

World Views Intersecting World Regions

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Does a person's worldview directly correlate to their religious beliefs? As experts study and understand trends better, they are able to identify correlating shifts within prominent world views and world religions. It is important for followers of Jesus to also understand these concepts to better know the people we are called to disciple and teach (Matt. 28:18-20). In order to best communicate the gospel and serve others in the name of Jesus, Christians should know what and why specific people groups believe a certain belief, adhere to a certain worldview, and how they can become more open to receiving His love and truth. This paper serves to show how some of the United States' most common religions intersect with specific world views. This paper also offers specific approaches to sharing the gospel to a people group with specific world views and religious beliefs. While this topic can become philosophically dense, I have attempted to focus on very practical findings based on global data charts, anecdotal evidence, and biblical truths. Although, names have been changed to protect their identity, each story shared are in fact true and captures a snapshot of the wider populous. I recognize that this paper contains more generalizations than desired around specific world views and religious beliefs, but with the magnitude of this topic and the inadequate length of pages to cover it, I find no better solution.

Scientific Naturalism / Atheism & Non-Religious Affiliation

The advancement of science over the past decades is at an all-time high and it does not look to be slowing down. Think about this for a moment. At the beginning of the twenty first century, there were no smart phones or YouTube channels, self-driving cars were a thing only imaginable in sci-fi movies, and pertinent documents and information were still being stored in filing cabinets. Today, because of smart phones, a person does not need to leave their bed to deposit checks into their bank account, conduct a presentation for a client across the world, unlock the front door for the house cleaner, or work on their professional photography business.

Air space is now being deliberated for traffic regulations as flying cars are in the testing stages. Unlimited digital storage is at the click of a button cloud systems. And artificial intelligence is now taking over the work force. The top five countries that lead the world in the area of science and technology are Japan, South Korea, China, United States, and Germany.¹

Consequently, there has been a global rise of a scientific naturalist world view as many people are placing all their faith in science and technology. Scientific naturalism is the believe that everything that exists must exist in the physical realm. In other words, all things can be reduced to its elemental material composition.² In naturalism, the physical matter of the universe is the only reality. Scientific naturalists believe that humans' progression in scientific knowledge and technology are the real solutions to all problems. As a result, because scientific naturalists believe nonphysical realities do not exist, they would deny the realization of any religion with gods, spirits, or a spiritual realm. With a worldview like this, one would expect scientific naturalists to adhere to atheism or to not be religiously affiliated.

If my hypothesis is correct, then the top five scientifically advanced countries should have some of the highest atheist and non-religious affiliated people. Leading data from Pew Research Centers reveal just that. Over the past decade the worldwide number of people who claim no religious affiliation grew by 17%. Of the top five most scientifically advanced countries in the world, four of them are in the top five most religiously unaffiliated countries in the world, with all five being in the top ten.³ Without a doubt, this data reflects a correlation of one's religious beliefs and their world views. An example of this phenomena is the United States, who

¹ US News, "These Countries Have the Most Technological Expertise," @USNews, last modified 2024, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/rankings/technological-expertise>.

² Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews : Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 100.

³ Conrad Hackett et al., "Religious Unaffiliated." *Pew Research Center*, last modified June 9, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/religiously-unaffiliated-population-change/>

is the fourth most technologically advanced country in the world and the second most religiously unaffiliated, at almost 30% of its population. But this was not always the case. In the 1970s, only five percent of the population was non-religious.⁴ While there are other factors attributed to the rise of naturalism, wherever there is rapid advancement in science, scientific naturalism is sure to follow, as well as atheism and religious non-affiliation.

If you are currently in a community saturated with a scientific naturalistic world view, it is important to know how to relate, love, and share Jesus to your neighbor. Even through eliminating God from the picture requires a completely alternative definition and reality of the universe, a common ground a follower of Jesus can have with an atheist with a scientific naturalist world view is their desire is to seek what is factual about the universe. While naturalism is a nice alternative to moral relativism, there are several problems and obstacles to be aware of. First, it diminishes the status of humanity as image bearers of Yahweh. If humans are comprised of a nanofriction of nature's "stuff" while living in a very complex and "stuff" filled cosmos, humans become infinitely insignificant. An atheist is going to have a hard time relating to their cosmic worth decided by a Cosmic Creator. When sharing the gospel or discipling someone, it will be key for them to accept that God has chosen them, invaluable beings, to partner with, as it redefines their identity and worth to the Creator.

