

Buddhism is built on four noble truths;

1. Life is full of pain and suffering (dukkha) – e.g. birth, sickness, death and separation from loved ones. These include the body, senses, thoughts, feelings and consciousness.
 2. Suffering is caused by 'tanha' – the desire or thirst for pleasure, existence, and prosperity.
 3. Suffering can be overcome by eliminating thirst or desire for pleasure, existence and prosperity.
 4. Right conduct with eightfold path. This eightfold path is a system of therapy designed to develop habits which release people from the restrictions caused by ignorance and craving.
- Buddhist – north-west India, China, etc.....

Zoroastrianism

This religion developed an extreme ritualism centering around the fire-temple. The sacred fire plays such an important role in this religion. Zoroastrians are sometimes called fire worshippers.

1. Their view about God is closer to that of Christianity than any other eastern religion. However, Ahura Mazda is not a personal god like the God of the Bible. Worship is centered on ritual forms, not a personal relationship.
2. Zoroastrianism teaches that a savior will come. Christians can carry this a step further by showing that the savior has come. But there is an offense of the cross, particularly to people in whom a work-oriented religion has fostered pride of heart. Such people then reject salvation as a free and undeserved gift. (Kenneth BOA; 1990:50)
3. Emphasizes moral standards (in legalistic form)

Shintoism: 'kami' is a concept which involves the gods, all aspects of nature, supernatural power, and certain people. It is an indigenous religion of Japan. It has been influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity. This religion is polytheistic and nature worship. Strong in social values and taboos.

Confucianism: teaches that man needs no help beyond himself. He was more concerned about the earth than he was about heaven. This is a religion of ethics which begins and ends with the wisdom of man. There is no emphasis on the supernatural. Although, it has only a hint about God and heaven.

Confucianism originally taught as an ethical philosophy – that is strong in system of ethics

- A savior is not needed because people are really not sinful, according to Confucius; human nature is good in contrast to Jeremiah 17:9 and Romans 3:23

Judaism: when dealing with Jews focus on the meaning of Christ's sacrificial death and the fact of his resurrection. God has chosen the blood to be the means for the forgiveness of sins (Lev 19-17) Isaiah 53 focuses on Christ's blood sacrifice on the cross for our redemption from sin.

10. Models (Contours) of Christian worldview
 Christians have divergent contours of worldview due to how we perceived the teaching of the Bible and our perceptions. Hence such perceptions created a dualistic mode of thought for understanding reality to the extent that some Christians think that the Kingdom of God is separate realm or sphere from creation (world) or as a separate entity from creation. Therefore, creation is divided into two spheres namely, 1. The secular that is profane, natural, worldly. 2. Religious is perceived as a sacred, supernatural, and heavenly. These misgivings created the following models (contours) of Christian worldview as follows:

1. **Christ (grace) alongside culture (nature or *gratia juxta naturam*):** This is a Lutheran view that perceives Christ or redemption or grace as situated alongside of nature or culture, in that both are equally valued and valid; but without a connecting strand between them. For this view, there is separation between faith (religion) and the world.
 Problem: it correlates but ignores nature or culture. E.g :Menonite and Charismatic groups hold to this conviction of the Christian life alongside the world.
2. **Christ (grace) above culture (nature; or *gratia supra naturam*):** it is a classical Roman Catholic vision since Thomas Aquinas (13th century). This view doesn't reject nature (Creation), but perfects it; because grace or Christ only completes creation or nature but cannot inherently change it. In other words, Christ or grace, or redemption floats on top like oil on water, not effecting any integral change .
 Problem : Subjects or suppresses the efficacy of Christ's person and redemptive work and perfects creation or nature (Subjective).
3. **Christ (grace) flanks/against culture (nature; *gratia contra naturam*):** this is the Anabaptists (16th century) vision, and philosophers like Karl Barth, Jacques Allul and some Pentecostal and Charismatic quarters believe the Bible teaches this view. They find anti-thesis between Christ and Culture or between grace and nature, and they reject worldly things and other realities like politics, philosophy, science, e.t.c, for instance Deeper Life used to call TV the Devil's workshop; and ECWA used to be here because she told her members that politics is a deity game, don't stain yourself stay away.
 Problem: rejects and replaces nature. Eg: Presbyterian and Anglicans tend towards an attitude of Christians against the world.
4. **Christ (grace) transforms culture (nature; *gratia naturam transformans*):** this is the Reformed view that grace (redemption) is able to reform or change creation or nature. Grace is like a healing medicine that penetrates into nature and renews and transforms it from inside out. Eg: John Calvin (16th century) Abraham Kuyers. It calls for renewal of individuals and reformation of society according to God's revealed norms and values. Reformed, Baptist, and Methodist hold a more transformational attitude of Christians changing the world. ECWA is now here looking at both the sacred and secular duties or careers or professions objectively as ministry.
 Advantages: Christ or grace is exalted and his person and work perfects the nature or creation through his efficacious work of redemption, in that nature is healed and sanctified.

