



**Only Two Religions?
Introduction to Worldview Evangelism
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Section 5A

The Oneist Solution

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Section 5A

The Oneist Solution

Oneism is defined as the worship of creation, where all is one when creation is worshipped and served as divine. In Oneism all distinctions are eliminated and through “enlightenment” Oneism proclaims that man is *also* divine.

Twoism is defined as the worship of the divine Creator of all things. In Twoism God *alone* is divine and is distinct from His creation, *yet* through His Son, Jesus, God is in loving communion *with* His creation.

The Oneist hopes to find unity in the world by bringing together the opposites and by discovering his or her own divinity. In order to facilitate this discovery, a Oneist often seeks a pinnacle of religious experience that will, on an individual basis at least, produce unity with the earth, the universe, and whatever Force is behind the desired progress toward utopia. This often trance-like experience is similar in a variety of Oneist systems. It produces the following confession: “I am uncreated, as old as God.” That is the statement of Harold Bloom, a Jew who turned **Gnostic**ⁱ and plunged into Oneist spirituality. The pin-on badge/button that said “I Am God,” on sale in a San Diego, California shopping mall, is not as strange as it first might seem. Mr. Bloom’s statement and the words on the button are expressions of Oneism that those living in the United States may hear and see.

In an animistic culture, the Oneist might turn to a **shaman**,ⁱⁱ witch doctor, sorcerer ([Deuteronomy 18:10](#)) or **hijra**ⁱⁱⁱ who claims to have brought the elements together in his mystical power, to ward off sickness or to punish an enemy ([Isaiah 47:13](#)). In some Oneist rites, worshipers use drugs, repetitive words ([Matthew 6:7](#)) or music to work themselves into a state in which they feel that they have found union with the universe.

ⁱ **Gnostic:** Gnosticism was an early heresy in the early Church. The Gnostics did not believe in the Old Testament Creator God, but felt there was a “god behind the creator,” who was the true god. They did not believe that Jesus truly died on the cross and believed that creation was either bad or unimportant. Because of this, some of them lived a very immoral lifestyle (our bodies aren’t important) and some lived a very controlled and ascetic lifestyle (are bodies are evil, so we need to master them). Some of the New Testament books, especially the epistles to Timothy and the epistles of John, were written to counter the earliest forms of Gnosticism.

ⁱⁱ **Shaman:** someone who is believed to be able to use magic to cure people who are sick, to control future events, etc.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Hijra:** a person who adopts a gender role that is neither male nor female.

Section 5A

In rationalistic countries, Oneists say that there is no force outside the evolving universe itself, but that mankind can and should participate in the process of making the earth better. Such an attitude has led to ideas such as eugenics, by which leaders with power try to determine which humans are the best specimens of the race, in order to help nature along in assuring that the future of the planet gets better and better. This led to the holocaust in the last century, when people tried to create a race of Supermen by killing handicapped people and people from races that were considered inferior. Even this seemingly rational and scientific version of Oneism often seeks the mystical experience as a necessary part of the system.

The mystical experience typical of Oneist spirituality involves silencing the mind and using some kind of technique (whether hypnotism, a **sweat-lodge**,^{iv} breathing techniques, a trance, a drug-induced state, or a **labyrinth**^v walk, to cite just a few) to reach a state of utter calm or utter ecstasy in which the worshiper has a sense of all things becoming one—including himself.

Oddly enough, this experience is never enough. It is addictive, bringing with it a hunger for another similar experience, a need to re-create a more and more powerful sense of unity with all things. In addition, it can have the effect of distancing the user from or hardening him to the needs and feelings of those around him ([Psalm 115:4–8](#)). In fact, it often has exactly the opposite effect of the one intended. The worshiper was hoping to feel unified to all things, but in fact ends up using all things for his own insatiable spiritual hunger. Spirituality becomes a power play—a tool to draw to himself all the good he desires and thinks he deserves. One sees such an exercise in the book, *The Secret*, which teaches people that they can draw to themselves the riches, glory and success that they deserve, if only they can concentrate hard enough on the techniques proposed.

Such spiritual techniques become a kind of spiritual Ring of Power, as in Tolkien’s story, *The Lord of the Rings*. In the end, this spirituality becomes, as did the Ring of Power, a heavy weight around the user’s neck. Life becomes harder and harder—the goal farther and farther from being realized. When an interviewer asked Harold Bloom (the one who said, “I’m as old as God”) why he had so much trouble being happy, Bloom said that he didn’t know and that even though he had a loving, faithful wife who was his best friend for forty-four years, he still felt a longing for something more.

In your relationships with unbelievers, you may find Oneists intent on living out their worldview. Those who are the most eager and the most disciplined may discourage you, because they don’t want to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must realize that the harder the person is trying to achieve one-ness with the universe, the closer he may be to the disillusionment that such a worship choice produces. Remember that the Apostle Paul was killing and imprisoning Christians when God called him to faith. Martin Luther was in a frenzy of spiritual practices before he finally realized that salvation was not due to his works, but to God’s grace and Christ’s righteousness. So

^{iv} **Sweat Lodge**: a hut, lodge, or cavern heated by steam from water poured on hot stones and used especially by American Indians for ritual or therapeutic sweating

^v **Walking the Labyrinth**: This practice involves meditating on one’s inner self, while walking to the center of a labyrinth traced on the ground or in a religious space. The experience is meant to help bring the person into an experience of the divine within. It is often a part of Oneist spirituality in the US and other Western countries.

Section 5A

keep loving your Oneist friends and family members. Keep sacrificing yourself for them joyfully. Keep praying and keep probing. And keep enjoying the solid, everyday, created structures in which God has placed you. The stability, good sense, faithfulness and steady joy of a Christian couple, home, family or individual often has an amazing effect on someone who has become disillusioned with Oneist spirituality. Eventually, by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, you may discover that your friends have that "longing for something more." God may break into their Oneist world, surprising them with his joy and forgiveness.

Optional Exercises

Section 5A

Marketplace Research

1. Where do you see the “longing for something more” in the Oneists you know?
2. What experiences, systems or worship techniques on offer in your culture promise to provide Oneist spirituality?

Challenge Questions:

You don't get to “interview” people like Harold Bloom. How can you discover what Oneist leaders are thinking?

How can you discover what your friends and neighbors think about spirituality?

If you can, find a Oneist to interview. As a group, write out some leading questions to draw out the hopes and desires of a “spiritual but not religious” neighbor or friend.