

Why I Don't Always Trust My Feelings



As a Result

- Faith can be hard to hold onto.
- Not because it is unreasonable or without evidence.
- But because our feelings can undermine or overwhelm what we believe.
- We need to carefully analyze how our feelings play a role in what we believe.

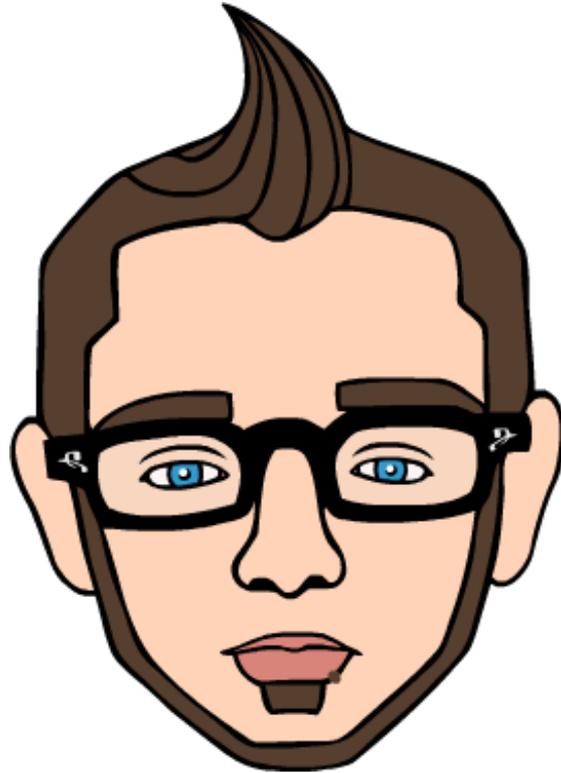
