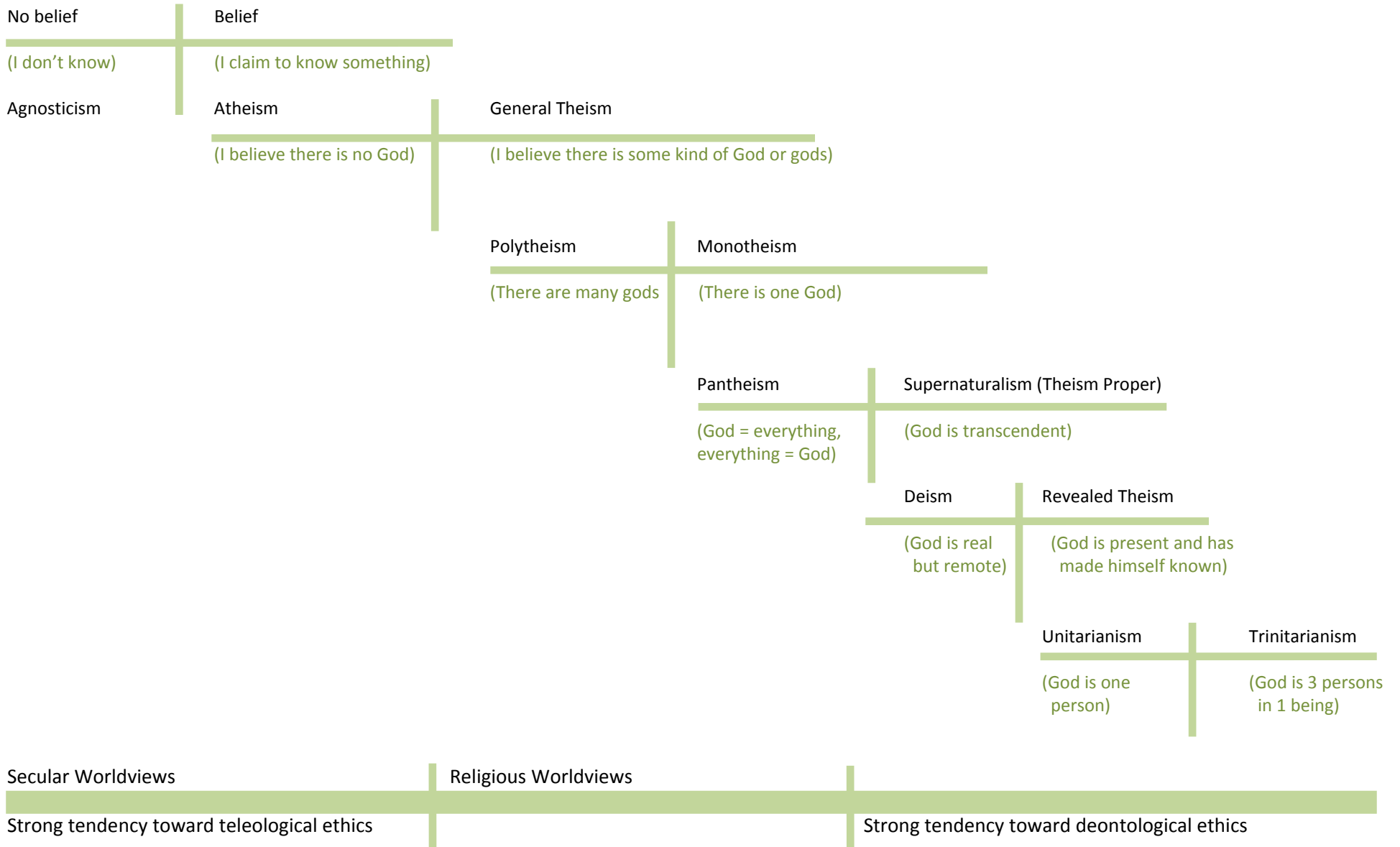


Survey of Options for Fundamental Beliefs

Worldviews and there tendencies toward certain ethical frameworks



Two Ways of Viewing the Subject of Ethics

Rule-based versus Result-based standards of right and wrong conduct



Deontological Ethic

Teleological Ethic

Rule determines the result

Result determines the rule

Rule is the basis of the act

Result is the basis of the act

Rule is good regardless of result

Rule is good because of result

Result always calculated within rule

Result sometimes used to break rules

Though it may not be strictly correct to associate ethical systems with deontological and teleological approaches as shown below – it is useful as a general indicator of relationships

