

RE»»RENEW

CONSIDERING CHRISTIANITY

severn.cc/renew for more info



Antony Flew in *There is a God*:

“I think the Christian religion is the one religion that most clearly deserves to be honored and respected whether or not its claim to be a divine revelation is true. There is nothing like the combination of a charismatic figure like Jesus and a first-class intellectual like St. Paul...If you’re wanting Omnipotence to set up a religion, this is the one to beat.”

Considering Christianity



2 Goals

Not Christian:

**Persuade you that
Christianity is...**

Reasonable

Respectable

Remarkable

**And therefore is worth
serious consideration.**

Christian:

Increase your...

**Confidence in
Christianity**

&

**Your ability to
defend and
commend it.**

2 Claims

- 1. Everyone tells themselves a story about the world and our place in it.**
- 2. Christianity is a true and better story.**

Considering Christianity

Is It a True & Better Story?

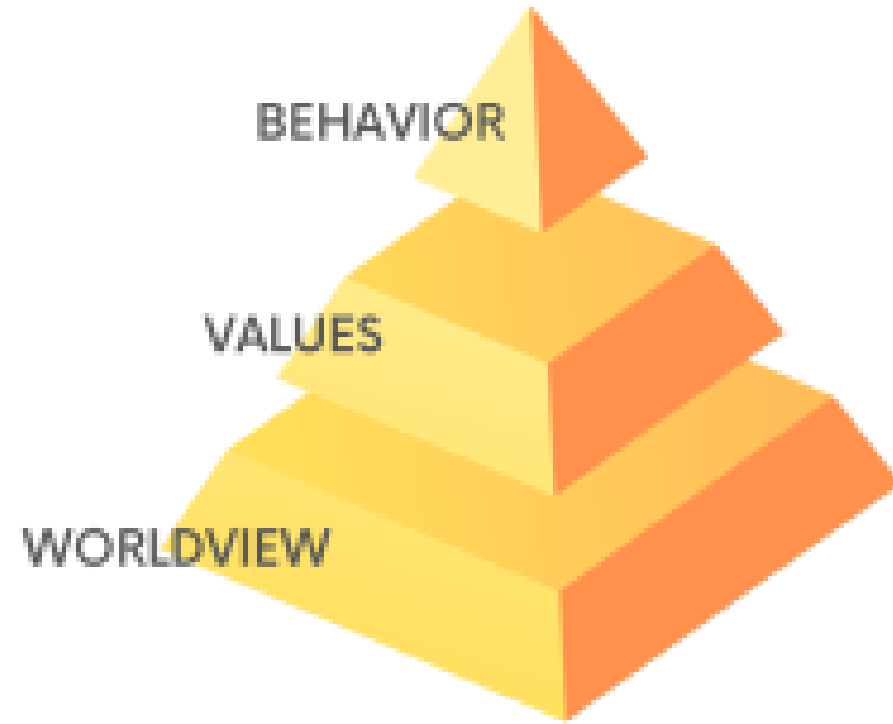


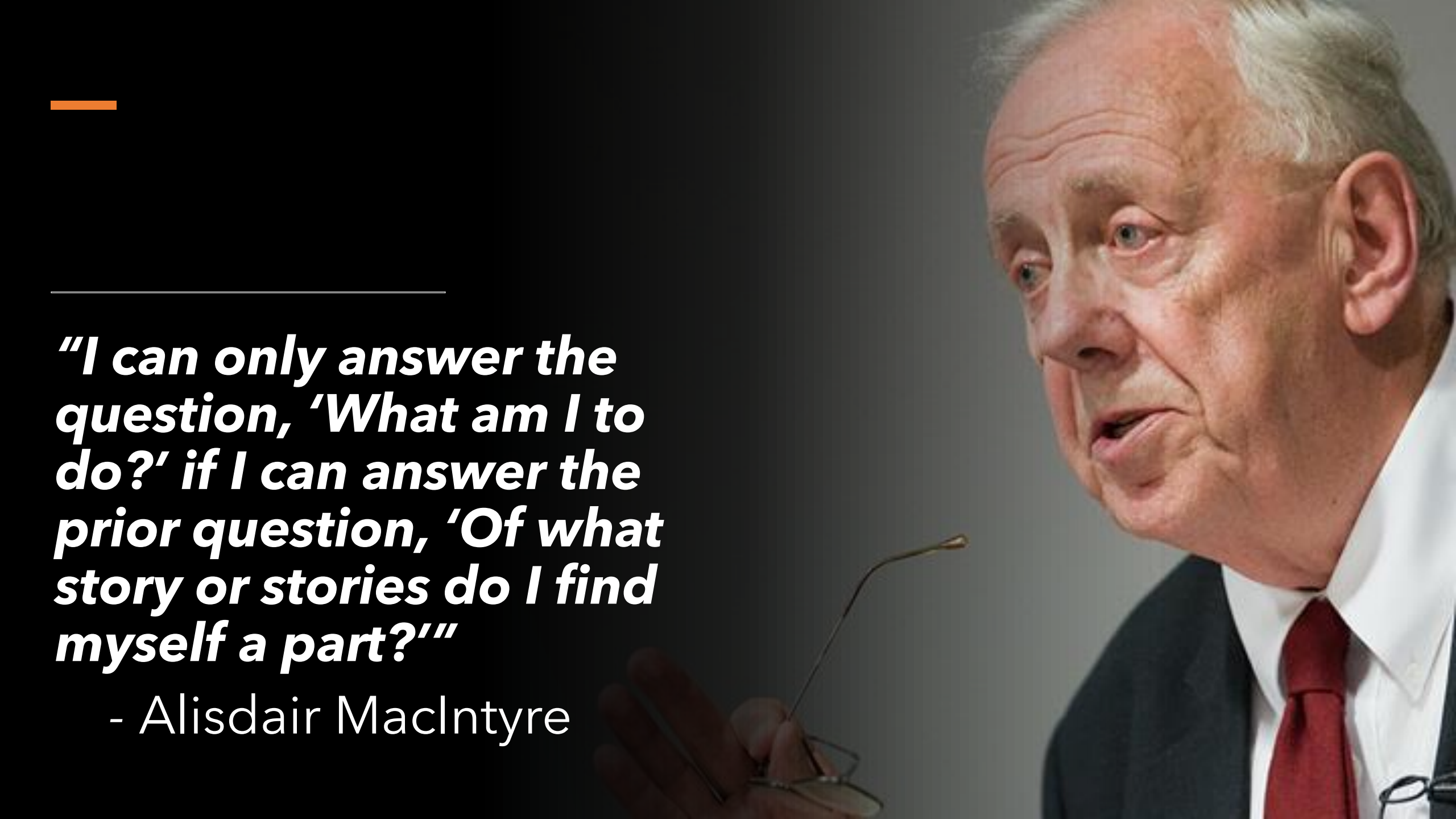
CLAIM #1:

*Everyone tells
themselves a story about
the world and our place
in it.*

Worldview:

A lens through which you perceive the world, make sense of it, form values, and make choices.





“I can only answer the question, ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question, ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’”

- Alisdair MacIntyre



How do we know this is true?

1. History/Culture



“There have been societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.”

- Ursula Le Guin

How do we know this is true?

1. History/Culture

2. Science/Psychology



“Some [therapy] models give these cognitive/emotional repertoires a technical name, such as ‘narrative’, ‘schema’, or ‘core belief.’ In ACT, we can freely use any of those terms just mentioned - but typically we use more common, everyday language, such as ‘stories’ or ‘themes’.”

