Worldview Apologetics

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Week 2: Worldview Evaluation, Worldview Evangelism

Worldview Evaluation

- Why prefer the Christian worldview?
  - Because it's **true**? (yes, but…)
  - Because of **good reasons** (such as…)
- Tools for worldview evaluation
  - **Theoretical** tools – dealing with 'head' issues
    - Does it work in theory? Is it logical? Is it reasonable?
  - **Practical** tools – dealing with 'heart' issues
    - Does it work in practice? Is it 'livable'? Is it satisfying?
  - Use the right tools for the task!
    - People differ in their interests, concerns, values, etc.

Tool #1: Consistency

- Is this worldview consistent?
  - with itself?
  - with other beliefs a person has?
- *Example*: 'scientism'
  - Scientism: "Only science can give us knowledge."
  - Do we know *that* through science? *Could* we?
  - So how can we know whether scientism is *true*?

Tool #2: Explanation

- How much can this worldview explain?
  – about the world?
  – about us?
- *Example*: naturalism and altruism
  – Naturalism: humans evolved via natural selection
  – Altruism: self-sacrifice for the weak is virtuous
  – So how does naturalism explain altruism?

Tool #3: Experience

- Does this worldview fit with our experience?
  – inner experience (e.g., consciousness)
  – outer experience (e.g., beauty in nature)
- *Example*: naturalism and reasoning
  – Naturalism: it's all physics and chemistry
  – Reasoning: some beliefs are better than others
  – What sense does it make to say that some of the chemical reactions in your brain are "more reasonable" than other chemical reactions?

Tool #4: Coherence

- Does this worldview fit together well?
  – Do some parts support other parts?
  – Do some parts explain other parts?
- *Example*: Christian view of God and salvation
  – Theology: God is holy and just and merciful
  – Salvation: we're saved through Jesus' sacrifice
  – Christ bore our sins and paid the full price, satisfying God's justice and showing God's mercy

Tool #5: Conscience

- Does this worldview's view of ethics resonate with our consciences?
  - general ethical outlook (e.g., moral relativism)
  - specific ethical issues (e.g., child sacrifice)
- *Example*: postmodernism and pedophilia
  - Postmodernism: morality is a social convention
  - So if society agreed that pedophilia isn't wrong, would that make it morally permissible?

Tool #6: 'Livability'

- Can one 'live out' this worldview in practice?
  - Consistency between theory and practice?
  - Could you "walk the talk" with this worldview?
- *Example*: monism and money
  - Monism: all is one – there are no real distinctions
  - Money: can't buy you love – but still important
  - Is there really no distinction between my wallet and yours, between my bank account and yours?

Tool #7: Fulfillment

- Does this worldview satisfy our deepest desires and instincts about life?
  - fulfillment: intellectual / emotional / spiritual
- *Example*: Christianity and religious instinct
  - Widespread human instinct to worship 'God'
  - Christianity fulfills that instinct by…
    - telling us whom to worship and how to worship
    - providing the ability and the motivation to worship

Tool #8: Hope

- Does this worldview give us real hope?
  - hope for the future
  - hope for the present
- *Example*: atheism and "telling it like it is"
  - Bertrand Russell: "A Free Man's Worship"
  - "Only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."
  - Hopelessness is our only hope? (Let's hope not!)

Worldview Evangelism

- How is any of this relevant to evangelism?
- **Conversion**: a change of worldview
- **Persuasion**: giving reasons for a change
  - 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 17:2-4; 2 Cor. 5:11
- A major challenge: **indifference**
  - Changing worldviews is like moving home
  - No one moves unless there's good reason to!

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3 Steps for Worldview Evangelism

1. **Worldview Awareness**
   "Have you ever thought about…?"
2. **Worldview Analysis**
   "Let me stand in your shoes for a moment…"
3. **Worldview Alternative**
   "Now you stand in my shoes for a moment…"