Unqualified Absolutism

Conflicting Absolutism

Graded Absolutism

Situationism

Generalism

Antinomianism

Comparison of Six Major Ethical Systems

Using the Applied Example: Is it ever right to lie to save a life?



View of Ethics	Response to scenario <i>View of moral laws</i>	Rationale for response	Implication for me
Antinomianism	Lying is neither right nor wrong <i>There are no moral laws</i>	There are no moral principles by which to judge the choice between actions	Whatever I choose is OK, it's all personal and/or pragmatic
Generalism	Lying is generally wrong <i>There are no universal laws</i>	Lying is generally wrong but the rule is general and does not apply in all cases	I must choose whether the rule applies by gauging the anticipated results
Situationism	Lying is sometimes right <i>There is only one universal law</i>	In this instance, lying to save a life is more loving than telling the truth	I can identify the more loving action and am morally obligated to choose it
Unqualified Absolutism	Lying is always wrong <i>There are many non-conflicting laws</i>	Telling the truth is an absolute moral law - it applies in all cases regardless of the results	If I know the moral rules there should be no ethical dilemmas
Conflicting Absolutism	Lying is forgivable <i>There are many conflicting laws</i>	When rules conflict the moral duty is to do as little evil as possible	If I am able to identify and choose the lesser evil God will forgive me
Graded Absolutism	Lying is sometimes right <i>There are higher laws</i>	Moral laws are absolute within their domain but are arranged in a hierarchy	If I identify and keep the higher law there is no need of forgiveness

How do the various definitions of ethics (standards of right and wrong) relate to the ethical systems (means of explaining/discerning right action) described above?

Note that some systems of ethical judgment will accommodate more than one definition, but not all systems will accommodate all definitions

What are the implications of the various views for the establishment of a common Professional Code of Ethics?

Might is Right

Morals are Mores

Man is the Measure

The Human Race is the Basis of Right

Right is Moderation

Right is what brings pleasure

Right is the greatest good for the greatest number

Right is what is inherently desirable

Right is Indefinable

Right is what God wills

Methods of Assessing Worldview Truth Claims

(extracted from Norman Geisler, Christian Apologetics but attributable to many sources)

