

# E V A N G E L I S M

## Understanding the Hindu Mindset

By Jay Wegter

We owe it to the Bible that only one culture [Western culture] in the world has promoted technology for liberating and empowering the weak, slaves, women, children, disabled, and poor. In contrast the ruling elite for prestige and power over enemies. Christian beliefs form the rational in faith for the motive of developing Western technology. Christian worldview is the key to understanding Western technology. Here is the reason why. God is the architect of the cosmos; we conclude that matter was created by Him for special purposes. Adam was created to care for it, not transcend it. The Bible emphasized intellectual craftsmanship in the world's design. Therefore the physical universe could be used for righteous ends.

In contrast to Hinduism, the Bible asserts that **humans are not spirits locked in fate**, they are meant to rule over nature. Our Christian worldview, our *Biblical cosmology*, teaches us that nature should be used rationally for human ends. Like God we work, but toil is dehumanizing. Therefore, it is right to promote humanizing, liberating, technologies that can change toil into work (Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book that made your World*, pp. 95-98).

As examples of technology lessening toil, we have sail technology the wheel plow, the mold board plow, crop rotation, pipe organ, mechanical clock, and eyeglasses (Ibid., pp. 100-107). The Greco-Roman world was not alone in looking down on manual work (Ibid., p. 109). The West had a dramatically different set of worldviews from those promoted by Greco-Roman literature, **Hinduism**, and **Buddhism**. The last thousand years of human history up to the present are demarcated by the fact that Biblical Christianity has replaced **a pagan world ruled by spirits**. The Bible is responsible for a secular (of earthly, non-clerical) worldview in which the world is stewarded by human ingenuity and technology. This is the **soul of Western civilization**. This is why the mechanical arts came so late (in the last thousand years). What changed? The Bible replaced the classical idea of a hero has a world conqueror and the medieval idea of the hero as a knight with the idea that a hero sacrifices himself for the good of others. This of course is at the heart of Biblical Worldview (Ibid., pp. 109-110).

In **Hindu culture**, the creation (*Maya*) is an illusion. Therefore there is no desire for knowledge of the material world (Ibid., p. 195). **Hinduism** has been characterized by cruel, degrading superstitions, barbarism, and ignorance (Ibid., p. 200). Why did the Bible promote education with such secular goals as equipping their subjects for self-rule? Answer: unlike the **Hindu sages**, who taught that spirituality is an **escape from reality**, the Bible has a uniquely 'this world' spirituality. Even after the Fall God wants to walk with us during our sojourn here, it is the meek that shall inherit the earth. Augustine's vision for education was broad, secular, and visionary. It included languages, history, grammar, logic, and the sciences (Ibid., pp. 207-208).

Why did the Bible, an **Asian book**, retain its hold on the Western mind even where Greek, Roman, and Islamic literature were available? Answer: up until the Reformation all education was church

education. The Roman Catholic Church let knowledge loose inadvertently. The Bible is a library. It is a **coherent view of the world**. It explains the world, and the human situation. In our human experience it provides meaning to what appear to be absurdities in life. Luther called for a complete overhaul of medieval education. Luther saw that Renaissance universities were training students in the fashions of Greek culture. This led to loose living. Heathen teachers were far from the rule of Christ and the standard of the Word of God. Luther insisted that the Bible must be at the center of university curriculum. Luther believed that the university, the church, and the state were subject to the Word of God. But Luther also made the state responsible for education, not the church (Ibid., pp. 210-212).

Modern education is shaped by the Bible. Jesus gives **power to love the unlovely**. Under Christ's teachings, Christianity began to understand that education plays a central role in granting dignity to the disabled. Prior to Christ, the Greeks often used blind boys as galley slaves and blind girls as prostitutes. But Christianity opened up asylums for the blind. Harvard, founded by the Puritans, was once a shining example of symbiosis between the Bible and secular education. The Puritans established this college within the first decade of arriving in America. They established Harvard before they built any industry. Since then the Bible has inspired the origin of 123 colleges and universities in America. Within a Biblical worldview the word secular can mean the study of disciplines which aren't immediately religious. So how did this symbiosis occur at Harvard? The answer is that the Bible provides for both religious and secular education within the **theistic worldview** because God has commanded our **dominion over the earth** (Ibid., pp. 215, 217-218).

