I saw an interesting post the other day:

"Just a reminder that 75% of the time you'll ever get to spend with your kids is over by the time they turn 12. And 90% of your time with them is gone by the time they're 18. So slow down, be present, and enjoy these short, sweet years. They'll soon be over." Good advice. Just sharing. Remember "Cat's in the Cradle". Nobody at their death ever lamented spending too much time with their children.

On an unrelated note: we've all likely seen comics depicting aliens coming to Earth with various themes of "Take me to your leader" or zooming back to outer space as fast as they could at this or that aspect of human culture. The classic sci-fi movie "The Day the Earth Stood Still" depicted the alien Klaatu—a representative of the inhabitants of the other planets—frustration at the internecine disagreements, suspicions, and battles among us humans; and threatening the Earth's destruction should we take our destructive habits beyond our own planet.

One might imagine how an alien researcher might be utterly bewildered at the multiplicity of religions we earthlings espouse—so many to choose from with such varying beliefs and philosophies, many persons holding no religion at all. Would the alien's world be similar? Perhaps so, for sincere religious belief is, in essence, a search for truth, and like ourselves, each person gloms on to what seems to be closest to what he sees as truth. Even atheist criminals have a religion of sorts—that of whatever benefits them materially.

In our search for truth, humanity is much like the Indian (?) parable of blind men describing an elephant. One who feels the trunk thinks the elephant is like a snake. The one with the leg thinks the elephant is like a tree. He, with the ear, a fan, etc. Of course, each thinks the others are fools or dishonest.

Another applicable parable is that of Plato's cave in "The Republic." In that analogy, cave-dwellers view shadows of puppets on the wall in front of them, trying to discern reality by those vague images. Of course, each has an idea about what those shadows mean and what reality is. Like those cave inhabitants, Man's search for absolute truth leads to areas, phenomena, and perceptions not easily answered. Physical sciences, of course, use our sensory nature to try to explain what does not readily yield to explanation. Yet. And even then, theories are refined or even rejected over time. For example, it was fairly "settled science" that the universe is around 13.7 billion years old; however, a very recent estimate puts it a teeny bit more: 26.7 billion years. Oops. Thus, the probing continues for what the age really is. Will we ever know for certain? Just when you think so....

But physical sciences are fairly hapless when it comes to explaining the non-physical—a "perfect" government, emotions, feelings, mystical experiences, etc. So is it any wonder such myriad religions and philosophies exist, all seeking to explain that which eludes explanation?

In such a quest, we are less like the blind men with the elephant and more like trying to discern the appearance of a person from a single hair: insufficient data! Many philosophies seeking the best ways to cultivate the communal human good tend to coincide in promoting kindness, forgiveness, humility, etc. But it is the divine especially, that perplexes us. Are there many gods, one god, or no god at all?

Atheists are poorly equipped to explain the non-material as they rely almost exclusively on sensory data for perception of reality. Yet, as mentioned before, what about things that may exist beyond the limitations of the senses? Even science and mathematics speculate about other dimensions, imperceptible to direct observation. Is the concept of "spiritual beings," therefore, so easily dismissible?

So, what would the spiritual world look like? Polytheism is still quite alive and thriving, though Socrates/Plato—living within a polytheistic culture—forwarded an interesting argument against such in his dialogue "Euthyphro." Atheism, of course, is quite prevalent—more or less the third-largest belief group, in fact. Monothemism is by far the largest group, with Christianity at the forefront and Islam a close second, according to many sources, such as this link.

So, what are their claims to truth? Obviously, that's way too big of a topic for a short article. Christianity, however, is the only major religion that believes their one god actually became Man—became, lived, and even died (temporarily) as one of us for decades—fully Man and yet without loss of His divinity. His claims as such were backed up by His actions, recorded by a number of His contemporary chroniclers and disciples in the standard Gospels and other writings. ("If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.") (John 10:37-38)

As mentioned here numerous times, the rapidity of the spread of Jesus’ teaching and faith throughout the known world—that of an uneducated laborer, spread by simple workmen apostles who died defending their belief—would indicate something super-natural about it, especially when one considers God’s ostensible promise to the wanderer-pilgrim Abraham—the father of the monothestic faiths—given around 4000 years ago and documented probably at least 3000 years ago, has come true (“I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore ... and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:17-18)). And now Christianity (certainly monothemism) exists in almost every country on Earth.

Huh ... how 'bout that.

Pontius Pilate asked rhetorically: "What is truth?" (John 18:38) Yet Jesus had just told him: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice. (John 18:37), as He had told His disciples earlier: "I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6)

Happy searching.