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Who Do You Say I AM?

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Jesus posed the above question to His disciples, the answer to which is the hinge upon which a worldview swings. Who we say Christ is affects our understanding of God, His purpose and plan, His creation, His relationship with people, and how people relate to one another. Simon Peter proclaimed a truth of eternal significance when he declared, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

The mere espousing of truth, however, does not automatically translate into a functional worldview. Actual belief in a worldview is validated through behavior. Jesus made no provision for ambivalent, uncommitted superficiality. In a conversation with Peter, Jesus bore in with the same question three consecutive times, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” (John 21:15). Peter responded with exasperation, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus continued to emphasize a behavioral validation of Peter’s proclamation by stating, “Feed my lambs.”

Though there are innumerable variations in worldviews, all fit somewhere into a continuum of three major worldview classifications, each with a distinct concept of reality (Miller, 1998, 24).

Animism	Theism	Secularism
Ultimate reality is spiritual	Ultimate reality is personal	Ultimate reality is physical

When this three-fold template is applied to a professed worldview, it is possible to better understand both its nature and consequences when applied, or imposed, on societies. Ask key questions, and a person’s

worldview begins to take focus.

An animist’s role in the world is but to appease the gods while making no effort to better the world, because he has no influence or power over it. It is a life of fatalistic fear. The secularist’s role is to manage the world by determining how man must adjust and live in peace with it. People are consumers of the earth (Miller, 1998, 70) and, since human life has little value, they are expendable for the greater good of the earth. The consequence of worldview affects physical environment, development, poverty, wealth, behaviors, lifestyles, cultures, nations, and history.

A biblical worldview is founded on hope, hope in eternal life, while also seeking betterment of life and life conditions in the present. It includes the commission to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:29). “If the church does not disciple the nation, the nation will disciple the church” (Miller, 1998, 192). Biblically based leadership has a faith-filled, stewardship determination to return to the Lord whatever is entrusted to them in better condition than it was received, be it people, earth, or environment (Matthew 25:14-28).

Because Christ came to this earth, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, rose from the tomb, and now sits at the right hand of the Father making active intercession on our behalf, our delight and fulfillment is to do the Father’s will. The gateway to promise is through our answer to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15).

	Animism	Theism	Secularism
Is there truth?	Truth is unknowable. It is hidden, irrational, mystery. Ignorance is virtue.	Truth is revealed by God, objective, can be known by man.	Truth is relative, defined by man. Whatever you believe is true.
What is ultimate reality? Is there a God?	Consciousness: a realm that transcends worldly phenomena. Millions of gods exist, to be appeased.	Personal and relational: because an infinite, personal God exists. Both physical and spiritual reality exists and God makes provision for communication between the two. Both seen and unseen worlds exist.	Pantheistic: laws of the universe are, in essence, god. Reality is physical.
Is there right and wrong? Where did evil come from?	Though filled with and dominated by evil, the causes are outside the physical world. The universe is amoral.	God’s character is good. The great “I AM” of Scripture declares moral absolutes. Satan, with powers and principalities, is the source of evil.	Since there is no God or God-given absolutes, determination of morals as well as truth are relative and determined by man.
What is the value of human life?	No value.	A gift of God, made in His image.	No value.

Miller, Darrow L. 1998. *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*. Seattle: YWAM Publishing.

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Biblical Worldview

THE HINGE ON PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

"Who do you say that I am?"
- Jesus (Matthew 16:13 NIV)

The answer to Christ's question is the hinge upon which a worldview swings. The disciples reported that a variety of answers could be found among the people. In essence, though, Jesus was not requesting a public opinion poll. His question was personal in direction, querying what His followers would say. Simon Peter proclaimed a truth of eternal significance when he declared, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:16 NIV). Who Christ is affects understanding of God, His purpose and plan, His creation, His relationship with people, and how people relate to one another. Given Christ's claim as the Son of God, there is no room for neutrality of view regarding who He is. For that reason the answer to the question Jesus posed to the disciples (and to all who follow) is the hinge upon which a worldview swings.

However, the mere espousing of creed or truth does not automatically translate into a functional worldview. Beyond articulation, actual belief in a worldview is validated through behavior. Again, Jesus made no provision for ambivalent, uncommitted superficiality. In a conversation with Simon Peter (John 21:15-17 NIV) Jesus bore in with the same question three consecutive times, *"Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"* To which Peter responded with exasperation, *"Yes, Lord,"* he said, *"you know that I love you."* Jesus continued to emphasize a behavioral validation of Peter's proclamation by stating, *"Feed my lambs."* It is important to articulate a biblical belief and worldview. However, articulation remains but a philosophical exercise until behavior aligns with articulation, as evidenced through role and relationship. That reality means the holder of a biblical worldview must humbly accept a life-long quest to pursue God, His Word, and transformation of behavior consistent with God's purpose.

