

# CEI GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD TERMS

Clarity of words is essential for communicating ideas and understanding worldviews. We have found it necessary to nail down definitions to certain words and terms that are often misunderstood, misused or carry multiple meanings within the Christian community. Listed here are the common terms we encounter regularly. Correct, Biblical definitions of other commonly misunderstood terms can be found in either the Noah Webster 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language published by FACE or the The Student Worldview Dictionary published by The Biblical Thinker.

## **Biblical (a.k.a. Christian) Worldview:**

Generally, the biblical worldview is based on “the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, which is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture.” [The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith](#), Ch 1, para 6.

Unfortunately, this definition, though correct, is too general and fails to portray the essentials of the biblical worldview which has led to misunderstanding and confusion as there are too many variations among ministries that fall short of the mark. A more comprehensive understanding of biblical worldview can be found here:

[The 42 Articles of The Essentials of the Christian World View](#) published by the Coalition on Revival:

These 42 Articles of Affirmation and Denial comprise the theological foundation on which all of The Coalition on Revival's [17 Sphere Documents, Manifesto for the Christian Church, Articles of Affirmation and Denial on the Kingdom of God](#), and all other official documents must rest and to which they all must comply. These 42 Articles state what are the essentials of the Christian World View and in turn rest upon the foundation of the inerrant, written Word of God, the Bible.

**A Biblical Worldview requires more than knowledge, however** – True worldview formation is relational that includes beliefs, behaviors, and heart orientation. Christian education must nurture all three dimensions to ensure students not only know biblical truth but also live it out. Jesus himself says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” ([John 14:15](#)).

## **Christendom:**

The application of biblical principles to all of life and culture, including all spheres of authority in society, in order that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Definition created by Christian Education Initiative

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Christendom is the manifestation of the Biblical Worldview

## Discipleship:

Discipleship is Disciple-making – is entering into relationships to intentionally help people follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and join the mission of Jesus. (Matt. 28:18-20).<sup>2</sup>

Discipleship is a lifelong journey of faith, learning, community, and service. It is a call to follow Jesus, grow in His teachings, and participate in His mission. Although it comes with challenges, the rewards of a deepened relationship with God, a sense of purpose, and the joy of seeing lives transformed make discipleship a fulfilling and transformative endeavor. As believers embrace the call to discipleship, they contribute to the building of God's kingdom and experience the abundant life that Jesus promised.

Discipleship has become a somewhat generic term. Small groups. Sunday services. Sermon series. Bible classes. The truth is that not all discipleship settings are designed to produce deep, lasting, personalized transformation. And yet, many churches try to make one tool fit every context. But Jesus didn't.

When you look closely at Jesus's ministry, you'll notice something powerful:

- He spoke to **the crowds** with stories and principles.
- He taught **the twelve** in deeper, more personal ways
- He pulled **Peter, James, and John** aside for even more intimate moments.
- And then there was **John** — his closest friend. The one whom Jesus loved. The one who stayed at the cross. The one who received Revelation.

Each relationship level served a purpose. It was with John that we see the beauty of one-to-one. Not necessarily better, just different; and deeply needed.<sup>3</sup>

## Education:

We affirm the provisions per position statements 1-43 from The Christian World View of Education published by Coalition on Revival.

We deny civil government has any role regarding education therefore position statements 44-47 can be reduced to:

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<sup>2</sup> National Study on Disciple Making in USA Churches: High Aspirations Amidst Disappointing Results, sponsored by Discipleship.org and Exponential

<sup>3</sup> <https://discipleship.org/blog/why-one-to-one-discipleship-might-be-the-most-overlooked-and-needed-tool-in-the-church/>

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- We affirm education is the primary responsibility for the parents of each household with secondary support from the Church.
- We deny civil government has a role for education except for development of its own workforce.