- Dr. Russ Harris

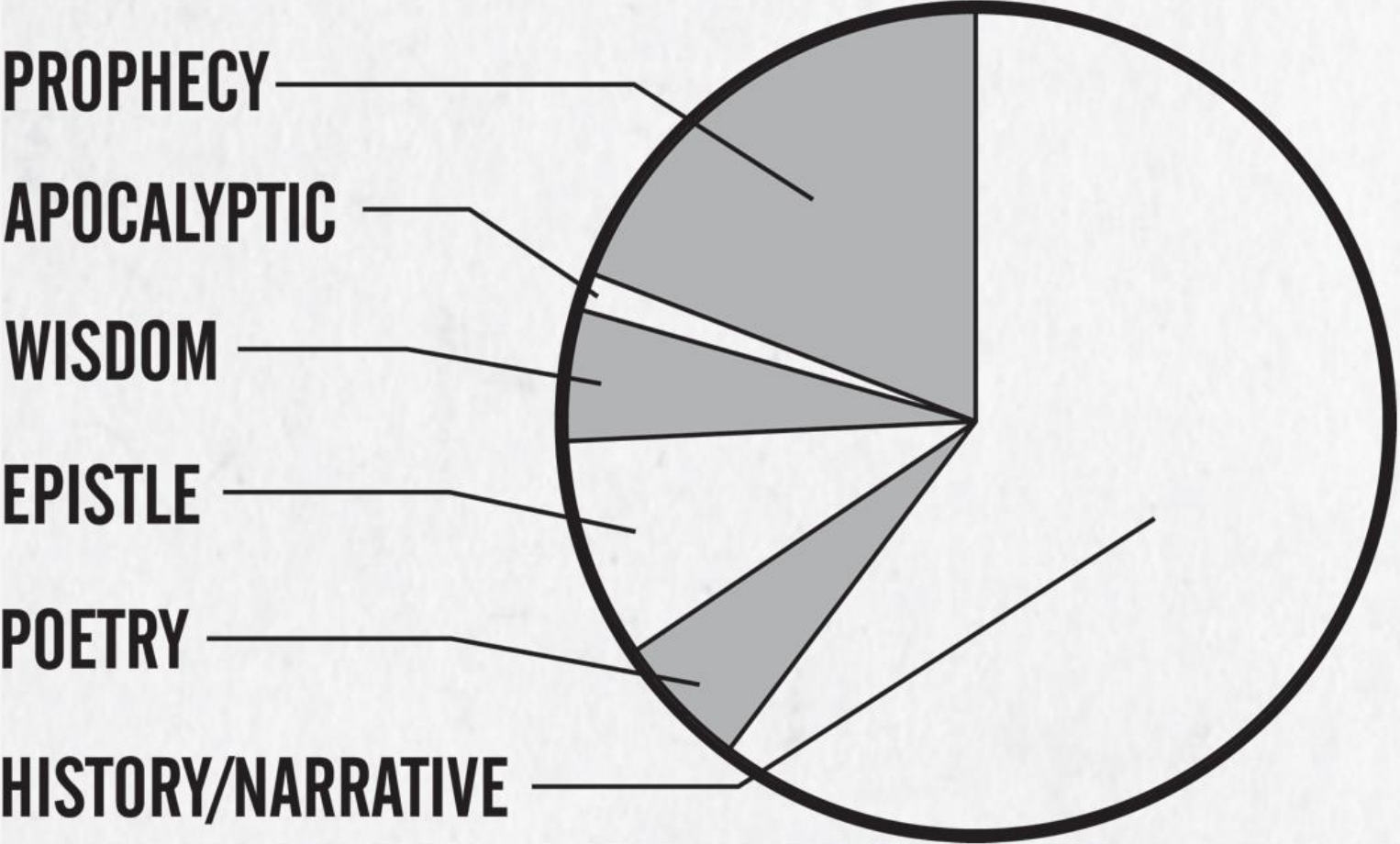
How do we know this is true?