So why are the universities today in the grip of anti-biblical education? (and we might add, self-consciously anti-Biblical). The answer is that **there is no "Big Picture" truth answer today**, no meaning and purpose for the universe. Therefore the West now rejects the Bible and searches for meaning through myth. **Britain gave universities to India to set their citizens free**. Now Hollywood and our public universities are giving our youth myths which enslave them. How ironic that the West which birthed science is now promoting myth. Christian universities 100 years ago saw natural history as a sub-division of theology.

The scientific method grew out of the study of theology. In fact, the premise for science rests upon the paradox and the confidence that humans can transcend nature. In other words, **they are not a pre-determined part of nature**, like a cog that cannot transcend it (fate). So again the **pre-conditions of science are man is not divine but fallen**, he needs objectivity from God, he many investigate the laws of nature as opposed to trying to **appease enchanted deities**. The Bible gave us science so that work replaced magic. Technology, science, math and dominion replaced fear and superstition (Ibid., pp. 219-223).

Theologians pursued science for biblical reasons. The very **notion of laws of nature came from the belief in a lawgiver**. This is a Judeo-Christian framework. The Lawgiver establishes the laws of nature and as His creatures put over the works of His hands, we investigate those laws **to better fulfill our dominion**. Western science sprung from the Bible's teaching that the cosmos is the product of the intelligible rationality of a personal being who is God (Ibid., pp. 223-225). The Chinese did not develop science because it never occurred to them that it was possible. The conception of a divine celestial lawgiver imposing ordinances on non-human nature never occurred to them. Under the influence of

Greco-Roman thought, medieval investigation depended more upon intuition than empiricism. By intuition, they assumed a stone two times as heavy as a small stone would fall twice as fast. Only in Europe through Biblical worldview did astrology turn into astronomy and alchemy into chemistry. And mathematics became the language of science (Ibid., pp. 226-228).

**Science was born** when the Church started reading the Bible literally and inductively and not allegorically. The Reformation established the intellectual authority of the Bible upon popular culture. Islamic and Aristotelian physics failed to birth empirical science (Ibid., pp. 234-235). **The Bible stimulates empirical science** (Ibid., p. 239). **Suffering in the material world does not make it evil; Buddha says it does** (Ibid., p. 243).

Much of Europe is still living off the fumes of Christian worldview. Nearly two centuries of the Heidelberg Confession imbued Holland with the truth of God's omniscience and the need to be honest when no one is watching. This is exciting because **Jesus makes possible inner self-government vs. evil only restrained by tyrants** (Ibid., pp. 254, 259).

In **Hinduism**, serenity comes from learning to **suppress the desire for happiness** by disciplines designed to enable one both to become detached from this present world and to be indifferent to one's welfare in the future. This is illustrated in the "Song of God" in the **Bhagavad Gita** (which has been called the gospel of Hinduism). Arjuna, a member of the noble warrior caste, is poised to do battle with an army made up of close relatives. Arjuna is troubled about the prospect of killing his relatives, so he asks **Krishna** his charioteer (who is the ninth incarnation of the god Vishnu) to delay the battle by halting the two forces. Krishna's reply is:

The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. There was never a time when these princes [in the opposing army] were not; and there will never be a time when we shall cease to be. . . The hero whose **soul is unmoved by unmoved by circumstance**, who accepts pleasure and pain with equanimity, only he is fit for immortality. . . The Spirit [the ultimate reality, **Brahman**], which pervades all that we see, is imperishable. Nothing can destroy the Spirit. The material bodies which this Eternal, Indestructible, Immeasurable Spirit inhabits are all finite. Therefore fight, O Valiant Man! He who thinks that the Spirit kills, and he who thinks of it as killed, are both ignorant. . . [**Brahman**] the end of the beginning of beings [is] unknown. . . We see only the intervening formations. . . [Therefore] thou must look at thy duty. . . [refuse] to fight in this righteous cause and thou will be a traitor, incurring only sin. . . To the noble, dishonor is worse than death. . . if killed, thou shalt attain Heaven; if victorious, enjoy the kingdom of earth. . . **Look upon pleasure and pain, victory and defeat with an equal eye**. Make ready for combat, and thou shalt commit no sin.

