



# TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGION

Pierre le Roux

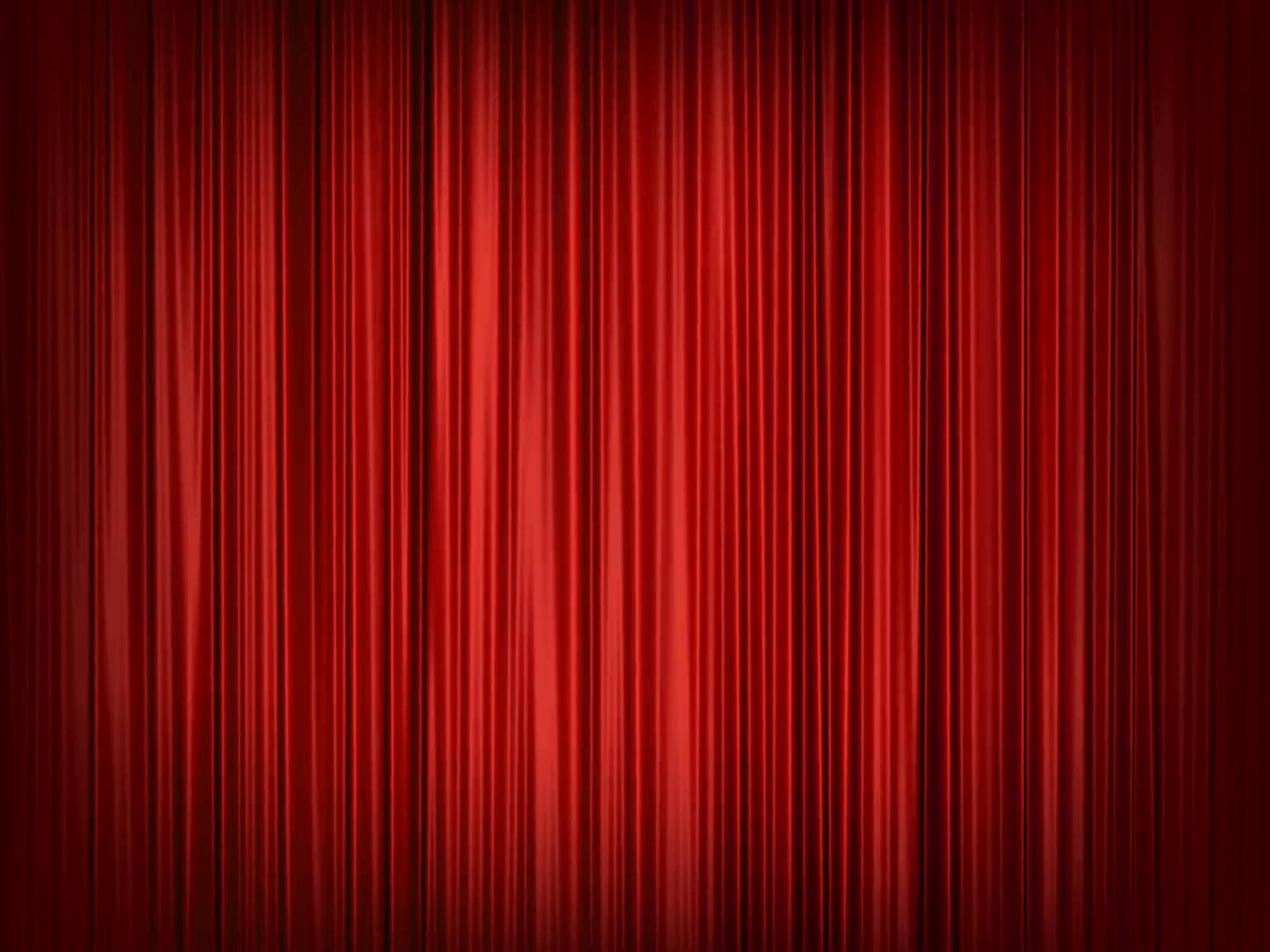
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# Animism & Traditional African Religion

## *An Important Qualification*

- ❖ Due to the complexity of any religious system we must speak abstractly & generally.
- ❖ Thus, not every statement about Animism and Traditional African Religion would necessarily apply to every instance thereof.
- ❖ This is done to make these talks possible, not to degrade or misrepresent any belief system or disregard the complexity of these religions.









