

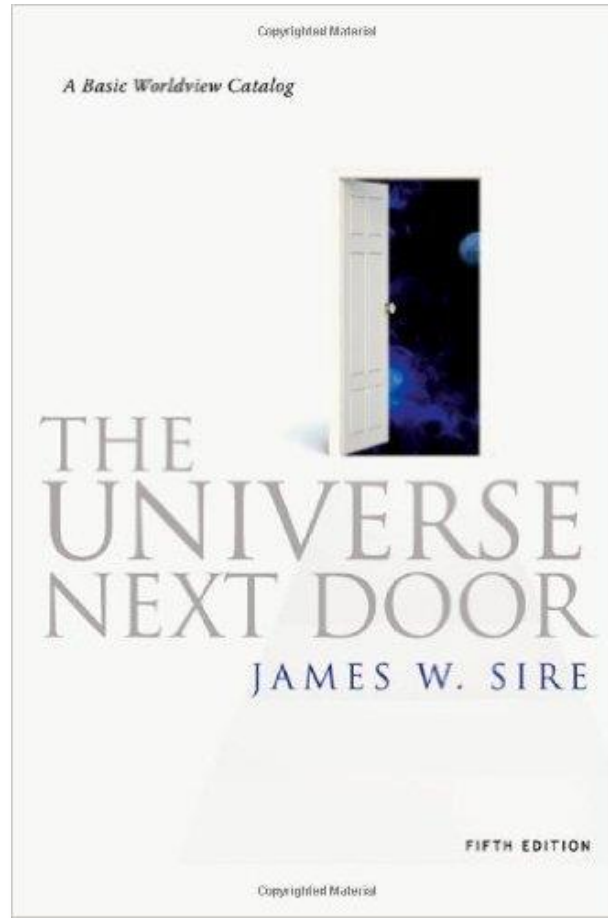
The New Age Movement

Search For Answers

November 29, 2015

John Babich, Presenter

The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog (5th Ed.), by James W. Sire



Worldviews Revisited Series

- Introduction to Worldviews (10/25/15)
- Christian Theism, Deism, Islamic Theism (11/01/15)
- Naturalism, Nihilism (11/08/15)
- Existentialism (11/15/15)
- Eastern Pantheistic Monism (11/22/15)
- **The New Age (11/29/15)**
- Postmodernism (12/06/15)
- How Shall We Then Live? (12/13/15)

What is a Worldview?

“A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”

Source: James Sire, p. 20-21, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009) – Extended quote

