

## WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

Introduction – There are three world views exerting major influence in American society today.

1. Secular humanism believes everything can be explained by scientific rationalism.
2. Eastern mysticism believes an impersonal force is at work, cyclically based on the karma principle with the possibility of future enlightenment.
3. Monotheism believes one God created the Universe and is revealing His will to us through Scripture.

World views are like an operating system in a computer, except they are in our mind. They determine the particular functioning that can be accomplished and the ones that cannot. World views are comprehensive and coherent ways of interpreting reality. We can test the validity of each world view by reason.

- A. These three world views are not new, but have existed in various forms throughout history.

Acts 17:1-21

1. Paul reasoned in the synagogue and the marketplace every day.
2. Jews are monotheists along with Islam and Christianity.
3. Stoic philosophers believed in a form of Eastern mysticism.
4. Epicurean philosophers lived a community life based on a form of secular humanism.
5. Athenian citizens are like the American society where we are exposed to a constant communication of conflicting world views.

- B. Secular humanism is based on the assumption that this is a material world and can only be explained by scientific rationalism. Everything else is considered only subjective opinions. It believes in a multicultural and ethical relativistic perspective.

1. There is a fundamental rational flaw in secular humanism. If the universe, including human beings, is the result of only material forces, then our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and decisions to act are pre-programmed. How can we tell for sure what is true or false?
2. How can an irrational, material force acting by blind chance produce life, much less reliable reasoning?

- C. Eastern mysticism believes that what we call reality is only an illusion. We are doomed to cycle through countless reincarnations unless we reach total enlightenment, overcoming karma, and experience a state of nirvana.
1. There is also a fundamental rational error in this world view. One cannot claim that reality is an illusion and still seek to live a virtuous life. The principle of contradiction says one cannot both exist as a person and yet really be one with an impersonal universe.
  2. The process of meditation is an attempt to empty our minds of rational thought in order to experience nothingness. If the alternate reality is nothingness, then all our reasoning is inherently delusional.
- D. Monotheists all believe that the universe, including humans, were created by one God and we are accountable to Him for our lives at death. They trust reason because an intelligent God made us in His image. They believe reality is real and can be scientifically investigated. They believe that God has made Himself and His will for us known through Scripture.

The three major monotheistic faiths are: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. They agree on the basic ideas that form a comprehensive world view. Their differences are not over a common world view, but other issues of fact and history.

Conclusion – To deny the truthfulness of Christianity or any monotheistic faith, one must prove an alternative world view is true. There are more possible world views than the three we have mentioned, but they all have serious rational flaws.

The Universe Next Door, James W. Sire, IVP Academic