**RELI 10023 IDEAS AND ISSUES, PART 2**

Continuing with dimensions of religions/worldviews:

**Mythical** **dimension**: stories making sense of existence, symbols important

Cosmogonies (creation of cosmos): Genesis, Rig Veda (Hindu), science (big bang)

modernity and myth as “false story,” importance of national myths

**Doctrinal Dimension**: often part of theology or philosophy, summarized in creed

brings system/order/coherence to worldview, makes reason-able

considers sources of knowledge of truth: perception/experience, scripture/tradition, reason

reason and the problem of evil (**theodicy**): is God all powerful *and* all good?

Mahayana Buddhist doctrines: emptiness (impermanence, lack of essence) of all

 *Heart Sutra,* *bodhisattva* (enlightened being) sees and acts on this, “perfect wisdom”

**Ethical Dimension**: rules on how to treat others and be good (orthopraxy)

 often similar in religions (vs. doctrinal differences, orthodoxy)

role of women in traditional religions: equal to men? complementary?

 Patriarchy, androcentrism, misogyny. note texts across cultures.

Sermon on the Mount as ethical commandments

Hermeneutics: should we take Bible literally? Is faith or works primary?

Utilitarianism (Mill/Bentham): maximum good for maximum number, common today

**Ritual Dimension**: ceremony of public worship, connects sacred/profane, for a community

three types of ritual: seasonal, tradition-specific, life cycle/rites of passage

aims: purify, make request, give thanks; offerings and sacrifice important (Communion)

**Social Dimension**: religions, true or not, important in society, tied to social order

today: pluralism, marketing of (mega)churches, community centers, personal growth

Berger: comforting “civic religion” is a social creation, “bad faith,” the three C-s

**“SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM”**

Focus on this (empirical) world, humans and happiness, utilitarian ethics.

**Social Responsibility**: commitment to “human rights”, equality and justice for all

World hunger as ultimate concern, relation of sufficient food, health care, and education,

women’s rights crucial to ending hunger, wealth/power lead to fewer children overall

**Humanistic Psychology**: concern for happiness, personal growth, “self-actualization” people basically good, love/trust yourself, *The Secret*: you create/limit your own reality

H. P. vs. traditional religions: develop vs. surrender yourself (C. S. Lewis)

**Science and Technology**: know real by empirical measurement and correctable theories

scientific method, prediction and falsification, religion as evolutionarily adaptive, not “true”

Dennett: evolution through natural selection, not “intelligent design”

Medical ethics: “playing God” How do you define “person”? Quality of life?

Significance of scientific progress, esp. human genome project

**Future of religion**: influence of academic study; tension between humanistic

pluralism (globalism and religious diaspora, individualism, environmentalism) and

exclusivism (unchanging, single fixed truth), “fundamentalism,” and nationalism

notable growth of Pentecostalism: personal experience and expression, feeling spirit