# Traditional African Religion in Popular Culture

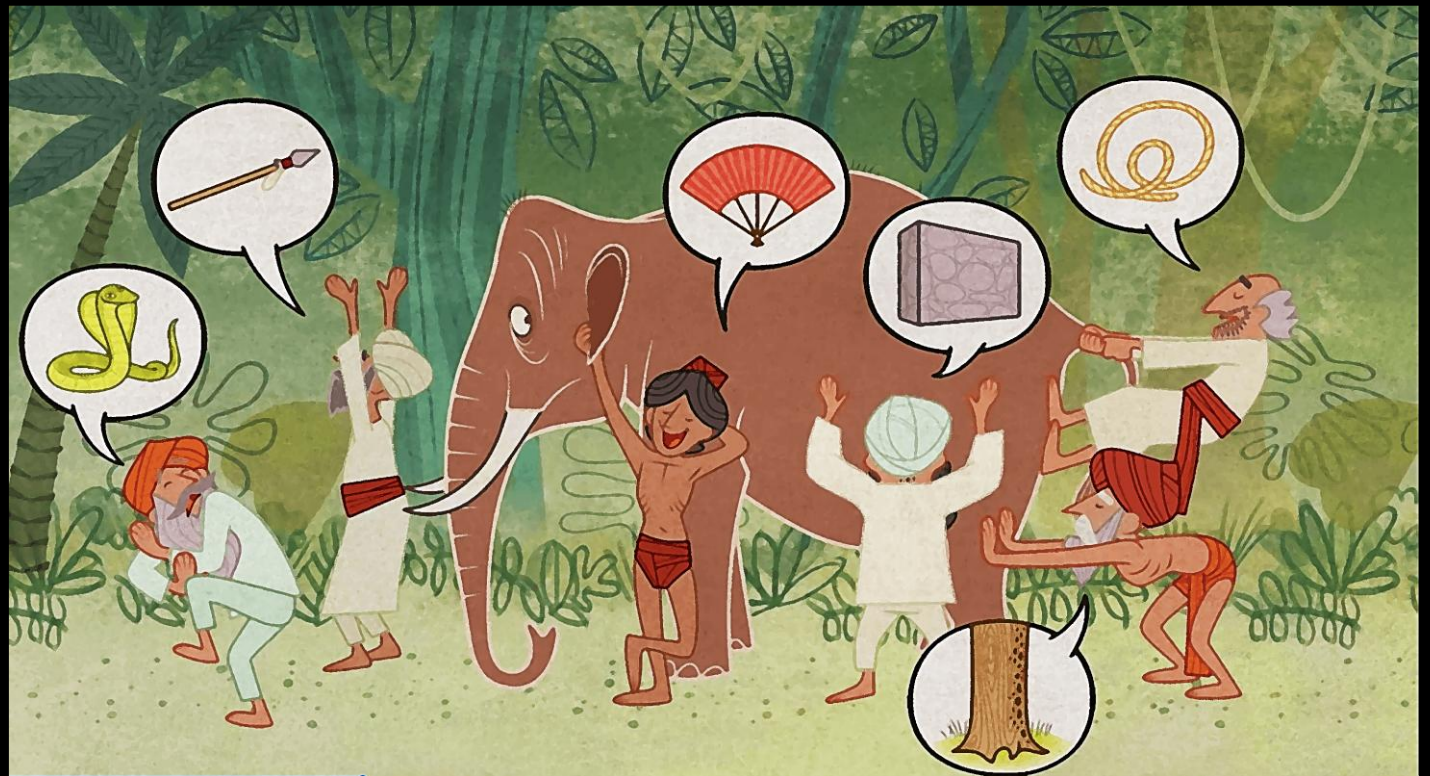




**Do All Roads  
Lead to  
Rome?**







**Relativism / Perspectivism**





# ◆ Important Distinction ◆

- ❖ Who gets to stand outside and see it's actually an elephant?
- ❖ “All the world religions teach the same.”

Every major religion:

- ❖ Differ in every important aspect!
- ❖ Only superficially similar!





**The Nature  
of God or  
Prime  
Reality?**





# Atheism



There is **NO** god.





# Buddhism



Everything is god, and god is **non-being**.





# Hinduism



Everything is god, and god is **being**.





# Greek Polytheism



There are **many limited** gods.



# Mormon Polytheism



We are becoming **gods**.



# Islamic Theism



There is **one** god, **one** person who never dwells with humanity, **totally** separate.



# Christian Theism



There is **one holy God** who is **three persons** – the Son took on human nature.



# Arguments for God's Existence

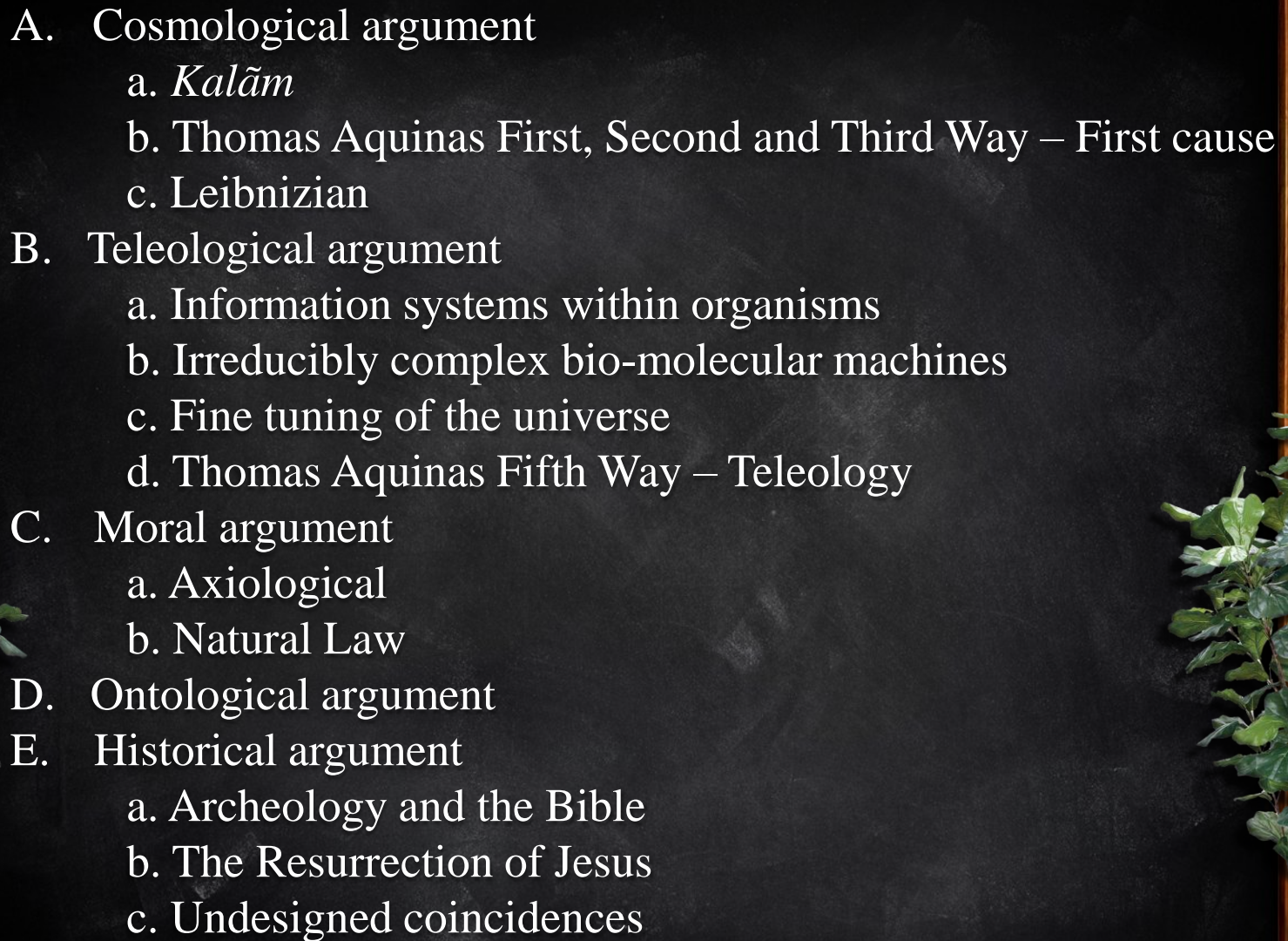




- A. Cosmological argument
- B. Teleological argument
- C. Moral argument
- D. Ontological argument
- E. Historical argument





