

15

**RELIGION**

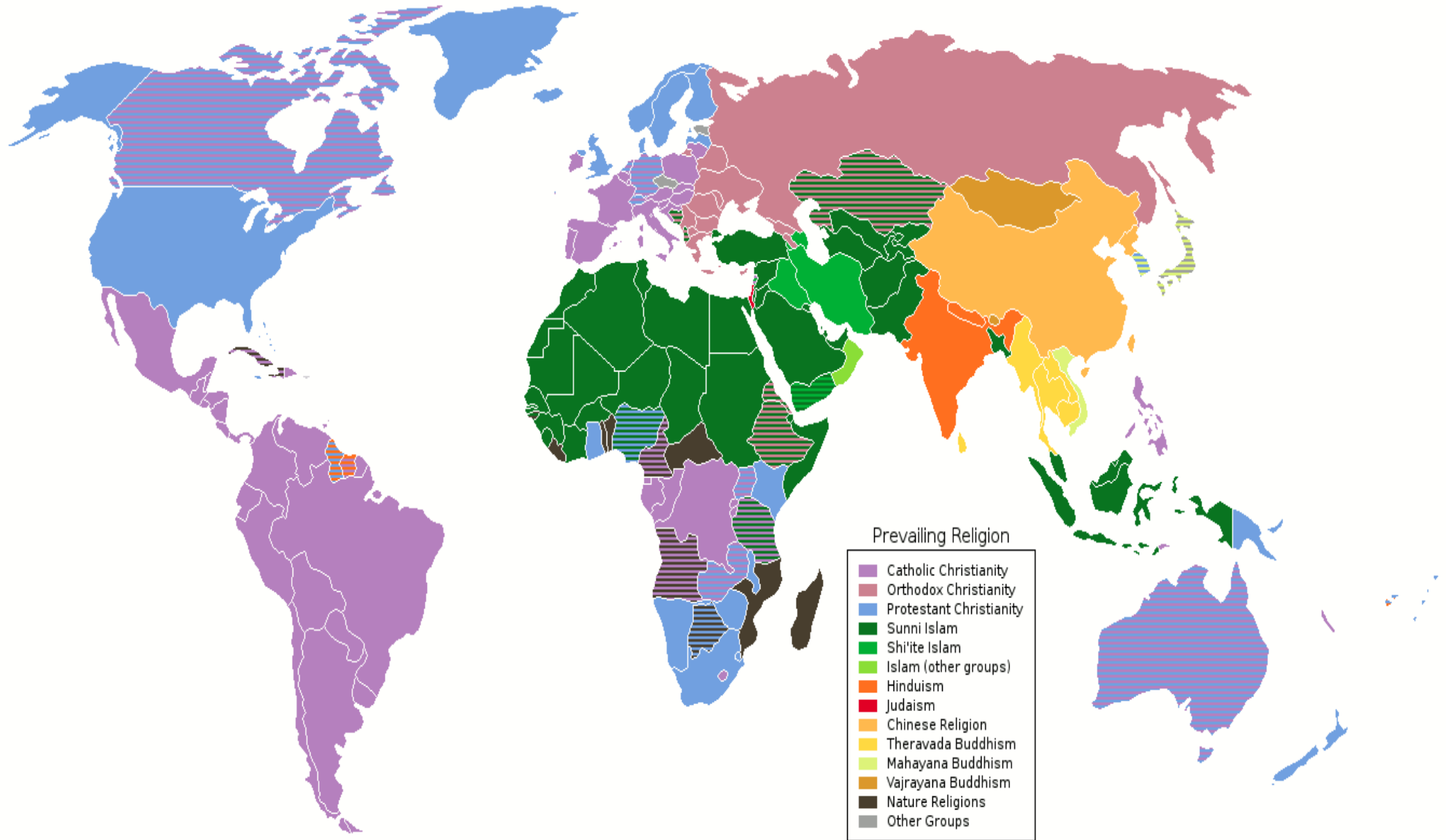
**JUST**

**A**

**CULTURAL**

**THINGS?**

# RELIGION BY COUNTRY



# HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF?

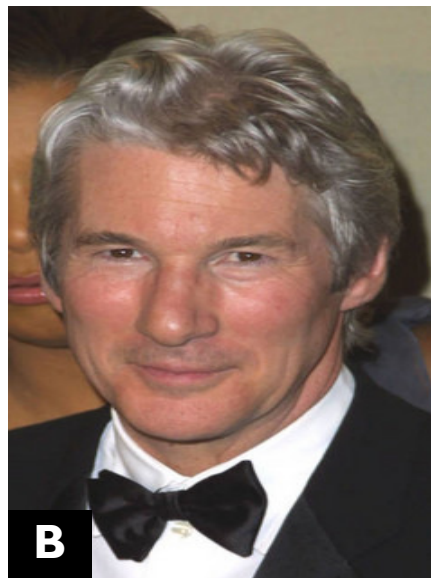
*Check more than one if applicable*

<b>Religion/ Race</b>	Asian	Black	Latino	Native Am	White	Other
Hinduism						
Buddhist						
Judaism						
Christian						
Muslim						
Atheist						
Agnostic						
Other						