Several facets are evident in this example of **Hindu thinking**. First, there is **Brahman**, an impersonal reality at the heart of everything in the universe. Here all the apparent opposites in the world (heat and cold, pain and happiness, victory and defeat) meld together as one. Second, between phenomenal individuals and the noumenal (perceived by thought), impersonal **Brahman** are "intervening formations" (Andrew Fuller, *The Unity of the Bible*, pp. 70-73).

The task of reaching the “Supreme” home of Brahman is formidable. One must meditate without ceasing on the noumenal aspect of Krishna, renouncing all thought of rewards one might gain from hard work in this life. One’s responsibilities in the world press in on all sides, but must still his “restless” mind by meditating on the illusory nature of the phenomenal world (suppressing the desire for activities that will bring gain from one’s work). What **hopelessness**, for according to Hinduism, one’s karma rating (consequences, fate, destiny) will move toward the negative if one tends to live life as it was lived in previous incarnations, thus extinguishing any hope of success in constantly meditating on the **noumenal Brahman** (Hindu philosophy of diversified pantheism). (*Brahman* can also mean a god, the highest caste--*Brahmin*, or a breed of Indian cattle--*Brahma*.)

How sad that this **fatalistic system** keeps millions in futile darkness. But the light of God’s Word is the answer. For according to Scripture, all that is required of those who desire blessings from the omnipotent and omniscient God of the Bible is to believe in Christ and to repent of sin. And to wait upon one’s Heavenly Father in the sense of banking all their confidence for a happy future on the many promises He has made. **All humanity craves happiness** (Hindus included). Future happiness as set forth in the Bible is vastly more attainable than that offered to the Hindu. We support in every way Christian missionaries to India who expend the time and energy necessary to teach God’s whole purpose in history as set forth in the Bible (Ibid., pp. 73-74).

William Carey opened up Christian missions to India. He revived the idea that ethics and morality were inseparable from religion. This had been an important assumption underlying **Vedic religion** (oldest Hindu sacred texts). But the **Upanishadic** (mystical Hindu treatises) teachers separated ethics from spirituality. They thought that the human self (*Atman*) was the divine self (*Brahma*). Therefore **our spirit cannot sin**; our *Atman* **only gets deluded** and begins to imagine itself distinct from God. What we require is not deliverance from sin, but enlightenment, that is, a **direct experience of our divinity**. Vishal Mangalwadi notes that this denial of human sinfulness and emphasis on mystical experience of our divinity made it possible for us in India to be **intensely religious yet at the same time unabashedly immoral** (Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey* pp. 23-24).

Missionary William Carey taught that it was not ignorance but **sin that had separated us from God**. And that it was not possible to please God without Holiness. True spirituality began only when we repented of our sin. This teaching revolutionized the 19<sup>th</sup> century scene in India. Carey is the father of the Indian Renaissance of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Hindu India** reached its zenith by the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. But **absolute monism** began to sweep the Indian subcontinent and the creative springs of humanity dried up. The 12<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of India’s great decline. The material environment, human rationality and all that enriches human culture became suspect. Untouchability, asceticism, mysticism, the occult, superstition, idolatry, witchcraft and other oppressive beliefs and practices became the hallmark of Indian culture (and accelerated sordidness—filth, wretchedness, squalor). One may add to that invasion, exploitation, and the political dominance of foreign rulers made matters even worse (Ibid.)

In William Carey’s journal he wrote that many Hindus will say the gospel is the word of truth. They abound in flattery, but little can be said respecting their sincerity. The very common sins of lying and

greed are so universal that Europeans have observed, “They will stoop to anything whatsoever to get a few coins and will lie at every occasion.”

When considering **Hinduism’s effects on home life**, it is sad that female homemakers seldom had picture books in their mud homesteads. This was a reflection of the systematic emptying of the female mind – a mind that God had created to be filled with all that is intellectually true, morally noble, culturally good, and aesthetically beautiful.