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- A. Cosmological argument
    - a. *Kalām*
    - b. Thomas Aquinas First, Second and Third Way – First cause
    - c. Leibnizian
  - B. Teleological argument
    - a. Information systems within organisms
    - b. Irreducibly complex bio-molecular machines
    - c. Fine tuning of the universe
    - d. Thomas Aquinas Fifth Way – Teleology
  - C. Moral argument
    - a. Axiological
    - b. Natural Law
  - D. Ontological argument
  - E. Historical argument
    - a. Archeology and the Bible
    - b. The Resurrection of Jesus
    - c. Undesigned coincidences





# Important

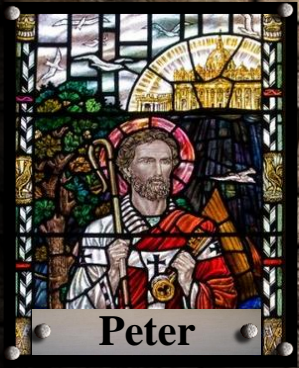
- ❖ There is an objective way to determine which religion is true or false.
- ❖ Standard independent of a worldview.
- ❖ Worldviews are falsifiable.
- ❖ Test which worldview best explains the nature of the universe.



**Is this  
Biblical?**





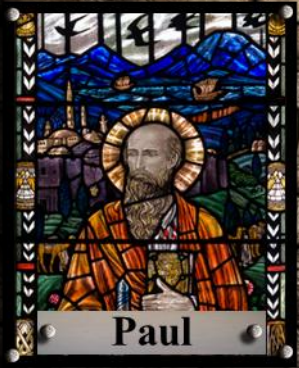


## ◆ 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV) ◆

<sup>15</sup> But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense** to anyone who asks you **for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect...







## 2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...







# ◆ Application ◆

- ❖ We each must be able to give our own reason ~ “What is your reason?”
- ❖ We can use scripture, nature or point to miracles that God did.
- ❖ We should strive towards Christian intellectual maturity.



# Two Sources of Divine Revelation



**Natural Revelation**



**Special Revelation**



# Knowledge of God

Known via  
Natural  
Revelation

Known via  
Special  
Revelation

**Existence**

**God Exists**

**Trinity**

Unknown  
...



# ◄ Moral Knowledge ►

Known via  
Natural  
Revelation

Known via  
Special  
Revelation

**Neighborly Love**

**Divine Love**

Unknown  
...





# Knowing Immorality

Known via  
Natural  
Revelation

**Sexual Affairs**

Known via  
Special  
Revelation

**Even Lust**

Unknown  
...







## Natural Law Theory

### Romans 1:24-27 (ESV):

Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity... For their women exchanged **natural relations** for those that are **contrary to nature**; and the men likewise gave up **natural relations with women** and were consumed with passion for one another... and **receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error**.



## Divine Command Theory

### Romans 2:14-16 (ESV):

For when Gentiles, who do not have **the law**, by **nature** do what the **law requires**... They show that the work of the **law is written on their hearts**, while their **conscience also bears witness**, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men...





# Evangelism

Cannot reason someone into the kingdom of God ~ that's just false:

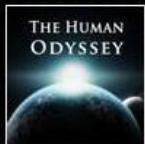
- ❖ Cannot reason, love, pray or perform miracles to bring someone into the kingdom of God
- ~ Only by the working of the Holy Spirit can someone be saved.
- ❖ However, God uses various means, including reason and arguments, which He then works upon to bring about repentance and faith.



# Prevalence of Animism

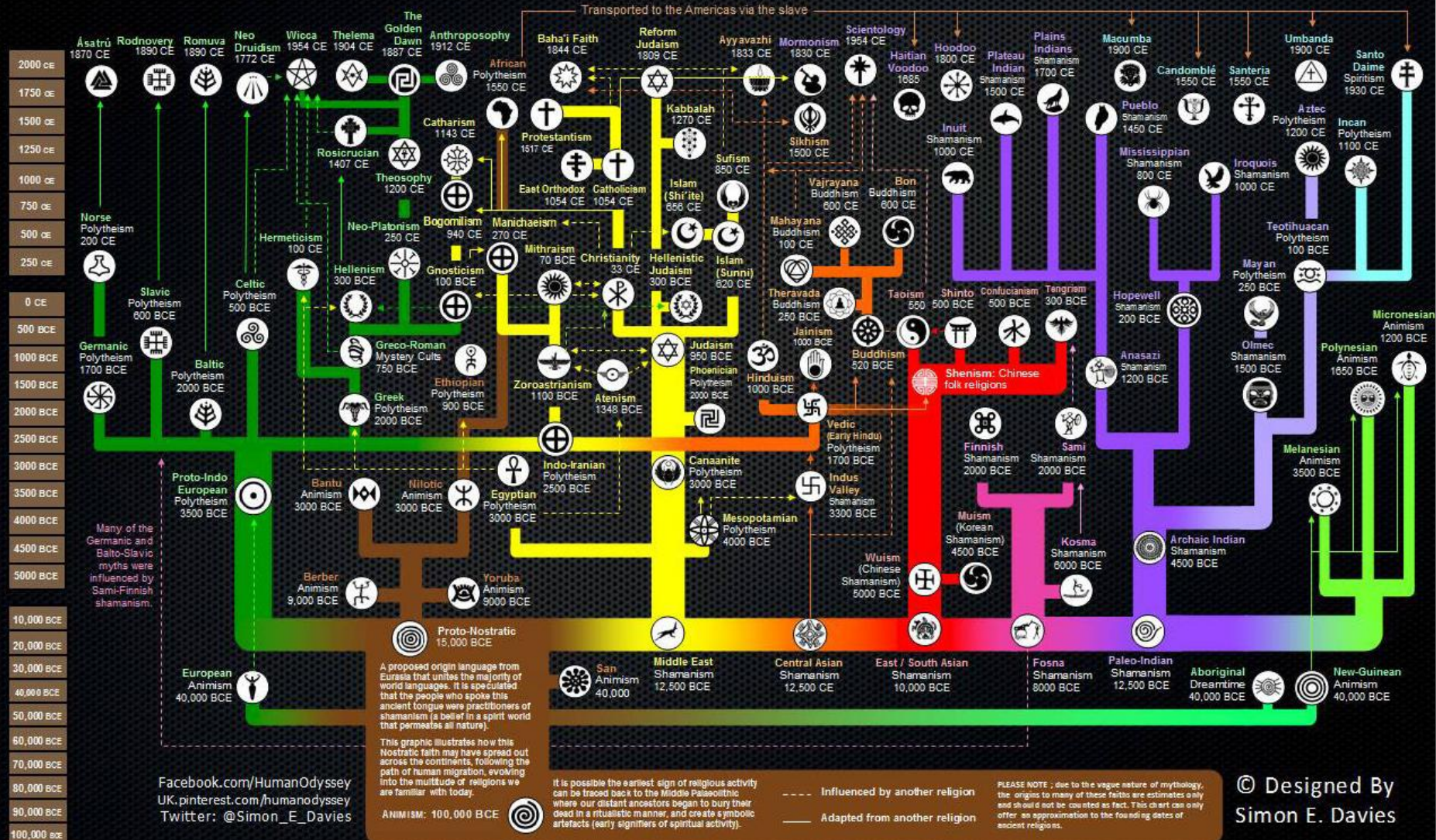






# THE EVOLUTIONARY TREE OF RELIGION (Faith, Myths & Mysticism) v 2.0

European African Middle East Indian East Asian Arctic N. American Central / Mesoamerica S. American New Guinean / Australian Oceanic