# WHAT RELIGION DOES THIS PERSON IDENTIFY WITH?

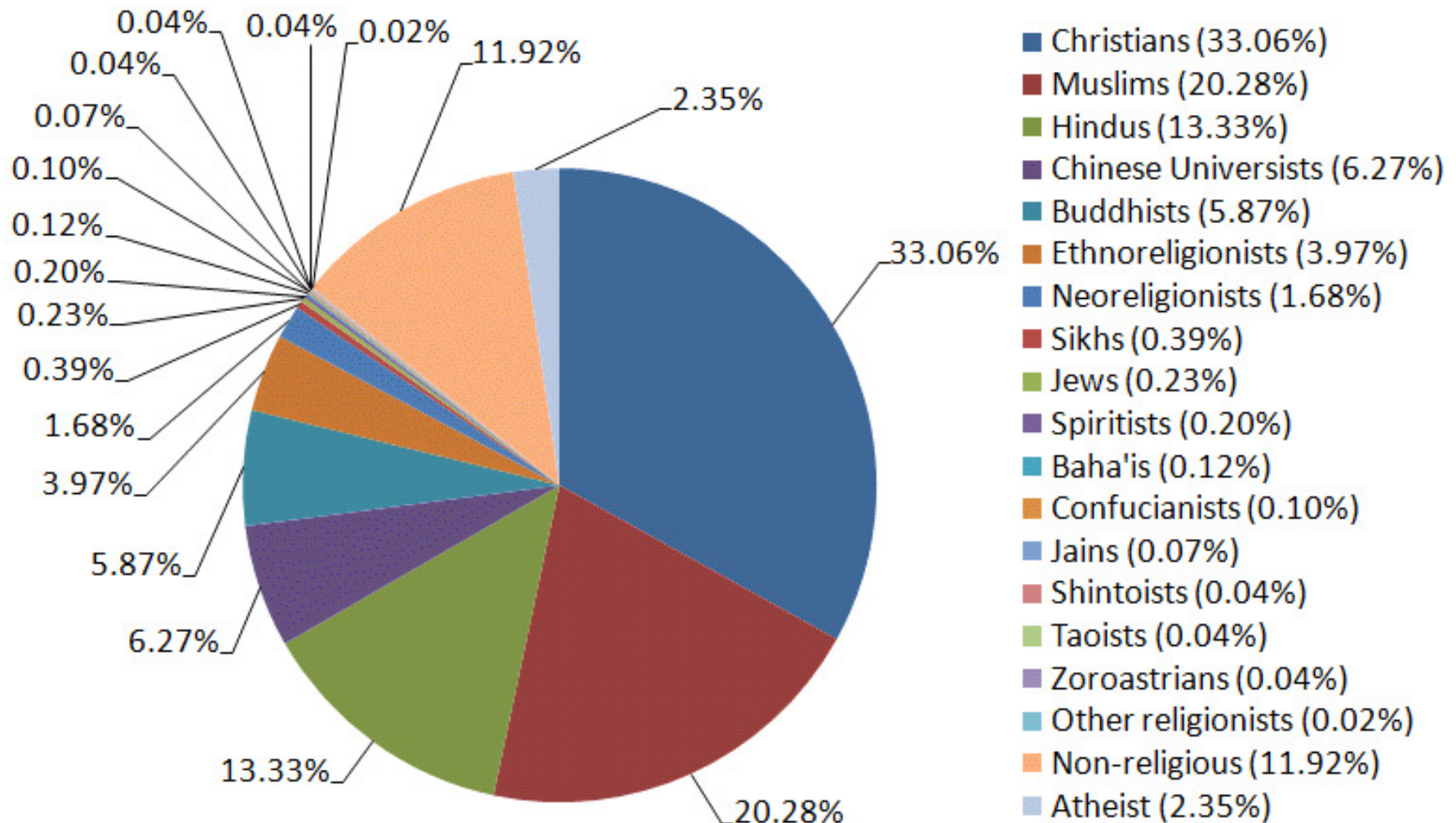
*Select all that apply*