**Kali, the goddess of death**, is the patron deity of Calcutta, and most other parts of Bengal. Divinity was perceived in Bengal as half male, half female, and yet women there were held in the lowest possible esteem. One contemporary journalist describes it this way, “Woman was deified in the abstract and demeaned in real life.” It has been stated often enough that “in **Hinduism there is no salvation for woman until she is reborn a man**.” Her only hope lies in serving man in complete self-abnegation. Female infanticide, child marriage, dowry and widow burning were every day realities accepted as normal until some of these were changed in India’s reformation. Contempt for the female made her a commodity, a chattel or possession which could be smothered or poisoned at birth and finally burned as a widow. This is a denial of the dignity of being made in God’s image (Ibid., pp. 30-33).

The culture that glorified the cruelty of widow burning had clearly put family possessions above the intrinsic value of a woman’s life. For two thousand years before Carey, the masses in India had been taught that this **earth was a place where souls were sent to take the consequences of their previous karma** (deeds). Thus life without suffering was not possible. The only way to escape this life of suffering was to escape life itself, which was the Indian concept of salvation or nirvana. What then should a person do if born an untouchable, a widow, or a leper? A Hindu/Bhuddist answer is that all have to **live with their karma and dharma (duties of one’s caste) as best they can, without seeking to change fate** in any fundamental way (this resignation to fate is tragic) (Ibid., p. 36).

**Hindu fatalism** is produced by the doctrines of *karma*, reincarnation and *dharma*. For these stress the all-pervasive belief that life on earth is determined by astrological deities above and demons and demigods below. Whatever freedom a Hindu has is severely limited by **karma, stars and demons, and by Hindu scriptures** often written from Brahmanical self-interest (the Brahman caste does not wish reform—they want to keep the lower castes in check). In addition **fatalism** makes social reform impossible. By contrast, Carey emphasized that suffering came later after creation, as the result of sin.

Suffering is thus a historical fact, not a **metaphysical truism**. Which means it can be and should be resisted. **Sin is not karma**. The idea of *karma* is that an impersonal law rules our destiny and automatically gives us the consequences of our actions. By contrast the Bible says that sin is breaking the laws of our personal heavenly father. Therefore it is possible to be forgiven and delivered from sin and its consequences. Only the gospel can reverse the two millennia bondage to **fatalism** and **religious escapism** (Ibid., pp. 89-91.)

Biblical epistemology, or how the knowledge of the truth is obtained, is the exact opposite of **mystical, magical and esoteric ideas of knowledge** then prevalent in India. Hindus did not translate their

scriptures from Sanskrit into the languages of the people because **truth was not something to be understood rationally**. Religious enlightenment was to be experienced **by killing the intellect** by various means of meditation and yoga. *Tantra* used *mantra* (by endless repetition in chanting) in a systematic annihilation of meaningful language.

**Mysticism requires a systematic obliteration of rationality**. Whereas true science founded upon biblical theology is based upon the assumption that the universe has a stable rational order sustained by the Creator (Ibid., pp. 105-107.)

In terms of religious philosophy, the ‘East’ (**Hinduistic pantheism**) has come West (to America). It is evidenced in a “New Age” belief that the individual is totally free to define his or her own reality. God defines freedom in a far different manner. Biblically we have freedom because we are made in the image of God. We are not programmed machines. God’s revelation sets limits to our freedom. We sin when we cross those limits. Neither the individual nor the majority is free to violate the divinely ordained moral categories.

When Carey arrived in India, he found a culture that denied two essential beliefs: First, a given physical/moral reality exists independently of a person’s perception of it. Second, a person has the ability to alter that reality (he is NOT locked in fate). These essential beliefs are scriptural; for the Bible also liberated post-reformation Europe to imagine and create a world better than that it had experienced. We find the polar opposite in Hinduism. The **Hindu mind** had no basis for fighting to preserve human life or affirm its dignity. For the doctrine of being made in the image of God was denied. **Human life was pictured as being in bondage of the wheel of Samsara** (the eternal cycle of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth). Individuality according to Hinduism was at best suffering and at worst a **hideous illusion**. Almost the entire mainstream Indian orientation had been a negation of life (Ibid., pp. 110-113.)

Being made in God’s image has profound ramifications. These affect creativity, imagination, scientific innovations and social reform. Only the gospel can lead out of **moral, social darkness**, for Christ is the light of life. Only the gospel can deliver from the prison of **fatalistic resignation** (Ibid., p. 114.)