# Examples of Animism







## Ojibwe communities of Canada

Five Ojibwe chiefs in the 19th century





**Munism ~ Ancient Lepcha people**





# **Shang Dynasty State Religion**

(1600 B.C. – 1046 B.C.)





**Modern Paganism**  
A Heathen shrine to the god Freyr





**Hinduism ~ Vat Purnima**  
(Hindu festival involving the banyan tree)





**Buryat shaman on Olkhon Island,  
Siberia**





# Shinto

Traditional Japanese folk religion - Kami





## **Traditional African Religion**



**What is  
Animism?**







# Animism

*What is it?*

- ❖ One of the oldest religious systems.
- ❖ Is extremely varied, lacking a unified system of beliefs and practices.
- ❖ Differs drastically between cultures globally.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.





# Animism

## *Spirits*

In most animistic societies, there are at least two types of spirits:

- ❖ Nature spirits
- ❖ Ancestor spirits

Could be more, e.g.:

- ❖ Kitchen spirits
- ❖ Spirits living in the threshold of a house

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Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic. p. 34.





# Animism

## *Nature Spirits*

- ❖ Have human form and personality.
- ❖ Inhabit animals, plants, rocks, streams, etc.
- ❖ May speak a human language.
- ❖ Have an order or hierarchy.
- ❖ The destruction of their dwelling may cause their destruction.
- ❖ Household spirits generally behave similarly.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic. p. 34.







# Animism

## *Ancestor Spirits*

- ❖ Departed family members.
- ❖ **Not necessarily your direct genetic ancestor.**
- ❖ Childless departed relatives may still be ancestor spirits.
- ❖ Ancestor spirits usually retain their family and social status.
- ❖ Generally respected by the tribe/clan.
- ❖ Often an ancestor spirit is treated as permanently departed or gone when there remain no more living family members who remember them (or a similar mechanism).

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic. p. 34.





# Animism

## *Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ This is an extremely complicated and nuanced topic.
- ❖ Thus, this talk can only treat the subject superficially.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.

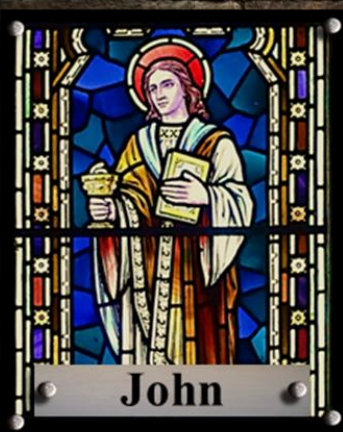


# Context

(The "so what?")

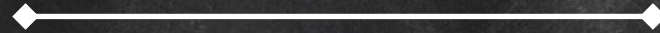






## John 17:3: (ESV)

“<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”



- ❖ If Christianity is true, then only via a personal relationship with God can one have eternal life and salvation.







# Application

- ❖ Animists tend to be individuals who believe in an impersonal god.
- ❖ To communicate with the upper God, one needs to placate the man of God, who influences the intermediary spirits or ancestors.
- ❖ Thus, the man of God and ancestors are the mediators between God and man.



# Animism & Traditional African Religion

*The Nature  
of the Spiritual*





## **UPPER ZONE**

### **❖ High God**

- Theoretically imminent, actually aloof.
- Little or no interaction with humans.
- Unseen by humans.

## **MIDDLE ZONE**

- ❖ Lesser gods
- ❖ Good & Bad Spirits
- ❖ Impersonal Forces
- ❖ Saints
- ❖ Ancestral Spirits

- Main focus of religious life.
- Highly interactive with Lower Zone, both for good and evil.
- Provides linkage and mediation between Lower and Upper Zones.
- Commonly seen or experienced by humans.

## **LOWER ZONE**

- ❖ Humans
- ❖ Animals
- ❖ Plants
- ❖ Inanimate Objects

- Constantly interact with Middle Zone.
- Unborn, living and deceased humans form an interactive community.
- Sub-human animals, forces, and objects interact with humans and the Middle Zone.



# Traditional African Religion *Introduction*





# Traditional African Religion

## *Introduction*

There are multiple variations of Traditional African Religion.

- ❖ It may differ between countries or even tribes.
- ❖ It is very complex.
- ❖ So, remember the important question: “What do *you* believe!”



Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 3-14.



# Traditional African Religion

## *Introduction*

❖ African people are essential to the African religion.

**John Mbiti:** “... a person must be born in a particular African people in order to follow African Religion in that group. It would be meaningless and useless to try and transplant [African religion] to an entirely different society outside of Africa, unless African people themselves go there with it.”

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 14.



# Traditional African Religion

## *Introduction*

**John Mbiti:** “When Africans are converted to other religions, they often mix their traditional religion with the one to which they are converted. In this way, they think and feel that they are not losing something valuable, but gaining something from both religious systems.”

John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 15.



# Traditional African Religion

## *Introduction*

- ❖ African Religion functions more on a communal basis.
- ❖ Beliefs are held by the whole community.
- ❖ It is not a matter of an individual's beliefs.
- ❖ Has **NO** scriptures or holy books.
- ❖ Is **very pragmatic** and realistic.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 15.



# Traditional African Religion

## *Introduction*

- ❖ God is an infinite, immaterial, all-powerful, spiritual and unknowable being.
- ❖ Africans may communicate with Him directly or via intermediaries.
- ❖ Often in humility Africans would consult those of higher standing socially and religiously to communicate with God, ancestors and spirits.
- ❖ This may entail giving gifts, offerings, or making sacrifices.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 68-69.



