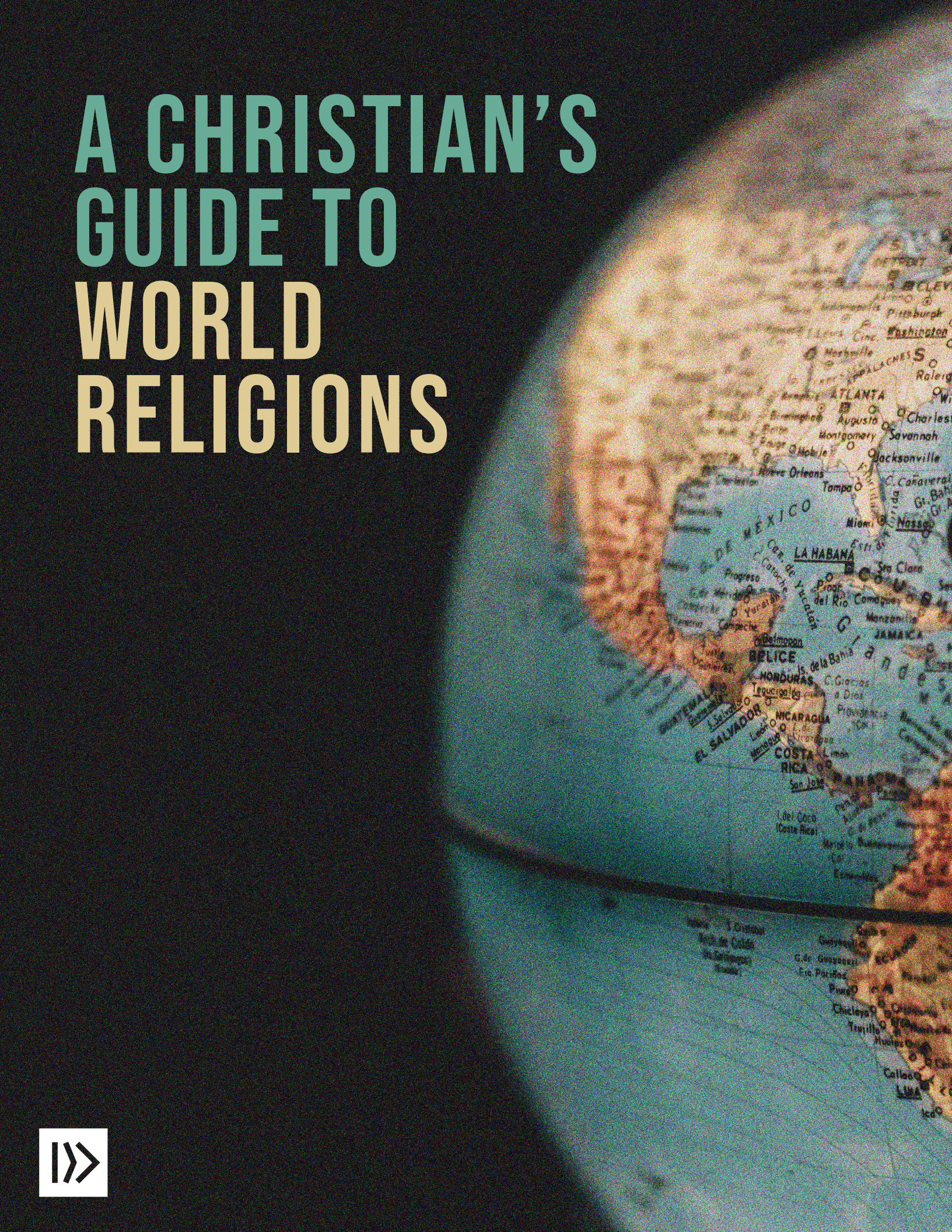
A CHRISTIAN'S GUIDE TO WORLD RELIGIONS



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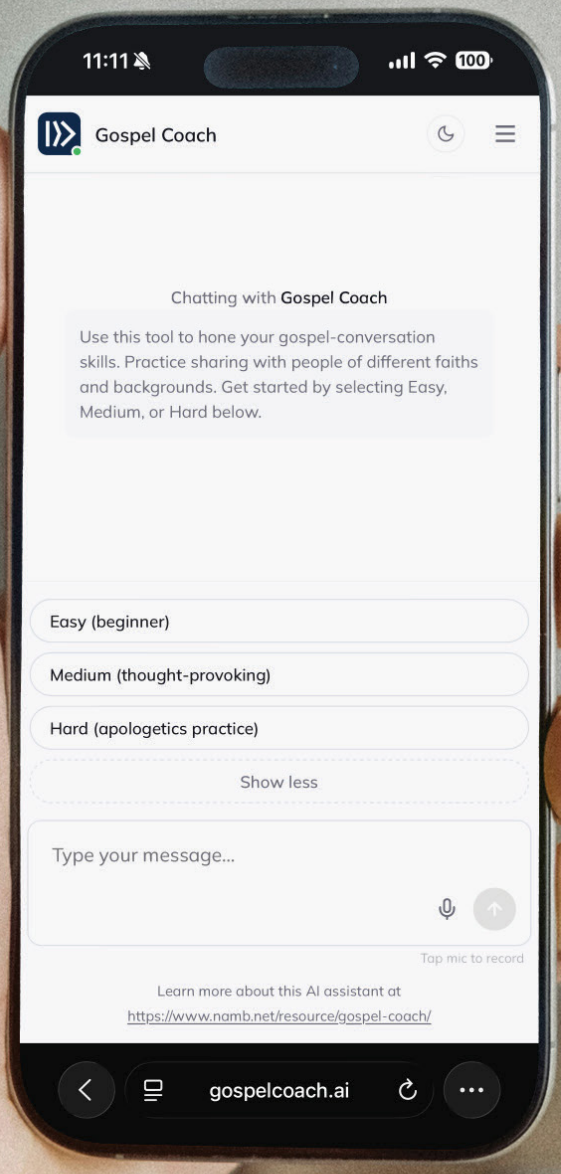
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NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY WHEN SHARING YOUR FAITH?

Practice first. Gospel Coach helps you grow in confidence through realistic, AI-powered conversations.

TRY IT TODAY.
GospelCoach.AI



NAMB

INTRODUCTION

THE APOSTLE PETER TELLS US THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE "READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO ANYONE WHO ASKS YOU FOR A REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU." — 1 PETER 3:15

Being ready to make a defense means two things. First, knowing what we believe and why we believe it. Understanding the Christian faith is vital for our own spiritual growth as well as for our effectiveness in sharing that faith with others. Second, knowing what others believe and how their beliefs differ from biblical Christianity.