1. History/Culture

2. Science/Psychology

3. Scripture

GENRES IN THE BIBLE



Which story do you believe? (Identify & Evaluate)

1. Look Inward

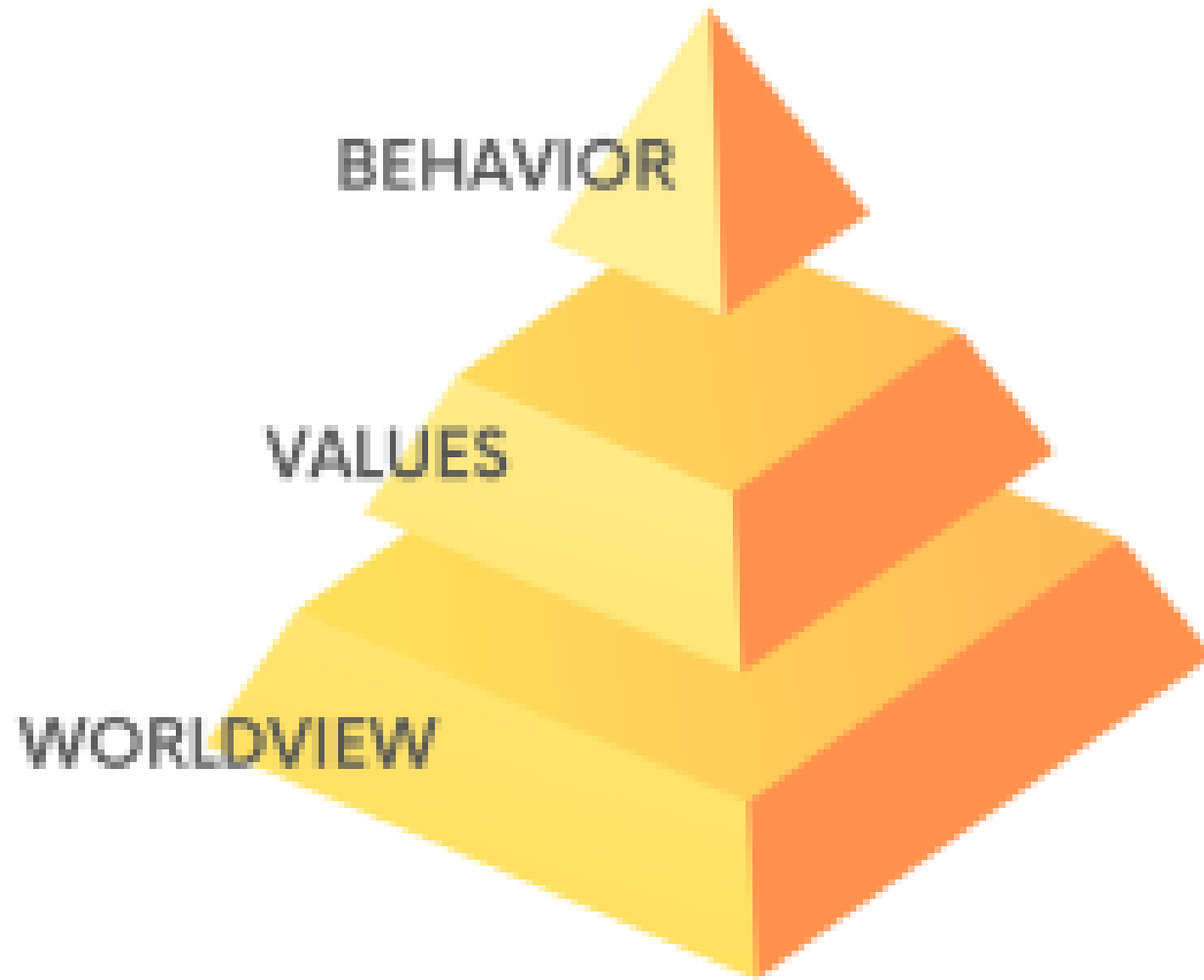
Reflection Questions

1. What are you ultimately seeking?
2. Who do you trust to deliver it?
3. How's that going for you?
4. How will it make you whole?