# Traditional African Religion

## *Introduction*

**John Mbiti:** “The idea of intermediaries fits well with the African view of the universe, which holds that the invisible world has its own life and population. The life of this invisible world is in some ways higher than that of man, but God is still higher. In order to reach God effectively it may be useful to approach him by first approaching those who are lower than he is but higher than the ordinary person. The notion of intermediaries also helps people to feel protected from the greatness of God which may otherwise crush the individual.”

John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 68.





GOD



Ancestors & Spirits



Spiritual Intercessor



Us



God Acts





# The ZCC







## **Zion Christian Church (ZCC)**

From orthodox to synchronistic Christianity



# Traditional African Religion VS Christianity







# Worldview Questions

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

- ❖ Prime Reality
- ❖ The Nature of Reality
- ❖ The Nature of Knowledge
- ❖ The Nature of Humanity
- ❖ Morality
- ❖ The Meaning of Life
- ❖ Death





# Prime Reality?

## *Traditional African Religion*





# ◆ Animism ~ Prime Reality ◆

## *Traditional African Religion*



**John Mbiti:** “It is generally believed all over Africa that the universe was created. The creator of the universe is God.”

- ❖ Generally believed that a spiritual life force flows throughout all things.
- ❖ This higher power, lifeforce, or Supreme Being is often considered far too removed from the current lives of people to be directly interacted with.

◆ John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 35.  
Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.





# Prime Reality? *Christianity*







## ◆ Isaiah 44:6 (ESV) ◆

<sup>28</sup> Thus says the LORD,  
the King of Israel  
and his Redeemer,  
the LORD of hosts:

**“I am the first and I am the last;  
besides me there is no god.”**







# Prime Reality

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

### **Agree:**

- ❖ There is one God who created the universe (Gen 1:1, Isa 44:24).

### **Disagree:**

- ❖ That other gods could exist (Isa 45:5).
- ❖ That God can be impersonal (Rev 21:1-7).





# Prime Reality

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

- ❖ Importantly, God is immaterial, infinite, eternal, and **personal** in Christianity.
- ❖ Christianity is actively aware of this fact and what it entails.
- ❖ Especially, God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent.
- ❖ God is everywhere, knows everything and everyone, and is all-loving.
- ❖ In contrast to the more impersonal nature of the god in TAR.



# The Nature of Reality? *Traditional African Religion*





# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Reality ◆

- ❖ The Universe has both a physical as well as a spiritual component.
- ❖ Physical phenomena also have a potential direct spiritual explanation.
- ❖ There is a distinction between the ‘Ultimate’ and the ‘Immediate’.



# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Reality ◆



## *Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ The animist views the “formal” religions ~ Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc. ~ important for ultimate issues, such as:
  - “Who is God?”
  - “What is humanity’s problem?”
  - “What happens after death?”
- ❖ However, these religions are **irrelevant** when it comes to addressing the immediate **practical** issues of everyday life.

◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 18-19. ◆



# Animism ~ The Nature of Reality



## *Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ This division between the **ultimate** and the **immediate** is why:

**For example:**

An animist can be a practising **Catholic**, but still **consult a Sangoma** to be healed.

## ***SYNCRETISM***

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 18-19.



# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Reality ◆



## *Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ How God created is disputed.
- ❖ God is the explanation of all things visible and invisible.
- ❖ God continues to create.
- ❖ There are physical and spiritual dimensions to reality.
- ❖ Some strands of TAR regard the Earth as “Mother Earth” or “Goddess Earth.”
- ❖ God is the sustainer of the universe.

◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 35-36. ◆



# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Reality ◆



## *Traditional African Religion*

**John Mbiti:** “...[I]n the context of the African view... God is considered to be supreme, and He has under him spirits and men.”

**John Mbiti:** “Africans believe that there is a force or power or energy in the universe which can be tapped by those who know how to do so, and then used for good or evil towards other people. But this is only a part of their belief.”

◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 18-19. ◆



# ❖ Animism ~ The Nature of Reality ❖



## *Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ There is no limit to the universe.
- ❖ Although it had a beginning, there is no end to the universe.
- ❖ There are great rhythms to existence, minor rhythms (living things ~ men or animals, life and death, etc.) & major rhythms (days and nights, seasons, etc.) **that have no end.**
- ❖ **Circle or Cycle of life!**

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 35-36.



# The Great Circle of Life





# The Nature of Reality? *Christianity*







# The Nature of Reality

*Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

## Agree:

- ❖ The universe began ([Gen 1:1](#)), God made all things, and the universe has a physical and spiritual dimension ([Col 1:15-17](#)).
- ❖ God is exalted above all ([Ps 57:5,11](#); [Ps 97:9](#); [Col 1:15-17](#); [Phil 2:9](#)).





# The Nature of Reality

*Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

## Disagree:

- ❖ That there is a force or power or energy in the universe which can be tapped by those who know how to do so, and then used for good or evil towards other people.
- ❖ Not found in scripture nor taught throughout church history.
- ❖ Completely foreign to Christianity.



# The Nature of Knowledge? *Traditional African Religion*





## ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Knowledge. ◆

- ❖ Since all of existence is divided between the **physical** and the **spiritual**, there are multiple ways of coming to know the world.
- ❖ Usually consulting the local Sangoma, Shaman, Witchdoctor, etc., to interact with the spirit world.
- ❖ The use of rituals, totems and other alternatives to interact with the spiritual components of the world.
- ❖ If the specific ritual has the desired effect, then that is deemed as true (**Pragmatism**).

◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic. ◆



# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Knowledge ◆

## *Traditional African Religion*



- ❖ There is an order to the universe that makes it knowable.
- ❖ This order is controlled by the Creator God or through His servants.

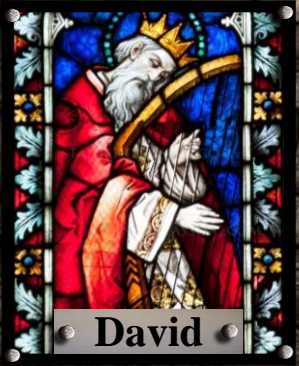
◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 40. ◆



# The Nature of Knowledge? *Christianity*







## ◆ Psalm 19: 1-2 (ESV) ◆

- <sup>1</sup> The heavens **declare**  
the glory of God,  
and the sky above  
**proclaims** his handiwork.
- <sup>2</sup> Day to day **pours out speech**,  
and night to night  
**reveals knowledge**.





# The Nature of Knowledge

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

### Agree:

- ❖ By the order that God has created, we can know things ([Rom 1-2](#)).