Type of Method	General Description	Contributions to Knowledge	Limitations	Some Proponents
Agnosticism				
Limited	God is not known	Reminds us that human beings and their range of knowledge are limited (not exhaustive) and corrigible (open to possible error)	Not adequate because it does not, by itself, decide for or against any particular theological viewpoint.	Immanuel Kant
Unlimited	God (like everything else) is not knowable		Is a strong claim against all knowledge, and as such appears to be self-defeating (e.g. I know that I cannot know anything about reality)	David Hume (technically, a skeptic) A.J. Ayer
Rationalism	Places ultimate confidence in the power of the mind and on certain <i>a priori</i> (independent of sense experience) aspects of human knowing	Emphasis on: the inescapability of basic laws of thought; the necessity of some <i>a priori</i> dimension of knowledge; the intelligibility of reality (all crucial to modern science, BTW)	1) Entails an invalid move from thought to reality (not everything we can think is real); and following from that 2) confuses actual undeniability with rational inescapability; 3) cannot use its own methods to justify its first principles (rationalist first principles cannot be demonstrated through reason)	Rene Descartes Gottfried Leibniz Benedict Spinoza
Fideism	Religious truth is based on faith, in contradistinction to sense experience or reason	1) avoids the indefensible rationalist claim that humans can know God by reason alone; 2) insists that no scientific or historical facts make sense outside of some metaphysical framework; 3) insists that belief is always more than intellectual; and 4) acknowledges a personal component of knowing	1) Confuses ontology with epistemology (i.e. its claims about knowledge may be defensible if God exists, but, our knowledge concerning the existence of God is the central question); 2) If fideism is making a truth claim then it must embrace some test for truth of propositions (which it does not), if it is not making a truth claim then it is psychology not philosophy that is at issue.	Blaise Pascal Soren Kierkegaard Blaise Pascal
Experientialism	Direct experience is what verifies truth claims	1) any real content of religion must be grounded in experience; 2) everything we know involves a consciousness or awareness of something or someone; 3) primary experience is the ground of secondary experience (i.e. consciousness of is more basic than conceptions about)	1) Experience in the primary sense is neither true or false (one <i>has</i> an experience while one <i>expresses</i> a truth claim); 2) an experience cannot be used as a basis for truth claims about itself (begs the question- the source of truth may be experience, but not the substantiation); 3) experiences are not self interpreting, speaking about them requires cognitive categories that are not themselves experienced.	William James Otto Rudolf Friedrich Schleiermacher
Evidentialism	Truth claims can be justified by appeals to evidence	1) if a truth claim is to be tested it must be publically accessible, not exclusively private or subjective; 2) rightly places facts (events) before theories; 3) facts cannot be justifiably isolated or arbitrarily interpreted apart from their proper context.	1) Facts and events only have meaning within a worldview; 2) meaning does not arise out of bare facts; 3) facts cannot be parsed from one another using only other facts; 4) one cannot label events "ordered" or "designed" unless a theistic view is already supposed (this two-edged observation that could be interpreted as a contribution).	Bishop Butler Donald Burrill John W. Montgomery
Pragmatism	Truth is what is experientially workable	1) stresses the necessity that any true worldview must be livable; 2) insists that spiritual/religious truth is finally confirmed in personal experience; 3) argues for a standard of truth claims that is less than absolute certainty; 4) highlights the personal and volitional aspects of knowing.	1) conflates success/failure with truth/falsity - truth is more than expediency (e.g. Survivor); 2) raises questions concerning short and long term goodness (as already mentioned in this class); 3) opposing worldviews may "work" equally well - at least in certain contexts (there are positive aspects of livability as a theory of truth but it is inadequate as a test for truth)	John Dewey William James
Combinationalism	Truth may be determined by appropriately employing some combination of the methods above	1) acknowledge the need for an interpretive framework - facts do not interpret themselves; 2) attempt to be comprehensive - may include logical, factual and existential forms of knowing; 3) is an adequate test for truth in certain contexts	1) in testing worldviews a given context is precisely what cannot be presupposed; 2) a leaky bucket argument (i.e. stacking six leak buckets will yield one that does not leak); at best a test for falsehood, more than one view may be both adequate and consistent	Ian Barbour Frederick Ferre Ian Ramsey

