

WHAT IS RELIGION?

S2

I. KEY THOUGHTS

S3

1. Religion is Difficult to Define

S4

this is because there is such a **WIDE** range of beliefs

EG religion has something to do with:

S5

God in heaven	Judaism, Christianity, Islam	Spiritual Being		
Nirvana	Buddhism	State of being	X	
Energy in Nature	New Age Religions	Cosmic Force	X	
Moral Duty	Moralism	Practice of good	X	S6
Ultimate Concern	All Belief Systems	Whatever! \$\$\$	X	

COMMENTS:

- NO Spiritual Being in many religions (X)

- Is viewing “\$\$\$” as a religion such an odd idea?

S7

1. Jesus: “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both **God & Money**.”

Matt 6:24

2. Academic Definition of Religion is WIDE → Theme of this section

S8

Religion ≡ Metaphysics (≡ approximately equal to)

EG some scholars view Marxism as a secular religion

3. Religious Ideas → Pervasive, Powerful & MOSTLY UNEXAMINED

S9

2. “I find that **religious belief** is the **most influential** of all beliefs, and the most powerful force in the world. Religious belief has the most decisive influence on everyone’s understanding of the major issues of life across the entire spectrum of human experience. Moreover, it exercises this influence upon all people **independently of their conscious** acceptance or rejection of the religious traditions with which they are acquainted. The enormous influence of religious beliefs remains, however, **largely hidden** from casual view.”

Roy A. Clouser, *Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Beliefs in Theories* (Notre Dame: U Press, 1991), 1.

COMMENTS:

S11

- **Tacit Categories** Latin *tacitus*: silent

DEF: silent categories that impact our thinking & that we are not aware of

- GOAL of education & this course:

to make you aware of YOUR silent religious/ metaphysical categories

- How is Clouser defining the term “religion”? More anon

II. STATISTICS ON RELIGIOUS BELIEF

S12

1. Global Population

S13

PEW RESEARCH CENTER “GLOBAL RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE” (2012)

based on 2500 censuses, surveys & population registers

32% Christianity

23% Islam

15% Hinduism

7% Buddhism

6% Folk Religions (eg, aboriginal religions)

1% Other Religions (eg, Judaism)

16% *No Religious Affiliation* (not categorized—agnostic, atheist, spiritual not religious, etc)

☛ **84% accept Traditional Religions**

2. American Population

S2

PEW RESEARCH CENTER "US RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE" SURVEY (2015)

survey of 35,000 individuals

☛ **89% believe in "God or a universal spirit" → Teleology**

71% Christianity

S3

decrease from 78% in 2007 Pew Survey

6% Other Religions (eg, Judaism, Islam)

23% *No Religious Affiliation* → increase from 16% in 2007

16% "Nothing in Particular"

74% of 16% believe in "God or universal spirit" (12% overall)

4% agnostic

3% atheist

☛ **77% accept Traditional Religions**

PEW RESEARCH CENTER "SCIENCE & RELIGION" SURVEY (2015)

S4

survey of 2000 individuals

59% believe science & religion are often in **CONFLICT**

cause of the conflict for 36% of these individuals → Origins

GALLUP POLL (2014)

S5

survey of 1000 American adults that has been conducted 12 times since 1982

50% accept human evolution

range: 46-52%

3. Canadian Population

S6

STATISTICS CANADA "NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY" (2011)

based on 4.5 million households

67% Christianity

decrease from 77% in 2001 Census

8% Other Religions

24% *No Religious Affiliation* → increase from 16% in 2001

not categorized into agnostic, atheist, spiritual not religious, etc

probably similar to USA

☛ **75% accept Traditional Religions**

S7

ANGUS REID "BRITONS & CANADIANS MORE LIKELY TO ENDORSE EVOLUTION THAN AMERICANS"

based on 1500 Canadians

(2012)

61% accept human evolution

4. Conclusions

S8

- humans still quite religious in an age of science

roughly 75% of US & Canada accept Traditional Religions

Christianity decreasing in both countries & No Religious Affiliation increasing

roughly 90% of US (probably Canada too) believe in a God or Universal Spirit

Therefore, at least **90%** are **Teleologists**

with 3% of US atheist → at best **5%** are **Dysteleologists**

- anti-evolutionism is significant in US & Canada

S9

roughly, only **50-60%** accept human evolution

III. OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

S2

QUESTION: There is lots of it, but what is religion?