Bill is a great example of how important an identity laced gospel presentation and follow on discipleship is to an interested naturalistic, atheistic person. Bill served with me in the army. He was a Ranger who prided himself in being the smartest and hardest worker in the room. Due to a rough upbringing and a couple hard deployments, Bill rejected every ounce of religions.

⁴ Pew Research Center, "How U.S. Religious Composition Has Changed in Recent Decades," *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (Pew Research Center, September 13, 2022), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/how-u-s-religious-composition-has-changed-in-recent-decades/>.

Relying heavily on his intelligence, he boasted of his scientific naturalist world view. I spent six months demonstrating the love, life, and words of Jesus to Bill. After six months Bill finally accepted Jesus as His Lord and Savior. But what was so difficult for Bill to accept as a new believer was how valuable he was to Jesus. For the ensuing six months I relentlessly taught and reiterated to Bill his new identity in Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 is one of the best go to verses to helping someone wrestle through their newfound identity in Jesus.

While many atheists and non-religious affiliated people reject the concept of a religion, it might be helpful to show them that their believe in “matter as eternal” becomes as much of a faith statement as “God is eternal.” In other words, they put their faith in a Godless religion.⁵ In 2023, I ran my own sports performance training gym. I had the pleasure of training Jane. Jane was an all-American collegiate soccer player in Texas who had recently moved from Switzerland (a world renown secular state). As I began to share Jesus with her, she held tight to the fact that she was an atheist and did not believe in any religion. After two months of coaching her and talking to her about Jesus, Jane realized that she did have a religion. She had put all her faith in science and naturalism. Recognizing her faith crises, I told her a parable that she absolutely related to. I shared with her that she was stuck on a mountain top of faith. If she decided to follow Jesus, it would require a great leap of faith. But because she had great faith, something she did not realize until exposing her Godless faith in science, if she decided to reject Jesus, it would cause just as great of a leap of faith to continue in her atheistic religion. Romans 6:16-23 is a powerful passage to share with people to help them realize, whether they admit it or not, they have put their faith in something and are, therefore, subject to that thing they put their faith in.

⁵ Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, 117.

New Age / Hinduism & Spirituality

As a direct result of the enlightenment period, the United States has seen an increase in new age thinking. A new age world view teaches that there is no part of the universe (or beyond) that is not inherently connected and one, including us. This means the divine powers of the cosmos is not just available to us; they are us.⁶ In the 1970s, new age thinking gained national attention when it was ushered in by a prominent increase of drugs and the sexual liberation. Still in full force today, followers of this world view believe there is an inner divinity that goes well beyond our present reality and ability that is waiting to be unlocked. As opposed to Christianity, which claims the possibility to experience God's power through relationship, the new age worldview claims everyone can be a god, available when we achieve the higher self.

New age thinkers tend to attract people of a polytheistic religion, such as Hinduism, which teaches that the goal of life is to reach moksha, a state of oneness in the force and flame of the universe.⁷ Not surprising is that over that past decade, as new age thinking has hit its stride, Hinduism in the United States has increased over 55%. This is a higher percentage increase than anywhere else in the world.⁸ "Spirituality" is another religion that prospers around a new age world view. People who call themselves spiritual, usually call out to any and all spirits to battle, save, and guide their lives. My college football teammate, Ryan, was one of these people. He used tarot cards, Ouija boards, and even got tattoos of ancient Greek and Egyptian gods, like Iris, on his arms. His whole goal was to appease the spirits so that one day he can become one with them.

⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁷ John Dickson, *A Doubter's Guide to World Religions* (Zondervan, 2022), 56.

⁸ Conrad Hackett et al., "Hindu Population Change," *Pew Research Center*, last modified June 9, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/hindu-population-change/>.

When sharing Jesus to Ryan, I realized that an aspect of a new age world view that served as a common ground between us was that we both recognized the reality and prominence of the spiritual realm. This commonality instantly allowed me and Ryan to passionately engage in deep, spiritual conversations. Albeit, the tricky part was to have Ryan see that there was only one Lord who had ultimate power and dominion over all spirits, and His name was Jesus. A polytheistic world view is common in fear-power cultures such as the Asian Pacific and tribal communities.⁹ When sharing the gospel to Ryan, I was intentional about using Scripture that proved Jesus to be the victor and conqueror of all realms. Good verses for this are Colossians 1:13, 2:15, and Ephesians 1:19-21, 6:10-18.