When this three-fold template is applied to a professed worldview it is possible to better understand both its nature and consequences when applied, or imposed, on societies. Ask key basic questions and a worldview begins to gather focus (Miller, 1998, 41-69):

Is there truth? What can I know? How can I know?"

Animism	Theism	Secularism
Truth is unknowable. It is hidden, irrational, mystery. Ignorance is virtue.	Revealed by God, objective, can be known by man.	Truth is relative, defined by man. Whatever you believe is true.

What is ultimate reality? Is there a God?

Animism	Theism	Secularism
Consciousness; a realm that transcends worldly phenomena. Millions of gods exist, to be appeased.	Personal and relational, because an infinite, personal God exists. Both physical and spiritual reality exists and God makes provision for communication between the two. Both seen and unseen worlds exist.	Pantheistic, laws of the universe are, in essence, god. Reality is physical.

Is there right and wrong? What is good? Where did evil come from?

Animism	Theism	Secularism
Though filled with and dominated by evil, the causes are outside the physical world. The universe is amoral.	God's character is good, the great "I AM" of Scripture declares moral absolutes. Satan, with powers and principalities, is the source of evil.	Since there is no God or God-given absolutes, determination of morals as well as truth are relative and determined by man.

An additional, defining question could be asked that further delineates worldviews (Miller, 1998, 68-69):

What is the value of human life?

Animism	Theism	Secularism
No value.	A gift of God, made in His image.	No value.

WHAT MAKES A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW?

How does one condense the elements of a biblical worldview into a few paragraphs when entire books have been written in an attempt to do so? Miller offers that the consequence of worldview affects physical environment, development, poverty, wealth, behaviors, lifestyles, cultures, nations, and history (Miller, 1998, 34). At the risk of oversimplification, there are at least three components of a biblical worldview; belief, role, and relationship.

BELIEF

A biblical worldview must begin with a view of God and His purpose because a biblical worldview cannot be but man's concoction. The Bible is not primarily about man at all, but about God (Packer, 2001, 20). What does God say about Himself and His purpose? "*I am the Alpha and the Omega,*" says the Lord God, "*who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty*" (Revelation 1:8 NIV). God's ultimate end in His dealings with His children is not simply their happiness. The Bible indicates that it is the glory of God Himself (Packer, 2001, 26). The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote in Romans 11:36 (NIV), "*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*" In Psalm 46:10 (NIV) we read, "*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*" The Westminster Catechism declares, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The only person who enjoys complete contentment is the person who knows that the only worthwhile and satisfying life is to be a means, however humble, to God's chief end – His own glory and praise (Packer, 2001, 30). A biblical worldview must be founded on an understanding that the worldview is not centered on us, but on God. God does not fit into our view; we fit into His.

A biblical worldview acknowledges that man was created in the image of God and assigned authority and responsibility for care of the earth (Packer, 2001, 26). Genesis 1:26-31 (NIV) clearly states,

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ [29] Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. [30] And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food.’ And it was so. [31] God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.”

A biblical worldview recognizes that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is one with the Father (John 14:9; 10:30). Christ is the cornerstone of faith (1 Corinthians 3:11), man is sinful in nature (Romans 3:23) and can only be redeemed and made whole with and by God through the forgiveness of sins by the blood and grace of His Son, Jesus (Romans 6:23). In order to maintain belief that is in alignment with God, Colossians 2:8 (NIV) admonishes, *“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”*

Christian researcher, George Barna, states that a biblical worldview includes a belief in absolute moral truth as defined by scripture, as well as acceptance of six core biblical beliefs (Jackson & Brown, 2002):

1. The accuracy of biblical teaching
2. The sinless nature of Jesus
3. The literal existence of Satan
4. The omnipotence and omniscience of God

5. Salvation by grace alone
6. Personal responsibility to evangelize

ROLE

A fair question, in response to an outline of the beliefs that constitute the foundation of a biblical worldview is, “So what?” As Miller states, the values and beliefs that form a worldview affect not only the way people *think* but also the way they *live* (Miller, 1998, 23). An animist’s role in the world is to but appease the gods while making no effort to better the world, because he has no influence or power over it (Miller, 1998, 60-61). It is a life of fatalistic fear. The secularist’s role is to manage the world by determining how man must adjust and live in peace with it. People are consumers of the earth (Miller, 1998, 60) and, since human life has little value, are expendable for the greater good of the earth. It is a hollow, devalued life.