### Disagree:

- ❖ Because something worked, it is true or good (*pragmatism*), e.g. “mass murder solves poverty”, or “sharks are aliens, thus they’re dangerous”. ([Jer 44:15-19](#))
- ❖ That knowledge of the spiritual world is obtained via sangomas, shamans, witchdoctors, etc. ([Deut 18:11-12](#))



# The Nature of Humanity? *Traditional African Religion*





# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Humanity ◆

- ❖ Human beings are creatures animated by the ultimate life force or “breath”.
- ❖ Human beings are typically composed of both the psychical (body) and immaterial form (soul).
- ❖ Distinct from the spirits (Middle Zone) and from the higher power (Upper Zone).



# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Humanity ◆

## *Traditional African Religion*



**John Mbiti:** “Man who lives on the Earth, is the centre of the universe. He is also like the priest of the universe, linking the universe with God its Creator.”

- ❖ Tries to create harmony with the universe.
- ❖ People may use this to do good or evil.
- ❖ There is a mystical aspect to reality which may be influenced using traditional medicine, witchcraft, magic or sorcery.

◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.  
John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 40-44. ◆



# The Nature of Humanity? *Christianity*







# The Nature of Humanity

*Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

## **Agree:**

- ❖ There is a spiritual aspect to reality (Col 1:15-17), and man has, at least, a body and soul (1 Thes 5:23).

## **Disagree:**

- ❖ Man links the universe with God, its Creator (Acts 17:24-25).

*(God doesn't need human beings!)*





## ◆ Acts 17:24-25: (ESV) ◆

“<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world  
and everything in it,  
being **Lord of heaven and earth**,  
does not live in temples made by man,  
<sup>25</sup> **nor is he served by human hands,**  
**as though he needed anything,**  
**since he himself gives to all mankind**  
**life and breath and everything.”**





# Morality?

## *Traditional African Religion*





# ◆ Animism ~ The Nature of Morality ◆

## *Traditional African Religion*



**John Mbiti:** “It is believed by African people that God gave moral order to people so they might live happily and in harmony with one another.”

- ❖ This order helps people to work out among themselves what is good and evil, right and wrong, true and false.
- ❖ Wrong-doing is punished by the people, or by the created order, or by God.
- ❖ There is a great emphasis on the centrality of human community and this is reinforced by a strong moral order that supports it.

◆ Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.

John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 40-41, 174-179.



# Animism ~ The Nature of Morality

*Traditional African Religion*



**John Mbiti:** “The morals and institutions of society are thought to be given by God, or to be sanctioned ultimately by him. Therefore, any breach of such morals is an offence against the departed members of the family, and against God or the spirits, even if it is the people themselves who may suffer from such a breach and who may take action to punish the offender.”

John Mbiti. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Heinemann Educational Books, UK. p. 40-41.



# Morality? *Christianity*







# Morality

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

### Agree:

- ❖ We generally agree ([Rom 1:18-32](#)).
- ❖ But in Christianity, the emphasis is on wrongdoing, specifically sin, against God.



# The Meaning of Life? *Traditional African Religion*





# Animism ~ The Meaning of Life

- ❖ Obtain blessings from the good spirits.
- ❖ Avoid curses from evil spirits.
- ❖ Have a life of good works to remain on the good spiritual path.
- ❖ To form part of your community.
- ❖ Due to the pragmatic approach of Animism, they tend to view material wealth as very important.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.



# The Meaning of Life

The pragmatic approach of traditional African religion emphasises answers to everyday problems. How to:

- ❖ Be healed of an illness.
- ❖ Be successful in a business endeavour.
- ❖ Find a job.
- ❖ Excel in school.
- ❖ Restore a scorned relationship.
- ❖ Find a lover.
- ❖ Gain guidance for the future.

Winfried Corduan. 2013. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP Academic.



# The Meaning of Life? *Christianity*







# The Meaning of Life

*Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

## **Agree:**

- ❖ That religion is important to practical life (**The Books of Proverbs & Ecclesiastes**).

## **Disagree:**

- ❖ We solve problems using wisdom revealed by God through creation and scripture not from sacrifices and spirits.
- ❖ The ultimate purpose of man is to have a relationship with God (**Col 1:15-17**).
- ❖ “To glorify God and enjoy Him fully.”



## Colossians 1:16: (ESV)

“<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and **for him.**”







## ◆ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: (ESV) ◆

“<sup>13</sup> The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”





# Death?

## *Traditional African Religion*





# Animism ~ Death

## *Traditional African Religion*



- ❖ Those who depart become either:  
Spirits of the living dead ~ Ancestors  
Spirits of those who died a long time ago ~ Ghosts
- ❖ There is no end to the world.



# Death?

## *Christianity*







# Death

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

### **Agree:**

- ❖ There is life after death ([Phil 1:23](#); [Luke 23:43](#); [Luke 16:19-31](#)).

### **Disagree:**

- ❖ The dead have no relationship with the living ([Ecc 9:5-6,10](#)).
- ❖ There are no Ancestor spirits or Ghosts who can have any influence in this world.





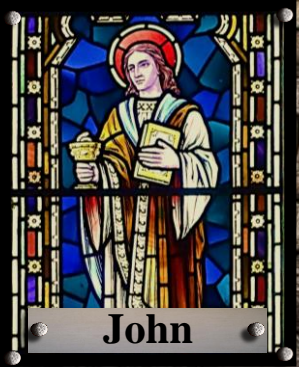
## ◆ Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10: (ESV) ◆

“<sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

<sup>6</sup> Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun...

<sup>10</sup> Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.”





## John 11:11-14: (ESV)

“<sup>11</sup> After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has **fallen asleep**, but I go to awaken him.” <sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he **has fallen asleep**, he will recover.” <sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of **his death**, but they thought that he meant **taking rest in sleep**. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, “**Lazarus has died...**”







# Death

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

- ❖ The dead have no relationship with the living ([Ecc 9:5-6,10](#)).
- ❖ The dead are asleep, meaning they are not conscious on Earth. ([John 11:11-14](#)).





## Hebrews 9: 27-28 (ESV).

“<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed  
for man to die once,  
and after that comes judgment,  
<sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once  
to bear the sins of many,  
will appear a second time,  
not to deal with sin  
but to save those  
who are eagerly waiting for him.”