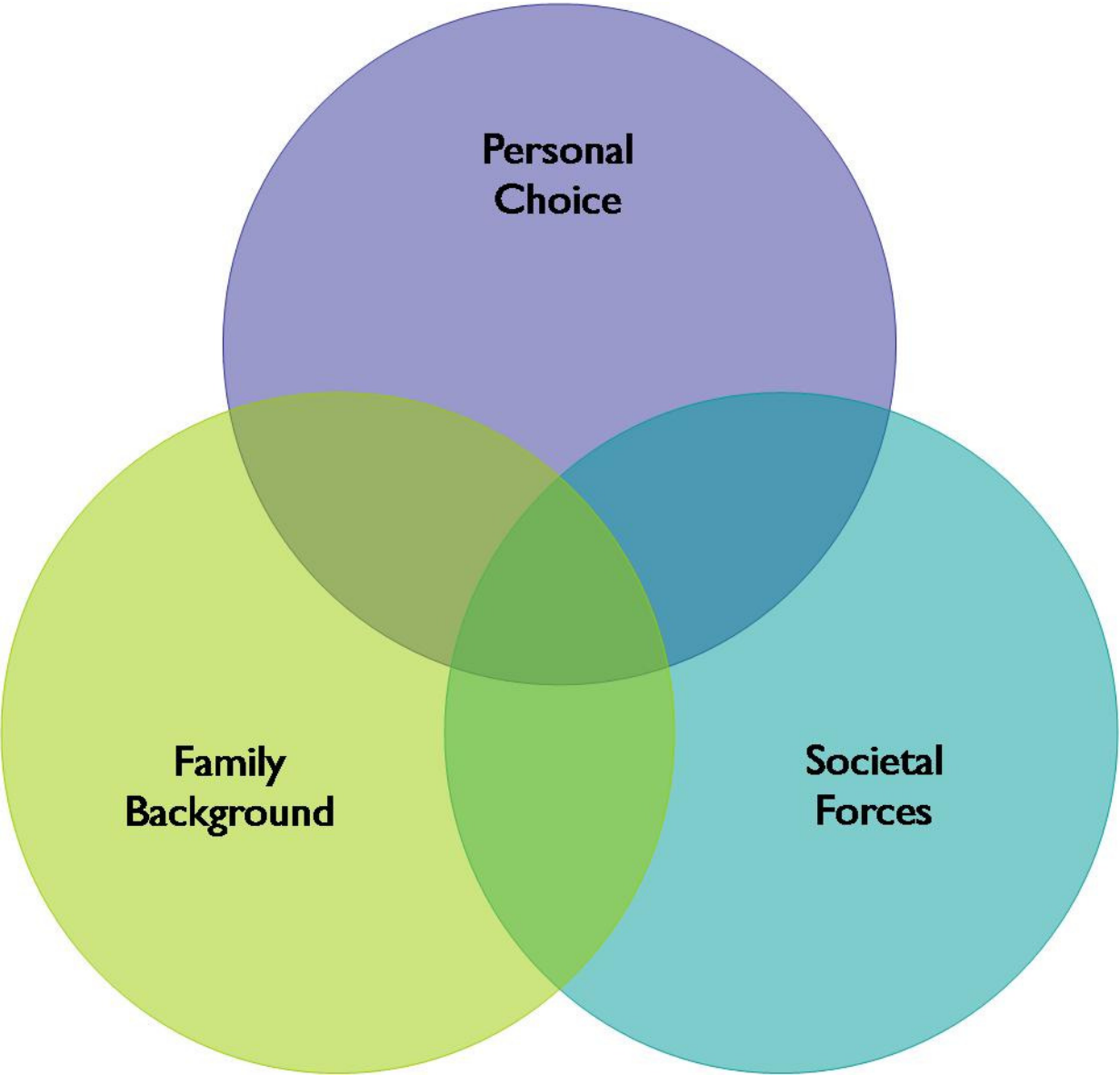
Indigenous/ Tribal			
Christianity			
Judaism			
Buddhism			
Other			