- Etymology doubtful & not helpful
relegere (Latin): to read over again
religare: to bind

S3

- Definition

S4

3. (5a) recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, reverence, and worship; the general acceptance of this feeling as a standard of spiritual and practical life.

SQ 1 for the rest of this entry

Academic Schools:

S5

- (1) Religious Studies
- (2) Psychology
- (3) Philosophy

IV. RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEFINITION OF RELIGION

S6

Ninian Smart

S7

“The Dean” of the modern study of religion
 method used in Departments of Religion in public universities

Importance of the Study of Religion

S8

4. “To understand human history and human life it is necessary to understand religion.”

Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*

(NY: MacMillan, 1991 [4th ed.]), 3.

EG: US politics → state-church separation, stem cell, abortion

English literature → Biblical allusions

Phenomenological Method Greek φαίνωμενον (*phainōmenon*): appearance

S9

5. “The intention is to **describe**, rather than to **pass judgment**, on the phenomena of religion.”

COMMENTS:

Smart, 4

goal of Departments of Religious Studies
 claim NOT to deal with truth or falsity of religion
 often termed the “Scientific” study of religion
 usually steeped in a positivistic epistemology

S10

☛ Theological Method

S10

theologians respectfully “pass judgment” on the truth or falsity of religion

Definition of Religion: “Six-Dimensional Organism”

S11

(1) RITUAL DIMENSION

S12

DEF: 6. Ritual is “some form of outer behavior coordinated to an inner intention to make contact with, or to participate in, **the invisible world** ... however interpreted, whether as [1] God’s presence, as [2] nirvana, as [3] sacred energy pervading nature.”

Smart, 6

COMMENTS:

S13

- from elaborate (Catholic High Masses) to simple (closing eyes)
- “the invisible world”

WIDE range of beliefs: [1] God → Spiritual Being

[2] nirvana → state of being

[3] sacred energy → Cosmic Force

(2) MYTHOLOGICAL DIMENSION S2

PROBLEM with the term 'MYTH'

Common DEF: false & not true

Appears in the Bible: S3

7. "For a time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine ...
They will turn their ears away from **the truth** and turn aside to **myths**."

2 Tim 4:3-4

HOWEVER, myth is an academic category in literature, theology & religious studies S4

Academic DEF: main message or ultimate (metaphysical) belief of a religion or philosophy

EG

Christian Myth → God became a human in the person of Jesus

Myth of Dysteleological Evolution → Dawkins

☛ everyone has a myth!

Evolution as a Myth & a Religion S5

8. "Evolution is the **creation-myth** of our age. By telling us our origins it shapes our views of what we [ultimately] are. It influences not just our thoughts, but our feelings and actions too, in a way which goes far **beyond** [μετα] its official function as a biological [scientific] theory.

In calling it a '**myth**,' I am **not** of course saying that it is a **false story**. I mean that it has great symbolic power, which is independent of its truth. Is the word **religion** appropriate to it? This will depend on the sense we give to that **very elastic word**."

Mary Midgley, "**The Religion of Evolution**" in John Durant, ed., *Darwinism and Divinity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 154

COMMENTS: S6

- Academic definition of the term myth
 - "not . . . a false story"
 - "shapes our views of what we [ultimately] are" → our metaphysics
- Reflects Metaphysics-Physics Principle S7 H5
 - evolution "goes far **beyond** [μετα] its official function as a biological theory"
 - Myth/Religion of Evolution: **Metaphysics**
 - Biological/Scientific Theory of Evolution: **Physics**
- Problem with defining "the word religion" S8
 - a "very elastic word"
 - Creation Myth of Evolution = RELIGION
 - WIDE** Definition

(3) DOCTRINAL DIMENSION S9

DEF: systematic organization of the myth
brings clarity & accessibility
this is the task of theology