Once intrigued by Jesus' power, Ryan wanted to know more. Him and I read through the Gospel of Mark, which has the most miracles stories over demonic entities, and saw how Jesus really Lord of all is. Ryan ended up giving surrendering his life to Jesus as the sole authority in his life. During our additional time of discipleship, I was intentional about deep diving into narratives throughout Scripture that dealt directly with God proving power of the spirituals. Some specific stories we spent quite some time studying were: Moses and Pharoah (Ex.15), Elijah and Baal (1 Kg. 18), Jesus' Temptation (Luke 4), the Gerasenian (Mark 5), and the Ephesians (Act 19).

Another deeply threaded concept of Hinduism and other spiritual or polytheistic religions is that they do not see a separation between the material world and spiritual world. This leads to everyone becoming gods or achieving their oneness with the eternal energy. In the most practical sense, this means that each person is their own means of salvation (a very scary thought). On the contrary, Christianity believes that nature is a product of God's creative activity and dependent

⁹ Jayson Georges, *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Fear Cultures* (Time Press, 2016), 25.

and separate from God. A good approach to sharing the gospel with our new age brothers and sisters is to show them there is only one Creator, who stands outside time and space, and one means of salvation through faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice. The Genesis 1 and 2 creation stories are a great place to start. In this approach, I caution you to avoid (at least initially) the modern debates over the early chapters of the Bible, (like, did God create the universe in seven literal days or figurative days), and stay focused on seeing how and what those verses reveal about God and His character.

Another helpful place to study is Paul's letter to Ephesians. In his letter, we see Paul dealing with a group of home churches who are living in Ephesus, the epicenter of the Greco-Roman religious systems. He demonstrates how paramount it was to reshape their world view and see the reality between the physical and spiritual. He desired to reveal to them an even realer reality beyond our physical, a spiritual one where a raging battle is going on. He does this by reminding them that the battle in this world is not against flesh and blood but the evil principalities (Eph. 6:12). Therefore, the only means of salvation we have is in Jesus, God incarnate, who is the only one to dismantle the principalities and set humans free (1 John 3:8; Matt. 12:28). We are not free to become one with the universe, but free to live as created beings meant to eternally experience a relationship, as sons and daughters, of the eternal Creator.

Nationalism / Monotheism

The United States was formed out of a people group who fled the religious persecutions of their native land in order to seek a fresh start. The principles the early pilgrims established that became the bedrock of the United States was that no person or government is above God. Throughout the centuries, much blood has been shed to defend these principles. As a result, citizens of the United States embody a sense of patriotism. Patriotism, the love for one's country,

is inherently a good thing. But patriotism can become imbalanced, distorted, destructive, and evil when one loses the proper perspective and offers their highest loyalty to a specific person, state, or form of rule.¹⁰ This is called nationalism. Nationalism is the belief that one's own nation is uniquely favored and set apart by God as an integral part of God's plan. In order to win the allegiance of people, a nation will claim the highest source of authority, usually God's, blessing upon its value, ideals, and mission.

A nationalistic world view has paved the way for two primary world religions other than Christianity in the United States, Islam and Judaism. Besides Christianity and the religiously unaffiliated people groups, Islam and Judaism are the most common religions in the United States.¹¹ It aligns that nationalism attracts monotheistic religious people groups as they are typically built upon the ideal that one's allegiance belongs to a higher value over themselves. Because humans naturally relate to the physical easier than the spiritual, a nationalistic world view can easily become entangled in one's monotheistic religious values.

Before diving deeper into how the three major monotheistic regions are connected to nationalism, it is critical to show the main ideas that make them vastly different. It is true that Christianity is rooted in Judaism. For example, the entire Jewish Scriptures, the TaNaK, comprise of three quarters of Christian Bible. The long-awaited return of God's presence that the Hebrew Bible anticipates is who Christians believe Jesus is, God incarnate (Heb 1:1-3). Christians believe Jesus is the Messianic King who redeemed God's blessing and presence to all of creation, something the people group of Israel was chosen to do but failed to do. While Jews and Christians serve Yahweh, the Creator God of the TaNaK and Old Testament, Jews reject that

¹⁰ Ibid., 62.