# RELIGIONS WORLDWIDE

Statistics from mid- 2005

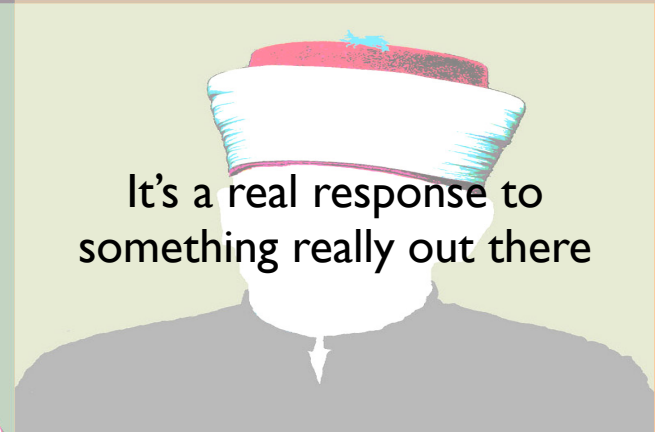
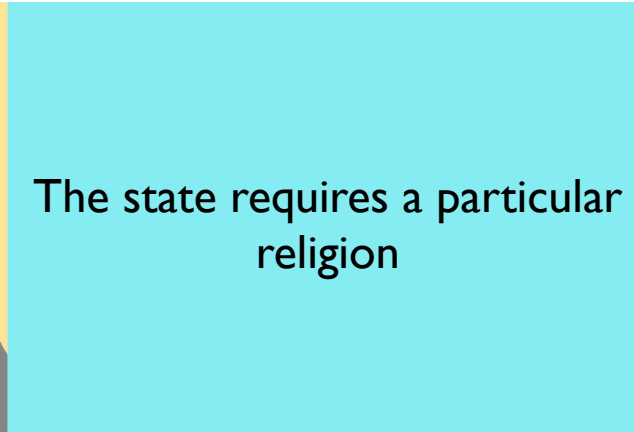


# WHY DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO?



# WHY ARE PEOPLE RELIGIOUS?

*Select all that apply*



# WHY DO PEOPLE MOST OFTEN CONVERT?

*Choose only one*

They are forced to  
(Mandated by the state, colonialism,  
marriage, etc.)

They are intellectually persuaded

Other

They identify more with another religion

They find a new social group

# HOW COULD YOU TELL IF A RELIGION IS MERELY A MAN-MADE THING?

Select your top 3



It's too local



It's too easy



It resembles other neighboring ideas



It legitimates people in power



Unfulfilled promises



It legitimates wealth



It legitimates men's desire for sex (e.g. via polygamy, etc.)