(4) ETHICAL DIMENSION S10

DEF: behaviour code of a religion

NB: don't colour the term "ethics" with puritanical Christian nuances

EG Epicurean Ethics → eat, drink & be merry

their gods had little concern for humans

(5) SOCIAL DIMENSION

S2

DEF: community aspects of a religion
religions are not merely belief systems, but involve communities of religious people

Two Way Relationship:

S3

1. Religion Impacts Society

EG English Common Law based on the Bible

2. Society Impacts Religion

EG modern science shaping Liberal Christianity

☛ origin of this Science-Religion course

it arose in response to the impact of evolution on Christianity

(6) EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION

S4

DEF: **inner** experience of the **Invisible World**

religion → internal & PERSONAL

CONCLUSION: Smart's Religious Studies Definition of Religion

S5

Last paragraph of his *The Religious Experience of Mankind*:

9. "Altogether the history of the religions of the human race has been multiple: often bitter, often noble, often sweet, at times cruel, sometimes beautiful, often ugly. It can teach us many lessons. Whether we feel ourselves [1] surrounded by a spiritual world, [2] or guided by the one God, [3] or striving toward nirvana, or [4] alone in an empty universe, **WE** [my capitals] **as religious people** asking **spiritual questions** have tried to see **beyond [μετα]** our senses. *Is it just imagination or is it a holy power that impels us?*"

Smart, 576.

COMMENTS:

S6

• **WIDE** definition of religion

religion includes belief in:

[1] spiritual world, or

[2] one God, or

[3] nirvana, or

[4] **alone in an empty universe!!!**

IMPLICATION:

S7

Is a dysteleological worldview religious?

Is everyone religious, including dysteleologists?

☛ YOU DECIDE

• Reflects Metaphysics-Physics Principle

S8 H5

"**WE** as religious people asking spiritual [metaphysical] questions have tried to see **beyond [μετα]** our [physical] senses."

• Non-Judgment Method

S9

"Is it just imagination or is it a holy power that impels us?"

consistent with the Phenomenological Method

Smart doesn't give an answer or judgment

• Religious Studies → excellent descriptive scholarship

S10

but in private, these scholars judge truth/falsity of religion
for many religion is nothing but human imagination

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF RELIGION I

S2

William C. Tremmel

educated as a theologian & worked in a department of religious studies

Religion is Difficult to Define

S3

10. “A good definition of religion **is hard to come by**, mostly because it must incorporate an enormous array of beliefs and activities all the way from magic to mysticism, from private prayer to sacred community.”

William C. Tremmel, *Religion, What Is It?*
(NY, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984), 3

Phenomenistic Method

S4

11. In the **phenomenistic** method one is interested in **describing** and **defining** ... questions concerning value and truth are **suspended**.”

Tremmel, 9

Phenomenistic → Greek φαίνωμενον (*phainōmenon*): appearance

Purpose of Religion

S5

to meet human psychological needs

- why do people ‘do’ religion?
practical benefits: deals with psychological pain
- what happens to people?
personal experience: offers a happy psychological state

Definition of Religion: “Functional-Experiential”

S6

- (1) PREPARES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL PAIN

S7

horrendous & uncontrollable events
death, suffering, guilt, meaninglessness, etc.

- (2) BELIEF IN A CENTRAL DIVINE REALITY

S8

12. “The conviction that there is at the center of human experience, and even of all reality, [1] **a being**, or [2] **beings**, or [3] **process** (a divine reality) in which and through which a person (or community of persons) can transcend the life-negating traumas of human existence, can overcome the sense of finitude.”

Tremmel, 7

- (3) TECHNIQUES

S9

beliefs, rituals, ethics

- (4) ENTER A PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE

S10

comfortable & satisfying state

COMMENTS:

S11

- **WIDE** definition of religion

Divine Reality can be: [1] a being

[2] beings

[3] a process

any belief or technique that deals with our psychological pain is a religion

☛ truthfulness or falsity of a religion is irrelevant

- an eloquent “Religion is a Crutch or Drug” theory

S12

similar to the well-known criticism of religion by Karl Marx

S13

13. “Religion is the opium of the people.”