Which story do you believe? (Identify & Evaluate)

1. Look Inward

2. Look Under



Which story do you believe? (Identify & Evaluate)

- 1. Look Inward**
- 2. Look Under**
- 3. Look Outward**

Naturalism

**Super-
Naturalism**

Atheism
Secular Humanism
Scientism
Marxism

Agnosticism
Deism

Judaism
Christianity
Islam
Buddhism
Hinduism
Paganism

3 BIG Questions

1. Why are we here?

2. What's wrong with us?

3. How do we fix it?

Which story do you believe? (Identify & Evaluate)

	Naturalism	Supernaturalism
1. Why are we here?	Accidental byproducts of natural processes.	Created by a supernatural force/being.
2. What's wrong with us?	Death.	Death.
3. How do we fix it?	We can't. Survive as long as possible.	Afterlife: heaven, resurrection, paradise, nirvana, moksha

Naturalism

**Super-
Naturalism**

Atheism
Secular Humanism
Scientism
Marxism

Agnosticism
Deism
Enlightenment
Romanticism
Consumerism

Judaism
Christianity
Islam
Buddhism
Hinduism
Paganism



“Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity...the inability to use one’s own understanding without another’s guidance...Dare to know! ‘Have the courage to use your own understanding’ is therefore the motto of the enlightenment.”

- Immanuel Kant in *What is the Enlightenment?*

Which story do you believe? *(Identify & Evaluate)*

	Enlightenment	Romanticism	Consumerism
1. Why are we here?	<i>To gain happiness through knowledge</i>		
2. What's wrong with us?	<i>Dependent ignorance</i>		
3. How do we fix it?	<i>Independent thought</i>		

“Romanticism is precisely situated neither in choice of subjects nor in exact truth, but in a mode of feeling. They looked for it outside themselves, but it was only to be found within.”

- Charles Baudelaire in *The Salon of 1846*



Which story do you believe?

(Identify & Evaluate)

	Enlightenment	Romanticism	Consumerism
1. Why are we here?	<i>To gain happiness through knowledge</i>	<i>To gain happiness by being true to your feelings</i>	<i>To gain happiness by consuming things</i>
2. What's wrong with us?	<i>Dependent ignorance</i>	<i>Outside pressures to conform</i>	<i>Lack of choices and resources</i>
3. How do we fix it?	<i>Independent thought</i>	<i>Expressive individualism</i>	<i>More choices and resources</i>

CLAIM #2:

Christianity is a true and better story.

Naturalism

Super-
Naturalism

Atheism
Secular Humanism
Scientism
Marxism

Agnosticism
Deism
Enlightenment
Romanticism
Consumerism

Judaism
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Paganism

The Christian Story

	Christianity
1. Why are we here?	Created by God in love.
2. What's wrong with us?	Death.
3. How do we fix it?	We can't. But God did through Jesus' death & resurrection.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

CLAIM #2:

Christianity is a true and better story.



“Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it might be true. The cure for this is...

...First, to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect.

Next, make it attractive, make good men wish it were true.

And then, show that it is.”