William Carey injected a biblical work ethic into Indian society. Hindu spirituality had taken the best of India’s children away from work and into *ashrams* (etymologically this means non-labor). In India to be spiritual meant to meditate, not labor. When divinity was seen as an **impersonal consciousness** or energy and man is assumed to be divine then spirituality is automatically seen as an attempt to depersonalize ourselves. **Hindu religious discipline** therefore was an attempt to **annihilate rationality** through mysticism, language through *mantra*, creative imagination through *yoga*, and work through meditation and the *ashram* system (a religious community and its *guru*) (Ibid., p. 116).

One of the ways the creativity of the human spirit is neutralized is by **Hinduism’s false view of time** championed by its teachers. This is demonstrated in the culture of low esteem toward work and high esteem toward detachment. For if we owe our existence to stars and are dependent upon cosmic cycles (reincarnation) then there is very little in that world view which would support planning and pro-active steps. How opposite is the Biblical command, “redeem the time.”

In addition, **Hinduism's false view of time** allowed **Hindu priests** and **astrologers** to easily exploit the people. By contrast, the biblical worldview affirms that the, "Development of our world and its resources requires a correct understanding of human destiny in relation to the universe of space and time. Human beings are not victims of time but are above time firstly by virtue of the fact that we share the image of God who is above the universe of space and time; and secondly, because we were made to live forever" (Ibid., pp. 116-118).

Those who hold the law of **karma** in contempt by trying to alleviate suffering are considered as interfering with the operation of **karma**. Such compassionate actions which succeed in cutting short someone's sufferings is considered foolish said a professor of Hindi at Dehli University. The professor said it's foolish because the sufferer will have to be reborn to complete his due term of suffering. You will make him suffer for the same **karma** in two lives (Vishal Mangalwadi, *Missionary Conspiracy; Letters to a Postmodern Hindu*, p. 23).

The *Upanishadic* seers turned their gaze inward because they believe the essence of man and everything else was divine. Hindi mystics express their quest to know based on the assumption that the knowledge of the truth might come to us in a **non-rationale experience**. This can involve manipulating the nervous system in a number of ways: *chemically* through drugs, *physiologically* through yoga, *sexually* through *Tantra* or porn, *psychologically* through meditation or chanting, or *electronically* through devices and virtual reality (Ibid., pp. 79-81). Today, the Hindu mystics see **rationalism as a trap** and assume they will find salvation or truth if they get rid of their rationality by manipulating their nervous system with the help of drugs, sex, yoga, meditation, or magic. (p 82)

Our **rationality** is seen by **Hindu mysticism** as a disease condition of consciousness because it makes the material universe to be real, which presumably in your emerging philosophy is only a lower and grosser layer of reality or more honestly merely *Maya*. But mysticism has an in-built difficulty in its inability to decide which layer of reality is really real. Guru, Sai Baba captures the problem in a poem: "Rebuked by his wife for not shedding even a tear over the death of their only child the man explained 'I dreamed last night that I was blessed with seven sons, they all vanished when I woke up. Who shall I weep for? The seven that are vapor or the one that is dust? The seven are a **dream** and the one a **daydream**'" (Ibid., pp. 89-90).

Swami Muktananda, popularizer of Siddha yoga, made a typical **Hegelian statement** when he said "Even what appear to be opposites are expressions of the same reality." Rajneesh amplified this viewpoint, "We have divided the world into good and evil. The world is not so divided. The good and evil are our evaluations. Things will be but there will be no evaluation. **There is no good, there is no bad.** These are all aspects of one reality-the evil and the good." Swami Prabhupada, founder of the Hare Krishna, taught that, "In transcendence notoriousness has the same connotations as eminence." Guru Param Hansa taught that "God tells the thief to go and steal, and at the same time warned the householder against the thief" (Ibid., pp. 92-93).

Hinduism makes great use of **idolatry**. Its theology is **pantheistic**. It does not see the relationship of God and the universe as that of an artist to a painting, but that of a dance and the dancer. In Hinduism, God is the dancing *Shiva*, the dance, however, is NOT distinct from the dancer. If the creator and the cosmos are one then of course it does not matter which form of the creator you love. It is equally valid to love Him as your lover or as your destroyer—as *Laxmi* or as *Kali*, just as it is possible to award the villain as well as the hero in the movie. **Hinduism’s justification of idolatry** is best expressed in the Hindi saying, “It is God if you believe it, otherwise, it is a stone” (Ibid., pp. 114-115).