This comparative belief guide provides a convenient reference for Christians who are seeking to share Christ with others. The guide compares biblical, evangelical Christianity with 18 different belief systems including Humanism, Islam, Mormonism, the New Age Movement, and others. The guide compares essential doctrines and issues, including views on the Supreme Being, Jesus, and salvation.

While Peter notes that believers should be ready to give an answer for their gospel hope, Paul also references the need for actively being ready to "demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5).

What this means is that believers need to be equipped to see in false religions the beliefs that are in opposition to the truth about God. Part of the task of the church is to confront falsehood with truth—especially in the places that such falsehood makes claims about who God is. Therefore, this guide intends to show the false claims about God and his world that shape the faith of our non-Christian neighbors and friends. This is not to demean them, but to point to the places where truth must confront falsehood.

This overview gives the reader quick, accurate answers as to where and how various religions agree and differ, and explains how you can share Jesus with those followers. The religions included range from some that are in many ways close to the evangelical Christian faith (such as Roman Catholicism and Seventh-day Adventism) to those that are far removed from the Christian worldview (e.g., Buddhism and Hinduism).

The purpose of this guide is to help believers gain a clear understanding of many major faith groups present in our world today in order to equip them to share Christ with their neighbors. While these brief answers aim to be accurate, we must acknowledge that every individual will express their beliefs differently. This guide will give you a starting point to lean into as you get to know your non-Christian neighbors. Consider this a launch pad into meaningful conversation and gospel traction with those whom the Lord has sovereignly put in your life.

CATEGORIES OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) classifies the religious world in this comparison chart into two major categories:

1. NON-CHRISTIAN BELIEF SYSTEMS

Obviously, this designation encompasses a broad spectrum of religious beliefs and organizations. It includes Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and others. These world belief systems claim millions of adherents around the world. Also, in recent decades, North Americans have witnessed the growth of world religions in their midst—notably Islam and eastern religions, and eastern mysticism, as expressed also in the New Age Movements.

2. CHRISTIAN-BASED BELIEF SYSTEMS THAT DIFFER FROM EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

Those groups include both belief systems found in historically orthodox Christian denominations and those found in historically heretical sects (sometimes called cults). By far the largest non-evangelical forms of Christianity in North America are Catholicism and liberal theology (found especially in mainline Protestant churches). Our focus with regard to Catholics and mainline Protestants is to highlight teachings and traditions that are likely to cause barriers to coming to saving faith in the biblical Jesus. A heretical sect is a group that claims to be Christian, yet deviates in its belief system at one or more essential points from core biblical doctrine. (The term cult is often used to refer to religious groups that exert abusive control over their members; in this sense, some, but not all, heretical sects are cults.) Heretical sects typically deny the Trinitarian doctrine of God. They may also hold other unorthodox views, such as the belief that God is an exalted man or that Jesus was a created being. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the Jehovah's Witnesses are the two largest such heretical movements. There are also Christian-based groups, such as Seventh-day Adventism and the Word-Faith movement, that do not fit neatly into any of these categories.

WITNESSING TO PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

1. Have a clear understanding of the gospel, Scripture, hermeneutics, and historic Christian doctrine.
2. Take initiative in the witnessing encounter and seek to develop a friendly relationship with your non-Christian neighbor. Remember, you are sharing Christ with a person, not just debating a movement's doctrine or practices.
3. Refer to this person—to their face and in referring to them when they are not present—as your friend or your neighbor to remind you of their place in your life and your responsibility to love them.
4. Ask questions about what your neighbor believes about specific things (God, humanity, sin, salvation, eternity, etc.). Listen carefully to determine how committed the person is to the faith and its teachings.
5. Trust the authority of the Bible and invite your friend to read the passages you want to refer to for themselves. Be aware of how some faiths may misuse the Bible, often quoting verses out of context or using symbolic meanings not based in the context. Also, many faiths do not regard the Bible as authoritative at all, in which case you may need to explain why it is reliable and truthful.
6. Define terms clearly. Explain carefully what you mean by the words you use and ask the person in the other faith group to do the same. Consider specific verses that show how the Bible uses those words so that you can show your friend how the Bible defines its own terms. (Remember, cults and sects often redefine standard Christian or biblical terms to accommodate their preconceived doctrines.)
7. Focus on basic issues such as the nature of God, the problem of sin, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the biblical plan of salvation, and life after death.
8. Share your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. Describe your salvation experience and relationship with Christ in personal terms. Center on God's grace as shown in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Avoid emphasizing emotional feelings, but focus on your assurance of eternal life through Christ. Remember, though, your testimony is NOT the gospel— use your testimony to highlight the actual gospel message about God's plan to save sinners, prophesied in Scripture and accomplished in Christ's death for our sins and his resurrection for our life (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).
9. Explain carefully the biblical plan of salvation. Emphasize the following points:
    - Jesus Christ came and died so that all who believe in Him may have eternal life. (See Romans 6:23b; John 3:16; 10:10; 14:3.)
    - The reason we needed Christ to die for us is that we have a problem, which is sin, which keeps us from being right with God on our own. (See Romans 3:19-20, 23; 6:23a.)
    - God's only provision for sin is Jesus Christ. (See John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 3:18.)
    - Each person must repent of his or her sin and by faith receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. (See John 1:12; Acts 3:19; 16:30-31; 26:18,20; Ephesians 2:8-9.)
10. Pray earnestly, be patient, and trust the Holy Spirit to lead you in your witnessing to people of other faiths.

PRINCIPLES IN EVANGELISM

Truth: Know what you believe and where that belief is biblically grounded. There is nothing to witness or evangelize to or for without a basic and accurate understanding of the Christian faith. Biblical concepts of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the reliability of Scripture, sin, and the plan of salvation are essential.

Discernment: Know what others believe. A quick study of this chart can equip the Christian to learn the essentials of other faiths. Knowing about the essentials of their faith can help you to ask the person to whom you are witnessing specific, strategic questions about what they believe personally. Be aware that many heretical groups use Christian terminology but with different definitions and meanings. Ask for explanations of words and concepts you don't understand or that seem similar. Be alert in order to find ways to relate Christian truth.

Love: Be patient, but steadfast; firm but gentle; loving and gracious, but confident. The goal is not just to win arguments, but to convince people of their need for Jesus Christ and to bring them into a personal/saving relationship with Him. Therefore, we must love them with the love that comes from God's Spirit. At the same time, love does not mean compromising your own faith to please others. Rather, the Bible says, "Love … rejoices in the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6).

Boldness: The Holy Spirit is noted in Scripture as the Spirit who gives courage and boldness. In every Christian, there should be not only a willingness, but a vibrancy to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Such an attitude is not the same as abrasiveness, insensitivity, or rudeness. It is a spiritually-based courage to say the right things at the right time to point men and women, boys and girls, to the Savior. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you as you speak of the one who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)—Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL COACH – AN AI-POWERED PRACTICE TOOL FOR GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

Followers of Jesus can face many objections and hesitations when it comes to sharing their faith. One is that they are not confident in conversing with someone who has a belief system they don't understand or are unfamiliar with.