¹¹ Conrad Hackett et al., "North America." *Pew Research Center*, last modified June 9, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/religion-in-north-america/>

Jesus was God Himself. Christians, believe faith in Jesus is the only way to restore relationship with Yahweh and Jews do not. For this reason, Christians and Jews do not serve the same God (John 14:6). Similarly, Islam serves a creator god, Allah, who, they say, is revealed in the TaNaK and the Christian gospels. But Islam claims that it was not Jesus who was the full revelation of God, but rather, the Quran, which was given only to the prophet Muhammad in the early 7th century A.D. There, it was revealed to Muhammad that Jesus was not Allah himself, but a wise and noble sage and prophet. This serious deviation, amongst many other reasons, from Christianity is what causes Islam and Christianity to be completely separate religions.

It is not the differences that draw these religions to favor a nationalistic mindset, but their similarities. For the Jews and the Christians, a major part of their story is that God chose a specific nation to represent Him to the world. He set them apart and gave them a specific land. Likewise, Islam is zealous about serving Allah. They believe only Arabic is the language of the Quran and is essential for their daily prayers. These specific, sacred aspects they believe must be defended, have led to battles and wars. Human history has proven the tendency for people to take the gifts and attributes of their religion and make it a god of itself. They deceptively place their loyalty in something else rather than solely in their deity. Similarly, nationalism overreaches its demand for loyalty. It views those that who are not in alignment with as outsiders and challengers. Thus, all three religions have a very violent record.

For Christians, we need to be mindful of how married we are to nationalistic ideals, even within the United States. The kingdom of this world functions in a very different way than the kingdom of God. In fact, the kingdom of the world operates with a “power over” others mentality. Remember, all kingdoms of the world, to some degree, are owned and operated by Satan, the very forces of evil that Jesus conquered (Luke 4:5-7; 1 John 5:19; Eph 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4).

A parable may help to articulate this point. There once was an artistic, farm boy who grew up in the Midwest. On his days at the farm, collecting eggs and tending sheep, He would take cow pies and sculpt them into beautiful objects. He would bring them home and put shellack all over the cowpie to the point that you could not even tell it was manure. He would sell them at farmers markets because no one could tell what this beautifully crafted object really was on the inside. Now, while some manure is better looking than others, especially those that have been glossed over with a veneer, it does not change the fact that it is still manure. Similarly, nationalistic actions can dress up the kingdom of the world to look like the kingdom of God, it will never be the kingdom of God. It will just be a cover up, but still the kingdom of the world, which does not mean it is transforming hearts. Changing the outside does not clean the inside. Jesus' heart on how to irradicate sin and that can only happen by living under His reign and rule in His kingdom.

Even though Christians have sadly partaken in this violent past, Christianity still offers the only solution that can resolve a nationalistic world view- Jesus. He stands above Judaism, who still awaits their messiah for true liberation, and beyond Islam, who sees physical violence as the means to bring Allah's peace. What Jesus did in a micro way the Church is to do in a macro way, advancing His kingdom in the lives of others. Jesus says "[the world] will know you are disciple by how you love" (John 13:35). We are to embody the immersible, love of God. This Calvery like love is never rooted in "power over", but "power under."

While nationalism is seen to promote the provision of common goods-food, clothing, shelter, healthcare- for those in need, it rules with a power over others mentality, and, therefore, can never offer a true heart change people actually need. Only Jesus can do that. God does not expect the kingdoms of this world to turn the other cheek, but those who live as citizens of His

kingdom, will. God does not except the kingdom of this world to bless those who persecute it, but He expects His followers to. God does not except the kingdom of this world to lay down its life for its enemies, but He expects the Church to. The kingdom of this world is to carry the sword, that is how it has been set up, and by its very definition, power over, it will never be the kingdom of God. But somehow, in some way, the Church's self-sacrificial love and service is the means by which lives will be changed, restored humans will come to know Him, and creation will be prepared for the ultimate rule of God's kingdom.

In conclusion, people's world views and religious beliefs seem to be directly linked together. We observed how an atheism and non-religious affiliations tend to stem from a scientific naturalist world view. As you present the gospel in this kind of culture, it is important to highlight the value that God has given His creation. Secondly, we saw how Hinduism and spirituality religions are prominent in new age thinking, and how it is important to show Jesus as the supreme authority over both the physical and spiritual realm. Lastly, we identified that monotheistic religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, are found in a nationalistic society, such as the United States, where allegiance to a higher being or value system is foundational. Here, it is important to share that true allegiance is through service under others, not over, demonstrated by Jesus, the One True God. My prayer is that this paper helped you become more mindful of people's world views and religious beliefs, as well as become more confident in sharing the gospel of Jesus to people of diverse world views and religious faiths.

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