A biblical worldview is founded on hope, hope in eternal life while also seeking betterment of life and life conditions in the present. Our behavior is to dynamically change and reorient from our former sinful state, marked in a distinct manner. J.I. Packer states this distinctive mark should be observable in least seven ways that we respond to God’s desire for glory (Packer, 2001, 31):

1. By worship and praise
2. By believing His word
3. By trusting His promises
4. By confessing Christ as Lord
5. By obeying God’s law
6. By bowing to His just condemnation of our sins
7. By seeking to make Him great in our daily lives

A biblical worldview includes a fascinating sweet/sour contrast. It both affirms the world as God's good creation and renounces it as corrupt throughout (Packer, 2001, 58). We are commanded, *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. [17] The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever"* (1 John 2:15-17 NIV). Yet, Galatians 6:9 also reminds us, *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."*

A biblical worldview role includes a specific commission, in Matthew 28:19-20, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Miller gives context to the Great Commission by emphasizing its scope includes entire nations and to fail to walk out the commission will bring loss for God's kingdom, *"If the church does not disciple the nation, the nation will disciple the church"* (Miller, 1998, 192).

A biblical worldview role is rooted in the Great Commandment, found in Matthew 22:36-39, where Jesus responds to a question from His disciples, *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.'* "Jesus illustrated what it means to love your neighbor when he shared (Luke 10:34-37 NIV),

"But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. [34] He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. [35] The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after

him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' [36] 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' [37] *The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'* Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

Jesus vividly demonstrated the power to transform by humbling Himself to serve, "...*he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet....*" (John 13:5 NIV). The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, exhorted, "*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love*" (Galatians 5:13 NIV). Vishal Mangalwadi, Indian development worker, observes, "The tragedy of our times is that while many Christians have confidence in the power of the Lord to return and change the world, many of us do not have confidence in the power of the gospel to transform society now" (Miller, 1998, 186).

Solomon introduced a passion for excellence into a biblical worldview, "*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might....*" (Ecclesiastes. 9:10 NIV). 1 Corinthians 10:31 re-emphasizes what must always be the motivation behind all deeds, "*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*"

RELATIONSHIP

It is possible to develop a strong biblical worldview belief system and zealously pursue an active role in the Great Commission while failing to grasp the importance of what is like the third leg of a three-legged stool, relationships that please God. Bruce Winston points out that one can attempt to practice the behaviors that are called for in The Beatitudes without first focusing on foundational values, such as agápao love [relationship]. The effect of this disconnect is results that are less than outstanding (Winston, 2002, 1). Miller states that the proper relationship between the I and We can be maintained only if we are properly related to the Thou, who is God (Miller, 1998, 204). Miller further declares that all of man's secondary relationships are defined

in the context of this primary relationship with his Creator (Miller, 2002, 92). He adds poverty comes not from a lack of resources but from separating our secondary relationships from our primary one, that the nature of wealth is relationships (Miller, 2002, 92). Jesus, sharing with the remaining eleven disciples after Judas had left to complete his betrayal (Ferguson, 2004, 217), shared tenderly, *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”* (John 13:34-35 NIV). David Ferguson points out there is a major cost to subscribers of a biblical worldview if they miss the priority of loving relationships. He states that the price is in being led astray from the simplicity of devotion to Christ and into darkness (Ferguson, 2004, 217):

- The darkness of prideful arrogance, being “puffed up” by how much we “know” or “believe” compared to others.
- The darkness of judgmentalism, comparing how “righteous” we are in contrast to others.
- The darkness of irrelevance, focusing on activity, achievements, or accomplishments, thinking that they bring fulfillment or transformation.

The Apostle Paul modeled a relational, biblical worldview when he wrote in Philippians 3:8 & 10 (NIV): *“What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...”* *“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...”* Ferguson ties belief, role, and relationship together in a biblical worldview in this way (Ferguson, 2004, 220):

- Because He died and rose, **we can live in union with Him**, drawing on His strength, wisdom and love (Galatians 2:20).

