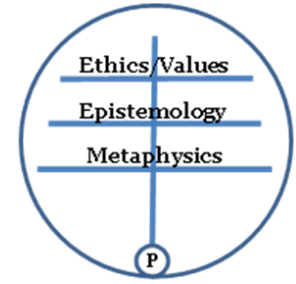


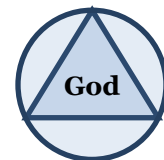
## 1. Tree of Knowledge – Roots and Fruits

The graphic shows how knowledge flows from the deepest recesses of our understanding to actual behavior. It incorporates what we think is real, what we know, and how we should live our lives. At the lowest level, P, for presuppositions, are unproven, unprovable, root beliefs that start the knowledge ball rolling. P is what gives reality meaning. This is the faith level. The small circle around the P is the self-referential, self-attesting nature of our presuppositions. The larger circle represents external, reinforcing evidences that support the presuppositions. The presuppositions, along with evidences, should form a coherent system of integrated thought that then, naturally supports Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Values, as well as provides feedback to the presuppositions. While no system is perfect, gaping holes point to either incomplete analysis or error. Evidences are always secondary but, if missing, can suggest P is not a valid starting point. If we “believe” something and there are no external evidences, we might need to rethink those beliefs. All this takes place before we even start to consider ultimate reality or metaphysics. For most people, all this happens unconsciously, being mostly inherited from their environment and experience.



## 2. Worldviews – Centers of Gravity, Attractors

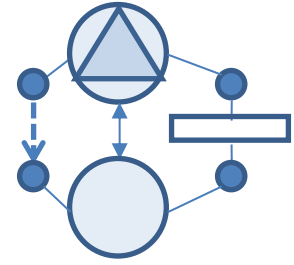
1. Monism – all of reality is one thing.
  - A. Spiritual – Hinduism and its derivatives, no distinctions, immaterial, infinite ocean of being.
  - B. Material – Atomistic (infinite number of particles moving in space), Atheistic (physics & chemistry). Reality is nothing more than **undirected** atoms and forces interacting with each other, **no teleology**.
    - a. Deterministic – no free will
      - i. Hedonistic – Live for pleasure – quantity vs quality
      - ii. Behavioristic – All behavior is product of stimulus and response.
      - iii. Marxist, dialectical materialism, all of history
    - b. Free Will – but no basis.
      - i. Egoism – live for self.
      - ii. Utilitarianism – what makes most people happy.
      - iii. Existentialism – define for oneself what I am or will be.
    - c. Nobody can know for sure.
      - i. Pragmatism – live for solving problems, what works.
      - ii. Skepticism
        - a) Sophists – master arguments to win debates, truth is irrelevant.
        - b) Cynics – it’s all a pretense, anti-establishment, anti-everything.
2. Dualism – all of reality is two things. Simply Natural/Supernatural
  - A. Idealistic – Platonic Reality, intuitional, I-Ching, others,
  - B. Moralistic – Confucius, Stoics – duty. There are two realms, but the relationship is unknown.
  - C. Christian – material and spiritual. They are not separate islands but in a profound relationship and integrated interaction between them, Jesus as Lord of all. God is imminent, not distant.



It frequently happens that you are speaking with someone, and it is though you are speaking different languages. You may have hit a worldview barrier. In principle, worldviews will agree on nothing. In principle, they would do nothing in a common fashion or in the same way in this world. But they often do things similarly. Why? People are inconsistent and don't mind plagiarizing each other. They will use what works even if it contradicts their most basic beliefs.

### 3. Philosophical Big Picture

- A. Metaphysics – Theory of ultimate reality
- B. Epistemology – Theory of knowledge based on Metaphysics.
  - a. Rational – Based on reason, Mental.
  - b. Empirical – Based on the senses, Experiential (also Science).
  - c. Revelational – Based on knowledge revealed to us by God Himself
    - i. Personal – God reveals knowledge directly to us, think Words of Knowledge, Prophecy, direction.
    - ii. Creation – God reveals knowledge in and through His created order.
    - iii. Scripture – God reveals knowledge in and through Scripture .
    - iv. Jesus – God is revealed in Jesus.
- C. Ethics/Aesthetics – Theory of right behavior; valuable, important, good, beautiful, rights, duties



### 4. Some Definitions

- A. Presuppositions. These are our most basic or fundamental beliefs, held religiously, believed by faith, unverifiable by natural science. Presuppositions cannot be “proven” but can be evidenced.
  - a. Divine – behind all of reality is God: “In the beginning God...,”
  - b. Material – reality is nothing more than physics and chemistry: “In the beginning nothing...”
- B. Epistemology. How we know what we know?
  - a. On what basis can we trust the reliability of the human mind?  
Without a satisfactory answer to this question, none of the others can be answered.  
In most cases basic reliability is assumed. But why? On what basis?
  - b. What is the nature of belief?
  - c. What is the nature of truth?
  - d. What are the standards or procedures for justifying one’s beliefs?
  - e. What is the nature of science and discovery?

Three basic roots of knowledge.