What do you say? How do you gain confidence to take the first step in conversation? What if you don't know the answer to their question?

The Gospel Coach web app can help you as you navigate common questions you may hear and will help you grow in your ability to engage people with the gospel.

This app is easy to use on any browser and utilizes AI technology. This app is simply a tool to help you practice honing your gospel-conversation skills. It does not replace in-person instruction from your pastor or church. Neither does it replace real conversations with real people. We encourage you to use this tool within the context of your local church, so you can get guidance from pastors and other church members as you work through the different scenarios proposed on the app. As with any AI tool, AI can make mistakes.

When you enter the app, you will first select Easy (beginner), Medium (thought-provoking), or Hard (apologetics practice). You will then select a conversation partner from the following worldviews:

1. Latter-day Saint (Mormon)
2. Muslim
3. Atheist
4. Agnostic
5. Jehovah's Witness
6. Hindu
7. Jewish person

Or you can type "Surprise Me."

As you enter the conversation, know that after six or so responses, you will be asked if you would like to receive feedback on the conversation. You can type "Yes." This feedback will help you craft more effective responses in real-life scenarios. You can then choose to continue the conversation. You can also type in "Feedback, please" to get feedback.

Click here to access Gospel Coach.

COMPARING EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN BELIEF SYSTEMS

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

JUDAISM

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Some key biblical figures:
Abraham (father), Moses (law-giver), and David (greatest king)
Post-biblical philosopher/theologian:
Moses Maimonides (1135-1204).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

Orthodox: There is One personal God who is Creator and Covenant-maker who is Lord of all. The Trinity is rejected. Liberal Jews (e.g. Reform) often deny that God is all powerful.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Jewish teaching contends that Jesus was a blasphemer and false Messiah. Modern Jews more often view Jesus as an unorthodox Jewish rabbi who was wrongly deified by the church (especially Paul). Judaism denies that Jesus died to atone for sin or that he rose from the grave. It does not accept him as savior or Judge.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

(Tanakh, or the Old Testament), as interpreted by rabbinic midrash and tradition found in the Talmud and systematized in the works of medieval commentators. Liberal Jews typically view much of the Hebrew Bible as myth.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

JUDAISM

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Human beings are a distinct part of creation, not mere animals, not divine, but created in God's image. Every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Sin: Human beings are morally and spiritually frail and tend to ignore or disobey God's commands and his covenant, especially the commands to worship him alone and to avoid idolatry. Most Jews rejected the idea of inherited sin.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

YHWH expects ethical behavior according to his covenant and command. He will send a Messiah and all people need to repent of idolatry and other sin. God expects Jews to study the Talmud and attend prayers at the synagogue since the temple was destroyed and no sacrifices can occur.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Human values are based on God's character as revealed in the Torah. Its 613 commands, and their expansion in rabbinic literature, form the ethical guidelines for Orthodox Jews. Reformed Jews develop contemporary parallels to the Torah.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

JUDAISM

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Reward for the pious in Paradise and resurrection to life in the world to come. Most people first go to Gehinnom (hell) to be purged of sin; the worst sinners either stay there forever or are annihilated. Reform Jews often deny or downplay any afterlife.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

About 6 million, almost all of Jewish ethnicity (more in North America than Israel). Half are Jews religiously (most not Orthodox), one-fourth are secular.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Realize that many Jews associate Christianity with European persecution of Jews. Show them that Jesus was also a persecuted, observant Jew, and that he fulfilled Hebrew Bible prophecy and rose from the grave.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

ISLAM

Muhammad (AD 570-632 traditionally) is the last and greatest prophet following Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus (Isa). Muslims regularly confess "that Muhammad is God's messenger."

There is one God (Allah) who is the transcendent Creator and Lord. He is explicitly not Triune. The unforgivable sin in Islam is to deny the oneness of God by associating partners with him.

Jesus was neither God nor God's Son. He was a great prophet, second only to Muhammad, born of a virgin, and he did miracles by God's permission. God gave hui the gospel (Injil), but his followers corrupted it. Jesus was not crucified, but God raised him to Paradise. He will come again to bring peace to the world and confirm Muhammad as God's prophet.

Traditionally, Muslims believe the Qur'an was dictated to Muhammad by the angel Jabril from 610-632 AD. Muslims generally interpret the Qur'an in light of the Sunnah and Hadith, traditions focused mainly on Muhammad's life and teachings.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

ISLAM

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Humans are imperfect, and this shows in their weak memory and corrupted wills. Created by Allah with ability to follow his will and remember his commands, human beings will give an account for their lives on the day of judgment.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Sin is human failure to remember or keep Allah's commands. Sin is borne of pride and rebellion that develops due to human weakness and forgetfulness. It is not unexpected nor does it disrupt a divine-human relationship. Yet it must be forgiven.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

What human beings need is to submit to the will of Allah as expressed in shari'ah (Islamic law). The spread of Islam as a cultural and civil force is essential. Allah will forgive those who repent and submit to him. He will be merciful in eternity to those to whom he wills to be merciful.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Ultimate values for humanity are dictated to them by Allah. The primary value is submission to Allah as the only God. Specific values are revealed in the Qur'an, through Muhammad's example, and codified in shari'ah.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

ISLAM

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Paradise (gardens of delight) for those Allah will be merciful to and hell (punishment) for those on whom Allah will enact punishment, unfaithful Muslims, and those who commit shirk (assigning partners to Allah).

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

About 6 million in North America: mostly Middle Eastern and South Asian immigrants (about a fifth fleeing persecution) and African American converts.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Invite Muslims to read about Jesus in the Bible. Consider reading the gospel of John with them. Stress that Jesus' death and resurrection is historical fact of theological necessity. Jesus came to save people of all races and cultures.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

HINDUISM

Hinduism is a combination of ancient animistic faiths of Northwest India. There is no founder of Hinduism. The varied traditions were codified around the 8th century BC when the Vedas were written.

Most believe in many gods: Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver), Shiva (destroyer), up to 30 million others; some Hindus believe these are forms of one Supreme Reality (Brahman).

Jesus was one of many spiritual teachers (gurus) or masters (yogi). Some Hindus acknowledge Jesus as one of many avatars, or manifestations of Vishnu. Hindus deny that often Jesus died to atone for sin or rose from the dead. They interpret his teachings esoterically (hidden meanings) to teach Hindu beliefs. They reject the exclusivism of Christ.

