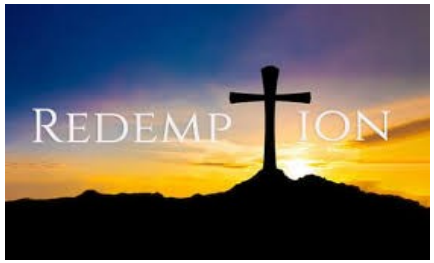
we behave as we do because something causes us to become "mentally ill." The Bible says it is the other way around i.e. because we are sinners our primary focus in life is on ourselves, and so we behave in a way that "looks after # 1! We are rebels who act as if we are "gods" in God's world, convinced that it is our prerogative (rather than God, the Sovereign Creator) to determine right/wrong etc., and thus how we should behave.

3. What needs to be done to fix what is wrong?

The Bible story recounts God's plan to rescue, redeem, and save His spiritually lost human creatures from their sinful condition. No-one is able to save themselves, since all are sinners - but God can. In the Bible, God progressively promises that He will provide a redeemer. Jesus, the Christ, God's only Son, the unique God/man, came to earth to pay the penalty that sinners owe to God and to enable God's redeemed people to live holy lives and recover "true life." All who respond to God's gospel good news, trusting and believing that Jesus is God's only solution for their sin problem, are adopted into God's new family and become part of His new spiritual humanity. They enter a state of eternal life at conversion, which will continue forever, by-passing the grave i.e. they are united to Christ, their Saviour and Lord, forever.



In one sense, human history is a record of mankind's quest to find a solutions for what is wrong in the world. Yet each new generation merely proposes natural solutions for what the Bible says is a spiritual problem. They do not address the real issue - sin in the human heart - but only provide temporal, external and cosmetic fixes e.g. like re-arranging the "deck-chairs on the Titanic."

4. What is the basis for ethics (right/wrong)?

The Bible reveals that God is the only morally good and perfect Being, and that His character is the standard for morality. God's ethical standards are set out in the Bible, and to a lesser degree in the human conscience, and in the general revelation of God in nature. God's law is absolute and unchanging because it is a reflection of His perfect Being.

SN generally recognizes no inherent moral absolutes: ethics are typically based on a collective consensus. Right/wrong are relative social constructs and thus mutable, typically framed via the dictates of the prevailing political system. In a democracy like NZ, ethics are therefore relative, and usually determined by various polls (opinions, votes etc).

5. Where is the world heading?

According to the Bible, history is linear: it has a beginning, a middle (now) and a definite endpoint. The world began at creation; mankind fell into sin; and now God in Jesus, His Messiah, is redeeming a people from their prison of sin in preparation for the revelation of a God's "new heavens and earth" - which will be revealed after Christ returns to judge both the living and the dead at the end of history.

Contrast this with SN, where the world ambles along as it always has, lacking any real or ultimate meaning or purpose, and without any really genuine hope for a better future, because it fails to adequately account for "reality" as it currently exists. God is not in "control" of His world, superintending history to the achievement of His purposes. Rather, the world simply "is" and one day life might end - either because the sun is extinguished or we are swallowed by a black hole, or something else: no-one knows because no-one is in charge! History is generally circular - round and round we go; everything changes, but everything is the same. Ultimately life is meaningless and we are going nowhere i.e. so let's get all we can now and make the most of our few short years! Is it any wonder there is so much depression, anxiety and hopelessness in the world? When we try to eliminate God from His world, there is nowhere to

Contact

info@covenantbiblechurch.net

Contest of Worldviews



Introduction

Every person forms a system of beliefs about the world and how it functions etc. The technical term for this system of beliefs is a "worldview" (WV). One may be conscious of one's WV and able to articulate it to others; or one may be completely unaware of these fundamental pre-suppositions which are their invisible life foundation. One's WV becomes evident as one interacts with others who hold to a different WV. Discussion not only exposes but also challenges each party to re-examine their basic beliefs. Theoretically there may be as many individual WV's as there are people in the world. But in practice, WV's can be grouped based on ideas that are held in common, many of which are derived from one's background i.e. parents, education, friends, associates, culture etc.

