

The Oxford Canadian Dictionary defines worldview as “a comprehensive view or philosophy of life, the world, and the universe.” All of us possess a worldview – a set of beliefs through which we see the world around us. Like a pair of glasses, our preconceived notions either distort or make clearer the reality we are presented with. Hindus see life as karma – what happens to you in this life is a result of actions in a previous incarnation. Atheists base their conclusions and morals on science and their own knowledge of the world. As Christians, we know that all things were created by God and are upheld and sustained by His fatherly hand. Ours is the only worldview in which truth is not relative, in which there are absolute standards of right and wrong.

We do not start out with a clean slate. Mentors, the home environment we grow up in, and experiences, are some deciding factors in what we believe. The culture we live in has a huge impact on our standards, influencing us through movies, books, television, and other media. Our actions are always a result of our view of the world.

If I believe that God does not exist and the universe has been formed by accident, I will have no compunction (apart from an inexplicable conscience) about committing murder or other horrible sins. If I believe that my dead aunt may have been reincarnated as a fly, I will be paranoid about accidentally ingesting insects. If I, like Shirley MacLaine, believe that I create my own reality¹, then in essence I can do whatever I please. But because I, as a Christian, know that I am a sinner saved by God, I want to do everything for His glory, because of an overwhelming sense of thankfulness.

Nothing is neutral. Every person looks at facts through the bias of their underlying beliefs. Picture a pair of tourists seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. One, a creationist, believes in the biblical account of creation; the other, an evolutionist, believes that the earth and everything on it was formed slowly over millions of years. The evolutionist says, “Look what a lot of time and a little bit of water did.” The creationist replies, “Look what a lot of water and a little bit of time did!” You notice that neither considers the other’s viewpoint in their first impression.

Adherents to other worldviews than Christianity are self-deceived, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness² although they know inherently that there is a God. They become futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts are darkened³. Fallen man is so reluctant to accept God’s truth, so it seems, that he will accept any pagan lie as a substitute. As Christians, God commands us to destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.⁴

What is **Worldview** and What *Influences* Our **Worldview**

by **Jessica Hofstede**
(2010 Essay Contest Winner)

We’re called to be a light to the world.⁵ Sophie Scholl, a member of a student resistance group in Hitler’s Germany, was a model of this light. Facing certain death, she was confronted with Nazi ideology and told that it was truth. She boldly replied, “No, it’s you who have the wrong worldview.” Despite darkness all around, Sophie remained true to the worldview she knew was true, and died for

it. Like Sophie Scholl, Christians need to call others out on their wrong beliefs and then, in love, give them the reason for the hope that is in us⁶. This is something we can only do through Christ’s help.

As the winner of AHEA’s Worldview Essay Contest, Jessica received a voucher entitling her to attend one of Worldview Academy’s weeklong camps. Worldview Academy is a non-denominational organization dedicated to helping Christians to think and live in accord with a biblical worldview so that they will serve Christ and lead the culture.

Footnotes

- 1 Shirley MacLaine, *It’s All in the Playing* (New York Bantam Books, 1987), p 173.
- 2 Romans 1:18
- 3 Romans 1:21
- 4 2 Corinthians 10:5
- 5 Matthew 5:14
- 6 1 Peter 3:15