Vedas, the earliest texts, teach both polytheism (many gods) and pantheism (all is divine). The philosophical Upanishads are more influential in the West. The Bhagavad Gita focuses on Krishna (an avatar of Vishnu) and the problem of evil and reincarnation.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

HINDUISM

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Human spirits (atman) live in physical bodies. Some Hindus (e.g., Advaita) view the atman as part of Brahman and the body as maya, illusion. The atman cycles around the wheel of samsara through many different bodies.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

The atman is trapped in samsara, the cycle of reincarnation (birth, death, rebirth, etc.). Where and in what social status one is reincarnated depends on one's works (karma) according to the specific moral duties of their previous life

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Moksha (liberation from samsara) through a path or discipline (yoga) and ritual worship (puja). Bhakti-yoga is the path of devotion to a personal deity (e.g., Krishna). Other paths focus on good works, knowledge, or meditation. Advaita seeks to realize oneness with Brahman.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Hinduism stresses the importance of not seeking physical or material pleasures, kindness, and traditionally encourages vegetarianism (since some believe atmans can be reincarnated as animals).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

HINDUISM

The atman will be reincarnated, either as an animal or another human, hopefully making its way higher up the social system referred to as the caste system until it achieves moksha. The world itself will be dissolved or destroyed, then reborn (a cyclical view of history).

3.5 million or more in North America, mostly immigrants from India; some converts through Transcendental Meditation (TM), ISKCON ("Hare Krishnas"), etc.

Show from the Gospels that Jesus offered himself as the only path to God (John 14:6); refer to Jesus' resurrection as proof. Emphasize that we have one life and then the judgment.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

BUDDHISM

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha (The Enlightened One), dates unknown (death dated from 483 to 370 BC). Buddhism later split into Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana along with others.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

Classically, Theravada rejects the idea of a god, whole Mahayana Buddhism includes room for a divine being without requiring it. Vajrayana Buddhism often speaks of a god-like power or energy.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Buddhists typically view Jesus as a Buddha-figure or a wise sage for the West, one of many enlightened ones who showed the way. They reject the idea that his death atoned for sins, and they deny that he rose from the dead. They can accept that he was divine only in the same sense they may affirm that the Buddha was divine.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

The Pali Canon, written about three centuries after Gautama. Called the Tipitaka or Tripitaka ("three baskets"), dealing with Buddha's teaching on discipline, meditation, and monastic orders. Mahayana accepts additional texts.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

BUDDHISM

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Classically, there is no enduring self ("no soul," anatta or anatman); to say "I" is not ultimate truth. Persons are aggregates (skhandas) of matter, feeling, awareness, and illusion that will one day dissolve into Nirvana.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

We suffer because we foolishly attach our desires to the world. Four Noble Truths: Life is suffering, suffering comes from desires, to kill suffering kill desires, to kill desires, follow the eightfold path of meditation and understanding.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Buddha recorded his teachings and so did his followers, yet he concluded that each person must take what works for them and leave behind what does not work. Some view devotion to Lord Buddha or other deity as key. Theravadans typically encourage men to become monks.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Eightfold Path: right belief (4 Noble Truths), intention (one's awakening), speech, conduct (the Ten Precepts: no killing, stealing, lying, drinking, etc.); right job and effort; right mindfulness and meditation.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

BUDDHISM

Classic Buddhism:
Reincarnation understood as passing on the flame of one's aggregates, overcome in Nirvana (in which no illusion of self remains and the self dissolves into ultimate unity). Amida Buddhists hope to be reborn in the "Pure Land," a kind of paradise prior to Nirvana.

5 million in North America, mostly Asian. Most Japanese and Vietnamese Americans are Buddhist. Most U.S. Buddhists are on the West Coast or Hawaii.

Explain that Jesus was not merely an enlightened teacher. Show that we exist because of God's wise will to create us. Show that he created us as embodied souls in a very good physical world that he will one day recreate to dwell with us.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

SIKHISM

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Guru Nanak (AD 1469-1539), the founder, sought to synthesize Hinduism and a mystical form of Islam; first of 10 Gurus (last, Guru Gobind Singh, 1666-1708).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

There is One God, called "True Name" (Satnam), who is the same God of all religions; God is the creator, yet is in everything (similar to pantheism). God cannot take human form.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Jesus is not God incarnate (since God cannot take human form) and is not uniquely God's Son (all people are God's "children"). Sikhs may regard him as a guru for others, though not one of their ten Gurus. Sikhs see no religious significance to Jesus' death and do not accept his resurrection.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

The "First Book" (Adi Granth), called Guru Granth Sahib, is the "Eternal Guru." (Thus, there can be no more human Gurus.) It is a closed collection of prayers and hymns composed by Gurus and saints (including portions of non-Sikh scriptures).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

SIKHISM

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

All humans have souls and are equally children of God who have the potential to commune with God.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Human beings live selfishly, contrary to God and truth; based on their works (karma) they are reincarnated either as people again or (if evil) as swine or other animals.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Followers of any religion can be saved if they meditate on the name of God (done by repeating the name from the heart) and do good works. The result is enlightenment and an end to reincarnation, and finally mystical union with God.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Five Evils to overcome: anger, lust, greed, attachment, pride. Sikhs reject Hindu practices (yoga, idol worship, religious vegetarianism) as superstitions, as well as Muslim pilgrimages. All races and both genders are equal.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

SIKHISM

Reincarnation until one attains union with God. There is no heaven (as Christians conceive it) or hell (since everyone will eventually break free of the reincarnation cycle). The goal is to attain commune with the True Name.

Roughly 1 million Sikhs live in North America. Most are descendants of immigrants from the Punjab in India (where Sikhism began). A few thousand are converts.

Emphasize that Christ came for all people (all races, men & women) and was not a guru but was God with us in human flesh. Explain transforming power of devotion to Jesus through faith in the gospel.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

BAHA'I WORLD FAITH

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Mirza Husayn Ali (1817-1892), Bahá'u'lláh ("glory of God"), the final prophet-manifestation of God. His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá was his authoritative interpreter.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

One personal creator God, known by various names in other religions as different dispensations of divine religion (despite their differing understandings of God's nature).