- i. **Rational – stop and think.** Knowledge comes through the mind through logic and reason. Reason is the **power to direct** our thoughts toward a conclusion. Those who say truth only comes from right reason are called rationalists. Some atheists say there is no such thing as a mind, only a brain.
- ii. **Empirical – stop and look.** Knowledge comes through the senses, experience, observation, science. Those who say truth only comes from the senses are called empiricists.  
“What science cannot tell us; mankind cannot know” (Bertrand Russell, atheist philosopher).
- iii. **Revelational – stop and listen.** Knowledge is revealed or disclosed, normally by God Himself. How is man’s mind enlightened by God? Those who say truth only comes from God are called revelationists. “All truth is God’s truth.” Truth is revealed in or through:
  - a) Personal (God speaks to people today) – Denied by many people.
  - b) Creation
  - c) Scripture – Destroyed as a source of knowledge by millions of years and evolution.
  - d) Jesus

Rational and empirical knowledge have their foundations here. Man can only observe or discover what God has made knowable. But what is most amazing is that man’s mind has been made with a correspondence to the natural world such that it is able to appreciate God’s creation from the infinitesimally tiny size of subatomic particles to the magnitude of intergalactic space (Deut 29:29, Rom 1:19, Eph 3:3-5).

How can it be that mathematics, being after all, the product of human thought, independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality? The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.  
(Albert Einstein)

- C. Ethics or Values – What is right behavior, valuable, important, good, beautiful?
- What is the nature of good and evil?
  - What are the standards of ethics and ethical evaluation?
  - How one attains moral character and conduct?
  - What is the nature of guilt, atonement, and personal peace?
  - What is the nature of social order and the state?
- D. Faith – Trust in an authority, belief that is put into action. You can't believe what you don't know. Reason and knowledge are the servants of faith. Faith starts in knowledge and is perfected in experience. It is not a leap of faith; it is an application of trust and understanding. Everybody believes things unverifiable by natural science. Faith allows us to touch the future through such avenues as trust, induction, the uniformity of nature (see below), and experimentation. Greg Bahnsen once asked, "What justifies your proceeding on the expectation that the future will be like the past?" **Faith!** And everyone exercises faith. Faith is often defined narrowly such that only "religious" people have faith. Every belief system requires faith and is often called a "faith." So, the next time someone challenges you on your belief system simply say, "Yes, your faith is different from my faith," Gal 2:20. Someone may ask you to trust them. At that moment, faith is exercised, or not. Faith and trust go hand-in-hand. Sometimes faith is grudgingly given. You may come, over time, to trust a new friend, author, or teacher. Faithfulness implies a loyal faith. Faith is blind when there is no knowledge or reason to back the trust, reducing it to mere opinion or credulity. Shallow, superficial "belief" is a poor substitute for the certainty of faith. To me belief is the same as opinion. All faith rests on belief that is put into action. Not all faith is true. When truth and Divine faith (Eph 2:8) walk together mountains move.

**Uniformity of Nature** is the assumption that nature behaves in a uniform manner across space and time. This is assumed since we have little experience beyond our own space and time. This is necessary for science and intimately related to induction.

**Induction** is the principle that allows us to start from general things, even past experience and make specific conclusions. It allows us to make predictions (a future outcome) based on past experience or incomplete knowledge. Induction, by faith, helps us bridge the knowledge gap. Induction works hand-in-hand with the Uniformity of Nature to make science possible. David Hume, in his "The Problem of Induction," demonstrates that monistic materialism offers no foundation for induction, and worse, says it is not possible to know the future. There are a wide variety of applications, and all involve faith.

- I have studied swans in Wyoming for two years and have concluded that all the swans in Wyoming are white. My conclusion may be shown to be false by the discovery of a single black swan.
  - Large copper deposits are discovered on the moon. Since we have no experience with lunar copper, what makes us think that lunar copper will conduct electricity like terrestrial copper?
  - What makes us think that we can mix hydrogen and oxygen and get water, not salt?
  - What makes us think that we can squeeze a tube of toothpaste, and toothpaste will come out?
- E. Religion. The day-by-day exercise or living expression of faith. People often think of religion as belief in some deity or as rituals performed at some location. This can be true but is deeper because everyone has religion, even those pretending to be religion-free. Someone might say, "So and so got religion." Not true. So and so changed religions. People change their religion by changing their underlying faith commitments. Inevitably, people of similar beliefs or thinking flock together to form associations, groups, or faith communities. Every religion has sub-groupings or "denominations." Changing one's religion often changes one's associations. This can be traumatic as friends become enemies and vice versa. The Saul/Paul conversion is an example. Those that once looked up to Saul later sought to kill him. Every religion claims exclusive truth. You may have to listen carefully to the vocabulary, but the underlying ideas are the same. A solipsist is a religion of one. (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of God*, chapter 2). Culture is religion externalized.

- F. Theology. The justification, outline, and/or theory of one’s religion. As everyone has a religion, so too everyone has a theology or theological statement. Atheism is a theological position.
- G. Philosophy. Who are we, how do we fit in, and why? It tries to answer the big questions and serves religion. All religions have an attendant philosophy. Everybody does philosophy.
- H. Politics. The application of theology onto the social order and governance. The largest position of atheism is Communism or one of its denominations. The state is the ultimate organized religion. All law is someone’s moral philosophy, derived from their worldview, being imposed on everyone else. Government is inherently forceful. Plainly, politics is an expression of religion, so it matters what religion is dominant.

Note that all the above definitions are interrelated and form a powerful interconnecting web or network that governs all human knowledge and experience. Later, we will look at what are called the “Preconditions for Intelligibility.” Does one’s most basic beliefs supply a proper foundation for meaningful human knowledge and experience?

As such, there is an inherent feed-back loop that adjusts the various parts of the network as needed. Of course, there is a spectrum of commitment strength, consistency, and coherence, ranging from true believers to the unwittingly ignorant and to pretenders.

**Romans 10:14-15**

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

Every form of proselytizing, theistic or atheistic, follows this principle. You cannot believe what you don’t know. Education follows this same procedure.

Primary symbols used in this class:

