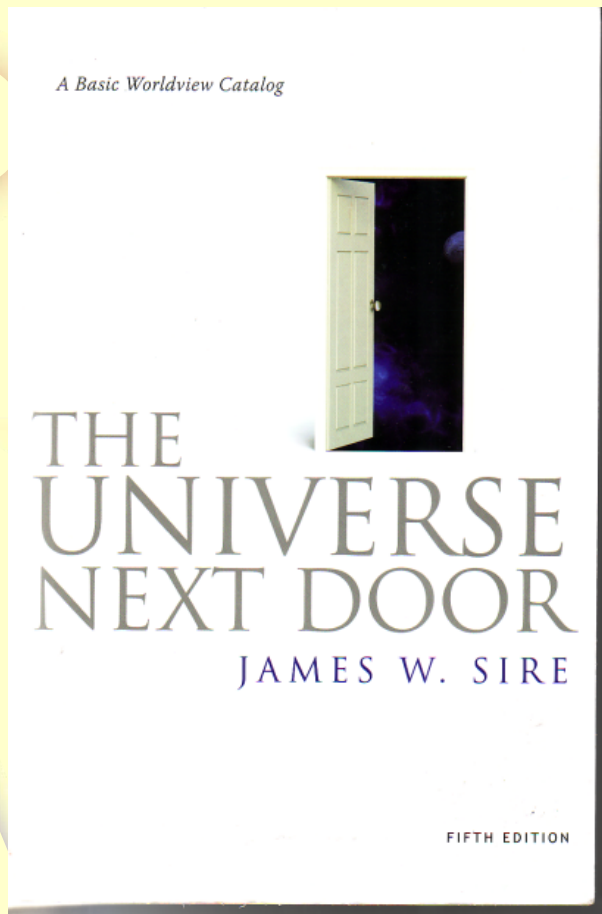


# Worldview Boutique



Some key points from  
James Sire's

*The Universe Next Door*



# Why this book?

- ◆ Outline basic worldviews that underlie the way we think
- ◆ Trace historically how these worldviews developed
- ◆ Show postmodernism's twist
- ◆ Understand ourselves and others so we can genuinely communicate



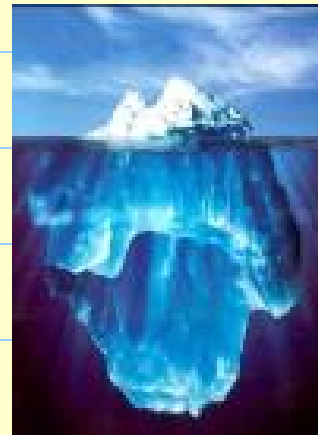
# Worldview defined

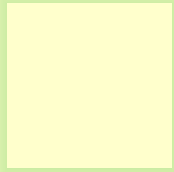
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"A *world view* is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world." -- Sire

# Worldview: An iceberg analogy

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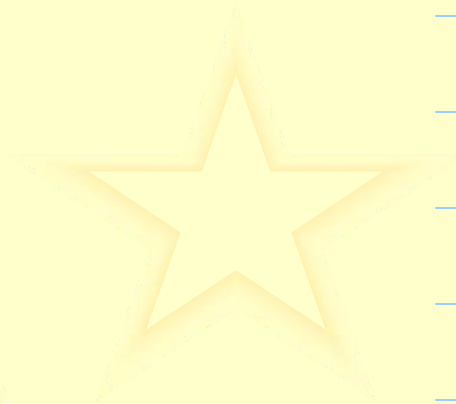


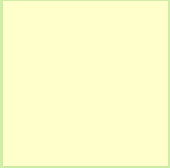


# What a worldview does . . .

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One's worldview determines how the  
events and circumstances of life  
will be understood . . .  
accepted . . .  
and acted upon.



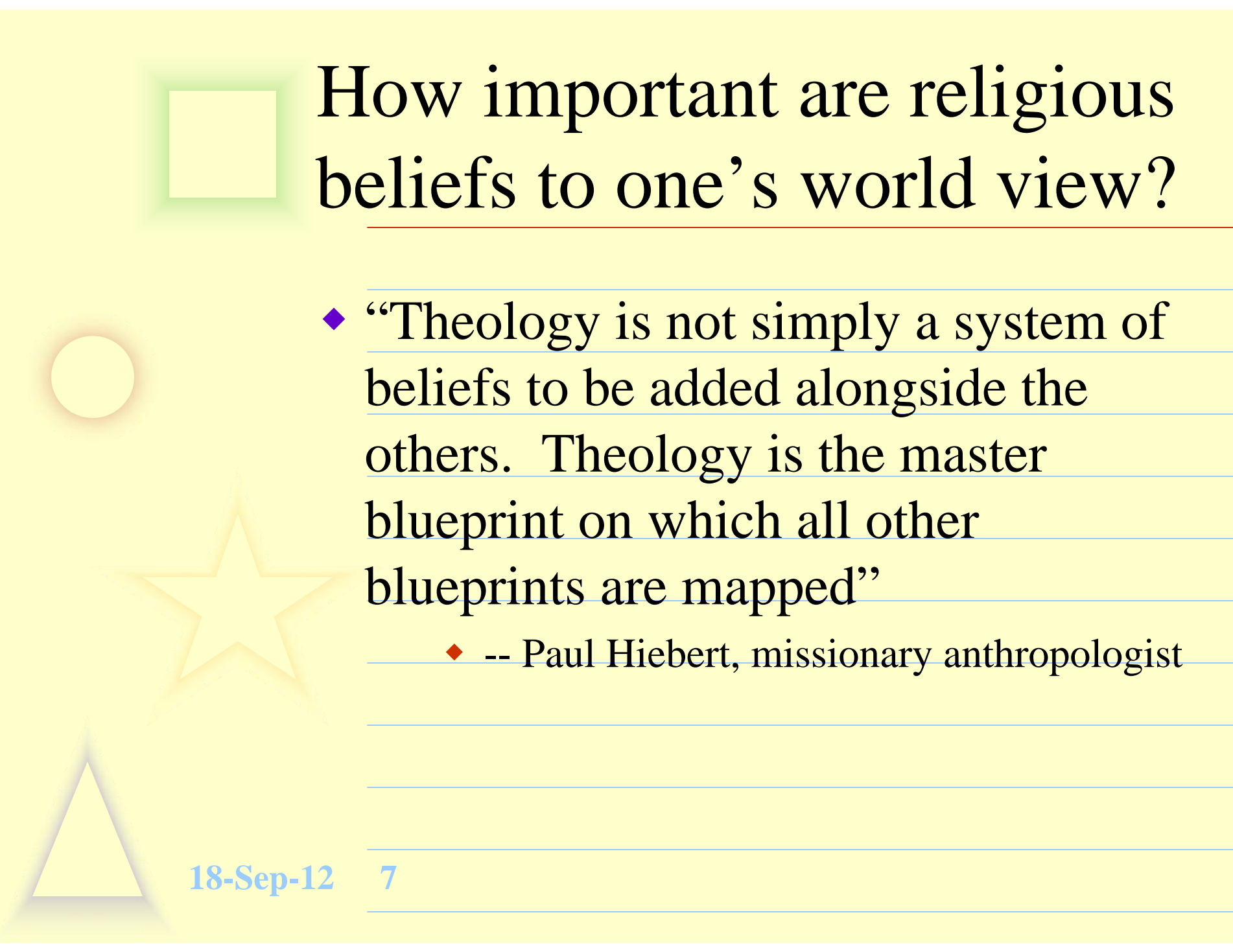


# Sire's 8 questions

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- 
- 
- ◆ What is prime reality?
  - ◆ What is the nature of external reality, the world around us?
  - ◆ What is a human being?
  - ◆ What happens at death?
  - ◆ Why is it possible to know anything?
  - ◆ How do we know what is right and wrong?
  - ◆ What is meaning of human history?
  - ◆ What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?
- 

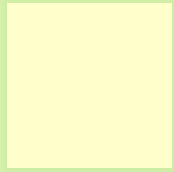
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# □ How important are religious beliefs to one's world view?