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

One of many Manifestations of God (including Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Muhammad, and Bahá'u'lláh), i.e., humans through whom God made himself known. His death did not atone for sins; his resurrection is interpreted spiritually. Jesus' message was one of love and unity, distorted by Christianity, but extended through Baha'i.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas ("Most Holy Book"), by Bahá'ulláh (c. 1873), as edited by his great-grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957). Its contents are mainly teachings on prayer, fasting, family law, and other matters.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

BAHA'I WORLD FAITH

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

The human soul, created by God, is basically good. Men and women of all races are equal and responsible to God.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Main problem is division in humanity—by religion, race, gender, caste, nation, etc.—alienating people from God and each other. There is no hell—these have been used to coerce people to conform rather than compel them to good behavior.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Humanity needs to unite under the message of the most recent, definitive manifestation of God, Bahá'ulláh, working together to foster world unity and peace. Allegiances to divisive beliefs should be put aside to foster human unity.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Values based on ideal of human equality, unity of all religions; gender equality; no prejudice; harmony of religion and science; compulsory education for all, and one world government, economy, and language.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

BAHA'I WORLD FAITH

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Each human being has an immortal soul that lives after the body dies. There is no physical resurrection. Heaven and hell are allegorical pictures of nearness to God or remoteness from God in the spiritual realm.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Up to 200,000 in North America, mostly in the U.S., from a variety of people groups. Bahai's inclusivistic teachings are more influential than this number admits.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Draw attention to ways that true Christianity unites people of different races, nations, etc. Show that the resurrection cannot be spiritualized in light of Messianic prophecy and Jesus's fulfillment of it for salvation from sin.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

NEOPAGANISM & WICCA

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Gerald Gardner, a British writer, drew on occult lore and eastern religions to invent modern witchcraft and goddess religion in the 1950s. There is no leader or official organization.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

Some are polytheists (gods and goddesses). Others are pantheists (all creation is divine, manifesting the Goddess), nature worshippers. There are also atheist Wiccans.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Some reject Jesus or ignore him; others regard him as a witch or occultist or highly evolved person adept at using spiritual powers. If they acknowledge that Jesus was a real person, they see no significance in his death and deny his physical resurrection. Most Wiccans and neopagans know about Christianity and reject it.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

No universally authoritative texts. Gerald Gardner, Witchcraft Today (1951), Doreen Valiente, An ABC of Witchcraft (1973), Starhawk, The Spiral Dance (1979), and Margot Adler, Drawing Down the Moon (1979), are seminal works.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

NEOPAGANISM & WICCA

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Human beings are basically good, though some choose to do wrong. Many believe people are divine or have a spark of divinity within them; some neopagans address one another, "Thou art God" or "Thou art Goddess."

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Most human beings live out of balance or harmony with nature, the Goddess, others, or themselves, ignorant of the divine that is in all things. The concept of sin is rejected as imposing unhealthy guilt, fear, and imbalance.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

People can "save" themselves by developing their divine potential in any way that works for them. "Neopaganism" is an attempt to revive pagan spiritualities. "Wicca" (another word for witchcraft) is a magic-based form of neopaganism (not Satanism).

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

The "Wiccan Rede" or "Pagan Rule" is that people may do whatever feels right to them as long as they don't hurt others (including nature). There are no moral absolutes, and pleasure is a virtuous pursuit as long as it does not impose on others.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

NEOPAGANISM & WICCA

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Many believe in reincarnation as a natural continuation of the process of spiritual evolution. Many believe in a spiritual realm (sometimes called Summerland) where souls are refreshed before being reincarnated. Others speak of joining the celestial bodies and spirits in the afterlife.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

No reliable figures; likely over half a million in North America, though many are reticent to align themselves with witchcraft publicly.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Most are hostile to Christianity, especially efforts to evangelize them. Show genuine interest in them; ask questions and try to find out what they value and how Scripture might speak to that.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

NEW AGE MOVEMENT

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

No one founder. 19th century precursors included Theosophy and Mind Sciences. New Age Movement came out of 1960s counterculture and combinations of Eastern religious practices.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

God is all (pantheism) or the impersonal life force (energy, mind, consciousness) pervading all things. There are many ways to think about or relate to God through his world and meditation.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

One of many great teachers who point toward the way, but not himself the way. Jesus was a man who realized his divinity (true of all of us) and thus became the Christ (similar to Gautama becoming Buddha). Many think Jesus went East and studied Buddhism. He did not resurrect but ascended to a higher place of consciousness.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

No single authoritative text. Most New Agers use the Bible but interpret it esoterically (hidden meanings) to teach New Age. Some also appeal to the Gnostic gospels (e.g., Gospel of Thomas) and other religious texts. Others appeal to eastern religious texts.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	NEW AGE MOVEMENT
HUMAN NATURE: Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.	Human beings are divine; some say that each person is God (or part of God). Each person has infinite potential and creates his or her own reality. All people are good and interdependent.
BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.	People fail to realize their divinity, are unaware of their infinite potential, and do not realize their oneness with the cosmos. Such ignorance results in divisions, war, and harm to the planet. We do not appreciate our interdependence.
SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.	Each person must and will eventually realize their oneness with God, the universe, and one another. When enough people attain this enlightened state, the planet will be transformed and attain a global, divine consciousness (often called Gaia).
ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM): Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.	Dualistic thinking related to good and evil must be transcended. Tolerance (to be non-judgmental) is the highest value. New Agers value peace, protection of the environment, unity, and equality.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

NEW AGE MOVEMENT

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

The process of enlightenment continues through as many reincarnations as are needed. Everyone will eventually arrive at perfect realization of their divinity. Souls may become "ascended masters," beings on a higher plane that can communicate with humans and the spirits.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

No clear boundaries, so no reliable figures; probably nearly a million self-described advocates. Increasingly appearing in tandem with crystals and natural health trends.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Affirm the reality of the spiritual world while showing that God has spoken about what we need to know about the invisible realm, most clearly in the incarnation.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

HUMANISM

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

No founder. Roots in the 18th century. Enlightenment. Humanists have called themselves such since the 1930s. One leading thinker was John Dewey (1859-1952).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

Humanists reject belief in God (whether they call themselves atheists or not). The universe is self-existing, not created. Belief in deities is superstitious.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Religious humanists tend to interpret Jesus as a humanist of sorts, a teacher of non-judgmental acceptance and service to others. Secular humanists see little value in Jesus as a teacher and may doubt that he even existed. Humanists deny that Jesus did miracles, atoned for sin, or rose from the dead.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

No authoritative texts, but scientific consensus is trusted. Three Humanist Manifestos (1933, 1973, 2003) illustrate what many religious humanists believe. The Secular Humanist Declaration (1980) typifies the view that humanism is not a new religion.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

HUMANISM

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Humans are simply part of nature, one of many species of evolved life. Humans determine meaning & purpose for their lives. They have the capacity to improve their lives and their society.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Human societies have created superstitions that keep people from fulfilled lives. Ignorance and outdated beliefs are at the root of humanity's conflicts and other difficulties. Sociological pressure breeds religion.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Science—which proceeds rationally from the assumption that nature is self-existent and self-explanatory—refutes superstitious and other false beliefs, while education is needed to transmit the findings of science to the masses.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

There are no moral absolutes; rather, ethical decisions are situational. Each human being should be treated with dignity and freedom to determine what is beneficial to them, their survival, and the general happiness of humanity.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

HUMANISM

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

There is no soul that can exist apart from the body, no life after death, no future resurrection, and no heaven or hell. What is real is the material world and it is ordered by the laws of physics and biology, not by the invisible hand of God.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Few call themselves humanists; the term applies to roughly 40 million in North America, in all people groups.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Show that a Christian worldview is not irrational or anti-science. Prompt consideration that materialism lacks a compelling purpose for existence and meaning of life. Back up faith with love in action.

