



UNSEEN
SEEN

The top level of the unseen world is the domain of formal religion. Listening to people talk about this will reveal a community's understanding of the formal side of Islam, Christianity, or whatever belief system it accepts. This is where we will hear stories and propositions that answer questions about ultimate origins, about the purpose and identity of the universe, our community, and ourselves.

The middle level of the worldview, while still spiritual and unseen, is the domain of folk religion. There is a folk version of everything-folk Islam, Buddhism, and even folk Christianity. This level addresses questions about managing everyday life. Who has to power over this or that area of life? What do they demand of us? How do we live a full life? How can we be prosperous or avoid failure? What do we need to know about our past? How can we make the future more secure? What is the right moral order for us? The answers point to the interdependence of all things, to the sources of power and the management of power.

The lower level of worldview is the natural order, the material world. This the world of science in both its modern and folk expressions. Nomadic people understand why and when to move their herds. Village healers have extensive knowledge of local herbs, barks, and leaves. The community has rules for how to live and work together. This is the world of hearing, seeing, touching, and feeling things.

THE 3 DOMAINS OF WORLDVIEWS

Adapted from Walking with the Poor, Bryant Myers, pp. 7,8, 140-141 Using concepts from Folk Religions: A Christian Response to Popular Religiosity, by Paul Hiebert,