How Feelings Relate to Belief

- Suggestion #1.
 - In some cases our feelings come first and influence what we will believe.
- Suggestion #2.
 - Our culture plays a major role in how we feel about certain beliefs.

So Why Do We Believe What We Do?

3 Factors

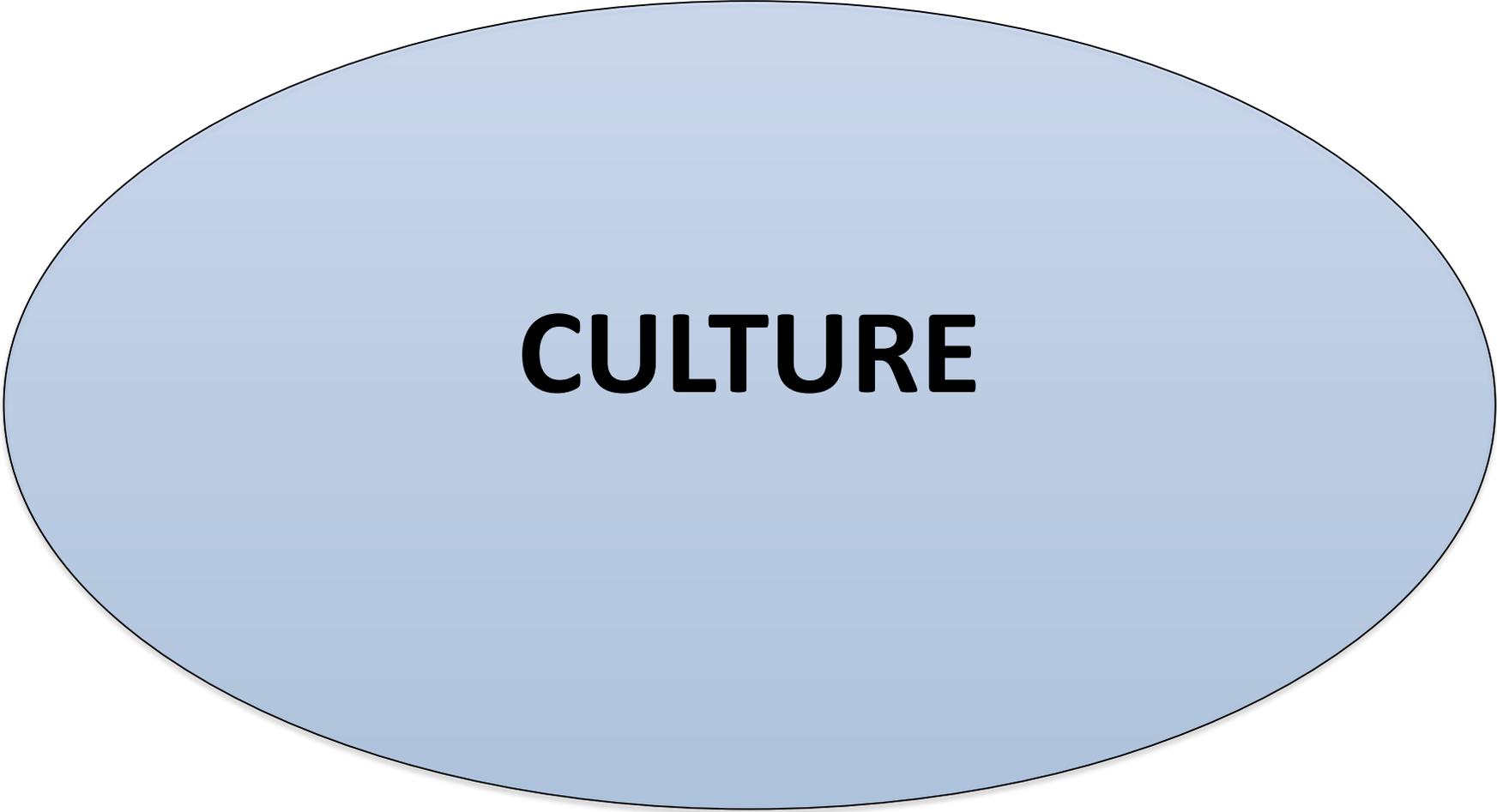
What We Think “Up Here”



