

### **What a Worldview is and Does . . .**

- Is a vision *of* life (descriptive) and a vision *for* (prescriptive) life.
- An eschatology that offers a vision of the future which guides and directs life.
- Determines values (esp. the *summum bonum*) and interprets the world (hermeneutics).
- Grounds life in the confessed ultimate certainty
- Relates life to the universal order of existence
- Serves as the interpreter of and integrative framework of all of life
- Acts as the shared, cohesive, motivating, and pervasive mind binding adherents into a community
- Rooted in culture and culture in world view in a reciprocal relationship
- Are an intensely spiritual and religious phenomenon (as “Geist” = German for spirit).
- Are influenced by language and the language by the world view (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis).
- Are understood as conceptual universes which makes it difficult to communicate with others across world view boundaries (different universes of discourse).
- Is held in faith as a confessional perspective, founded on ultimate faith commitments; ultimate faith commitments (conscious or unconscious) sets the contours of our world view.
- Is expressed in symbols (semiotics)
- Is crucial in shaping personal identity
- Evokes and creates deeply held emotional attitudes and moods of deep satisfaction, inner joy, and peace (or the opposite).
- Excites intellectual quests and deepened conceptual reflection
- Sanctions sacrifice on its behalf, perhaps even to the point of death; a world view is a value worth dying for (S. Kierkegaard).

- Once shaken, shakes its adherents to the core as a psychological or emotional crisis of the greatest magnitude (“shaking of the foundations”-P. Tillich).
- As a faith commitment, answers four basic questions: 1. Who am I? 2. Where am I? 3. What’s gone wrong? 4. What’s the remedy?
- Are mostly unconscious, pre-theoretical and foundational to philosophy and theology, or any disciplinary enterprise. World view commitments serve as “control beliefs” for other endeavors (Wolterstorff).
- Incarnates itself in a daily practice and a way of life (lifestyle); if not, the result is hypocrisy.
- May be tested in at least three ways: 1. Whether the world view is consistent with reality (and does not idolize one part over another, but is able to open up, elucidate, and integrate the whole of life successfully); 2. Internal coherence logically and in terms of unity of commitment; 3. Openness (existential livability) in that it opens up life to prosperity and blessing, rather than death and cursing (Deut. 30).
- Recognizes its own limitations and is open to correction, refinement, learning and reformation since world views are not infallible and are not to be absolutized (not even our version of the Christian, biblical world view).
- Can gain cultural dominance, become totalitarian in character as an ideology, and become an instrument of oppression and violence (“beware of anyone who falls in love with the ‘truth.’” -Neil Postman, UTA, Spring 1995).