

**A Faith That Integrates Three Worlds**  
**by Bob Young**  
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Recently I was handed an article by Dan Baker (DanBaker.ws) in which he discusses his “Two-World Theory”. Baker distinguishes the outer world and the inner world, and suggests that the difference between people who cope and those who do not is the attitude one develops within. According to Baker, few of us can do much about the “stuff” in our outer world. He says the key to life is getting the inner world right—the world of attitude, thought, and action.

Baker is one world short. Let me explain. Gordon McDonald writes, “Following Christ implies meeting God in the upper real world of the Heavens, mastering life in the inner real world of our selves, and making personal history in the outer real world of the streets.” Meaningful, effective Christian living integrates the spiritual world, the self world, and the societal world. A single world faith (or a two world faith) will not suffice in difficult days. Forging a sustaining faith for the realities of our lives demands a “big picture” response that integrates the three worlds in which we all live.

Consider the following.

HEAVENLY WORLD	INNER WORLD	OUTER WORLD
Spirit world	Self world	Societal world
Faith exalts Christ	Faith edifies and equips me	Faith evangelizes the world
Worship magnifies God	walk matures me	words reflect mission to others
Presence of God	power of God	purpose of God
Deny self	master self	sacrifice self
Redemption/reconciliation	recover/renewal	relationships

Faith that operates with the spiritual or heavenly world—the ultimate world—in view, worships. To walk by Christ-exalting faith in the heavens encourages self-denial. Such self-denial is not a great big negative (that is outer world thinking), but rather moves me from a shallow focus on self to a deep life empowered by God. Worshipful faith celebrates redemption and reconciliation.

Faith lived out in the self world—the inner world—imitates Jesus. Self-mastery is not possible by my own power. The mind of Christ connects with the power of God to move me from confusion to reorientation, and ultimately to renewal and recovery.

Walking by faith in the world of society—the temporary world that surrounds us—reminds me that God entered this world and wants to involve me in his mission. His purpose is my purpose. I do not live in fear of or isolation from the world around me—I live in expectation, waiting to see what God will accomplish today.

May God help us develop a “Three-World Faith.”