COMPARING EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER CHRISTIAN-BASED BELIEF SYSTEMS

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	CATHOLIC CHURCH
FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES: Jesus the Messiah (Christ) (c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).	Catholics confess Jesus Christ as their founder, the Virgin Mary as an exalted figure, and Peter as the first in a line of Popes, who are Christ's vicars on earth.
GOD/SUPREME BEING: God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.	Same as evangelicals.
JESUS CHRIST: Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people. John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.	Same as evangelicals.
FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY: The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.	Bible (with additional books in the Old Testament) is the inspired Word of God, interpreted in line with sacred Tradition as taught by the magisterium (teaching office) headed by the Pope, who may speak infallibly on occasion.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	CATHOLIC CHURCH
HUMAN NATURE: Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.	Same as evangelicals.
BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.	Same as evangelicals, although Catholics distinguish venial sins, which do not merit eternal death, from mortal sins (deliberately, knowingly disobeying God).
SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.	Salvation—release from the guilt and power of sin—is by grace, infused at baptism (usually of infants), nourished by the Eucharist, and confirmed in faith and good works. Many non-Christians who sincerely follow the light they have will also be saved.
ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM): Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.	Same as evangelicals, though the authority for values is broader, including sacred tradition and the Church's teaching.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

CATHOLIC CHURCH

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Most believers and others who died in a state of grace go to purgatory to be purified of sins over time before going to heaven. The saints go immediately to heaven; the wicked, immediately to hell.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Approximately 70 million in North America; large numbers of Irish-Americans, Hispanics, and Quebecers (French Canadians).

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

About one-fourth of Catholics are nominal, non-practicing; another fourth depart from Catholic belief in basic ways (liberal theology, New Age, etc.). Don't assume all Catholics are lost; focus on the gospel, personal faith in Christ.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM
FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES: Jesus the Messiah (Christ) (c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).	Liberal Protestants view Jesus as their founder. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was the "father" of liberal theology.
GOD/SUPREME BEING: God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.	Many view God as the divine power of the world (panentheism) or as a creator of limited power. Trinity often recast as creator, redeemer, and sustainer.
JESUS CHRIST: Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people. John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.	Usual view: Jesus was not God, but he shows us what God is like. The Virgin Birth is an expendable doctrine. Jesus' example and ethics are central. Jesus' death is as example of God's love but not atonement for sin. The resurrection is a mythical way of saying that Jesus' spirit or work continues in the church.
FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY: The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.	Bible, as reinterpreted in light of modern science and advancing knowledge of history, religion, and ethics. Much of the Bible viewed as myth or legend.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM
HUMAN NATURE: Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.	Human beings are a part of creation, biologically descended from non-humans, but with a transcendent capacity for moral goodness and spirituality.
BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.	The natural human capacity for goodness is unrealized due to selfishness, ambition, archaic beliefs, ignorance, and inhumane, unjust social structures and institutions.
SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.	By following the teaching and example of Jesus in the light of modern knowledge, we can challenge injustice, serve others, and work for the betterment of humanity.
ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM): Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.	All values are subordinate to the principle of love as exemplified by Jesus' nonjudgmental stance toward people. Most theological liberals are also social liberals (pro-choice on abortion, accepting homosexuality, etc.).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Issues about the eternal state are deemphasized. Many believe in heaven; most do not acknowledge hell or think that only a relative few go there. Sincere people of any religion will make it to heaven. Many are Universalist.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Approximately 30 million in North America, mostly in mainline churches (almost entirely Caucasian), some African American churches; most in the northern U.S., Canada.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Affiliation only suggestive: mainline churches include liberals and evangelicals (and many in the middle). Key point: Jesus' view of Scripture was not liberal (Matt. 5:17-18). Show that Jesus' resurrection is fact, not myth.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH (SDA)

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Ellen G. White (1827-1915), regarded as a prophet, led the organization of the SDA Church in 1863.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

Same as evangelicals.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Same as evangelicals, though SDA adds that Christ entered the "heavenly sanctuary" in 1844 to begin an "investigative judgment" of professing Christians.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

Same as evangelicals, though deference is given to White's interpretations of the Bible. The church teaches that White had the "spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10)

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH (SDA)

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Same as evangelicals.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Same as evangelicals; SDA adds that humans are caught in the midst of a "great controversy" between Christ and Satan over God's right to rule the world.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Salvation—release from the guilt & power of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through repentance and faith, shown by baptism and obedience to the Ten Commandments. In the last days the SDA is the "remnant church" faithfully doing these things.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Same as evangelicals, though SDA argue that Christians must adhere to the food restrictions of the Mosaic law and especially observe the Sabbath (which must be done on Saturday).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH (SDA)

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

All of the dead are in an unconscious state, akin to sleep. The righteous will be raised to eternal life, first in heaven, later in the new earth; the wicked will be raised to meet Christ in a final battle, judgment, and annihilation.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Over a million in North America, especially in Southern and Western U.S. states. Hispanic members especially prevalent in Southern California.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Many, perhaps most, practicing SDA are more or less evangelical in their core beliefs. One faction is highly legalistic; they need to hear the gospel of grace. Stress that evangelicalism does not condone disobeying God.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (JW)

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), started the Watchtower magazine (1879), and founded the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society (1881).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

One God, the Father alone, whose name is Jehovah. Created the world through his Son (Jesus) as his agent. The "holy spirit" is an impersonal force. No Trinity.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

The first and only creature made directly by Jehovah God. Known as Michael the archangel in heaven. Jesus became a perfect human— no more, no less. He died on a "torture stake," not a cross. God raised him as an immortal spirit, with no physical body. Christ's second "presence" happened spiritually in 1914.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

Same view of the Bible as evangelicals, except that one needs the JWs' own version (New World Translation) and the organization's publications (especially the Watchtower) to get the proper understanding.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (JW)
HUMAN NATURE: Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.	Same as evangelicals.
BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.	Same as evangelicals.
SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.	Christ's death gives believers a chance to start over and prove worthy. Faith, loyalty to the organization, and obedience to their laws (including JW taboos, see below) needed for salvation. Those who never heard the gospel get a chance in the millennium.
ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM): Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.	Values derived from the Bible as interpreted in Watchtower publications. All governments are of Satan. No fighting in war; no political activity; no flag salute; no birthdays or holidays; no blood transfusions.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (JW)

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

The dead exist only in God's memory until he raises (recreates) them. 144,000 JWs go to heaven to rule as spirits with Christ. Other worthy JWs live forever in paradise on earth. Hell is the grave, not endless torment.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Over 1.2 million in North America. One-fourth Hispanic, over one-fifth African American. 60% of adult JWs are women. JWs are disproportionately poor.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Let them "teach" you (especially if they came to your door) by asking questions, inviting them to explain biblical texts. Tell them of the assurance of salvation you have in Christ. Suggest they read the Bible by itself.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844), considered the Prophet of the Restoration, founded the Latter-day Saints (LDS) Church in 1830.

