Examining and Evaluating Worldviews

A. Theism
1. One infinite personal God
2. He exists *beyond* (*transcendent* - above and over creation or "up" and "out" there) and *in* (*imminent* - presence within creation
3. He is *in* the world but not *of* the world (distinct from the world just as an artist is distinct from his painting)
4. Possesses all the omni-predicates
5. Miracles occur
6. The world is analogous to God (being, language)
7. Represented in Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

B. Atheism
1. No God exists in or beyond the universe
2. No miracles (secular humanism)
3. Injustice and evil are realities
4. Many movement: Death of God (Al Kaiser); Death of God-talk; Myth of God (Nietzsche); Classical atheism (Freud, Ayn Rand)

Problems:
1. No first cause
2. No absolute basis for morality
3. Evolution is untenable. Ask five crucial questions:
   a. Order from non-order (simple to more complex)?
   b. Life from non-life?
   c. Intelligence from non-intelligence?
   d. Something from nothing (causality)?
   e. Personal from the impersonal?
4. Irreducible Complexity
5. "Chance" does not explain the origin of all things

C. Deism
1. One God that exists beyond (transcendent) the universe but *not* active in it
2. Mechanical universe and natural theology
3. Like theism but no miracles
4. Denies the incarnation, virgin birth, divine inspiration, etc..
5. Jefferson and Franklin

Problems:
1. Inconsistent view of miracles
2. Confuse the function of the Laws of Nature (descriptive vs. prescriptive)
3. Ignores the abundant evidence of the reliability of the Bible

D. Pantheism
1. God (impersonal) *is* the universe
2. All is *one* substance (monism)(Parmenides)
3. No distinction between creator and creation
4. No miracles
5. Opposite view of deism
6. Eastern philosophy and religion

Problems:
1. Self-defeating (change vs. non-change)
2. Fails the practical test
3. Where did the spiritual amnesia come from?
4. If the world is God, how do they explain the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics?
5. To deny logic is self-defeating

E. Polytheism
1. Many personal finite Gods beyond the universe and in it
2. They have a beginning but no end
3. Pantheism and polytheism are only two worldviews which are compatible with each other
4. World is eternal
5. Usually named after natural phenomena and human traits
6. Romans, Greeks, Witches, and Mormons

Problems
1. The universe is not eternal (2nd Law; Expanding universe)
2. Some say the gods were birthed by the forces of nature. If so, nature is ultimate, not the gods
3. To render ultimate worship to what is less than ultimate is idolatry
4. Philosophically, there can be only *one* perfect God

F. Panentheism (dipolar theism, processism, organicism, neo-classical theism)
1. This worldview is a mixture of theism and pantheism
2. A personal God that has two poles: an *infinite pole* (Spirit beyond the physical universe and a *finite pole* (God's body) which is the universe.
3. God is *in* the universe as soul is *in* the body
4. God and the universe are interdependent
5. God grows, learns, and changes with history
6. Evil is seen as an incompatibility within the universe

7. Major figures are A.N. Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, Shubert Ogden, John Cobb and Lewis Ford

Problems:
1. God cannot be both *infinite* and *finite* at the same time and in the same sense (what about the incarnation of Christ?)
2. God cannot be dependent since He is a necessary being, or else we must find what God is dependent upon (this is God)
3. God cannot guarantee final victory over evil
4. God cannot change or else he is finite (Mal 3:6)

G. Finite godism
1. A finite god that is active beyond and in the universe but is limited in power
2. Evil is real
3. The universe is eternal
4. Plato

Problems:
1. God cannot guarantee final victory over evil
2. If god is finite, how did they come to exist. No apparent cause which is impossible, or if by the forces of nature, then nature is god
3. The cause of the finite world must be infinite, otherwise it too would be part of the finite world. The creator of time cannot be in time.