Comparison of Muslim and Christian World Views

A certain amount of difference in views has arisen because of the contrasting cultural backgrounds represented by 'East' and 'West.' The following is a representation of these differing viewpoints between Muslims and western Christians. But the differences are not *merely* cultural. The various doctrines have made a significant impact on both societies. As varied as Muslim countries are, there is quite significant correspondence between them through the influence of Islamic doctrine.

Concept	Muslim	Western Christian
1. Unity	Basic to every aspect of life.	Considered important only if it appears reasonable.
2. Time	Great respect for the past and tradition. Generally regarded in indefinite terms: the event is more important.	Emphasis towards the future. Past is out-dated: the future is considered a challenge.
3. Family	Solidarity of the extended family. Family responsibility is considered a major priority.	Emphasis placed more on the rights of the individual in society. (However, Biblical Christianity teaches solidarity of the family unit and responsibility of relationship.)
4. Peace	Idea of harmony, health and integration = Total way of life. Look for both subjective and external objective expression.	Idea of harmony and contentment = one aspect of life. Emphasis on subjective quality; often a more spiritual ideal.
5. Honour	All-important consideration. Maintaining family honour is a major priority.	Has importance for an individual; emphasis on being an honourable person.
6. Status in Society	Associated with birth, wealth, family name, and age (often over-riding educational considerations).	Usually through some achievement, accomplished through personal hard work.
7. Individualism	Considered much less important than the group opinion, esp. in matters of welfare and decisions to be made.	Independent thinking is considered beneficial; strong personal decisions valued.
8. Secularism	A totally unacceptable trend within society; upholding the principle of theocracy is vital. Islamic law is linked to national pride.	A largely acceptable trend; belief must be seen to be relevant to life. Often considered to co-exist with spiritual expression of life (yet spiritually unhealthy!)
9. Change	Undesirable; causes identity crisis in community.	Usually valued and considered desirable; looked on as synonymous with progress.
10. Equality	A highly valued but theoretical ideal of brotherhood of man which is rarely practised consistently.	Valued ideal, with practical breakdowns, and inconsistencies
11. Organisation	Very little concern shown for structured planning and method	Considered an imperative for successful society and fulfilling life.

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