- Because He died and rose, **we can live for Him**, sharing His life and love (2 Corinthians 5:15).
- Because He died and rose, **we can live as His representatives**, extending His presence into the world by the power of His Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:20).
- Because He died and rose, **we can live to glorify Him**, responding in gratefulness and “wonder” at the grace given to us (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Jesus transparently exposed His heart and how disappointed He was when His followers could so concentrate on belief and action (according to their worldview) that it was as if they had not been in close relationship and listened, *“Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'”? (John 14:9 NIV).*

BARNABAS – A LEADER WHO EXHIBITS A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

In the tumultuous days of the early church Saul, better known by his other name, Paul (Acts 13:9), caused quite a stir. Ananias, a disciple, received what seemed like a horrific assignment from God when he was instructed to place his hands on the newly converted man then known as Saul, a persecutor of the church, so that his sight could be restored (Acts 9:12). Ananias described what all Christians knew about Saul's heinous record, *“'Lord,' Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. [14] And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name'” (Acts 9:13-14 NIV).* Christians were fearful of Saul, the Jews conspired to kill him (Acts 9:23), and the disciples were unwilling to allow him to join them because they didn't believe he really was a disciple (Acts 9:27). Doors were closed to a man who

would become known as the Apostle Paul and is considered by many to be the most influential force in history for Christianity, apart from Christ. However, according to then prevailing worldviews Paul was a permanently damaged commodity, destined to be despised, feared, and mistrusted. He was caught between and now rejected by two worlds, having been plucked from a highly educated and refined background, prestigious military standing with the accoutrements of power, and a career as an authoritative point man of Roman oppression, and now an infant believer reviled by the minority he had most recently persecuted, but whose beliefs he had adopted.

One man, with a servant's heart, who truly exemplified a biblical worldview, a man referred to among the apostles by a name that meant "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36), escorted and mentored Paul into fulfillment of his destiny. Barnabas invested his well-earned reputation by becoming Paul's advocate in bringing him before the apostles. There, on behalf of Paul, Barnabas shared the testimony about Paul's conversion (Acts 9:27). A distinguishing characteristic of servant leaders is that they seek to serve first and focus on followers before organization (Patterson, 2003, 2-3). Had Barnabas only been concerned with the objectives of the group alone it might have been too risky to introduce Paul and to encourage his acceptance. However, according to Frank Crane, "You may be deceived if you trust too much, but you will live in torment if you don't trust enough" (Winston, 2002, 15). Clearly, Barnabas did not select Paul for special sponsorship and treatment because of a natural affinity between the two. They were of different backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and personality types, very much unlike. In fact, after a storied team ministry, the two split from each other for a time because of a sharp dispute over the status of young follower, John Mark (Acts 15:39). Barnabas did not link himself to Paul because of what they had in common. What occurred was Barnabas, Son of

Encouragement, poured himself into Paul's fulfillment because it was a natural extension of a biblical worldview that was lovingly rooted in Barnabas' heart. Winston states that *agápao* leadership is required to bring out the best qualities in people (Winston, 2002, 9). Barnabas modeled such loving leadership.

As he gave himself to Paul's development Barnabas walked out a sequential (Winston, 2002, p. 21) application of each of The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). One example of this is how Barnabas demonstrated the humility of Matthew 5:3 (*Blessed are the poor in spirit*) in his relationship with Paul, particularly as Paul's leadership ascended to become more visible and dominant than that of Barnabas. In the early part of Dr. Luke's narrative in the book of Acts he refers to Barnabas and Paul, in that named order, but later begins to reverse the order of their names, suggesting a change in their leadership roles? After chapter 15, when the Council in Jerusalem selected the duo for an assignment to Antioch, Paul is always named first and appears to be recognized as the team leader. Note Acts 15:36 (NIV), "...*Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.'*" Paul was leading the way. In Galatians 2:1 (NIV) we read how Paul was directing the team, which included Barnabas, "*Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.*" What a measure of Barnabas' biblical worldview and servant leadership! He became a loving advocate for a neophyte believer and developed the follower from an "I do, you watch," to "I do, you help," to "You do, I help." Ultimately, Barnabas did his job so well that could take joy in seeing Paul's leadership grow beyond his own. That requires humility and faithful dedication to God's Word. Barnabas exhibited three characteristic marks of a biblical worldview: His beliefs were founded on the Word, with Jesus at the core. His role was consistent with his beliefs as evidenced by the

distinctive Son of Encouragement moniker from those who knew him best. His missionary travels and ministry were exhilarating walks of faith, learning how to obediently appropriate the power of God. His relationship with God was preeminent and it flavored all other relationships, as evidenced by his respectful mentorship of Paul and the esteeming love that his fellow apostles accorded him. There was no question about how Barnabas would respond to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus was Savior, Redeemer, and Lord to His humble servant, Barnabas. Barnabas is an excellent model of a leader with a biblical worldview.

PILATE – A LEADER WHO DOES NOT EXHIBIT A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

It would be easy to select a ruthless, maniacal leader from history or contemporary times as an example of what is not biblical worldview leadership. From various biblical rulers such as Nineveh's leaders, so wicked that Jonah fled an assignment there (Jonah 1:2-3), to more modern leaders such as Adolph Hitler, Josef Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, Idi Amin, and Saddam Hussein, there is no shortage of leadership examples to be reviled. Such leaders are so odious that we can disassociate ourselves from them and fail to identify the unbiblical worldviews that led them in such evil directions.