11. Christian Worldview and Christian Religious Cults

What is a Christian cult? According to the historic Evangelical Christianity- a Christian cult is any religious movement that claims to have its origin from the Bible or Christian faith but seriously denies or deviates from the historic Christian Orthodoxy on God, Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the Bible. Below we shall consider only four cults.

A. Latter- Day Saints (Mormonism)

Bellow are their believes on God, Trinity, Humanity, Jesus Christ, Sin and Atonement;

- i. *God the Father*: Mormonism claims that God the Father was once a man that progressed to godhood.
- ii. *Trinity*: Mormons believes that trinity consist not of three persons in one God but rather of three distinct gods
- iii. *Humanity*: Mormons believe that humans like God the Father can go through a process of exaltation to godhood.
- iv. *Jesus Christ*: for Mormons, they teach that Jesus was the firstborn spirit-child of the heavenly father and a heavenly mother. Thus, this Jesus Christ progressed to deity in the spirit world.
- v. *Sin and Atonement*: Mormons believe that Adam's Sin was a noble act that made it possible for humans to become mortal and a necessary step on the path to exaltation to godhood. They also teach that Christ atonement secures immortality for all people whether they believe or repent or don not believe nor repent.

B. Jehovah Witnesses

Jehovah Witnesses: This religious cult believes that the only divine name by which God must be identified with is JEHOVAH. Below is their position on trinity Jesus Christ, Resurrection, Second coming of Christ, two types of people in the world and Hell.

- i. *Trinity*: Jehovah witnesses believe that the concept of trinity is unbiblical because the world is not found in the Bible and because the Bible emphasis that there is only one God.
- ii. *Jesus Christ*: Jehovah witnesses teach that Jesus was created by Jehovah as the arch angle Michael before the physical world came into being, and is a lesser though mighty god. Thus Jesus' incarnation only affirm his birth on earth. For Jehovah witnesses Jesus was a mere human being and not God in human flesh.
- iii. *Resurrection*: Jehovah witnesses teach that Jesus Christ resurrected spiritually from the death but not physically.
- iv. *The Second Coming of Jesus Christ*: Jehovah witnesses believe that Jesus Christ second coming was an invisible, spiritual event that occur in the year 1914. We Christians don't believe in this.

- v. *the two Redeemed People* : Jehovah witnesses teach that there are two types of people of God: first, the anointed class (144000) will live in heaven and rule with Jesus Christ. The second type of people is the "other ship" (all other believers) will live forever on a paradise earth.
- vi. *Hell*: Jehovah witnesses believe that hell is not a place of eternal suffering but rather the common grave of mankind. The wicked are annihilated-snuffed out of conscious existence forever.

C. Christian Science

Below are their believes:

- i. *Sin, Sickness, and Death*- Christian science teaches that sin, sickness and death are illusions that can be conquered by correct thinking. They believe that all things in the universe are ultimately God; thus there can be no sin and no matter. Since matter does not exist neither can sickness, pain or death exists.
- ii. *God*- Christian science holds a pantheistic view of God that is God, humanity and the universe are the same reality. Thus humans too are God.
- iii. *Salvation*- Christian science teaches that one is saved when he/she ceases to believe in sin, sickness and death.
- iv. *Heaven and Hell*- Christian science believes that people make their own hell by thinking wrongly and their own Heaven by thinking rightly.

D. New Age Movement

This movement has no headquarters or leadership but consist of hundreds of informally associated small organizations and groups it has more members or followers in the 21st century. Bellow are their believes:

- i. *God*- new agers hold to a pantheistic impersonal view of God .
- ii. *Jesus Christ*- New agers claim that Jesus was a human vessel who as an adult embodied the Christ (variously defined but always divine). Thus Jesus Christ is a prototype for the rest of humanity since all people embody the Christ.
- iii. *Humankind*- New agers hold that human beings are God and therefore have unlimited potential that is humans have the same attribute as God.
- iv. *Sin and Salvation*-New agers say humans do not have "sin problems" but "ignorance problem" the greatest need of humanity is enlightenment about their divinity through reincarnation the human soul can eventually reach a state of perfection and merge back with its source "Pantheistic God"