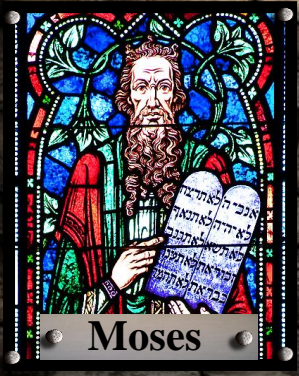


# Death

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

- ❖ The dead have no relationship with the living ([Ecc 9:5-6,10](#)).
- ❖ The dead are asleep, meaning they are not conscious on earth. ([John 11:11-14](#)).
- ❖ **Nor do they act, but await the Second Coming and the Final Judgement** ([1 Cor 15:18](#); [1 Thes 4:13-18](#)).





## Deuteronomy 18: 10-13 (ESV)

“<sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer <sup>11</sup> or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, <sup>12</sup> for **whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord...** <sup>13</sup> **You shall be blameless before the Lord your God...**”







# Death

## *Traditional African Religion VS Christianity*

- ❖ The dead have no relationship with the living ([Ecc 9:5-6,10](#)).
- ❖ The dead are asleep, meaning they are not conscious on Earth, nor do they act, but await the Second Coming and the Final Judgement ([John 11:11-14](#); [1 Cor 15:18](#); [1 Thes 4:13-18](#)).
- ❖ **Speaking to the dead is an abomination to God** ([Deut 18:10-13](#)).



# GOD & the spirits





# GOD & the spirits *Communication*







GOD



Ancestors



Spiritual Intercessor

Us



God Acts





# GOD & the spirits.

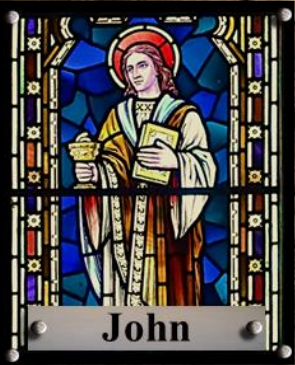
*Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

## Sources of Personal Revelation:

- ❖ God ([Exo. 3:5-17](#); [2 Peter 1:19-21](#)).
- ❖ The human heart ([Jer. 23:26](#)).
- ❖ Satan and the demons ([Mark 8:33](#); [John 13:26-27](#); [1 Tim 4:1](#)).







## ◆ 1 John 4:1: (ESV) ◆

<sup>1</sup> Beloved, do not believe every spirit,  
but *test* the spirits  
to see whether they are from God,  
for many **false prophets** have gone out into the  
world.







# GOD & the spirits.

*Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

## Sources of Revelation:

- ❖ Ancestors (TAR).
- ❖ God (Exo. 3:5-17; 1 Peter 1:19-21).
- ❖ The human heart (Jer. 23:26).
- ❖ Satan and the demons (Mark 8:33; John 13:26).







## ◆ Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10: (ESV) ◆

“<sup>10</sup> for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.”







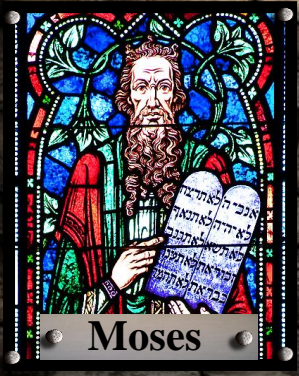
# GOD & the spirits.

## *Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

### Sources of Revelation:

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## Deuteronomy 18: 11-12 (ESV)

“<sup>11</sup> ...a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, <sup>12</sup> for **whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord...**”







# GOD & the spirits.

*Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

## Sources of Revelation:

- ❖ ~~Ancestors (TAR).~~
- ❖ ~~God (Exo. 3:5-17; 1 Peter 1:19-21).~~
- ❖ The human heart (Jer. 23:26).
- ❖ Satan and the demons (Mark 8:33; John 13:26).





## ◆ 1 Corinthians 10:19-20: (ESV) ◆

“<sup>19</sup> What do I imply then?

That food offered to idols is anything,  
or that an idol is anything?

<sup>20</sup> No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice  
they offer to demons and not to God.

I do not want you to be  
participants with demons.”





# GOD & the spirits

*Divine Revelation*





# Revelation

- ❖ We require God to reveal Himself to us.
- ❖ There are two modes of objective revelation:
  1. Natural Revelation ([Rom 1:19-20](#))
  2. Special Revelation ([Exo. 3:5-17](#); [2 Peter 1:19-21](#))





# GOD & the spirits

*Spiritual Experiences*







# GOD & the spirits.

*Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

Does lived experience give reliable grounds to know how to engage spirits?

❖ NO, no it does not!

For:

- ❖ Satan is the father of lies ([John 8:44](#); [Rev 12:9](#)).
- ❖ All experiences outside of scripture may, therefore, be tainted by deceitful spirits.





# GOD & the spirits.

## *Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ There is good reason to believe that those who speak to the dead are really speaking to demons ([Acts 16:16-18](#)).







## Acts 16:16-18: (ESV)

“<sup>16</sup> As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a **spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.** <sup>17</sup> ...Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out...”







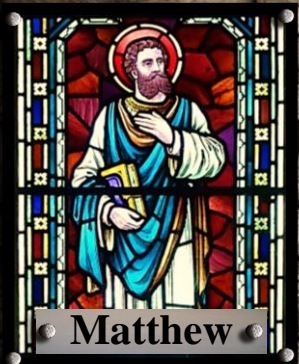
# GOD & the spirits.

## *Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ There is good reason to believe that those who speak to the dead are really speaking to demons ([Acts 16:16-18](#)).
- ❖ Scripture is set by Jesus to be the final authority on spiritual matters ([Matt 4:1-11](#)), and as the guide in all godliness ([2 Tim 3:16](#)).







## ◆ Matthew 4:1-11: (ESV) ◆

“<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil...

<sup>3</sup> Now when the tempter came to Him...

<sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, “**It is written...**”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “**It is written again...**”

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “**Away with you, Satan! For it is written...**”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him...”



# GOD & the spirits

*God vs Demons*



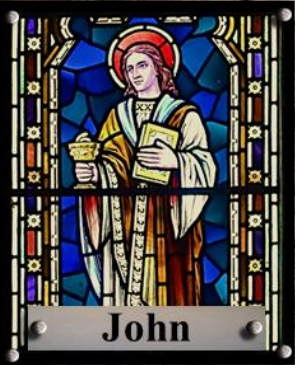


## Colossians 1:16: (ESV)

“<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and **for him.**”







## ◆ Revelation 20:7-10 (ESV) ◆

“<sup>7</sup> ...Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations... to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...”







# GOD & the spirits.

## *Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ Notice, there is no climactic battle with God at the head of the angels.
- ❖ There is no struggle or fear that, just maybe, God will lose ([2 Thess 2:8](#)).
- ❖ God is infinite in power (a pebble vs the sea).