The "*I find no fault in this man*" Pilate of Luke 23:4 (KJV) is of interest because his dismissive declaration of Jesus' faultlessness indicates he was not a man of evil intent. He was not looking for or desiring to cause trouble for anyone. Clearly, Pilate did not have biblical beliefs because his inquiry of Jesus was merely to establish the veracity of the mob's accusation about Jesus' claim to be king of the Jews (Luke 23:3). However, instead of exhibiting biblical, servant leadership in caring more about his followers than organization (Patterson, 2003, 3), Pilate looked for opportunity to escape leadership responsibility: "*When he learned that Jesus*

was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod..." (Luke 23:7 NIV). When Herod, another example of a person with an unbiblical worldview, bounced Jesus back into Pilate's court, Pilate's primary concern was not to do that which was correct, but to placate people. When he again told the crowd that he could find no basis for prosecuting Jesus but would still punish, and then release Him (Luke 23:15-16), the crowd's raging demands caused him to release a murderer from prison instead, hoping that would satiate their anger. Not an evil man, but a man whose worldview also meant he lacked courage of conviction, Pilate tried again to appease the crowd by offering to punish and release Jesus (Luke 23:22). Adam Smith stated, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest..." (Winston, 2002, 13). Ultimately, out of self-interest, Pilate *"...surrendered Jesus to their will"* (Luke 23:25 NIV). Instead of exercising the power of his authority to protect, Pilate became a fearful pawn.

Pilate did not have biblically rooted beliefs that constitute the foundation of a biblical worldview. Consequently, his role was one that was consumed with self-interest, which was evidenced in his relationships. In essence, Pilate answered Jesus' question, "*Who do you say that I am?*" Pilate's actions reveal that Jesus, while not a criminal, was viewed by Pilate as but a man to be processed in such a way to avoid problems. What a commentary on leadership to watch this leader publicly absolving himself of responsibility for his leadership by symbolically washing his hands in a bowl of water (Matthew 27:24).

HOW DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS AFFECT LEADERSHIP

Francis Schaeffer posed a watershed question with the title of his book, “How Should We Then Live?” (Schaeffer, 1976). Ideas do not exist in a vacuum. They have consequences (Miller, 1998, 27), particularly in terms of leadership. Winston reports that he learned how he could see the leader’s foundational values yield beliefs, and how their beliefs yield intentions to behave, and how from their intentions spring actual behavior (Winston, 2002, iv). And, to repeat Miller, the values and beliefs that form a worldview affect not only the way people *think* but also the way they *live* (Miller, 1998, 23).

An animist’s role in the world is to but appease the gods while making no effort to better the world, because he has no influence or power over it (Miller, 1998, 60-61). Thus, an animistic worldview leads to fatalistic, fearful leadership. There is no motivation to explore, discover, and learn because ignorance is a virtue (Miller, 1998, 96-97). Missionary pioneer, William Carey, identified the key to poverty that dominated India, “Their minds resembled their mud huts” (Miller, 1998, 95). There is no purpose in trying to improve life in the present and no assuring view of life hereafter. The consequence is observable to Miller that the lands with the least access to the gospel are also among the neediest (Miller, 1998, 65). “*Who do you say that I am?*” To the animist Jesus could very well be another god or spirit. Why not? There is no limit. Many routes to consciousness are possible. Because Jesus is but one among many gods, the animist leader has nothing to offer his or her followers but hollow fatalism. Jesus declared a powerful, leadership-defining, and eternal truth in John 14:6 (NIV), “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*”

To the secularist, for whom god is what man determines, there are no moral absolutes, no definition for truth beyond himself (Miller, 1998, 96). Because there is no God, there is not truth.

Therefore, since everyone has an opinion, whatever you believe is true (Miller, 1998, 102). Since there are no absolutes man's ultimate value is but openness to everything except absolutes. If people cease believing in God, they do not then believe in nothing. They will instead believe in anything (Miller, 1998, 101). In the name of "tolerance," there is no basis for distinction between good and evil (Miller, 1998, 96). Instead of asking what is true, right, or just, the secularist will ask, "What can I get away with?" (Miller, 1998, 138). Freedom without moral responsibility is an invitation to anarchy (Miller, 1998, 138) and exploitation (Miller, 1998, 150). The historical record of exploitive leadership is massive. The secularist leader's worldview is a call to manage the world by determining how man must adjust and live in peace with it. People are consumers of the earth (Miller, 1998, 60) and, since human life has little value, are expendable for the greater good of the earth. "*Who do you say that I am?*" Perhaps an historical figure, a good man, a revolutionary, or a mythical person to the secularist, but not the Son of God. The consequence to secularist leadership is described in Luke 6:39 (NIV), "*Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?*"