It has questionable historical evidence



It has places of internal incoherence



Other

God created man in his own image.  
And man, being a gentleman, returned the favor.  
-- Rousseau

# WHY WOULD PEOPLE CREATE A RELIGION LIKE THIS?

- You take the most challenging ethics of Judaism
  - The promised land and wealth
  - The sacredness of Jewish distinctives (customs, foods, Temple, priests, etc.)
  - + Love for the Roman oppressors, other Gentile enemies, and the poor
  - + Die before you worship the Roman Emperor
- 
- = **Christianity**

An overt desire for self-inflicted punishment

It gave the most meaning to life

A desire for 'community'

The first Jewish disciples all had the same hallucination

Guilty feelings

Jesus was really resurrected and established the movement

A subconscious desire to put a human face to the Jewish YHWH

Other

# A HUMAN INVENTION?

*The period 163 BCE – 135 CE was filled with military, revolutionary movements as Jews struggled against Greek, then Roman oppression. For 300 years, the uniform view was: the Jewish Messiah would oust the foreigners and recapture Jerusalem. Below is a greatly shortened list of such movements:*

## Timeline of Jewish Independence Movements 163 BCE to 130 CE

<b>163 BCE</b> <b>Judas Maccabeus</b> recaptures Jerusalem, cleanses the Temple, and sets a pattern	<b>40 BCE</b> <b>Hezekiah</b> leads skirmishes, revolts	<b>3 BCE</b> <b>Judas</b> leads a revolt	<b>6 CE</b> <b>Judas the Galilean</b> leads a Jewish independence movement	<b>28 CE</b> <b>Pilate</b> puts down a revolt in Jerusalem	<b>40's CE</b> <b>Jacob and Simon</b> , sons of Judas, lead a rebellion	<b>66 CE</b> <b>Menahem</b> , son or grandson of Judas, seized the Temple and burned the records	<b>67-70 CE</b> <b>John of Gischala</b> leads revolts in the Jewish-Roman War	<b>130 CE</b> <b>Bar-Kochba</b> leads the Jewish rebellion
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# JESUS' RESURRECTION: A JEWISH INVENTION?

*What do you think happened?*

**The Swoon Theory:** Jesus survived crucifixion and escaped the tomb...

**The Mass Hallucination Theory:** The earliest Jewish followers of Jesus all had the same delusion...

**The Christian Theory:** Jesus' resurrection *forced* his earliest Jewish followers and others...

**The Stolen Body Theory:** The earliest Jewish followers of Jesus stole Jesus' dead body...

**The Growth of Legend Theory:** The followers of Jesus invented the idea of resurrection over time...

...failed to deliver on any national hopes, but persuaded many Jews to shift their entire worldview anyway.

...against their own prejudices and preconceptions, to shift their entire worldview and see the Scriptures afresh.

# WHICH IS MERELY A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT?

*Below are three representative belief systems. According to your earlier criteria, which is the most likely to be merely a social construct? Choose only one.*

	<b>Classical Greek &amp; Indian Religions</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Atheism</b>
<b>US:</b> What are we?	<b>SOUL.</b> We are immortal, good souls, wanting to escape the bad physical body	<b>BODY AND SOUL.</b> We are both body and soul, both were created good	<b>BODY.</b> We are physical, chemical beings
<b>DEATH</b> is...?	<b>INEVITABLE</b> but liberates the soul	<b>THE ENEMY</b> God will overthrow it in a fresh new creation	<b>THE END</b> of life and consciousness
<b>HOPE:</b> What is there to hope for after death?	<b>DISEMBODIMENT</b> the separation of soul from body	<b>RESURRECTION</b> God's renewal of the world, including us, affirmed by Jesus' bodily resurrection	<b>NO CONSCIOUSNESS</b>
<b>GIVE WEALTH</b> up for the poor, the weak...?	<b>NO</b> since other people's bodies are not important	<b>ABSOLUTELY YES</b> since people's bodies and souls are important. 'We share all things but our spouses.'	From <b>NO</b> (Social Darwinism) to <b>SOMEWHAT</b> (compassionate humanism)
<b>SEX &amp; MARRIAGE</b> are...?	From <b>NEUTRAL</b> (Greek Epicureans said have sex with anyone since the body is not important), to <b>BAD</b> (Stoics, Gandhi, etc. said don't have sex)	Marriage and sex are inseparably <b>UNITED AND GOOD</b> because God designed it that way.	Marriage is a <b>CONSTRUCT</b> . Sex is pleasurable but ultimately <b>FUNCTIONAL</b> , for the survival of the species.
<b>SOCIAL CONSTRUCT</b>			