T. Bottomore & M. Rubel, eds. *Karl Marx* (NY: McGraw Hill, 1964), 41

- many religious people are suspicious of psychology

S14

Religion = psychological & not rooted in reality

= emotion & wish fulfilment

= **nothing but** imagination in head of religious devotees

QUESTIONS

- Is the BELIEF that God does NOT exist: S2
 - psychological & not rooted in reality?
 - emotion & wish fulfilment that there is no God and that we are not accountable to him after our death?
 - nothing but** imagination in the head of atheistic & agnostic devotees?
- Do atheists & agnostics have Beliefs & Techniques that prepare them S4
 - for their psychological pain?
 - IF SO, are these Beliefs & Techniques:
 - (1) the opium of atheists & agnostics?
 - (2) a religion according to Tremmel's definition?

VI. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF RELIGION II S5

Tom Pyszczynski, Jeff Greenberg & Sheldon Solomon
social psychologists & founders of the field of Terror Management Theory S6

Terror Management Theory S7

14. "Knowledge of the inevitability of death gives rise to the potential for paralysing terror, which would make continued goal-directed behavior impossible. The theory posits that this terror is managed by a dual-component **cultural** anxiety buffer, consisting of (1) an individual's personalized version of the **cultural worldview**, which consists of a **set of benign concepts** for understanding the world and one's place in it, a set of standards through which one can attain a sense of personal value, and the promise of **literal** and/or **symbolic immortality** to those who live up to these standards; and (2) **self-esteem**, or a sense of personal value, which is attained by believing that one is living up to the standards of value that are part of the **cultural worldview**."

Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, "Why Do We Need What We Need?
A Terror Management Perspective on the Roots of Human
Social Motivation," *Psychological Inquiry* 8:1 (1997), 2

Features S8

- awareness of inevitable mortality
"potential for paralysing terror" → cripples us psychologically
- worldview manages terror S9
 - KEYWORD: **worldview** → our beliefs & metaphysics
 - offers the promise of immortality: literal (in heaven after death)
 - symbolic (one's legacy on earth)
- practice of worldview S10
 - leads to self-esteem & keeps us psychologically functional

Definition of Religion (Implicit) S11

Religion is a Terror Management Technique
terror of death is managed by the hope of life after death
Religious worldview is **nothing but** "cultural" and "a set of benign concepts"
☛ truthfulness or falsity of a religion is irrelevant

QUESTIONS S2

What keeps atheists & agnostics psychologically functional?

Are atheistic & agnostic worldviews **nothing but** Terror Management Techniques?

IF GAME S3

- assume God exists

- assume the Bible is correct:

“It is a **terrifying** thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Heb 10:31

THEN

Do atheistic & agnostic worldviews manage the terror of facing God after death?

CONCLUSION: Psychological Definitions of Religion I & II S4

1. Focus is on functional & practical aspects of religion, not the truth value S5

religion has a psychological component → don’t be embarrassed, we are psychological beings!

it provides comfort, happiness & meaning to life

it meets the challenge of horrendous situations like suffering & death

2. Modern psychology offers excellent DESCRIPTIVE work S6

EG James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: Psychology of Human Development & Quest for Meaning* S7

SQ2 see if these categories apply to your faith/philosophical development

3. BE AWARE of dysteleological metaphysics CONFLATED into modern psychology S8

50% of US psychologists are atheists & 11 % are agnostic

N Gross & S Simmons, “Religiosity of American College & University Professors”
Sociology of Religion 70:2 (2009), 116

SUGGESTION for religious & teleological people: S9

- Use the Metaphysics-Physics Principle in Psychology

SEPARATE DON’T CONFLATE:

dysteleological metaphysics & psychological sciences

- INTEGRATE your metaphysics (eg, belief in reality of sin, guilt & forgiveness) with S10
the psychological sciences to develop YOUR worldview on psychology

