

## **Under the Skin: Going Beneath the Surface of Media Messages to Discover Aspects of Worldview**

Western culture is saturated with media messages. From tweets to vlogs to movies, an immense number of stories inundate us. All media production, like everything else humans do, reflects both the image of God and our fallenness, and every story we tell expresses something of our worldview. If we are to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves, we need to become like the men of Issachar who “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chronicles 12:32). Part of that means that we must not only pay attention to the surface level of media messages, but we must go deeper to discover how worldviews are being expressed. This workshop will introduce practical worldview analysis of media (especially film) and consider the implications for both discipleship and evangelism.

**Tony Watkins** is a speaker and writer on media and the Bible. He is doing doctoral research on the relationship between the biblical prophets and today’s media, and works alongside several organisations including Damaris Norway and the Lausanne Media Engagement Network (as Network Co-ordinator). He regularly lectures at Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communications, Norway. Tony has written, or co-written, several books including *Focus: The Art and Soul of Cinema* and *Dark Matter: A Thinking Fan’s Guide to Philip Pullman*. Tony and his family are involved in Above Bar Church, Southampton.

### I. The two realities of human nature

#### A. Made in God’s image

#### B. Rebels against God

## II. What is a worldview?

### A. Analogies for worldviews

### B. Definitions

A worldview is a cluster of basic beliefs about reality by which we make sense of our experiences, and which form our patterns of living.

‘A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false), which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.’ – James Sire, *Naming the Elephant*, p. 122

### C. Ted Turnau’s ‘Worldview tree’



### III. Five dimensions of worldviews

A. Reality

B. Humanity

C. Knowledge

D. Ethics

E. Redemption (meaning/purpose)

### IV. Engaging with worldviews

## Further reading and viewing:

### Books

Byers, Andrew. *Theomedia: The Media of God and the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2014)

Godawa, Brian. *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films With Wisdom & Discernment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009)

Gould, Paul M. *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019)

Romanowski, William D. *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007)

Sire, James W. *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004)

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door : A Basic Worldview Catalog* 6th ed., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015)

Turnau, Theodore A. *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012)

Watkins, Tony. *Focus: The Art and Soul of Cinema* (Southampton: Damaris Books, 2007)

### Articles

Dahle, Lars. 'Media Messages Matter: Towards a New Missiological Approach to Media Engagement.' *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjonsvitenskap* 23.2 (2014): 105-21. Available online at <[http://egede.no/sites/default/files/dokumenter/pdf/NTM\\_2014\\_2\\_Dahle.pdf](http://egede.no/sites/default/files/dokumenter/pdf/NTM_2014_2_Dahle.pdf)>.

Dahle, Margunn Serigstad. 'Worldview analysis of popular media: A Christian perspective.' *Budskap* 7 (2006): 165-74. Available online at <[fih.fjellhaug.no/wp-content/uploads/Budskap-2006.pdf](http://fih.fjellhaug.no/wp-content/uploads/Budskap-2006.pdf)>.

Watkins, Tony. 'Art's Desire: Responding to Film and Literature.' *Anvil* 28.3 (2012) Available online at <[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/anvil/28-3\\_watkins.pdf](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/anvil/28-3_watkins.pdf)>.

### Videos

TruthProject – What is worldview? <[youtu.be/Txez9sJUtaE](https://youtu.be/Txez9sJUtaE)>

Impact360 Institute – What's your worldview <[youtu.be/VXnSE0uvwzM](https://youtu.be/VXnSE0uvwzM)>

Gustavsson, Stefan. 'Understanding and Responding to Different Worldviews'. ELF, 2011. <[foclonline.org/talk/understanding-and-responding-different-worldviews](http://foclonline.org/talk/understanding-and-responding-different-worldviews)>

Swais, Khaldoun. 'The Theology of Superheroes: Engaging Secular Society with Modern Mythology'. ELF, 2017. <[foclonline.org/talk/theology-superheroes-engaging-secular-society-modern-mythology](http://foclonline.org/talk/theology-superheroes-engaging-secular-society-modern-mythology)>

Turunen, Pasi. 'Metaphysics in the Movies: Hidden Worldview Questions Waiting for Your Christian Answer'. ELF 2016. <[foclonline.org/talk/metaphysics-movies-hidden-worldview-questions-waiting-your-christian-answer](http://foclonline.org/talk/metaphysics-movies-hidden-worldview-questions-waiting-your-christian-answer)>