Eight Basic Questions

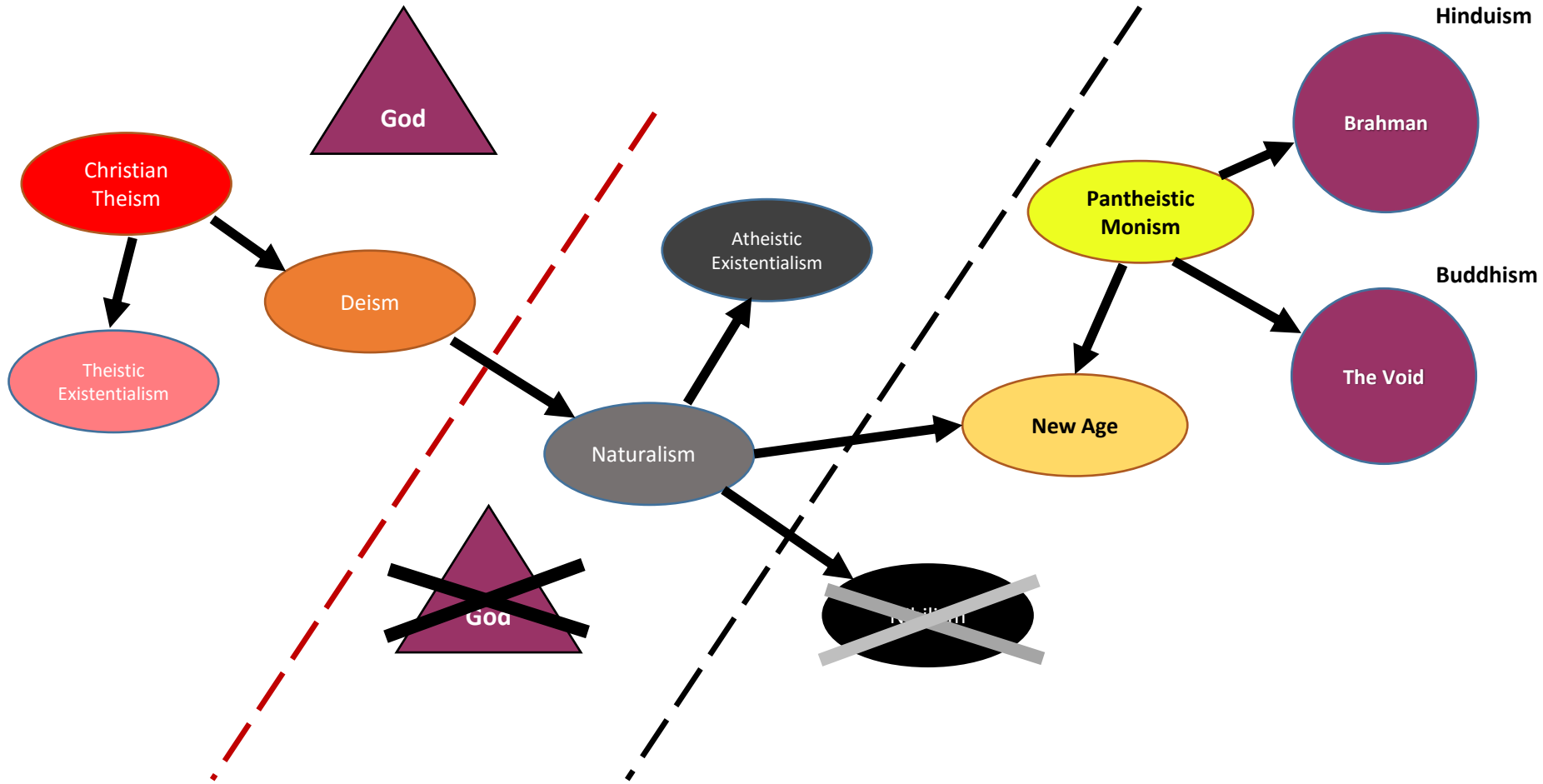
1. What is the prime reality – the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person after death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?
8. What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?

Source: James Sire, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

The New Age Movement

A Separate Universe
– Spirituality without Religion

“The Slide...and the Leap”



The Panoramic Sweep of New Age Thought

“We have here more than the current fad of New York intellectuals or West Coast gurus. The following list of disciplines and representatives within those disciplines emphasizes this fact. For the people listed here, New Age thought is as natural as theism is to Christians.”

Source: James Sire, p. 173, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Psychology

- **William James** – Altered States of Consciousness
- **Carl Jung** – Psychiatrist, founder of analytical psychology
- **Abraham Maslow** – Self-actualization, hierarchy of needs
- **Aldous Huxley** – Author (*Brave New World*, *Doors of Perception*) and drug experimenter

Source: James Sire, p. 174, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

Psychology

- **Robert Masters & Jean Houston** – Foundation for Mind Research
- **Stanislov Grof** – Maryland Psychiatric Research Center - LSD for the terminally ill – Transpersonal Psychology – Esalen Institute
- **John Lilly** – Marine Biologist
- **Ken Wilber** – Transpersonal psychology

Source: James Sire, p. 174, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Anthropology

Carlos Castaneda (1931-1998)

- *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (1968)*
- *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations of Don Juan (1971),*
- *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan (1972)*

Source: James Sire, p. 174, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

Natural Science

- **Fritjof Capra** – *Tao of Physics*
- **Lewis Thomas** – *Lives of a Cell*
- **J. E. Lovelock** – *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*

Source: James Sire, p. 174, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

Health Science

- **Andrew Weil** - *The Natural Mind: An Investigation of Drugs and the Higher Consciousness* (1972, rev. 2004), *Spontaneous Healing* (1995), *Healthy Aging* (2005), *Spontaneous Happiness* (2011)
- **Deepak Chopra, MD** – *Return of the Rishi: A Doctor's Story of Spiritual Transformation and Ayurvedic Healing* (1991), *The Third Jesus* (2005)