- Blaise Pascal in *Pensees*

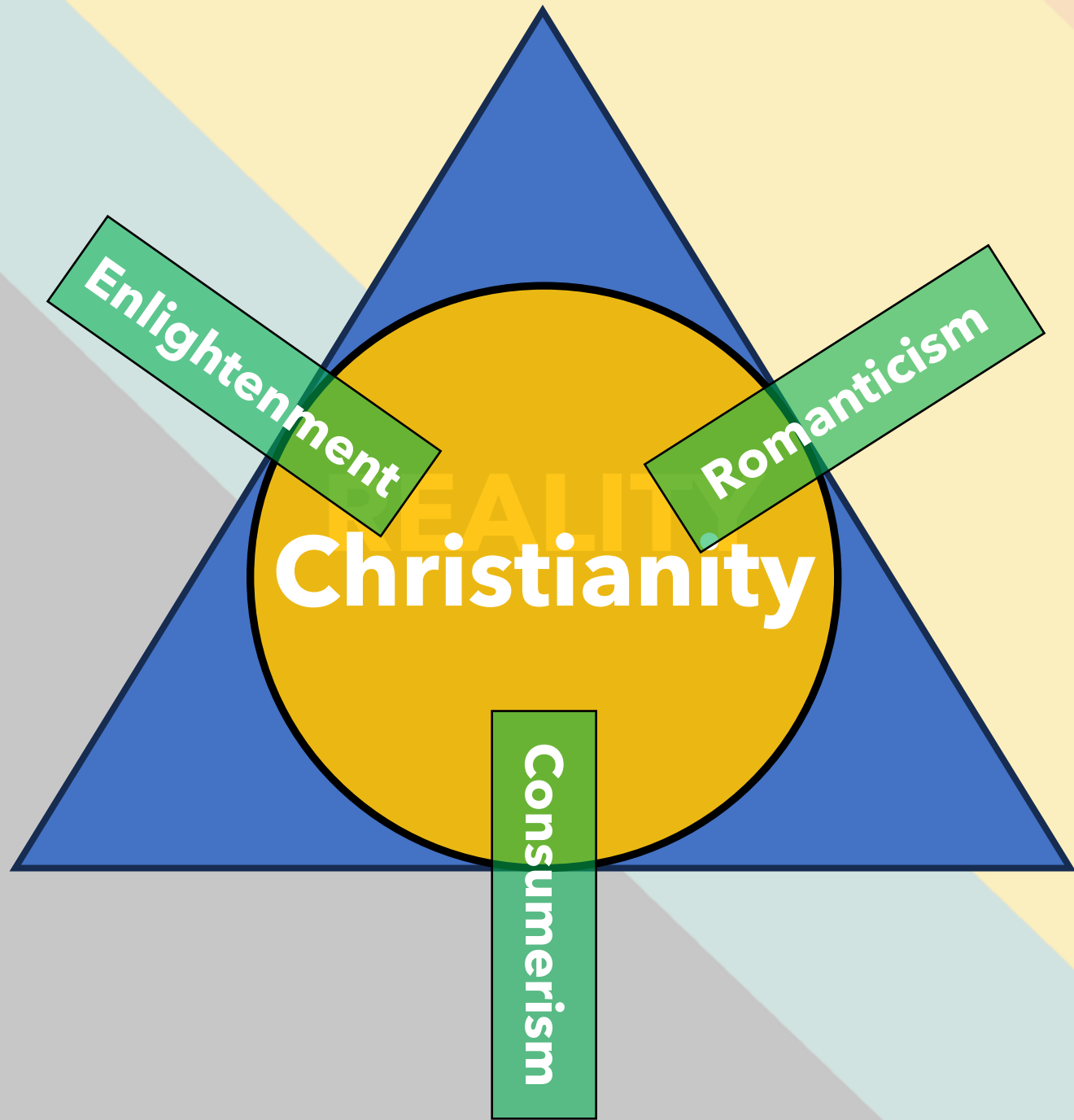


REALITY



Christianity

REALITY



Enlightenment

Romanticism

Consumerism

Christianity

Upcoming Classes...

Is Christianity a True & Better Story?