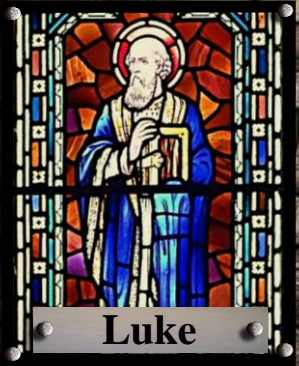


## Job 1:8-12 (ESV)

“<sup>8</sup> And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”... <sup>12</sup> And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.”







## ◆ Luke 22:30-35 (ESV) ◆

“<sup>31</sup> “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”







# GOD & the spirits.

## *Christianity VS Traditional African Religion*

- ❖ Satan must ask God for permission.
- ❖ God protects all His people.
- ❖ We have sure Hope in Christ.





# Importance & Role of Jesus Christ







GOD



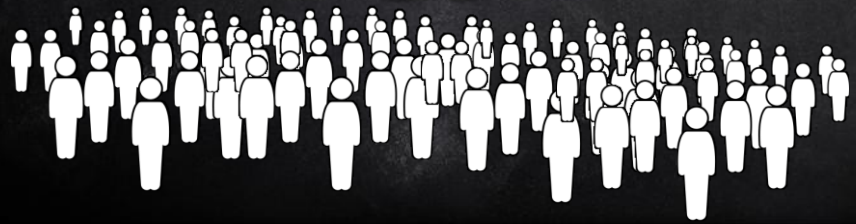
Ancestors & Spirits



Spiritual Intercessor



Us



God Acts







GOD

Jesus

Us



## The Good News

1 Timothy 2:5-6 (ESV)

“For there is **one God**, and there is **one mediator between God and men**, the man **Christ Jesus**, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.”





GOD

Jesus

Us

## The Good News

John 14:6 (ESV)

“Jesus said to him,  
‘I am the way, and the  
truth, and the life.  
No one comes to the  
Father except through  
me’.”





# How to Engage TAR



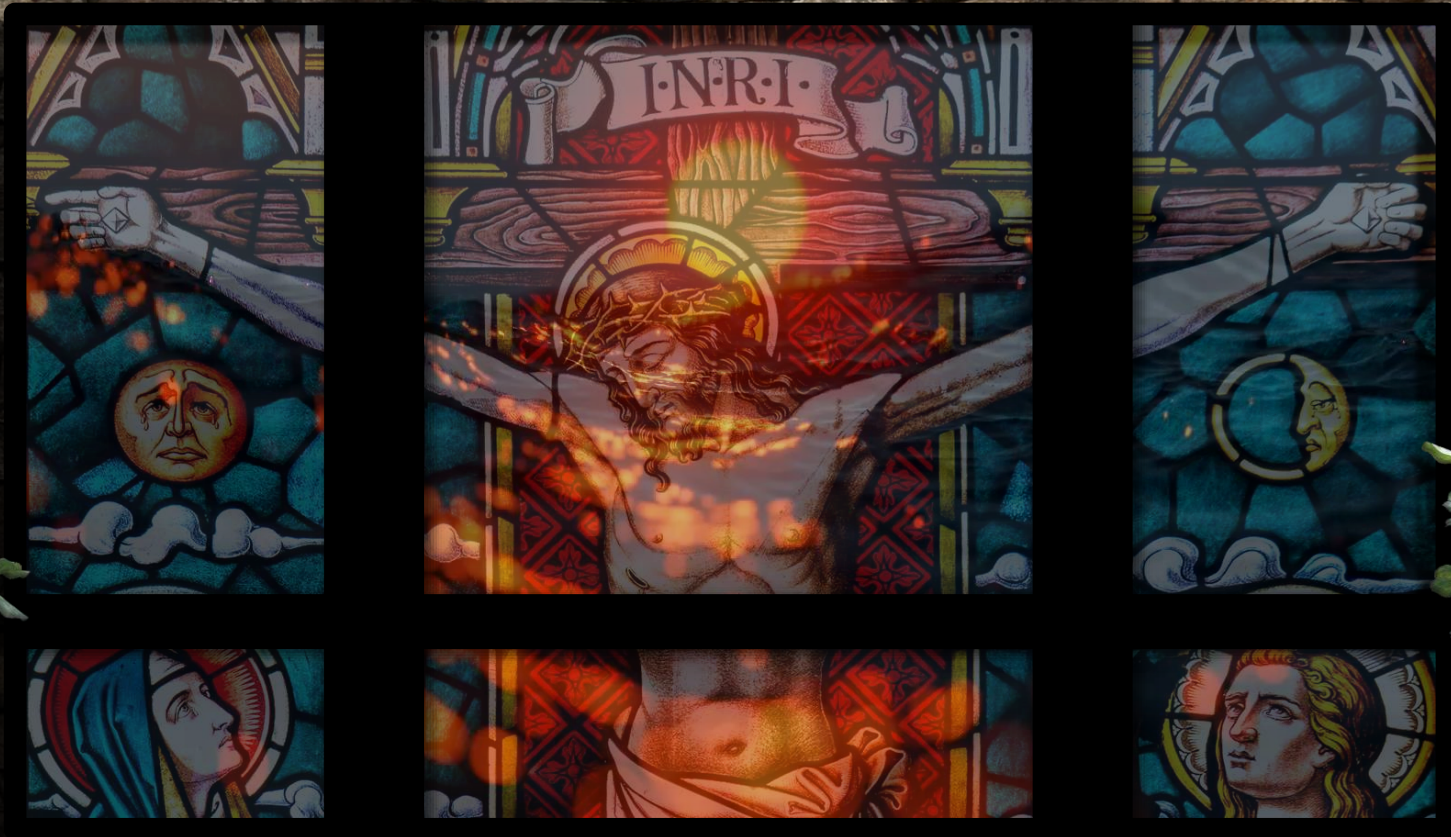


## Engaging TAR

- ❖ Pray!!!
- ❖ There's a person in front of you, not an idea.
- ❖ Ask a lot of questions.
- ❖ Listen!
- ❖ Go to the landmarks that scream: "God made me!" (Ask questions, and if you can ~ give the arguments.)
- ❖ If possible, build relationship with the person.
- ❖ Remember: You are an ambassador of Christ.
- ❖ Be prepared for rejection: Prepare for the worst, hope for the best, and handle whatever you get!



# An Eternal Perfect Hope Awaits Everyone Who is in Christ



RATIO  
CHRISTI