A biblical worldview is founded on hope, hope in eternal life in Heaven while also seeking betterment of life and life conditions in the present. Biblically based believers exist in two dimensions, as sojourners on earth while ever cognizant that their ultimate citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20). C.S. Lewis stated that Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next (Packer, 2001, 64). Leadership that is guided by a biblical worldview is established on the rock of relationship with a personal, omnipotent God through His Son, Jesus Christ, and is guided in all other relationships and endeavors by God's Holy Word and agápao love (Winston, 2002, 1).

Because biblically based leaders understand God's stated purpose and mandate, they accept a stewardship mantle to *"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...."* (Genesis 1:28 NIV). Such leadership is inspired to explore, create, discover, and develop by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2).

The biblically based leader accepts responsibility for his or her actions, which are to be transformed by and reflect God's Word and moral authority, *"Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 7:20-21 NIV).

Leaders guided by a biblical worldview are committed to servant leadership, giving first priority to the needs of followers (Patterson, 2003, 3), and evidencing that servanthood through seven virtuous dimensions: agápao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service (Patterson, 2003, 3). Biblically based leadership can neither be resigned to powerlessness over life (animist) nor become god in authority over it and its inhabitants (secularist).

Biblically based leadership has a faith-filled, stewardship determination and joy to return to the Lord in better condition whatever is entrusted to that leadership, be it people, earth, or environment (Matthew 25:14-28 –*parable of the talents*). Because Christ came to this earth, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, rose from the tomb, and sits at the right hand of the Father making active intercession on behalf of a leader with a biblical worldview, that leader's delight and fulfillment is to do the Father's will. The gateway to promise is through the leader's answer to Jesus' question, *"Who do you say that I am?"* Echoing Peter, He is Christ, the Son of the living God.

PERSONAL WORLDVIEW AND LEADERSHIP

First things first – Who do I say that Jesus is? He is truly my Savior and Lord. I grew up in church and have dwelled there all of my life. However, at age nine Jesus introduced Himself to me in a very personal way, transcending the head knowledge I had acquired. My heart became His dwelling place. We are instructed, in 1 Corinthians 6:20 (NIV), “*You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*” I own nothing. God owns all, *including me*. Everything that I “own” is but entrusted to me as a gift from God. Though God has given me a mind and creative abilities to design, develop, lead, and administer, my association by name with what is accomplished will always be as support staff to the Lord. His continued love for and continued grace extended to me transcend and defy my comprehension. I exchanged a sin debt for a love debt and the account will never be paid, though my life is committed to giving back as much as is humanly possible.

After over thirty years of working in various capacities with the church I am very much aware of how Christians can read the same Bible and quote the same favorite verses but interpret and apply Scripture in almost radically divergent manners. A mystery of life and eternity, which I am relieved is not my responsibility to resolve, is how Christians with such divergent viewpoints will amicably inhabit Heaven when they have difficulty doing so on earth.

I see at least three primary interpretive tracks among Bible-believing people that can cause their worldviews to be in conflict: contractual, assent, and yielded. Roles and relationships emanate from beliefs, not always because of a deliberative process, rather often because they are but natural byproducts of belief. I believe there are ten key concepts that, when defined by each of the three tracks, bring their perspectives into focus (See illustration below).

CONTRACTUAL

One track is what I call **Contractual** in its view. These are people who view God as a contractor and interpret His Word as a contractual agreement with guaranteed authorities and privileges, available upon faith demand. While this track offers an admirably strong belief in appropriating God's promises through the activation of unfettered faith, corresponding roles and relationships sometimes reflect an abrasive edge. And it could also be said that, in the name of faith, God can virtually be considered a contractual servant. If the contract, as precisely defined by this track, is not fulfilled, and God has already obligated Himself in print for His part, then sin or failure of faith must be assigned to the other contractor, man. This need to judge when outcomes do not fit into a worldview was illustrated in John 9:2-3 (NIV), when Jesus and His disciples came upon a man who had been blind from birth: *"His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' [3] 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'"*

Though I prefer to avoid the descriptive phrase, "Name it and claim it" is often applied, perhaps somewhat unfairly, as a label to this worldview. I do not want to be harsh in judgment, but I believe that servant leadership, as described by Patterson (Patterson, 2003), is often a difficult fit for the contractual worldview.

