

WTSU. Class Notes

Lesson 3 9/24/13

I. Review:

A. Many Christians don't think much about worldviews or study them because it seems like an "intellectual" exercise that is contrary to faith; Christians who do are:

1. less susceptible to being permanently wiped out when circumstances become challenging, and
2. better able to understand where the non-Christian is coming from.

B. Christians who pooh-pooh worldview study feed the perception of many that Christianity is anti-intellectual and irrational, and that religious claims are not claims to real knowledge as opposed to knowledge based on reason or science.

II. Summarized the different ways in which worldviews can be categorized.

A. Most Basic: Material and Spiritual.

1. Watched clip of movie "Signs"
2. Gibson is former priest who loses faith in God because of tragic death of wife; worldview shaken by circumstances.
3. Gibson says folks that are "spiritual" have hope that they are not alone to face things; materialist realize they are on their own and that can bring fear.
4. Christian hope is in a person who lives and cannot die; meaning behind Scripture that says Christians have a "living hope" different from unknown, impersonal "force" and not shakable such as a hope in business, economy, money, fame, etc.

B. Material, Life Force, and Spiritual (really theism)

1. Watched clip of Yoda in Star Wars telling Luke his "ally" is the force which is powerful and that he is depending on the physical - his body.

2. This is a transcendentalist-list type worldview. Ultimate reality is spiritual; Hinduism is an expression of that worldview.

C. Some worldviews categorized on basis of whether it addresses all the different academic spheres of study.

1. This is why Marxism is sometimes classified as a worldview as Marist have their own way of looking at economic, philosophy, psychology, history, sociology, etc.

2. Marxism is really an expression of the material view.

D. Some categorize worldviews on the basis of one's understanding of Ultimate Reality; the way categorized in our textbook. Those three are:

1. Naturalism (materialism)

2. Transcendentalism or "non-naturalism" (an expression being Yoda's "Force")

3. Theism - God is ultimate reality and is distinct from the created/natural order.

a) Expressions of Theism are:

(1) Judaism

(2) Islam

(3) Christianity

b) This distinctive of theism (from non-naturalism) - that God is wholl distinct from the natural world is called "creation *ex nihilo*" by some theologians, meaning creation literally out of nothing, not some emanation from god.

III. Christians need to understand the following in order to help protect themselves from believing a lie:

A. Everyone, even if they've never stopped to "define" it, has some belief about what ultimate reality is, in other words, that one thing from which everything else we see, touch, feel, and smell came from.

B. This is critical: Remember first class - where you start determines where you wind up.

IV. The one aberration from the above 3 major worldviews: postmodernism.

A. Postmodernism is an anti-worldview worldview.

B. Increasingly prominent worldview; one being taught in a lot of colleges

C. Say there is no larger "story" - no "metanarrative" that explains things.

D. Postmodernism is self-contradictory - it is a metanarrative that says there is no metanarrative.

V. A major difference between the 3 major worldviews and postmodernism is that the naturalism, transcendentalism, and theism believe the world is knowable (by various means) and the postmodernist says it's not really knowable.

A. For example, naturalism says the world can be known through science and reason.