Oct. 16

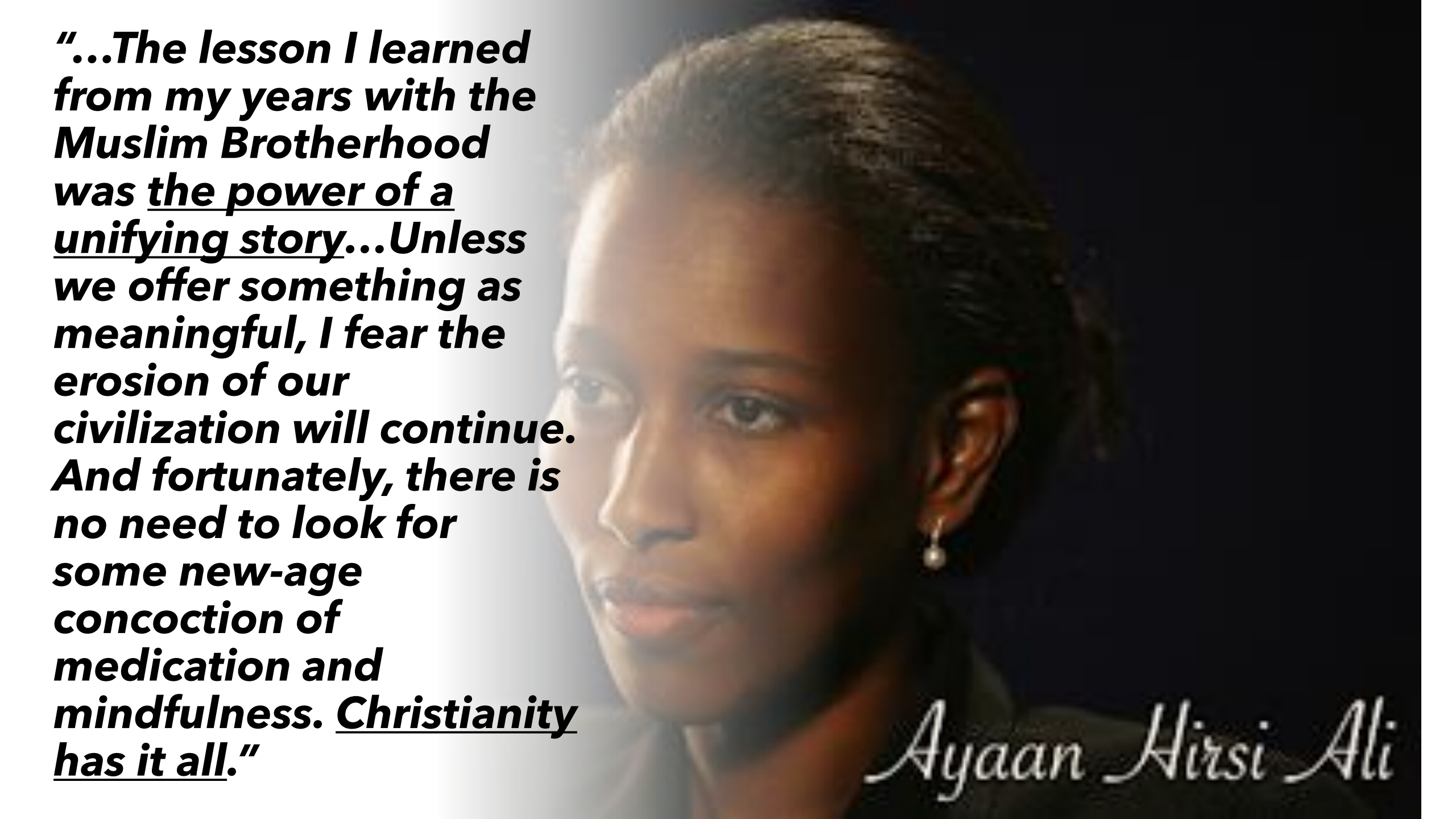
***Scientific
Evidence &
Objections***

Nov. 20

***Moral
Evidence &
Objections***

Jan. 15

***Historical
Evidence &
Objections***



“...The lesson I learned from my years with the Muslim Brotherhood was the power of a unifying story...Unless we offer something as meaningful, I fear the erosion of our civilization will continue. And fortunately, there is no need to look for some new-age concoction of medication and mindfulness. Christianity has it all.”

Ayaan Hirsi Ali