ASSENT

The second track consists of people who call themselves Christians because of **Assent** to Christ and God's Word, less than a full embrace and commitment. These are the folks for whom there is a major disconnect between official belief and the lives that they lead. Miller refers to this crowd as evangelical Gnostics that suffer from split personalities because they separate their

religious-church-Bible study lives from their job-education-recreation lives (Miller, 1998, 46). Miller describes them as conformed as to the pattern of this world and have secular minds (Miller, 1998, 47). Packer cites such believers as often subscribing to eudaemonism, a system of philosophy that makes human happiness the highest objective (Packer, 2001, 56). Packer further laments that Christianity has been recast to place happiness above holiness (Packer, 2001, 65). People who are Christians by assent present a major challenge to the Western church of today. Becoming a servant leader is a distant journey for such Christians.

Y I E L D E D

I believe that the preferred biblical worldview is a track I refer to as **Yielded**, harmoniously reflected in belief, role, and relationship with God. It is my hope that my life offers evidentiary characteristics of the yielded track as validation of my calling to service. The yielded track reflects Patterson’s description of servant leadership (Patterson, 2003). Following is an attempt to conceptually delineate the three Christian worldview tracks:

	Contractual	Assent	Yielded
GOD	Obligated to fulfill promises, as I claim them	Genie in Aladdin’s lamp	Relational & purposeful
BIBLE	Contract	Inspiration	God’s purpose & plan
SELF	Important to God	Centered	He must increase, I must decrease
OTHERS	Help me reach my goals	Co-workers	Minister
OWNERSHIP	God owes me	God has given, I control	God owns & controls, I am a steward
PRIORITY	Rule & dominate	Fulfillment & happiness	Seek ye first...
PURPOSE	Accomplishment	Comfort	Glorify God
MOTIVE	Claim	Grow	Serve
ATTITUDE	Pride, arrogance, & haughtiness	Measured	Humility & submission
OUTLOOK	Bless me	Bless us	Bless God

BELIEF

A couple of years ago I devoted quantity and quality time to the formulation of a personal calling statement. Though previously written, it lives fresh within me today, guiding my worldview (Bach, 2001):

My Purpose

My purpose is to love God through Christ by gratefully accepting His salvation¹, loving and serving Him with obedience² and integrity³, committed to giving my all in fruitfulness⁴ unto Him.

My Values

The values that under gird and guide me are trust in God⁵, depth of character in Him⁶, love for and care for my wife⁷ and family⁸, commitment to competence and excellence⁹, a big picture viewpoint¹⁰, integrity, developmental creativity¹¹, skillful administration¹², effectiveness¹³ over mere activity, hunger for wisdom¹⁴, and the direction of attention and praise to God over self¹⁵.

My Vision

My vision is to love the Lord God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength¹⁶, to follow Him wholeheartedly¹⁷, to live a life marked by integrity, taking whatever assignment God gives to me with the zeal and determined focus of Caleb¹⁸ and as a servant who will “occupy”¹⁹ until He comes. Occupy means I will lovingly and creatively improve and build whatever is entrusted to me so that I can return it to the Master in better state than received, and to do so as my act of worship²⁰. My vision is that my wife and family will cherish my love and devotion to them. My vision is that those who know me will remember my life as the embodiment of my personal and ministry values, as one who walked faithfully with and fruitfully for the Lord, and who finished well²¹. The crowning moment of my vision is to stand before God one day and hear Him say to me, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”²²

¹**Psalm 116:12-13**

What can I offer the Lord
for all he has done for me?
I will lift up a cup symbolizing his salvation;
I will praise the Lord's name for saving me.

²**1 Samuel 15:22**

Obedience is far better than sacrifice.

³**Genesis 39:8**

But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household.

1 Kings 9:4

As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and godliness...

Daniel 6:4

Then the other administrators and princes began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling his affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize. He was faithful and honest and always responsible.

⁴**Philippians 1:22**

Yet if I live, that means fruitful service for Christ.