Source: James Sire, p. 177, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

New Age's Debt – Naturalism

- No transcendent God
- Closed universe, even with superior beings
- Hope of evolutionary change for humanity
- Value of individual people

Source: James Sire, p. 179, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

New Age's Debt – Pantheism

- Transcendence of time, space and morality through mystical experience
- Rejection of reason - “Straight thinking”
- Embracing of irrationality - “Stoned thinking”

Source: James Sire, p. 179, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

New Age's Debt – Animism

- The natural world is inhabited by countless spiritual beings, often conceived in a hierarchy
- Universe is personal, but no infinite-personal God
- Spiritual beings are capricious, may be nasty or comic
- Placate evil spirits and woo the good spirits
- Witch doctors, sorcerers and shamans are experts
- Unity of all life

Source: James Sire, p. 180, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Three Versions of the New Age

- **Occult** – Animistic, Shamanistic, Wiccan, Astrological
- **Psychedelic** – “Better living through chemistry”
- **Conceptual Relativism** – Quantum theory, which absolutely proves that there are no absolutes

Note: My phrasing, with a pinch of sarcasm.

Source: James Sire, pp. 198-204, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #1

What is the prime reality – the really real?

(NAM) Whatever the nature of being (idea or matter, energy or particle), the self is the kingpin, the prime reality.

Source: James Sire, p. 181, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #2

What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?

(NAM) The cosmos, while unified in the self, is manifested in two more dimensions: the visible universe, accessible through ordinary consciousness, and the invisible universe (or Mind at Large), accessible through altered states of consciousness.

Source: James Sire, p. 186, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #3

What is a human being?

(NAM) As human beings grow in their awareness and grasp of this fact [the self is the kingpin], the human race is on the verge of a radical change in human nature; even now we see harbingers of transformed humanity and prototypes of the New Age.

Source: James Sire, p. 186, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #4

What happens to a person after death?

(NAM) Physical death is not the end of the self; under the experience of cosmic consciousness, the fear of death is removed.

Source: James Sire, p. 158, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #5

Why is it possible to know anything at all?

(NAM) Human beings can understand reality because in a state of God-consciousness they directly perceive it. Nonetheless, when New Age teachers present this view to others, they often cite the authority of ancient Scriptures and other religious teachers.

Source: James Sire, p. 204, The Universe Next Door, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #6

How do we know what is right and wrong?

(NAM) The core experience of the New Age is cosmic consciousness, in which ordinary categories of space, time and morality tend to disappear.

Source: James Sire, p. 190, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #7

What is the meaning of human history?

(NAM) History as a record of events that actually occurred in the past is of little interest, but cosmic history which ends with the deification of humanity, especially the individual human self, is seen as a great vision and a great hope.

Source: James Sire, p. 207, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

Question #8

What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?

(NAM) New Agers are committed to realizing their own individual unity with the cosmos, creating and recreating it in their own image.

Source: James Sire, p. 207, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th Ed. (2009)

The New Age – Two Stories

THE NONRATIONAL
AND NONLOGICAL

Cosmic consciousness, Expanded consciousness, God-consciousness, Mind at Large, holotropic, “Atman is Brahman”, supernatural

THE RATIONAL
AND LOGICAL

Ordinary consciousness, consensus reality, hylotropic, *namarupa* (“name & form”), natural

Source: My diagram based on Schaeffer's Two Stories

Appendix

Two-Story Dichotomy

FAITH (NONREASON—OPTIMISM)

THE RATIONAL (PESSIMISM)

Source: Francis A Schaeffer, p. 16, from The God Who is There, in The Complete Works, Vol.1. (1984)

The New Super-spirituality

THE NONRATIONAL
AND NONLOGICAL

Existential experience; the final experience; the first-order experience.

THE RATIONAL
AND LOGICAL

Only particulars, no purpose; no meaning. Man is a machine.

Source: Francis A Schaeffer, p. 16, from The God Who is There, in The Complete Works, Vol.1. (1984)

Soli Deo Gloria

<http://searchforanswers.org>