EG Evolutionary Creation

integrates the science of evolution & the metaphysics of creation

MORE IF GAMES S11

IF sin & guilt are SPIRITUAL REALTIES

THEN modern secular psychology is missing a valuable piece of information

this would be like doing biology without evolutionary theory

IF a psychological problem is a SPIRITUAL PROBLEM S12

THEN physical protocols won’t work

spiritual protocols are required

EG spiritual experience of God’s forgiveness

4. Clinical Psychology & Psychiatry S13

- a blessing to our culture and wonderful career choice

- treatment & healing of:

marriages, sexual abuse, eating disorders, depression

- if you need the medications, use them under medical supervision S14

it is NOT against God’s will

anti-depressants = insulin

DO NOT be ashamed if you need medication

- I’ve struggled with depression & have been successfully treated using anti-depressants S15

See my paper: “I Sleep a Lot” online at: www.ualberta.ca/~dlamoure/pdepression.pdf

VII. PHILOSOPHICAL DEFINITION OF RELIGION I

Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach & David Basinger
philosophers of religion

S2

S3

Philosophical Method

S4

15. “The **traditional** conception of **philosophy**, which was dominant throughout the history of Western thought, was that **philosophy** can investigate the content of our beliefs, including the **truth** or **falsity** of theological beliefs.”

Michael Peterson, W.Hasker, B. Reichenbach & D. Basinger,
Reason & Religious Belief (Oxford: U Press, 1991) 8

COMMENTS:

S5

Describes & Judges truth value of religion
goes beyond phenomenological method (eg Religious Studies)

Traditional Method

S6

- Define
clarify the meaning of terms & concepts → CATEGORIES
- Criticize
look for hidden assumptions → TACIT CATEGORIES
Key Thought #3: Religious Ideas: are pervasive, powerful &
mostly unexamined
- Justify
use rational arguments to defend a position
- Synthesize
construct a theory
make a TRUTH claim → novel notion in post-modern age!!!

Definition of Religion: “Tentative, Working Definition”

S7

16. “Religion is constituted by a set of beliefs, actions, and emotions, both personal and corporate, organized around the concept of **the Ultimate Reality**.” Peterson, 4

COMMENTS:

S8

- **Beliefs**
KEY → religion has an INTELLECTUAL component
religions make **truth claims**
beliefs can be JUDGED for their truth or falsity
explicitly organized into religious doctrines
implicitly seen in practice
real believers → walk the talk

- **Actions**
rituals, ethics, institutions

S9

- **Emotions**
psychological aspect with feelings of:
goodness
piety & humility
hope & optimism
awe & mystery

- **Personal & Corporate**
individual & social community

• **The Ultimate Reality**

S2

17. “This [Ultimate] Reality may be understood as a [1] **unity** or **plurality**,
[2] **personal** or **non-personal**, [3] **divine** or **not**, and [4] **so forth**,
differing from religion to religion.” Peterson, 4

COMMENTS:

WIDE range of Ultimate Realities, including those that are:

[2] non-personal

[3] not divine

[4] so forth → **WHATEVER!!!**

Therefore: anything can be the Ultimate Reality

CONCLUSION: Peterson *et al* Philosophical Definition of Religion

S3

1. Very **WIDE** definition of religion
2. Asserts some religions are not true!

Excursus: Criticisms of Philosophical Approaches to Religion

S4

• Problem of Impersonal Analysis of a Personal Faith

S5

some complain that critical analysis leads → impersonal God of the philosophers
not the living & personal God of religion

BUT not a substitute for religion or God

instead an instrument to improve & strengthen your relationship with God

EG marriage counselling

• Problem of Fideism

S6

Fideism Latin *fides*: faith

DEF: religious truth rests **ONLY** on faith, not reason

Therefore: religion cannot be analysed rationally

aka the ‘Just Believe’ or ‘Faith Only’ Argument

☛ **IRONICALLY** this is an **ARGUMENT**

fideism attempts to be **RATIONAL!!!**

BUT Jesus commands Christians to think!