Any worldview that resists a **transcendent God** inevitably takes away individual **freedom of conscience** (nothing then is intrinsically “good” or “bad,” “just” or “unjust.” Hindu zealots oppose conversion to biblical Christianity. Freedom, justice, and conscience are spiritual concepts rooted in the belief in a Creator who is free, personal, and **transcendent** (beyond the cosmos). God has made humans—male and female—in His image, which includes creative freedom and the ability and freedom to make value judgments, such as the following: AESTHETIC: “this is beautiful, that is ugly.” CULTURAL: “this is noble, that is vulgar.” MORAL: “this is right, that is wrong.” EPISTEMOLOGICAL: “this true, that is false” (Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Quest for Freedom and Dignity; Caste, Conversion, and Cultural Revolution*, p. 106).

Paul’s **cosmology** in Romans one tells us that we cannot understand the gospel in its depth UNTIL we understand the contours of human rebellion against the knowledge of God. This is why Paul lays a worldview foundation for the gospel (Peter Jones, *One or Two*, p. 74).

Paul’s incisive analysis of the two worldviews: ‘two-ist’ (biblical theism) believes that God placed distinctions in the natural world, whereas ‘one-ist’ worldview rejects those distinctions. ‘Two-ist’ worldview believes that the primary foundational main distinction is between the Creator and the creature, whereas the ‘one-ist’ view (**Hinduism’s monism**) confuses the two—making nature divine. As a consequence, ‘one-ist’ spirituality worships creation and self. ‘Two-ist’ spirituality worships God by honoring Him and giving thanks. In the sexual arena, ‘two-ism’ respects the natural order of marital union with its heterosexual distinctions. ‘One-ism’ erases sexual distinctions in the name of freedom. There are only two worldviews. The ancient **Lie in Eden rejects natural law**—and according to Romans one, your understanding of the good news depends on facing the bad news. We are responsible to know the truths about creation structures (natural order/law)—such knowing is a requisite to repentance. AND, God has placed the knowledge of this **moral order** deep within us—so all mankind is without excuse (Ibid., p.80-81).

In ‘one-ist’ worldview, the world and humans are co-creators. **All is connected and there is nothing outside the circle**. In ‘two-ism’ (biblical theism) there are two forms of existence: our self-existent Creator, and all else. Our Creator gives an authoritative Word from the outside (the outside perspective which we crave—Ecclesiastes 3:11—“eternity in their hearts”). Where do we find a coherent comprehensive view that makes sense of our deepest longings for meaning and significance by giving us an overview of the whole. (EXAMPLE: The ants in the kitchen of the cruise ship that find a sweet roll tidbit—but must have ‘ant’ communication from the captain to know the destination of the ship—otherwise they are locked into their shrunken perspective.)

Speaking in the vocabulary of postmodernism: there are only two metanarratives: an ultimate story from within the universe, OR, a Word from without (biblical revelation). MEANING: either creation is divine; or the Creator is divine. It cannot be both. To say the creation is divine when you know deep down it isn't is soul-destroying folly. The stark choice immediately translates into but two spiritualities: esoteric; or exoteric—'one-ism' or 'two-ism' (Ibid., pp. 88-89).

A gaping hole has been left by the **suppression of God's transcendence**—His power and authority as Creator of all things. Paul, in Romans one, states that there are only two kinds of gods we can worship: THE GOD WHO CREATED US; OR, the gods we create. The latter represents the 'one-ist' view that God is no longer distinct; but all is contained in the circle including the divine (the inclusive circle as the proposed source of unity). The transcendence of God defined in contrast to our dependent derivative nature as humans (Ibid., pp. 99-100, 120).