What We Feel “In Here”



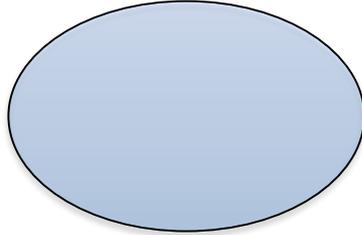
The Forces “Out There”



CULTURE

The Formula

- What's



- Influences what we feel.



- Which influences what we believe.



Mistaken Views of How We Believe

Mistaken View #1

Deliberating

Weighing Evidence



Logically Analyzing

Reasoning

Mistaken View #2



Instinct

Intuitions

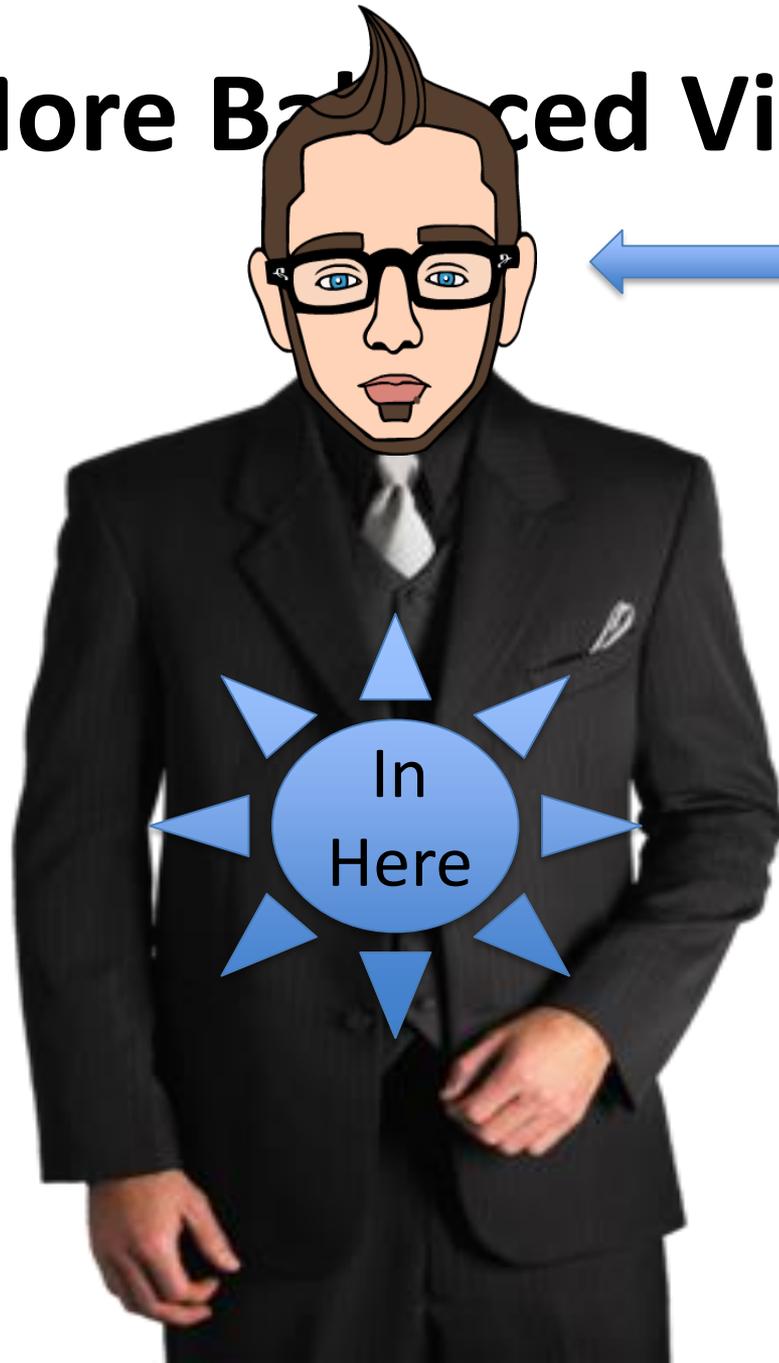
Guts

Feelings

A More Balanced View

- We don't hold beliefs just because of what goes on "Up Here."
- Nor do we hold beliefs just because of what goes on "In Here."
- It is a combination of both

A More Balanced View



Up Here

Which Comes First?

- There is good reason to believe that some of our beliefs are rooted in our feelings and then our head finds reasons to support them.
- Beliefs that are particularly related to ethics, politics, and religion are strongly influenced by what is going on “In Here.”

If That's the Case . . .

- We need to ask, why do we have the feelings we do?



Feelings Come From:

