

## UNDERSTANDING THE MAJOR WORLD VIEWS

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Four major world views are prevalent today.

### **Theism**

Theism is the belief that an infinite personal God rules over the entire universe which He created out of nothing. Because He created it, He can intervene supernaturally within it and perform miracles. Theism is the world view of Christians, Jews, and Muslims. However, unlike Jews and Muslims, Christians believe that God is three persons but one essence.

### **Atheism**

Atheism is the belief that God does not exist. This belief usually affirms that the universe has existed for all eternity and that planet earth came into being by chance and evolved to its present state. Most atheist recognize that without God life is devoid of meaning, value and purpose. Yet, many atheists attempt to find meaning by living creatively and courageously.

### **Pantheism**

Pantheism is the belief that the entire universe is God. God is in all things, includes all things and energizes all things. This God is not the personal God of the Christian theism but an impersonal god, a force. Pantheism has gained more proponents in recent years since it is the primary world view of the New Age movement. Pantheism is the traditional world view of the eastern religions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism.

### **Polytheism**

Polytheism is the belief that there are many finite gods who rule the universe. These gods are not regarded as all powerful creators but as shapers and influencers. The major proponents of this world view today are the Mormons.

### **Ask the Right Questions**

James Sire, in his book, *The Universe Next Door* lists five questions that are useful in discovering a person's world view. Knowing the answers to these questions will enable you to cultivate an intelligent relationship with a friend and to be discerning as you communicate the gospel message. The five questions are:

- 1) What is your concept of God?
- 2) What is the basis for man's value?
- 3) What happens to man at death?
- 4) What is the basis for morality?
- 5) Where is the meaning of history and where is it going?