The aseity or independence/self-existence of God: the *exchange of glory* constitutes a failure to see the distinction between God and His creation (Rom 1; Ps 106:20). God has incommunicable attributes that He does not share or give to us (Ibid., pp. 122-123). The promise of divinity was part of the Lie. "Two-ism" means that this is a moral universe. Without ultimate justice and moral order; life would be hell. God's righteous judgment infuses the universe with personal moral significance—which constantly calls us to a higher standard than merely living by our own appetites. **"One-ist" theology denies the possibility of a moral universe.** In the 'one-ist' worldview, *mother nature* doesn't press upon us the moral standard which calls for personal holiness. The Lie offered a higher state of existence through the denial of the Creator/creature distinction (based upon the denial of our bounded-ness the rejection of our creaturehood). We are without excuse because the 10 Commandments are written on our hearts (Rom 2:12-16). What a scary place this would be if the universe were without moral law; without conscience; without ethical norms; without accountability or guilt. (Think of the countless dramas and works of literature which turn upon the longing to see justice done.) (Ibid., pp. 124-127).

Without the moral structures mentioned above we would be living as the children in *Lord of the Flies*—stranded on a desert island devouring one another. God's righteous judgment will be revealed (Rom 2:5). All will be held accountable to God (Rom 3:19). By contrast in "one-ism" there can be no clear distinction between good and evil (Ibid., pp. 128-129).

The Holy Trinity is the ground and basis for personhood. The evidence of neo-paganism's explosion is the growing trend to embrace a form of 'spirituality' that rejects the Bible and its 'two-ism'. "One-ists" like to blur the debate by casting and framing the debate as a contrast between *narrow fundamentalism and tolerant syncretists*. No, the debate is between "one-ism" and "two-ism" (and their overarching view of all things). The new atheism does not threaten the gods of neo-paganism; ONLY the God of the Bible (Ibid., pp. 132-133).

**Paganism preserved local customs in which included geo-centric concentrations**—in other words, physical place is the source of spiritual life, AND worship of the earth as a spiritual entity. **Sacred spaces** being the concept (this is exactly what contemporary spiritualists do). **"One-ist" spirituality** has its methodology: erase the distinctions created by God (which constitutes an effort to erase the identity of

God, the distinction-Maker). **Rajneesh** (limos and sexual adventures) taught that good and evil are part of the same reality—and that **spirituality** comes from **joining opposites (Zen enlightenment)**. One can take control of one's life by creating an amalgam of dark and light (side) (Ibid., pp. 136-141). To reject the Creator of the universe throws us back on our 'hardwiring by sin' to the default mode of worshipping creation. True worship of God is dependent upon knowing Him as transcendent. The reason we worship Jesus Christ (Ibid., pp. 147, 149-152).

Tomorrow's culture will be religiously pagan says Lloyd Geering. The new global world is **monistic** (the oneness of all things). So far from being the final refinement, **pantheism** is, in fact, the permanent natural bent of the human mind (since the fall we have been hard-wired to nature worship). This new religion fits naturally with the Buddhist, **Hindu**, and Chinese notions of **non-theistic spirituality**. Polytheism gives us poly-sexuality, religious syncretism gives us the multicolored rainbow of sexual options (Peter Jones, *God of Sex*, pp. 42-45).

The two circles of **monism** and **theism** illustrate the two antithetical worldviews. God is holy and transcendent, unique, personal, Creator—He is distinct, altogether 'other' (Ibid., pp. 108-109). God creates by separating (**paganism sees separation resulting in fixed distinctions as bad**). The Bible affirms real, identifiable created distinctions—things with clear labels. Adam had a clear special role, in the created cosmos (as 'namer' of the creatures and as planetary king he shared co-regency with his Creator). His uniqueness involved shared dominion and glory. Naming is closely tied to holiness (for naming is our obedient response to preserve, teach, and celebrate the divinely ordained creation structures and distinctions to the glory of God). The difference between male and female is an essential part of cosmic holiness. Man's interpretive calling means that to deny or refuse to describe a thing the way God does is to be untruthful. (To call a thing contrary to what God has described it—is unholiness.) (Ibid., pp. 122-123).

The body is sacred, honorable, holy—it is our chief spiritual resource—which means that through disobedience, it can be used in non-sacred, unholy, dishonorable ways (Ibid., p. 127). The truth about the pagan religion is that it is **strictly about the self**—and may be reduced to the praise of self (there is no significant different 'other'—narcissism reigns) (Christianity has been accused of arrogance because of its exclusivist truth claims; but to say that all is one, and **"I am the same substance as God,"** is the height of arrogance—for it is the worship of self) (Ibid., pp. 136-137).

