

# Editorial: Worldview, World Religion, and Missions

Greater knowledge of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism is needed in order to evangelize the unreached peoples of the world. It can hardly be denied that this knowledge is needed and that it must be on a deep worldview level. Since the great majority of the unreached peoples belong to long standing and well developed religious systems it is paramount that frontier mission personnel deeply understand the worldviews of the non-Christian religions.

As we shall in this issue, worldview properly understood shapes and determines the behavior and the way people live. Missionaries are after real change in the lives of people, not just change in behavior without a corresponding change in worldview. In fact change in values and beliefs will not suffice unless these are based on a deep change in worldview. Only deep seated change as related to the Gospel will produce fruit that remains and plant the church that prevails!

It is with this in mind that we have developed this special issue with its focus on worldview and world religion. We want to make a strong case for a close link between worldview and world religion. Most of the articles in this issue focus on beliefs, values and hopes of non-Christian religions compared to Christianity. These articles describe concepts, perspectives, hopes, developments, systems of thought and belief that are worldview issues that focus on the questions of ultimate reality, which normally (traditionally at least) have been associated with religion.

Questions of origin and purpose of the universe, questions concerning who we are as human beings and what is wrong with humanity, including the remedy for the malady, cannot be answered without fundamental beliefs usually associated with religious beliefs. But we want to link religion and worldview and make the point that the dichotomy many of us see between

them is false because it rests on wrong assumptions, i.e., worldview, that is founded on naturalistic and humanistic thought systems. These systems radically divide the sacred and secular, the natural and supernatural, as well as science and religion. As will become clear in this issue, that essential dichotomy of reality is wrong because it is anti-biblical, and also is intrinsically wrong—it contradicts and undermines reality as it objectively is.

For that reason we want to make the point that there is no essential or radical dichotomy. Worldview and religion need to be closely linked. In fact when rightly understood on a deep belief level, they are one and the same.

Besides getting a deeper understanding of worldview and making us more effective ministers of the Gospel, we want to make a very strong case for another very important point: Christians in general and missionaries in particular need to develop a solid Christian biblical worldview for themselves. The point is as follows: “Christians should have a worldview that is strongly related to their faith. However, some Christians hold worldviews inconsistent with biblical truth and often heavily influenced by surrounding culture. There is the strong, consistent temptation to adopt elements of a cultural worldview, a worldview that may have little regard for Christian truth. The Christian’s task, then, is to shape a worldview according to the teaching of Scripture, and continually test the (cultural) worldview beliefs against the Scriptures. A biblical worldview should then serve as a guide through life.” (From Richard T. Wright’s book *Biology through the Eyes of Faith*, 1989 pg. 11-14)

We are convinced, and we trust that our readers will see the same, that the Church in general and Missions in particular need to develop a solid Christian worldview, one that is thoroughly supernatural, that gives us a complete cos-

mology of “the heavens and the earth,” including what the apostle Paul called the visible and the invisible reality of creation and existence (Col. 1:15-20). Christians everywhere need to develop a world and life view that answers the ultimate questions of life in God’s way based on His revelation which is totally trustworthy because it reveals objective reality and therefore is absolutely true!

We are convinced that without a biblical worldview of life and its purpose nothing of real significance in the Church nor in Missions will happen—in fact it cannot happen. Without a biblical Christian view of life and existence secularism, rationalism, humanism and the other currents of our time, will continue to take deeper roots in Western culture, and increasingly weaken the Church, and may eventually destroy Christian faith and life altogether (See Luke 18:8). Furthermore, without a solid biblical worldview, there is every likelihood that the unreached of the world will remain unreached. For how can they be reached “if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound”? (1 Cor. 14:8) How can we evangelize them if we proclaim a Western secularized gospel rather than *the Gospel*? Jesus specifically said that “this Gospel of the Kingdom” is what the nations need “as a testimony unto them.” (Matt. 24:14)

There exists a vital link between worldview, world religion and world missions. Christian faith and life and our service unto the Lord in world missions depend on it. May we all see it. May we all rediscover the need to build solid biblical foundations for faith and life and develop a deep Christian worldview. As nothing else will, this will make us complete “equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

*Hans M. Weerstra,  
IJFM Editor  
April, 1997  
El Paso, TX USA*