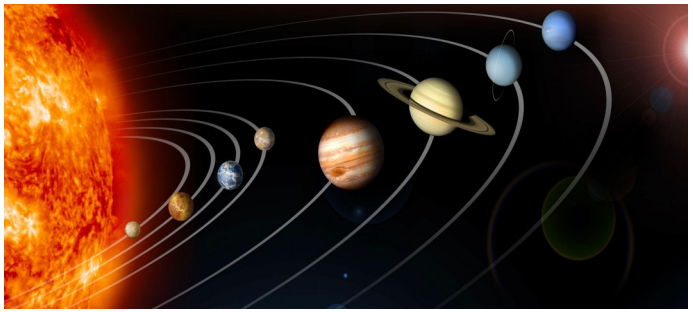
Worldviews address ultimate questions:

1. **Why is there something, rather than nothing?**
2. **What is wrong with the world?**
3. **What needs to be done to fix what is wrong?**
4. **What is the basis for ethics (right/wrong)?**
5. **Where is the world heading?**

WV's can be grouped based on different critieria e.g. eastern V western thinking; religious V secular etc. But at the highest level, they can be categorised based on their source. Most originate as the product of finite, human thinkers, living inside the universe. But there is one WV that originates outside this world, which has been revealed to mankind by the infinite, perfect Being we know as God. As the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, God has communicated His truth to His human image-bearing creatures in general terms in creation, but also in written format (the Bible). This brochure briefly compares biblical answers to some ultimate questions with the dominant WV in modern NZ - secular naturalism (SN).

1. Why is there something, rather than nothing?

This is ***the*** BIG question! But implicit within it are some smaller questions: Why do ***I*** exist? Why am ***I*** here? Who



am ***I***? Our understanding of "origins" is key to our understanding of our self-identity. The opening verses of the Bible (Genesis 1:1f) reveal several important truths about origins. First, there is a supernatural God who pre-exists the world i.e. He is not part of the natural physical realm. Second, God is a personal, rational, intelligent, knowable and communicating Being with

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them...Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!" Gen 1:1,27,31(NLT).

the will, ability, power and authority to create "out of nothing" - all with a word of command. Third, human beings have incredible dignity, value and worth because God made us in His likeness (in two distinct and complementary genders). Gen 2:7 indicates that humans are a blend of the physical (from the earth) and the spirtual (from God). Fourth, God made us for a relationship of meaningful fellowship with Himself. Fifth, God created an ordered universe via a sequence of commands - in an ascending order of importance. Sixth, when God completed His work of creation, He declared that it was "very good." Seventh, Gen 2 reveals that in God's pristine paradise world, mankind experienced harmony and enjoyment, along with purpose, work and fulfillment - with God; with one another, and with nature.

SN can only guess at the origin of the world/humans, postulating that the universe originated spontaneously from nothing, all by itself, at a certain point in time as the product of random chance i.e. everything came from nothing, somehow! "Non-being" gave rise to "being" one "Tuesday afternoon" many millions of year ago - despite the fact that "chance" is simply a statistical description of probability i.e. it doesn't possess being, or power, or authority - "it" can *do nothing!* Current evolutionary theory postulates that human beings "somehow" evolved at the end of a process involving numerous undetermined links (none of which has been proven) that began with some impersonal "pond-scum" millions of years ago! Hardly something to instill in us a sense of value and dignity, or a sense of meaning or purpose? SN is essentially a sophisticated, institionalised myth which, though it asserts that the human beings have great worth and value, it does not provide a justified basis for this conclusion! Francis Schaeffer critiqued humanism as a belief system which "*has both feet firmly planted in mid-air!*" Much the same could be said about it's cousin SN.

2. What is wrong with the world?

Most people sense that something is not right in the world. At the level of the individual, I'm not the person I aspire to be. We struggle to get along with others, even in families. And at a higher level, history is replete with wars and national contests for power and resources etc.

In Genesis 3, God reveals what is wrong in His world. The first human couple were seduced by a deceptive adversary to disobey God. This resulted in them becoming afflicted with a terminal spiritual condition - "sin" (which cannot be diagnosed by physical means). Adam and Eve's posterity inherited their rebel heart, thus every person also disobeys God, seeking to live an independent, autonomous life, in which they, rather than God, are sovereign. God had warned that failure to obey His word would result in death. Every person now begins life with a sin nature, which impels us to act sinfully. As a result we incur God's judgment on sin - alienation from God (spiritual death), and the cessation of ordinary life (physical death).

The Bible informs us that the universe comprises both a physical and a spiritual realm. SN recognizes only the physical realm. For SN the problems we each face in the world result from external influences upon us; whereas the Bible says they are all the result of our internal sinful nature. A modern expression of SN is mental illness i.e.