The logic behind **the command of no idols** is this: God is transcendent Creator; this implies a certain specific kind of spirituality anchored in the Creator-creature distinction (the utterly dependent creature owes his existence to the self-existent Creator who clearly reserves the right to define all human experience and existence). Because God is separate from the created order, therefore we are to make no graven image to represent Him (graven images which draw upon the objects He has placed in the creation such as bird, beast, fish, man, sea creature, heavenly body above, etc.—for our transcendent God cannot be accurately equated with anything in His own creation). Thus, graven idols would constitute abominable images. **There are only really two worldviews—paganism and theism**—the worship of

the creation or the worship of the Creator. Nowhere is this clearer than in the debate over sexuality (Ibid., pp. 146-147).

Biblical revelation gives us an accurate account of reality; a truthful and authoritative representation of what's out there. The historic confession of the church has been as follows: biblical revelation gives an accurate account of what's out there. **Correspondence between Scripture and reality** is secured by the fact that God Almighty has given it. God's truth is unvarying and universal. God's immutability guarantees that His Word is not open to change or revision. God's revelation sets up an **antithesis with all that is untrue**. God's holiness sets up a contrast with all error and evil. God has precipitated a collision between His wisdom and the world's spurious wisdom (1 Cor 1-4) (David Wells, *Above All Earthly Powers*, pp. 88-114).

A fallacious understanding of human nature drives **Eros spirituality** (*Eros*--human yearning, desire, and ambition—but ignorance of biblical theism). Our perceived innocence leads to the assumption that the sacred is naturally and easily and conveniently accessible to us. The truth is that God has 'shut up all in disobedience' (Gal 3:22; Rom 11:32). God's truth corresponds to reality—whether the counsels of the Creator, or the contents of the human heart; God's truth is a faithful representation of what's out there. Nature itself yields no saving revelation. But God, in flesh and bone history, has disclosed Himself and has acted in Christ.

God's self-revelation, faithfulness, and predictability are bound up together. His ways, His covenant, His promises are given to assure believers that He is their reliable Rock (Deut 7:9). God's works, ways, wonders are recorded by the biblical writers. God's acts have objective meaning—the interpretation of which is not subject to revision. Grace is only known as God acts to make Himself known through His Word and His Spirit. **The Spirit of Truth invades sacrosanct areas and spaces. God respects no sacred spaces other than the ones He fills!** The truth is: *God brooks no rivals*. He respects no self-constructed sacred spaces (Ibid., pp. 170-175).

**'Eros spirituality' dies in the presence of God's Word** because biblical truth destroys the sinner's sovereignty. But grace is only grace when there is no synergism—no cooperation with *Eros* desires and human effort. The upward of *Eros* is forever blocked by God who makes Himself inaccessible to it (Ibid., pp. 175-189).

Biblical faith is about *agape love*—God reaching down to disclose Himself to those who would not otherwise be restored to Him. The Word of God says that there is a boundary between God and humans—a boundary that can only be understood through the Scriptures. God's revelation is needed in order to understand that **by reason of man's sin; God is hidden and man is blind**. Only by the biblical revelation is the boundary made visible. The boundary is only apprehended by the aid of the Word and the Spirit; **the truth understood overturns our primal pagan instincts**. The meaning of *Agape* is God reaching across the boundary to sinners. In His revelation, He destroys illusions, misconceptions, and frauds which sinners have perpetrated on God and the cosmos. God's *Agape* is downward, gracious, condescending. He makes Himself known to us by way of a knowledge that gives understanding of life's meaning which corresponds to objective reality. God's sovereign love (*Agape*) revealed in His Word

destroys all false worldviews. **The cross of Christ killed all private worldviews.** God's *in-breaking* into history through Christ is *Agape*, not *Eros*. To be confronted with Christ is first of all to be confronted with one's sin against God—the reason being is Christ is the manifestation of God's glorious holiness. We desperately need God's testimony concerning our lost condition. The believer discovers that in Christ—Creator and Redeemer are one (Col 1:15-20). **Christ is the reference point for all reality.** How radical this stands in opposition to **pantheistic spirituality** which seeks meaning and salvation in self (Ibid., pp. 204-232).