EDUCA´TION, n. [L. *educatio*.] The bringing up, as of a child; instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good *education* in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious *education* is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties. <sup>4</sup>

## Gospel:

The term “gospel” has both a broad meaning and a narrow meaning as follows:

The word *gospel* literally means “good news” and occurs 93 times in the Bible, exclusively in the New Testament. In Greek, it is the word *euaggelion*, from which we get our English words *evangelist*, *evangel*, and *evangelical*. The gospel is, broadly speaking, the whole of Scripture; more narrowly, the gospel is the good news concerning Christ and the way of salvation. <sup>5</sup>

When addressing the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John they refer to the life of Jesus per each of the books.

For clarity, we will use the narrow meaning for gospel due to its prevalent use within the Christian community and use the term whole counsel of God when addressing all of scripture. This narrow meaning is the basic doctrine for the pietistic churches.

## Government

GÖV´ERNMENT, n. Direction; regulation. These precepts will serve for the *government* of our conduct.

2. Control; restraint. Men are apt to neglect the *government* of their temper and passions.

3. The exercise of authority; direction and restraint exercised over the actions of men in communities, societies or states; the administration of public affairs,

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<sup>4</sup> Webster, N. (2006). In [Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language](#). Foundation for American Christian Education.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-gospel.html>

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according to established constitution, laws and usages, or by arbitrary edicts. Prussia rose to importance under the *government* of Frederick II.

4. The exercise of authority by a parent or householder. Children are *often* ruined by a neglect of *government* in parents.

Let family *government* be like that of our heavenly Father, mild, gentle and affectionate. *Kollock*.

5. The system of polity in a state; that form of fundamental rules and principles by which a nation or state is governed, or by which individual members of a body politic are to regulate their social actions; a constitution, either written or unwritten, by which the rights and duties of citizens and public officers are prescribed and defined; as a monarchial *government*, or a republican *government*.<sup>6</sup>

Each sovereign sphere (individual, marriage & family, industry, church, private association and civil government) has its own form of government(s) charged with God given authorities that don't conflict with the authorities given to the other sovereign spheres.

## Kingdom of God <sup>7</sup>

1. We affirm that the Triune God has reigned sovereignly as King of the universe throughout all time, both before and since the incarnation, and will continue to reign eternally.
6. We affirm (a) that the Bible reveals God's intentions for the growth of His Kingdom in all nations of the earth during this present age through the proclamation and obedient application of His stated will in Scripture, and (b) that His intention includes the increasing manifestation of His rule over individuals, voluntary associations, families, the church, the state, and all spheres of human activity, some of which are law, government, economics, business, occupations, education, sports, medicine, science, technology, arts, and media. We deny that God's rulership is limited to transforming only the private lives of individuals to His will.
8. We affirm that Jesus Christ rules sovereignly over the kings of the earth not only as eternal God but also as the sole mediator between God and men, and that He lawfully defeated Satan de jure by His victorious life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

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<sup>6</sup> Webster, N. (2006). In [Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language](#). Foundation for American Christian Education.

<sup>7</sup> Coalition on Revival, Articles of Affirmation and Denial on the Kingdom of God: A Summary of the Biblical and Historical View, 1989 & 1999

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## Politics

POL 'ITICS, n. [Fr. *politique*; Gr. πολιτική. See *Policy*.]

The science of government; that part of ethics which consists in the regulation and government of a nation or state, for the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity; comprehending the defense of its existence and rights against foreign control or conquest, the augmentation of its strength and resources, and the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals. *Politics*, as a science or an art, is a subject of vast extent and importance.<sup>8</sup>

## Religion (functional and substantive):

Religion, a multifaceted and deeply personal phenomenon, has been an integral part of human civilization since time immemorial. It is commonly defined from either a functional approach or a substantive approach. We, however, incorporate both approaches as each religion (aka worldview) contains both aspects.

A functional definition of religion is based on what religion does and how it operates 'in terms of its place in the social/psychological system. This can pertain to the social function of religion for group coherence, social order, defense of group interests, etc. It can also pertain to the psychological functions of religion by providing stories, symbols & rituals that will help individuals to identify with role models, be motivated, find consolation, provide answers to existential questions, etc<sup>9</sup>

Substantive definitions of religion are concerned with identifying the core essence or substance of what constitutes a religion. They often focus on specific beliefs, practices, or deities that a system of beliefs must have to be considered a religion. It is these beliefs, however, that determines what one does within a social system.

Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others. See *Washington Ethical Society v. District of Columbia*, 101 U.S. App. D.C. 371, 249 F.2d 127; *Fellowship of Humanity v. County of Alameda*, 153 Cal. App. 2d 673, 315 P.2d 394; *II Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* 293; *4 Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1957 ed.) 325-327; 21 *id.*, at 797; Archer,

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<sup>8</sup> Webster, N. (2006). In [Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language](#). Foundation for American Christian Education.

<sup>9</sup> [https://ugc.futurelearn.com/uploads/files/02/a3/02a3244f-7595-4699-b4a0-6496933e9212/Functional\\_and\\_Substantive\\_Definitions\\_of\\_Religion.pdf](https://ugc.futurelearn.com/uploads/files/02/a3/02a3244f-7595-4699-b4a0-6496933e9212/Functional_and_Substantive_Definitions_of_Religion.pdf)

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Faiths Men Live By (2d ed. revised by Purinton), 120-138, 254-313; 1961 World Almanac 695, 712; Year Book of American Churches for 1961, at 29, 47. : <sup>10</sup>

## Whole counsel of God:

A comprehensive grasp of the [OT and NT] Scriptures helps safeguard against false teachings and doctrinal errors. By studying the entirety of God's revelation, believers can discern truth from error and maintain a balanced theological perspective.

Embracing the whole counsel of God promotes holistic discipleship, where every aspect of a believer's life is shaped by biblical principles. It encourages a lifestyle that reflects God's character and purposes, impacting personal conduct, relationships, and social responsibilities.

This requires contextually understanding Scripture verse by verse, chapter by chapter and systematically understanding Scripture for the “order of logical relationships, the grand sum of what God has told us in His Word” [and revealed in His creation]. <sup>11</sup> Along with systematically understanding Scripture is developing the knowledge and skills of presuppositional apologetics so we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.

The whole counsel of God encompasses the full range of divine revelation found in the Scriptures [and in creation]. It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding God's will and purpose for humanity. By diligently studying and applying the whole counsel of God, believers can grow in doctrinal soundness, spiritual maturity, and effective ministry, ultimately fulfilling their role in God's redemptive plan. By engaging with the entirety of Scripture, Christians are better equipped to discern truth from error.

## Worldview:

A worldview encompasses the comprehensive lens through which we interpret reality and our existence within it. It represents our mental scaffolding that helps us understand and navigate the complexities of life. In simpler terms, it is the framework composed of beliefs, values, and assumptions that guide our perception, understanding, and interactions with the world.

To delve deeper, a worldview answers fundamental questions concerning our existence. It provides us with insights into our purpose, morality, the nature of

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<sup>10</sup> TORCASO v. WATKINS, 367 U.S. 488 (1961), Footnote 11

<sup>11</sup> J Gresham Machen, Education Christianity and the State, pp 149-150

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reality, and our relationship with the divine, if any. Essentially, it determines our stance on these core issues and influences our daily decisions, behaviors, and overall approach to life.

Philosophers categorize the core components of a worldview into four major areas of enquiry:

- Epistemology: The study of knowledge. It addresses how we know what is true and how we distinguish truth from falsehood.
- Metaphysics: The study of reality. It delves into questions about what exists and the nature of existence.
- Ethics: The study of what should be done. It explores what actions are right or wrong in light of our understanding of reality.
- Socio-political philosophy: The study of ethics on a societal scale. It examines how communities and societies should organize and govern themselves.

Understanding one's worldview is crucial because it not only shapes individual actions and decisions but also influences collective societal norms and behaviors. Thus, our worldview is our internal compass, directing us through the myriad choices and challenges we encounter daily. <sup>12</sup>

Typical, formal worldviews encountered in America are Christian, Secular Humanism, Marxism, Islam, New Age, and Wiccan. An individual's worldview is generally syncretized between two or more worldviews to one degree or another and is, subconsciously, well formed by age 13.

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<sup>12</sup> Produced by Microsoft Copilot, Define Worldview