S7

18. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with
all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” Matt 22:37

• Problem of Political Correctness

S8

a Post-Modern cultural value

don’t criticize or judge anyone’s religion today

practical importance → keeps the peace

BUT it leads to the death of thinking

criticism is valuable!!!

my atheistic/agnostic critics are some of my best colleagues

if my religious beliefs cannot stand criticism, then I get rid of them

SUGGESTION:

S9

- Openness—to all ideas. No idea unimportant

in my class that means questioning & rejecting the existence of God

- Respect Critics—at all times no matter what is said

- Thicken—your own skin → theology is a contact sport!

- Select Critics Carefully—some people you just can’t talk with

- Goal—to increase dialogue → get rid of the LUST to always be right

- **“Speak Truth in love”** Eph 4:15

you don’t have to be a Christian to appreciate this verse

VIII. PHILOSOPHICAL DEFINITION OF RELIGION II

Roy A. Clouser philosopher of religion

Philosophical Method

19. “Logic requires that **religious trust** can be either [1] **well placed** or [2] **misplaced** as can **nonreligious trust**, since beliefs about the divine are—as all other beliefs—either **true** or **false** but not both at once. It follows, therefore, that when two beliefs disagree about what is divine, one or both of them must be (at least partly) false.”

Roy A. Clouser, *Myth of Religious Neutrality* (Notre Dame: U Press, 1991) 34

COMMENTS:

- **Describes & Judges** truth value of religion

- asserts some beliefs are **WRONG**

☛ such a counter-cultural idea today in a post-modern world!!!

- asserts two types of **TRUST**:

[1] religious

[2] non-religious

- asserts two types of trust can be misplaced:

[1] religious → **BLIND FAITH**

[2] non-religious → **BLIND UNBELIEF**

Definition of Religion: ALL Theories Are Religious

Thesis Statement of Book:

20. “No theory can avoid presupposing something to have the status of **divinity**.” Clouser, 18

The Divine

DEFINITION:

21. “A religious belief is any belief in something or other as divine. ‘**Divine**’ means having the status of not depending on anything else. . . . All [religions] believe that the divine is whatever is ‘**just there**.’”

Clouser, 19, 21

COMMENTS:

The Divine is something/s or someone/s that are *self-existent & not dependent* on anything or anyone

EG eternal God of traditional religions

eternal energy & matter of secular belief

Types of Religious Beliefs

CORE BELIEFS

statements about the characteristics of the Divine

WIDE variety of attributes: personal/impersonal, singular/multiple, good/evil/indifferent

SECONDARY BELIEFS

statements about how humans relate to the Divine

WIDE variety of relationships: loved/hated/indifferent, worshipped/not worshipped

Types of Religions

Three basic types: (1) Pagan (2) Pantheist (3) Biblical

based on the arrangement of the Divine to the non-divine

CAUTION:

a bit of a cartoon, because religions are much more complex
but for our purposes, a reasonable instructional tool

(1) <u>PAGAN RELIGIONS</u>	S2
DEF: the Divine is some Force <u>within</u> the universe (non-divine)	
Note: not a derisive term → an academic category in religious studies	
<i>Ritualist Pagan</i>	S3
Nature Religions: a Cosmic Force in the earth, sun, trees, <i>etc</i> (teleological)	
<i>Non-Ritualist Pagan</i>	S4
• Popular Culture: Fate, Destiny, the “Meant To be” (teleological)	
• Marxism: a Cosmic Force that pushes society forward (teleological)	
feudalism → capitalism → socialism → communism	
• Materialism: a purposeless Force in nature with no final goal (dysteleological)	S5
The Divine: blind chance	
The Non-Divine: matter & energy	
QUESTION: Can you call Richard Dawkins religious? Clouser would!	
<i>Dualistic Pagan</i>	S6
Two Divine Forces in opposition with each other (both teleological)	
Chinese Yin & Yang	
(2) <u>PANTHEIST RELIGIONS</u> Greek παν (<i>pan</i>): all θεος (<i>theos</i>) God	S7
DEF: everything is the Divine	
<i>Idealistic Pantheist</i>	S8
the physical universe (non-divine) is believed to be an illusion	
even the person & logical thinking are an illusion!	
22. [Idealistic] Pantheistic traditions insist that what is wrong with people is	S9
their attachment to the illusory world as it is encountered in ordinary	
experience by reason ... Logical criticism , they say, fails to recognize	
that logical thinking is also part of the everyday world of illusion .	
As such, logical thinking is part of the deception that prevents people	
from discovering the divine unity of all reality.” Clouser, 42	
<u>COMMENTS:</u>	S10
the goal is to detach from the illusion of the world & the self	
through mystical experience	
☛ annihilate the self & melt into The Divine	
EG Buddhism: to achieve Nirvana and melt into Nothingness	
<i>Naturalistic Pantheist</i> (NB: not included by Clouser)	S11
the physical universe is the only reality	
EG Albert Einstein (1879-1955)	S12
raised Jewish & rejected a personal God at 12 yrs of age	
God → the <u>physical</u> world with its beauty & harmony	
Complementary View of Science & Religion:	
23. “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”	
A. Einstein, “Science & Religion” <i>Ideas & Opinions</i>	
(NY: Crown, 1982 [1954]), 46	

