

# What in the World is Going on?

## Introduction

What's the opposite of modern?

Modern things aren't bad as long as...

Read **Acts 17:16-21**.

## Modernism

The term *Modernism* is perhaps thought of as an art movement rather than a philosophy. For example, modern art breaks away from the traditional style. It's a new style. It challenges how things have been done in the past. However, those ideas spill over into other areas, not just art. Modernism also challenges assumptions about the world and human nature that had been widely accepted by previous generations. ***Pause here and think about the implications this has for the Christian church.***

There are several other "isms" that fit under the modernism umbrella:<sup>1</sup>

***Naturalism.*** Sometimes called materialism. It states that the universe (or nature or matter) is the prime reality. The universe is considered to be a "closed box." In other words, there is no room for a transcendent God to intervene. There is a natural explanation for everything.

***Darwinism*** (evolution). Darwinism and Naturalism are closely connected. It is assumed that (1) Naturalism is true because Darwinism is true and (2) Darwinism is true because Naturalism is true. The origin of the world and mankind as we know it is the result of adaptation over many years.

***Secular Humanism.*** Humanism seeks the improvement and development of humanity. Humanism teaches that man is by nature good and capable of doing good things for the advancement of society. Through man's efforts, society can become a better place. At the same time, it also acknowledges certain morals; only it does not recognize a god as the standard of what is truly right or wrong. Man is accountable to fellow man.

***Some mash up of all the above...***

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<sup>1</sup> Descriptions of these categories are primarily gleaned from "What in the World is Going On?" (pages 33-44).

Naturalism is seen most commonly when people use the term “nature” or “mother nature” to describe and explain the world around us in place of God. This isn’t so modern; read **Romans 1:25**.

How can a Christian lovingly engage in conversation with someone who speaks in those terms as though nature is God?

Imagine that a Christian feels that a literal interpretation of creation is out of date. Instead he favors the theistic evolution approach to explain the world around us. Is it still possible for this person to be a Christian? Is there any reason for concern?

Of the various worldviews we’ve studied in this lesson, which do you encounter most regularly? Which do you think most subtly influences Christians today?

Read Paul’s response to the Athenians in **Acts 17:22-31**.