God (Heavenly Father) is an immortal Man of flesh and bones; there is also a heavenly mother. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three Gods in one Godhead.

The first of Heavenly Father and Mother's billions of spirit children, and a member of the Godhead. The literal son of God in the flesh through Mary. His suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross secures resurrection for nearly all human beings. Jesus rose physically and ascended to heaven and will return.

"Standard Works": Bible (KJV, with Smith's changes); Book of Mormon (story of Jesus in the Americas); Doctrine and Covenants (modern revelations); Pearl of Great Price (other books), as the Church interprets them.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

All humans and angels existed as God's spirit children in heaven (Satan and demons are rebellious offspring). God made all things (including his children) from preexisting matter.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Although Adam sinned, his doing so was necessary so that humans might pass through mortality and be resurrected, with the potential of becoming gods. Human beings need to know about Heavenly Father and choose to obey him.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Christ's suffering secures immortality for nearly all people. The fullness of the gospel had been lost but was restored through Smith. Repentance, faith, baptism, temple ceremonies, good works, etc., needed to move toward exaltation to godhood.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Values derive from God as revealed in the Standard Works and interpreted by the LDS Church authorities. These may change as God directs, e.g., the LDS Church practiced polygamy but now does not (though splinter groups do).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Three heavenly kingdoms: celestial (with God, for faithful LDS, potential for godhood), terrestrial (for righteous non-LDS and others), and telestial (for unrepentant wicked). Hell (perdition) for Satan and the most culpably evil.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Over 7 million in North America, three-fourths in Western U.S. Utah is 58% LDS; Idaho is 23% LDS. 7% of LDS are Hispanic. LDS tend to have larger families.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Don't assume all LDS accept all of Smith's doctrines. Share your assurance of eternal life with God through Christ. Avoid inaccurate sound-bite criticisms of LDS belief. Acknowledge common ground (e.g., Jesus' resurrection).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

MIND SCIENCES: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE & UNITY

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Mary Baker Eddy founded the Church of Christ, Scientist (1879). Charles and Myrtle Fillmore started Unity (1889). Other Mind Science groups.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

God is Father-Mother.
Christian Science: God is Mind, Spirit, the All-in-All (pantheism). Unity: God is infinite Mind embodied in all things (panentheism).

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Unity: Jesus was God's son in the same sense that all of us are. He showed the way by his life and teachings. Jesus was one of many great teachers. Christian Science: Jesus was the unique way-shower. He only seemed to die (so did not rise physically from the dead).

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

Christian Science: The Bible, interpreted esoterically (hidden meanings), and Eddy's Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures (1875). Unity: The Bible, interpreted esoterically; other religions' writings also of value.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

MIND SCIENCES: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE & UNITY

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Humans are all essentially good, divine. Christian Science: Only Mind is real; humans are all part of the infinite Mind. Unity: Humans are all God's children, manifesting the divine Mind.

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Christian Science: material world, bodies, sin, pain, disease, and death are all "mortal error" (unreal). Unity: Sickness, poverty, death result from our forgetting our oneness with Mind, failing to live up to our divine potential.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

People need to be in harmony with their true nature as part of the divine Mind (Christian Science) or as God's children (Unity). By prayer we connect with God, overcome false beliefs, and free ourselves of their effects (especially sickness).

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

The highest value is harmony or unity. All people should observe the Golden Rule. Peace, gender equality, acceptance of all faiths and lifestyles key emphases.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

MIND SCIENCES: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE & UNITY

Christian Science: There is no death. Heaven is harmony; hell is lack of harmony. All people will transcend mortal error and attain absolute harmony. Unity: All will realize their oneness with God, passing through reincarnations as needed to learn life's lessons.

No reliable figures; probably a little under a million in North America. Unity is largest; has African American churches. Christian Science dwindling.

Show that Jesus claimed to be God's Son in a unique sense. Contrast Jesus' view of God with the Mind Science views. Explain that harmony/unity must be based on truth.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

ONENESS PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Frank Ewart first taught Oneness view in 1914. Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) was the first Oneness Pentecostal denomination (1919).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

One personal God who is Creator and Lord of everything that exists. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are modes or manifestations of Jesus, the one God (no Trinity).

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Jesus is God the Father manifest in the flesh and indwells believers as the Holy Spirit. The Son did not exist before God manifested himself as the Son in Jesus. He was born of a virgin, lived without sin, died for our sins, rose bodily from the grave, and will come again to judge all people.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

Same as evangelicals. Many Oneness prefer the KJV only. The Bible cannot be understood rightly without the "Oneness key" (the revelation that Jesus is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	ONENESS PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES
HUMAN NATURE: Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.	Same as evangelicals.
BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.	Same as evangelicals.
SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM: Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.	Much the same as evangelicals, up to a point. However, many if not most affirm that one must be baptized in Jesus' name only to be saved, and that only those who have spoken in tongues are saved. Some also view "holiness" taboos as tests of salvation.
ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM): Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.	Same as evangelicals, but may require legalistic personal standards for dress, hairstyles, etc.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

ONENESS PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Same as evangelicals.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

Approximately one million in North America. Many, perhaps half, are African American. The United Pentecostal Church Intl. is largely white; the PAW is mostly black.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Correct misunderstandings of the Trinity (e.g., three Gods; Jesus not God or only partly God). Show that the Bible requires no set formula in baptism and that not all Christians speak in tongues.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION (UUA)

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

William Ellery Channing founded the Unitarian Association (1825). They united with Universalists (dating from 1793) to form the UUA denomination in 1961.

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

No official teaching about God. Almost half consider themselves humanists. Unitarians denied the Trinity; now many in the UUA do not believe in God at all.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Historically, Unitarians believed that Jesus was a man through whom God revealed himself; Universalists believed that Jesus had saved everyone by his death. Few if any in the UUA now view Jesus as anything more than a respected religious teacher.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

No authoritative texts. Both groups historically affirmed the Bible as primary, but no longer. UUAs draw freely on liberal readings of the Bible, other world religious traditions, and humanistic philosophies.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION (UUA)

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

The UUA affirms "the inherent worth and dignity of every person." Human beings are part of "the interdependent web of all existence."