Biology



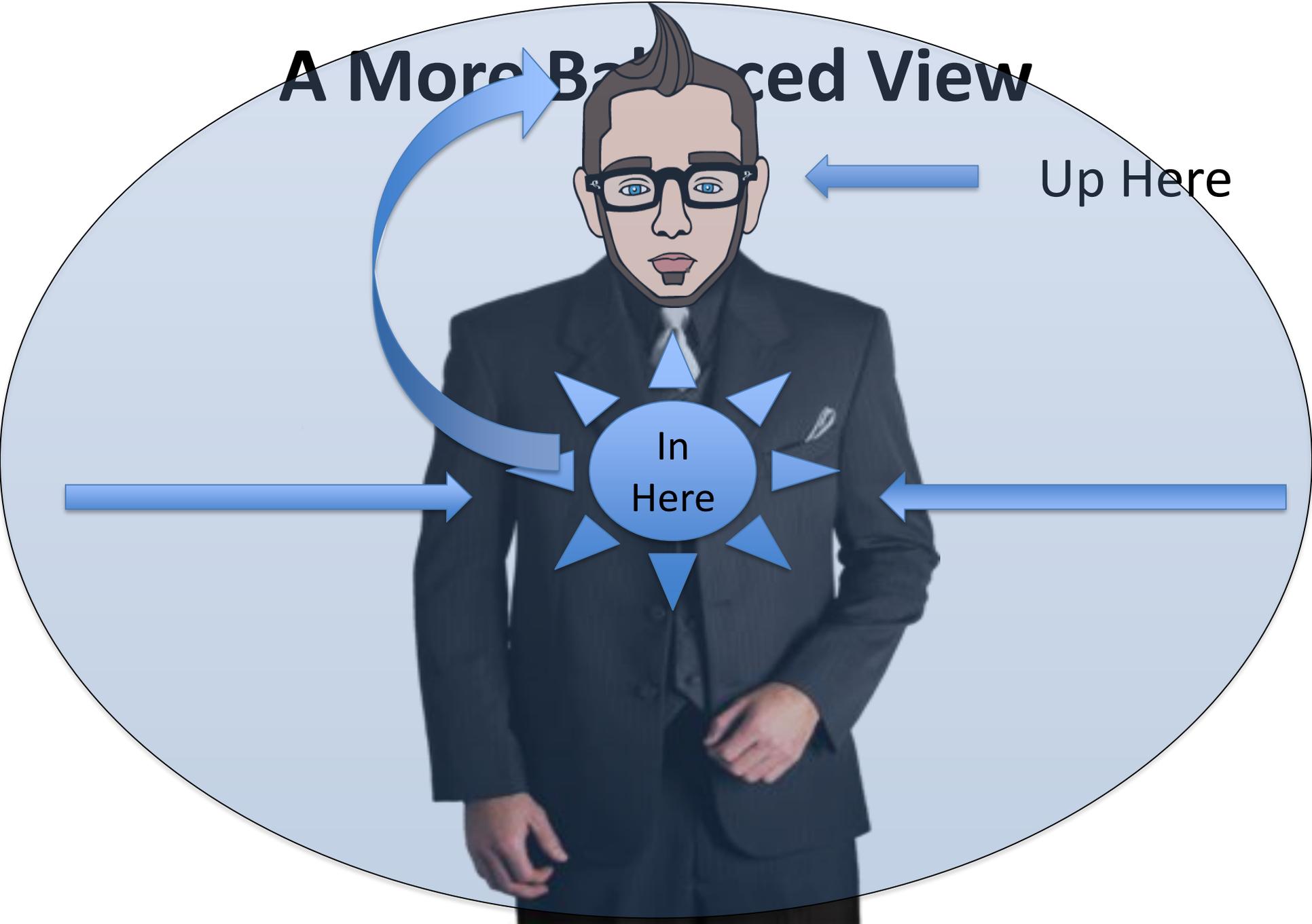
Experiences



A More Balanced View

Up Here

In
Here



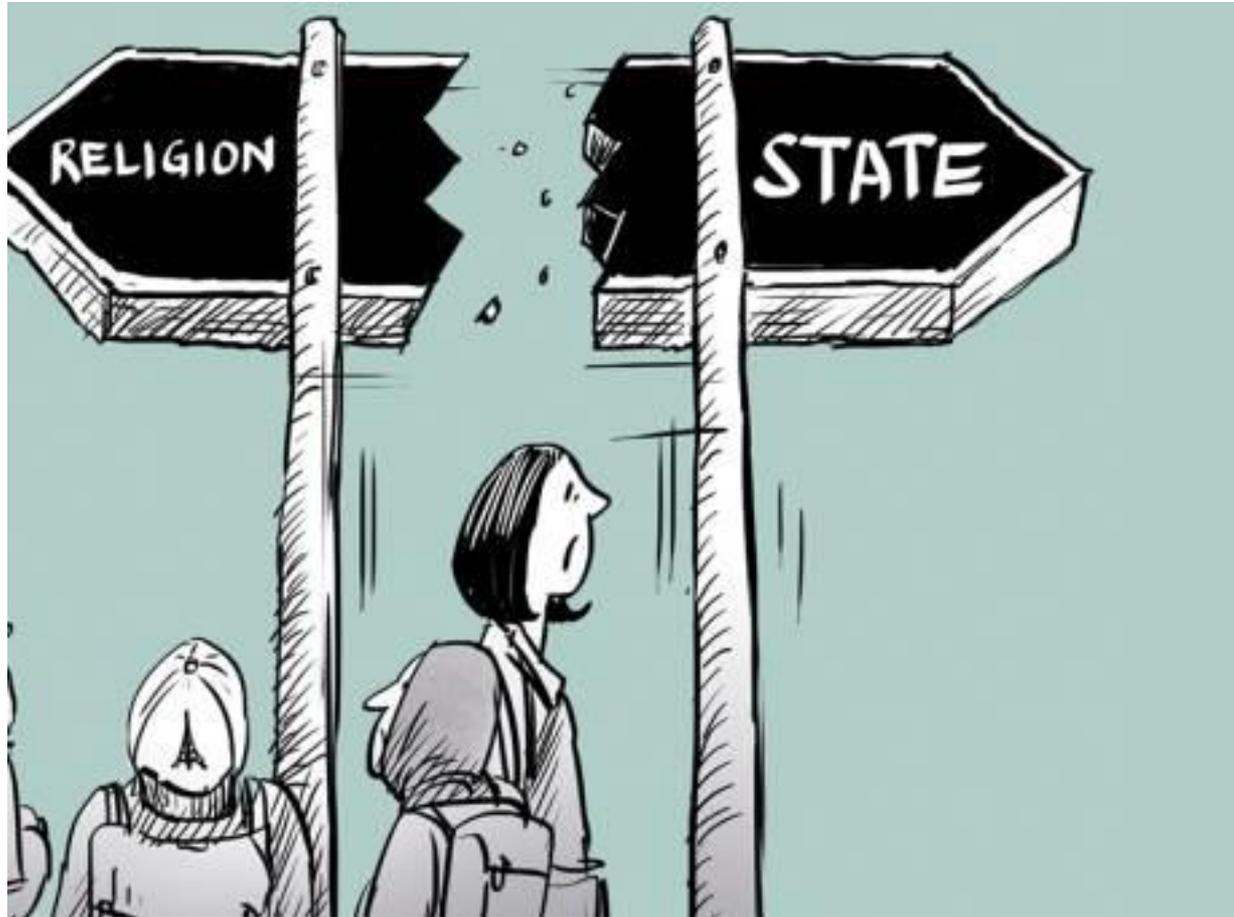
How Does Culture Impact Our Feelings and Ultimately Our Beliefs?

- Subtly, culture is sneaky.
- By influencing what we think is reasonable.
- Plausibility Structures
 - It shapes what claims we will take serious

Plausibility Structures



What is Our Culture Like?



Consider:

What had in the U.S. long been an alliance between faith and intellect—between reason and revelation—became at first a split, then a chasm. Today it is a battle. Intellectual elites have never been so far removed from the normal distribution of religious attachment or practice as they are today. And no segment of the intellectual elite is more estranged from faith, and specifically from Christianity, than the media elite—the collection of professionals who write, edit, program, or produce the nation’s prestige media: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *Business Week*, *Harper’s*, *Atlantic*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, the *Weekly Standard*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The American Spectator*, CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN, Fox, PBS, and the major movie studios.

The God Problem