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- ◆ “Theology is not simply a system of beliefs to be added alongside the others. Theology is the master blueprint on which all other blueprints are mapped”
  - ◆ -- Paul Hiebert, missionary anthropologist



# Christian Theism

Subtitle: A universe charged with the grandeur of God

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- ◆ Knowledge, death, reality, ethics, history, and the realness of human beings are all focused on God.





# Deism

Sire's subtitle: The clockwork universe

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◆ Timeline: 1500

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◆ God

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◆ is distant:

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◆ an intellect to be recognized

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◆ not a person to be worshipped

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◆ is an architect; not a lover or judge

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◆ Cosmos is not fallen or abnormal

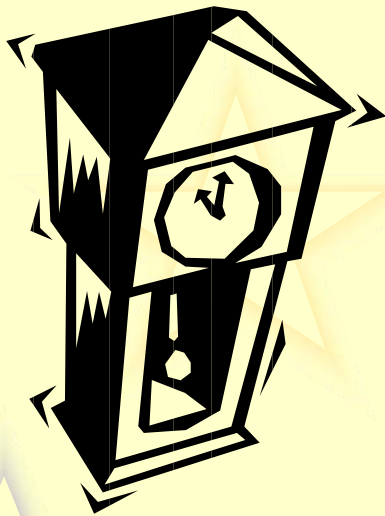
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**John Locke, Buckmeister Fuller, Voltaire,  
Albert Einstein**

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# The cosmos in Deism

- ◆ Cosmos is a closed, linear cause and effect system
  - ◆ “Clockwork universe” -- God simply left it to run on its own
  - ◆ God, as the First Cause, never intervenes
  - ◆ Miracles are not possible



# Naturalism

Subtitle: The silence of finite space

◆ Timeline: 1630

◆ Dialectical materialism / secular humanism

◆ God is removed: history was self-activating

◆ Human personality is only an interrelation of chemical properties

◆ Values are manmade

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12 Bertrand Russell, Astrophysicist Carl Sagan

# Naturalism

- ◆ **“Free will as it is traditionally conceived ...simply does not exist.... There is no way that the evolutionary process as it is currently conceived can produce a being that is truly free to make choices” – William Provine, naturalistic, atheistic biologist at Cornell University**

# Naturalism

- ◆ C.S. Lewis in his book *Miracles* – Naturalism is self-refuting because it is inconsistent with the validity of reasoning.

# Nihilism

Sire's subtitle: Zero point



- ◆ Timeline: 1870
- ◆ Extreme pessimism / skepticism
- ◆ Nothing has meaning, value, significance, dignity or worth
- ◆ Human beings are conscious machines with no ability to effect their destiny
- ◆ Human animal only invents values

**B.F. Skinner**



# Existentialism

Subtitle: Beyond Nihilism

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◆ Timeline: 1920

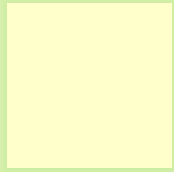
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- ◆ Humanity is central: people make themselves who they are
  - ◆ Knowledge is subjective
  - ◆ No absolute moral values
  - ◆ History is uncertain and even unimportant
  - ◆ Supernatural is brushed aside
- 

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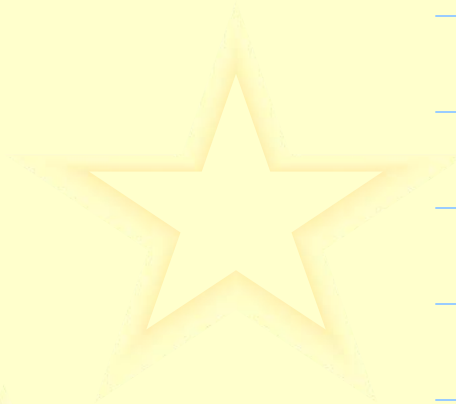


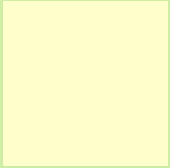


# Existentialism - 2 flavors

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- ◆ Atheistic
- ◆ Theistic





# How existentialists view the Bible

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Even the theistic version says that  
the Bible, though “religiously  
true,” is historically  
untrustworthy.