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Evil social and political structures, ignorance, and greed disrupt our natural harmony with nature and each other, and are the causes of wars and other ills.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Human beings need to search for truth and spiritual renewal in an environment of free inquiry. The UUA has as its goal a world community of peace, liberty, and justice for all.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

There is no one authoritative basis for values. The UUA values justice, peace, and liberty, which are understood in socially liberal ways.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION (UUA)

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

The UUA takes no position on matters pertaining to life after death. Most are either humanists (about half) or neo-pagan (perhaps one-fourth); see descriptions of those views.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

The UUA reported numbers dwindling to 130,000 members as of 2024. Two-thirds are women; 10% are non-heterosexual. 98% are white (UUA is trying to change that).

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Show interest, find out what kind of beliefs they hold (humanist, New Age, or other), and approach them in that light. Point out Jesus' radical stance toward women as people of worth.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

WORD-FAITH MOVEMENT (WF)

FOUNDERS/ORIGIN/KEY FIGURES:

Jesus the Messiah (Christ)
(c. 5 BC—AD 30 or 33).

Much of Word-Faith theology came from E. W. Kenyon (1867-1948). The movement's "father" was Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003).

GOD/SUPREME BEING:

God, the creator and Lord of everything, exists as one perfect nature in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.

Same as evangelicals, although some WF teachers say that God the Father has a "spirit body" and are unclear or confused in their affirmation of the Trinity.

JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus is one divine, eternal Person, the Son, distinct from the Father, who assumed humanity; fully human and fully God. He is the Christ (Messiah). Atoned for sin by being born of a virgin, living without sin, dying for sin, resurrecting, and ascending to heaven. He will return to judge all people.
John 1:1-18; 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 4:14-15; 9:26-28.

Some WF teachers say that Mary "confessed" Christ into being. All WF teachers argue that although Jesus was uniquely God, he acted as a man filled with the Spirit, so that we should be able to do anything he did. Jesus died physically and spiritually, took on Satan's nature and suffered in hell, then was born again.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS/SOURCES OF AUTHORITY:

The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God, revealed, accurate, and relevant. It is the sole authority for faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21. Early creeds are helpful records of interpretation, but not inspired statements.

Same view of the Bible as evangelicals. Modern teachers such as Hagin are viewed as "anointed," even as prophets, whose message and ministry should not be rejected or criticized.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

WORD-FAITH MOVEMENT (WF)

HUMAN NATURE:

Human beings are creatures, yet they are not mere animals, nor are they divine. Rather, created in God's image, every human person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7.

Human beings are "little gods," with potential to do miracles by words of faith, just as God does. Human nature is trichotomous (body, soul, spirit); God is known by spirit, not mind (part of soul).

BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Sin: Human beings rebel against God using their God-given capacity for making moral choices, refusing to worship and obey Him, pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law. Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23.

Adam forfeited godhood over the earth to Satan, with the result that human beings do not exercise their God-given authority of dominion and live in defeat spiritually, physically, and financially.

SOLUTION TO THE BASIC HUMAN PROBLEM:

Salvation—rescue from the many effects of sin—is God's gift, received by grace alone, through personal faith in Christ alone, resulting in a new life realized in union with Christ, by the Spirit, and to the glory of the Father. Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.

Through faith in Christ, believers become incarnations of God, just as Christ was, and can then speak words of faith (positive "confession"), experiencing victory over the devil, bodily health, financial prosperity, and success in all areas of life.

ETHICS (VALUE SYSTEM):

Ultimate values are based on God's character and commands as revealed in Scripture. Human beings are born in sin and always need God's grace to renew them by gospel faith in thought and action. Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Same as evangelicals.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

WORD-FAITH MOVEMENT (WF)

LIFE AFTER DEATH:

Believers are with Christ and awaiting resurrection as immortal people in a new heavens and new earth where they will be with God eternally. The lost face eternal punishment from God in hell. Matt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22.

Same as evangelicals.

NORTH AMERICAN FAITH GROUPS:

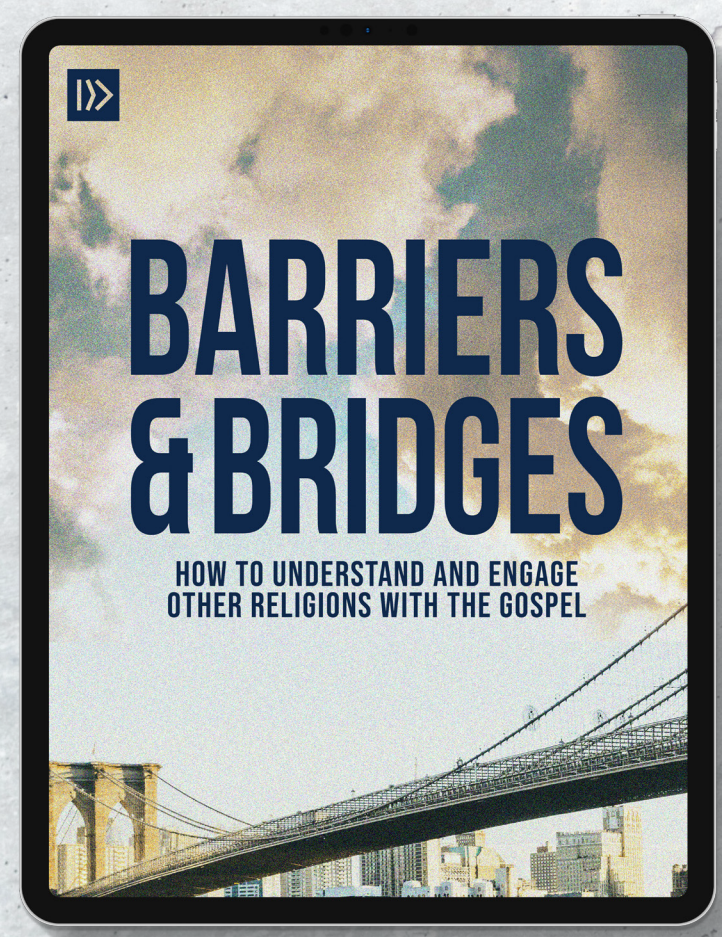
Approximately 23% of adults in the United States identify as evangelicals. Many of this number may be cultural Christians who have inherited this label but not received the gospel.

It is hard to estimate the size due to no formal membership. Likely over one million; most charismatic and Pentecostal. Large numbers of African Americans and Hispanics.

SHARING CHRIST:

A large percentage of professing evangelicals qualify as syncretists and don't have a basic Christian worldview. Many who grew up in the church fall away. Millions of people in evangelical Christianity need to hear the true biblical gospel.

Many are basically evangelical, many saved; many others believe a gospel of success and prosperity instead of the gospel of salvation. Build on common ground; correct doctrinal errors; don't turn the gospel into a message of defeat.



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