An educated person should understand that the Scriptures were not really divinely inspired, that sacred texts contain errors, and that there are naturalistic explanations for religion itself. People living several centuries ago may have read the biblical story about the world being created in seven days and have little trouble believing that this really happened in space and time. They may have heard that God created Adam and Eve about 6,000 years ago and figured it was exactly when it happened. A person nowadays with no education might have heard these yarns from a family member and had no reason to question them. A child could learn the story of Noah's ark in Sunday school and think how nice it was that all the animals were saved from the flood. But educated people should have reasons to question all of this

In Summary

- What we believe “Up Here” is directly tied to what we feel “In Here.”
- What we feel “In Here” is shaped by our experiences: culture.
- Our culture is secular / practical atheism.
- If you are sensitive to the influence of culture it can cause us to feel the following:

The Result

- Feel:
 - Embarrassed because culture says belief in God is unreasonable.
 - Dumb because culture says the Bible is for children not educated people.
 - Shame because culture says Christianity is narrow-minded and judgmental.
 - Guilty because culture says biblical morality is intolerant.

What You Need to Know

- What seems reasonable is relative to our cultural context.
- Our present cultural context is not an unbiased, objective or neutral sphere.
- Need a standard by which to measure our culture, one that tells us if our feelings / beliefs are in accordance with the truth.