- (3) BIBLICAL RELIGIONS Greek βιβλος (*biblos*): book S2
 DEF: religions with Holy Books
 believe in a Creator (Divine) who made a creation (non-divine)
 EG Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- The Creation** S3
 not an illusion (Idealistic Pantheist) → but real
 not eternal (Pagan & Pantheist) → but temporal
 not exalted as Divine (Pagan & Naturalist Pantheist) → but good

Excursus: Doctrine of Creation S4

Central concept: the belief THAT God created, not on HOW God created

1. Realism S5

BELIEF the creation is real and not merely an illusion
 we are not trapped in some sort of computer program like the Matrix (the movie)

2. Transcendence

BELIEF the Creator is radically distinct from the creation

3. Ordinance

BELIEF the creation was ordained (ordered) into existence by the Creator
 the universe is NOT a fluke or mistake

4. *Creatio Ex Nihilo* Latin *creatio*: creation *ex*: out of *nihil*: nothing S6

BELIEF the Creator made the creation out of nothing
 ☛ the Creator created not only **matter**, but **space & time** as well

5. Temporality

BELIEF the creation has a beginning & an end

6. Dependence

BELIEF the creation is utterly dependent on the Creator
 the creation cannot exist outside the will of the Creator

7. Sustenance

BELIEF the Creator sustains the creation (matter, space & time) every moment of its existence
 in contrast to deism, the Creator does not stand outside the creation

8. Omnipresence Latin *omnis*: all, every S7

BELIEF the Creator is present everywhere throughout the creation

9. Omnipotence Latin *potentia*: power, force

BELIEF the Creator is all-powerful and can act upon the creation at any time
 through dramatic interventionism & subtle providentialism

10. Omniscience Latin *scientia*: knowledge

BELIEF the Creator is all-knowing and understands everything about the creation

11. Revelatory Intelligibility S8

BELIEF the creation reveals understandable messages from the Creator
 • physical world → non-verbal revelation of general attributes of the Creator
 • human conscience → non-verbal revelation of general moral laws of the Creator

12. *Imago Dei* Latin *imago*: image *deus*: God

BELIEF the Creator made human creatures in his likeness & image (aka Image of God)

13. Goodness

BELIEF the Creator made the creation good

CONCLUSION: Clouser's Philosophical Definition of Religion

S2

1. Extremely **WIDE** definition of religion

ALL beliefs, including dysteleological beliefs, are religious

2. Many religions are FALSE

S3

24. "Although there are strong similarities among [religious] traditions of the same type, those which fall into different types [Pagan, Pantheist, Biblical] are **hopelessly incompatible**. Far from being different **paths up the same mountain**, they do not agree on which mountain to climb." Clouser, 34

COMMENTS:

- challenges the common understanding of different religions S4
 - ☛ they are NOT paths up the same mountain to the same God

- challenges the so-called "**Problem**" of **Exclusivism** S5
 - today you can't make exclusive claims that you know "THE TRUTH"

- challenges Relativism → Post Modern Cultural Value S6
 - truth is relative & everyone has their own "truth"
 - everyone is "right" & no one is "wrong"

BUT recognize the **Fallacy of Relativism** S7

ironically, relativism makes an exclusive TRUTH claim!!!