⁵**Proverbs 3:5**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

- ⁶ **James 1:4**
So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.
- ⁷ **Ephesians. 5:25**
And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her
- ⁸ **Psalm 103:17**
But the love of the Lord remains forever
with those who fear him.
His salvation extends to the children's children
- 1 Chronicles 29:19**
Give my son Solomon the wholehearted desire to obey all your commands, decrees, and principles...
- Ephesians 6:4**
And now a word to you fathers. Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.
- ⁹ **Ecclesiastes 9:10**
Whatever you do, do well.
- Colossians 3:23**
Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.
- ¹⁰ **Proverbs 4:25**
Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you.
- ¹¹ **1 Corinthians 3:10**
Because of God's special favor to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it.
- ¹² **Genesis 41:40**
I hereby appoint you to direct this project. You will manage my household and organize all my people.
- ¹³ **1 Corinthians 16:9**
because a great door for effective work has opened to me....
- ¹⁴ **1 Kings 4:29**
God gave Solomon great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge too vast to be measured.
- ¹⁵ **John 3:30**
He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.
- ¹⁶ **Luke 19:13**
Occupy till I come.
- ¹⁷ **Joshua 14:14**
...because he wholeheartedly followed the Lord, the God of Israel.
- ¹⁸ **Joshua 14:12**
Now therefore give me this mountain...
- ¹⁹ **Luke 19:13**
And he ... said unto them, Occupy till I come.
- ²⁰ **Romans 12:1**
And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?
- ²¹ **2 Timothy 4:7**
I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.
- ²² **Matthew 25:23**
The master said, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!"

ROLE

My primary roles as a biblically based leader are those of husband and father. No amount of accomplishments and public acclaim could match the importance of faithfulness in this area, nor compensate for failure to carry out my roles as husband and father. God, in His grace, has also seen fit to call and appoint me to church leadership, currently as a superintendent that serves 60 churches and over 200 ministers. I am committed to a synergistic premise that we accomplish much more for God by partnering together than we do as isolated islands. I will give every

available breath and piece of energy to this cause, to help churches and ministers to be as fruitful as God desires. By nature, experience, education, and, perhaps, generational orientation, I would be a transformational leader (Patterson, 2003, 2). To help ministers and churches to achieve more together for God, within the context of our fellowship, is exhilarating. Virtually all of my adult life has been given to this quest.

RELATIONSHIP

The most profound change in my leadership has taken place in the last six to eight years. My understanding of a biblical worldview was altered when the Lord opened a window into my heart that allowed me to recognize the importance of relationships. I had the proper belief down concerning relationships, beginning with God. But, my task-oriented nature saw relationships existing for the purpose of fulfilling tasks; transformational goals (Patterson, 2003, 2). I was sure the Lord was quite pleased with that focus. However, as I began to learn about the nature of God and the relationship He desires to have with His people and His desired relationship for people to have with other people, I realized I was like a middle aged man entering relational Kindergarten. I could no longer dismiss Romans 12:15 (NIV) as a syrupy aside to be but superficially heeded, *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”* It must become central to my heart and in my relationships with those I lead.

My pilgrimage, thus, has been toward a servant leadership model as espoused by Kathleen Patterson (Patterson, 2003). I am not optimistic about totally crucifying my carnal nature, even the well-intended transformation oriented side. Truly, it is a pilgrimage. But, by opening that window God also helped me to discover a previously unexplored and undeveloped room in my heart. I find myself delighting in the victories of people, looking for ways to inspire, stimulate, and encourage more, through relationship. And, to my amazement, I have found a

sweet and deeply rewarding place in my heart in weeping with and offering care for those who are hurting, through relationship. I have even bravely, but humbly, added the term Pastor in front of my official Superintendent title. It both expresses my desire and calls me to accountability; I know that I can fall off of this relational wagon by allowing my natural inclinations to control.

“Who do you say that I am?” “Jesus, I love you as my Savior and Lord. And, I accept your call to demonstrate my love for you by feeding your sheep. Show me and teach me how, Lord, and I will follow.”

CONCLUSION

“Who do you say that I am?” The answer to the question is the hinge upon which a worldview swings. The animist looks into a cosmos fearfully filled with millions of gods and has but a blank response to the question. The secularist either dismisses the question entirely or offers a deity denying response. The Bible-believing Christian passionately answers, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”

As widely divergent as are those belief statements, as vast as the chasm is between them, *belief is actually as close as the worldviews will be.* That is because roles and relationships flow from belief and are where the *ramifications* of belief are witnessed. Beliefs can be debated and argued with little impact upon the participants. However, the effect of roles and relationships is inescapable and the differences become visibly profound. Those marked differences are revealed through value that is assigned to life, how the inhabitants of the earth view and interact with the cosmos and earth, the development and outcomes of cultures, nations, governments and economies, the source and determination of morals and law, and how people simply relate to each other.

I am deeply thankful for a God who loves us so much that He would send, give, and sacrifice His only Son to death on a cross in order that man would have a means of salvation, raise His Son from the tomb and to a place of intercession for man at God's right hand, and freely offer abundant and eternal life to all who believe. Christ is the hinge upon which a worldview swings! It is this same, loving God who declared a promise to those who call upon His name, a promise that distinctively sets apart a biblical worldview from all others in that it instills and sustains hope in the heart of true believers: "*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*" (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

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