Worldviews Chart

World View Questions	Christian Theism	Deism	Materialism Naturalism	Nihilism	Existentialism	Pantheism	New Age	Post-modernism
1. What is prime reality – the really real?	God is infinite, personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good.	God is transcendent, not imminent, merely an architect, not a judge or lover of his creation.	Matter or the cosmos exists externally, and is all that there is, and will ever be.	Matter is all there is.	God does not exist.	All that exist are gods. Reality is a hierarchy of appearances.	No existence of God.	Language functions are used to construct meaning.
2. What is the nature of external reality; that is, the world around us?	God created cosmos ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.	A uniformity of a cause and effect system no alterations are possible.	A uniformity of a cause and effect system, more complicated than clock in motion, but alterations are still not possible.	Cosmos operates without uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system; matter is all there is.	Cosmos made of matter, reality either subjective or objective. Makes no difference.	The soul of each and every human being is the soul of the cosmos.	Unified in the self. Manifested in visible and invisible universe.	The truth of the universe and reality is hidden from us.
3. What is a human being?	Human beings created in image of God thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness, and creativity.	Personal beings, but only part of the clockwork of the creation, no relation to God.	Complex machines, composed of matter, but not fully understood.	Complex machines, composed of matter, but not fully understood.	Existence precedes essence; humans make themselves who they are. Man defines himself.	Each person is god, and is impersonal.	The self is the kingpin, or the prime reality. Human beings on the verge of radical change.	Human beings make themselves who they are. We describe what the "I" is to us.
4. Why is it possible to know anything at all?	Human beings know both world around them and God himself because God has built into them capacity to do so and because he takes active role in communicating with them.	We create our knowledge from our station in life, and the experiences that go along with it.	Science gives understanding to all.	There is no knowing, because of the lack of an absolute reality.	All knowing is based on man's own construction of knowledge.	To realize one's oneness with the universe is to pass beyond knowledge.	Know cause of experience. Can never really know?	No purely objective knowledge, storyteller has power over others.
5. What is the meaning of human history?	Humans created good, but through Fall became defaced. Through work of Christ, God redeemed humanity and began process of restoration (may be rejected).	Has no value. Past history is not really important, except to reveal ethical principles.	A linear stream of events, with no significant importance. Shrouded in mystery.	The present state governs us. History is absurd.	History is a linear stream of events linked by cause and effect, but without purpose.	To realize one's oneness with the one is to pass beyond time. Time is unreal. History is cyclical.	Time is linear, yesterday is gone, here we are today, and tomorrow is on the way.	The past disappears in the present moment.
6. What happens to a person at death?	Death is either gate to life with God and his people or gate to eternal separation from God.	Whatever is built into nature.	Death is extinction, matter is de-organized and personality no longer exists.	There is no purpose and directness.	Death is the ultimate state of absurdity.	Death is the end of individual existence.	Physical death is not the end of self/only fear of death is removed.	
7. How do we know what is right and wrong?	Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).	All that is, is right. Past history is not really important, except to reveal ethical principles.	Values man made, related only to human beings. Any form of ethics originates in man's mind.	Can't really know good/evil.	Man must revolt against the objective world and create value himself.	Realizing one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond good and evil; cosmos = perfect.	Depends on the consciousness. No value at all in the universe. Ethics impossible.	Ethics is a construct; social good whatever society takes to be. We create criterion for what is good.

COMPARISON CHART OF MAJOR WORLDVIEWS*

Worldview	God	God's Relationship to the World	Ethics	Miracles	Man's Makeup	Man's Nature	Jesus Christ	Man's Destiny
THEISM Christianity Judaism Islam	One Infinite Personal God	Transcendent and Immanent	Moral Absolutes	Possible and Actual	Body and Soul Immortal	Morally Depraved	Christianity: God Judaism: Man Islam: Prophet	Resurrection; Heaven or Hell
DEISM	One Infinite Personal God	Transcendent and some Immanent	Moral Absolutes	Possible and Actual - Not Actual Today	Body Mortal; Soul Immortal	Various	Good Man	Annihilation or Reward (State of Mind)
FINITE THEISM	One Finite Personal God	Transcendent and Immanent	Relative	Possible - Not Actual	Body Mortal; Soul Immortal	Basically Good	Good Man	Some Kind of Reward of the Soul
PANENTHEISM	One Potentially Infinite - Actually Finite God	Potentially Transcendent and Immanent	Relative	Impossible	Body Mortal; Soul Immortal (some)	Basically Good	Good Man	No Literal Destiny Besides Memory in God's Mind
PANTHEISM Hinduism Buddhism Taoism New Age, etc.	One Infinite Impersonal God	God is the World	Relative	Impossible	Body Mortal; Soul Immortal	Based on Karma	A god; Enlightened	Reincarnation; Nirvana
POLYTHEISM Hinduism Mormonism Neo-paganism Wicca, etc.	Multiple Finite gods	Gods are Immanent	Relative	Possible and Actual	Body Mortal; Soul Immortal	Good	One of many gods	Various Views on Reward and Punishment
NATURALISM Atheism Agnosticism Secular Humanism Existentialism Nihilism Marxism, etc.	No God	None	Relative - Situation Ethics	Impossible	Body Mortal - No Soul	Good, Environment Causes Evil	Religious Leader; Criminal; Mere man; Legend	Non-existence

*Categories of worldviews adapted from Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), p. 787.