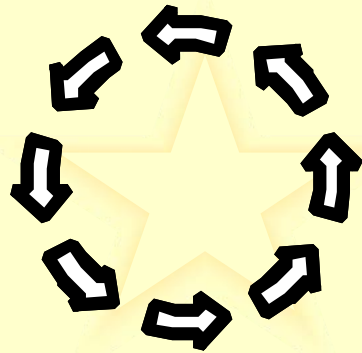
**Tillich, Sartre, Camus**



# Journey to the East: Eastern Pantheistic Monism



- ◆ Many (if not all) roads lead to the One
- ◆ Ideas are not really important
- ◆ Time is unreal
- ◆ History is cyclical
- ◆ Desire to enter the undifferentiated One; in one sense, each person is God



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# A Separate Universe

Sire's subtitle: The New Age – Spirituality  
Without Religion

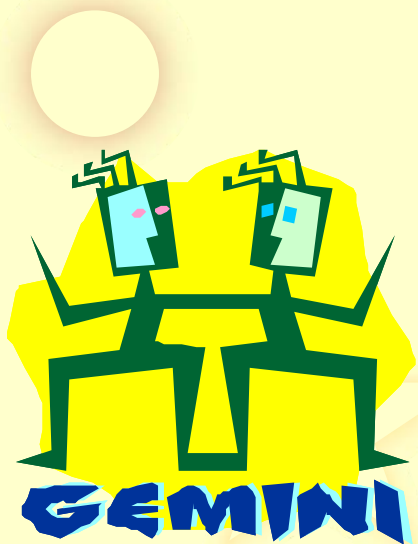
◆ Timeline: 1965

◆ “Core” experience is cosmic  
consciousness

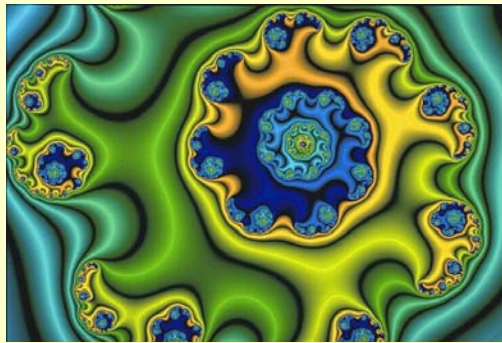
◆ No personal God; only a  
mysterious Force; no Lord of the  
Universe unless it be us

◆ Borrows heavily from animism

**Actress Shirley McClaine**



# New Age and altered consciousness




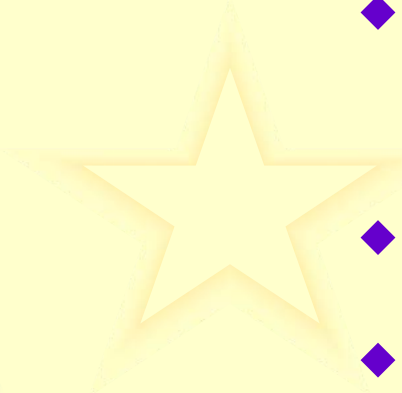
- ◆ The invisible universe is accessible through altered states of consciousness
- ◆ Drugs used to enhance human consciousness



# Postmodernism

Sire's subtitle: The vanished horizon


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- 
- 
- ◆ All stories equally valid
  - ◆ Focus changes from *being* to *knowing*
  - ◆ Paradoxically, reality is forever hidden
  - ◆ Any story but my own is oppressive
  - ◆ Social good = whatever society takes it to be at the moment




