
   a. **F** ____________________
   b. **U** ____________________
   c. **R** ____________________
2. Basic theme: “Different strokes for different folks.”
3. Object illustration: A ____________________ ____________________
4. Cultural connections: Madonna; Britney Spears; Star Trek: The Next Generation; The Truman Show; The Matrix; Lost; Inception; Reality TV shows; Modern [Post?] Family.
5. Biblical connections (Deut 12:8).

H. A worldview “test.”

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1 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 communication with God.

2 “Postmodern” often refers to cultural characteristics. “Postmodern-ISM” is a philosophical position that disputes the possibility of universal truth and values. Often, this distinction is not adequately made. I suggest that the church adapt to a postmodern culture but be careful not to be unduly influenced by postmodernist philosophy.
III. A General Strategy for Responding to Other Worldviews

A. Expose the worldview’s position and its ____________________________ implications.

B. Contrast the worldview’s logical implications with the __________________ and actual __________________ of its advocates.

C. Compassionately confront with probing _____________________________.
   (See Mark 11:27-33)