☛ it states that truth is relative

AND it excludes those who believe in absolute truths

SUGGESTION: S8

since we can't help but make exclusive truth claims,

consider **Respectful Exclusivism** → "Speak truth in love" Eph 4:15

IX. CONCLUSION: WHAT IS RELIGION?

S9

1. Common Definition

S10

religion has something to do with a Supreme Being, rituals & ethics
in North America coloured by Christian categories

2. Academic Definition

S11

Religion ≡ Metaphysics → **WIDE** definition of religion

MODERN EXAMPLES:

S12

religion associated with being/s, process/es, state/s of being, etc

Ninian Smart:

invisible world (spiritual world, one God, nirvana, empty universe)

William Tremmel:

divine reality (being, beings, process)

Tom Pyszczynski *et al*:

management of terror (psychological state)

Michael Peterson *et al*:

ultimate reality (including the "so forth")

Roy Clouser:

the just there

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES:

Jesus Christ (5 BC/E to 30 AD/CE)

25. “No one can **serve** two masters. Either he will hate the one and **love** the other, or he will be **devoted** to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

Matt 6:24

COMMENTS:

WIDE definition of religion
not just spiritual beings, but things → \$\$\$

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Protestant Reformer

26. “That to which your **heart clings** and **entrusts** itself is, I say, really your **God**.”

Martin Luther, “Larger Catechism” in *Book of Concord*
(Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 365

COMMENTS:

WIDE definition of religion
whatever we trust & whatever gives us psychological comfort → God

3. Near Universality of Religion

- A corollary (ie, built into) of the academic definition of religion (Religion = Metaphysics) is the notion that nearly everyone is religious

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Philosopher

27. “That the human mind will ever give up **metaphysical** researches is as little to be expected as that we, to avoid inhaling impure air, should prefer to give up breathing altogether. There will therefore always be **metaphysics** in the world.”

I. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*
B Logan, ed (NY: Routledge, 1996 [1784]), 124

COMMENTS:

IF Religion = Metaphysics
IF everyone has a metaphysics (according to Kant)
THEN nearly everyone is religious
☛ **WIDE** definition of religion

- The cause of the metaphysical (religious) impulse according to Kant:

28. “**Two** things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: [1] the **starry heavens** above me and [2] the **moral law** within me.”

I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* A Wood, ed
(Cambridge: U Press, 1996 [1788]), 269

COMMENTS:

General Revelation

[1] Natural Revelation

“starry heavens above” → intelligent design (Ps 19:1)

[2] Moral Revelation

“moral law within” → law written on the heart (Rom 2:14)

Summary Chart of Religious/Metaphysical Beliefs

S2-5 H10

See handouts manual page 10

Larson & Witham “Scientists Are Keeping the Faith” (1997) Revisited

S6-7 H10

Now that you have new categories, this study of the religious beliefs of US scientists can be seen in a new light

See handouts manual page 10

X. TOWARD A WORKING DEFINITION OF RELIGION

Lamoureux

S8

- Religion deals with **teleology** in the world and **The Ultimate Foundation/s of Teleology**

S9

Teleology: BELIEF the world has an ultimate plan & purpose &

the world it is headed toward an ultimate final goal

- Religion has been practised throughout history, because nearly every human being has attempted to be in a **relationship** with his or her Foundation/s of Teleology
- Religion offers **psychological comfort** and contributes to the **psychological stability** of humans, giving them the ability to function in life

COMMENTS:

S10

WIDE definition of religion

Religion = Teleology

☛ I can't put dysteleologists (eg, Dawkins) in the religious camp

The Ultimate Foundation/s of Teleology:

S11

Being/s or Thing/s (personal or impersonal): called “The God”

Religion is Relational: most humans yearn/crave a relationship with “The God”

Religion is Psychological: “The God” comforts & stabilizes humans