# Postmodernism

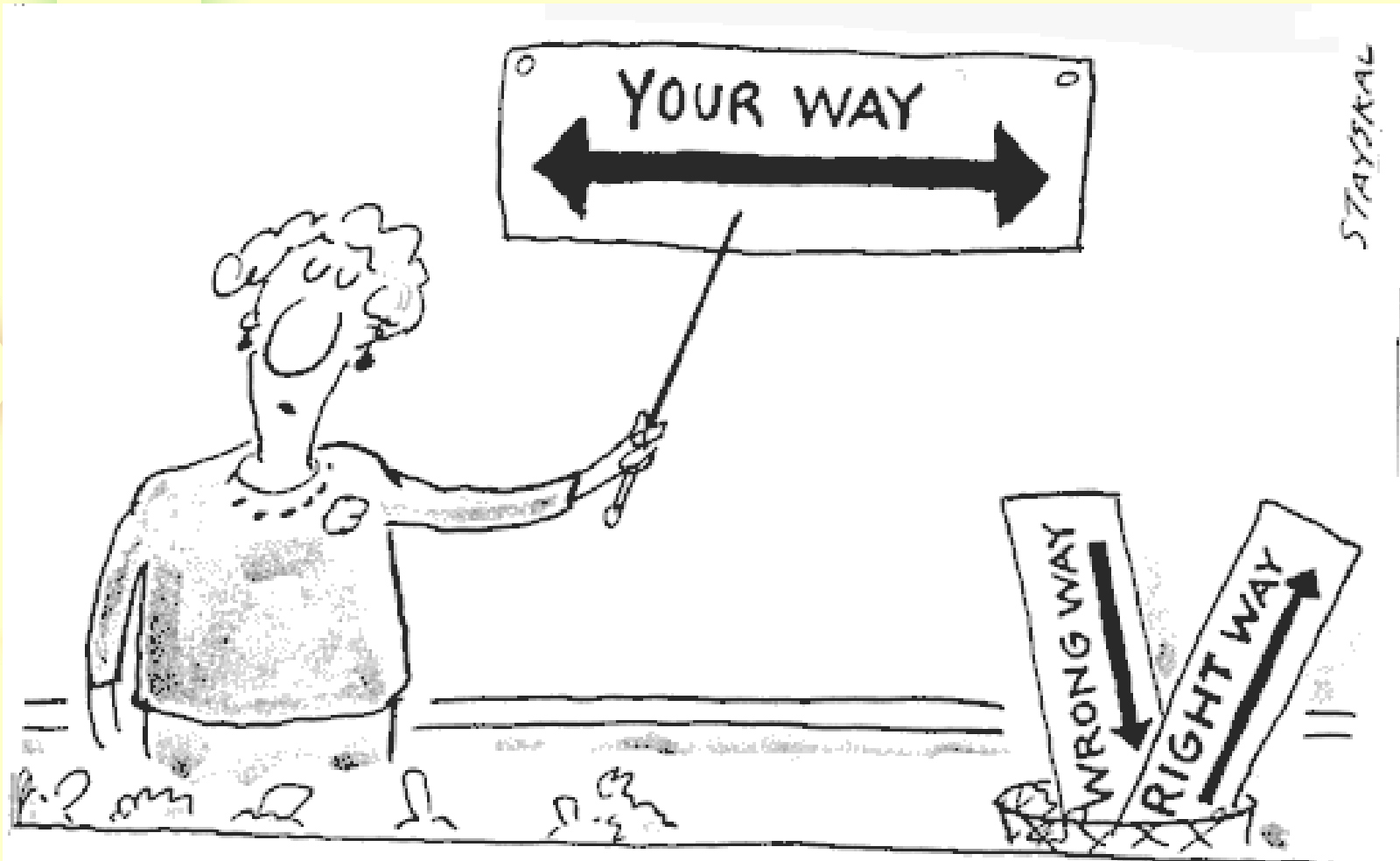
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The postmodernist stares blankly at  
any claims to truth and shrugs:  
**“Okay if it works for you.”**



“There are many kinds of truths and  
consequently, there is no truth” --  
Nietzsche



Wayne Stayskal, *Tampa Tribune*

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# Postmodernists and truth

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- ◆ “Truth is what one’s peers let one get away with” -- Richard Rorty
  - ◆ “Postmodern ethics inevitably slides in the direction of nihilism, holding that since nothing is really true, nothing is necessarily good” -- Gerard Reed
- 
-




# A View from the Middle East: Islamic Theism

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- ◆ Emphasizes God's oneness, transcendence and sovereignty
- ◆ Nothing happens in world outside of God's divine decrees
- ◆ Devout Muslims strive to follow divine instructions in even the smallest part of life






# Secular people



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- 
- ◆ They live without a daily awareness of or reference to God and His church
  - ◆ They think God and His people are irrelevant
  - ◆ To them Christianity is boring and perhaps even untrue
-



# Secular people

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- ◆ They may look and sound religious . . . Their gods are things like money, sex, materialism, success, power, social acceptance or some philosophical system