

## **Religion, Ethics, and the Meaning of Life<sup>1</sup>**

ROLANDO M. GRIPALDO<sup>2</sup>  
Philippine National Philosophical Research Society  
drgrips@gmail.com

**Abstract.** Religion as a concept has generated some nuances that retain the sense of religiosity or spirituality while negating the idea of a personal anthropomorphic deity. One should therefore be clear as to the usage of this concept in a given context. While religion, ethics, and the meaning of life are intertwined, there are now variants wherein nonbelievers can themselves be ethical and lead meaningful lives. The author believes that the discarded theistic deity can be redeemed and given a reinterpretation that is suitable to our contemporary postmodern setting.

**Keywords and phrases:** Religion, Ethics, The meaning of life

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper will try to resolve the following issues: (1) Is religion monolithic or are there other types of religion? (2) Can there be a religion without God? (3) Can one be *religious*<sup>3</sup> without having a religion? (4) Can there be ethics without religion or without God? and (5) Can the theistic God survive in today's world, or can God be redeemed? To address these issues, the following outline will be followed: (a) Philosophy of Religion vs. Theology; (b) Types of Religion; (c) "Religious" vs. "Religion"; (d) Religion and Ethics; (e) Ethics and the Meaning of Life; and (f) Theological Considerations. I will then give some concluding remarks.

### **PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND THEOLOGY**

As is well known, we can distinguish philosophy of religion from theology (Sahakian and Sahakian 1965). The former, on the one hand, deals with the existence and nature of God, the existence and immortality of the soul, the issue of natural evils, the validity of miracles, and the efficacy of prayers on the basis of reason, facts, or nature. This is sometimes called natural theology or general theology. The latter, on the other hand, deals with the same religious issues on the basis of revelation or sacred scriptures. It is sometimes referred to as revealed theology, dogmatic theology, or special theology.<sup>4</sup> In the Western philosophical

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world, it is assumed that the idea of religion can "best" be justified if it can be shown that a supernatural personal God exists (Dawkins 2007).

As a result of this type of thinking, a great deal of energy has been spent in trying to prove the existence of a personal supernatural God. Since the time that Parmenides introduced the concept of a Necessary Being, the ontological proof was formally presented by St. Anselm during the Middle Ages. It was criticized by Gaunilo, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Immanuel Kant, but some philosophers, especially the pantheists, including Georg Hegel, have continually made use of it (Freemantle 1954). St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>5</sup> attempted to transform Aristotle's impersonal God into a personal one and elaborated more on Aristotle's proofs on the cosmological (first-cause argument) and the teleological (argument from design),<sup>6</sup> but, just the same, Kant (1966) rejected them in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant (1788), however, was forced to formulate his moral proof in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which postulates God's existence on the basis of morality because many on earth who do good from a sense of duty do not enjoy life as much as those who do evil. Justice demands that there must be a God who allows the good on earth to enjoy a heavenly life and punishes the bad. Many empiricists, logical positivists, scientists, and other learned men challenged these religious proofs and became either agnostics or atheists.

## DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL PROOFS

At the start of the 20th century, which signals the beginning of the contemporary period, there has been a decline in the acceptance of the traditional proofs, viz., the ontological, cosmological, teleological and moral. New proofs were presented such as the axiological arguments of Rashdall (1907) and Sorley (1919), the pantheism of Whitehead (1929), and the mysticism of Chandler (2001).<sup>7</sup> But these were not meant to support an anthropomorphic God. For most people, towards the end of the 19th century, either one relied on revelation for one's religious beliefs or one became an agnostic or atheist. Richard Dawkins's book *The God Delusion* (2007) tries to persuade us that the need for a personal anthropomorphic supernatural God in the 21st century – which is described as the continuing "postmodern age" (Lyotard 1979), characterized by the rejection of metanarratives such as the Hegelian Absolute, the fragmentation of ideas, and the rise of "petite narratives" – is entirely irrational.

## TYPES OF RELIGION

There are two general types of religion: monotheism and polytheism, which have many subtypes. Monotheism, the belief in one God, is of two kinds: theistic and

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nontheistic. God here can be supernatural, personal, and anthropomorphic (SPA); He can be supernatural, personal, and nonanthropomorphic (SPN); or He can be supernatural, nonpersonal (impersonal), and nonanthropomorphic (SNN). There are other types of monotheistic religion that do not recognize a supernatural God (NNN). Polytheism is the belief in many gods and goddesses, and in good and evil spirits.<sup>8</sup>

## **Monotheism**

### **Theistic monotheism**

*Theism (SPA)* is a special kind of monotheism that specifically refers to a personal supernatural God that can either be anthropomorphic (Catholics, Mormons and Jews) or nonanthropomorphic (Muslims) (see Keller 1995 and the Qur'anic verse in Surat al-Shura 42:11). This type is what most people refer to when they use the term "religion" and that Dawkins (2007) rejects. By "personal," we mean that God communes with us through a personal relationship. He listens, responds and communicates with us. He is moved by us sympathetically. By "anthropomorphic," we mean that God looks like us because He made us in his own image. By "supernatural," we mean that He is beyond nature or the natural. Some theists (Muslims, for example, and many panentheists) believe that God is only personal but does not "look" like us.

*Deistic Supernaturalism (SPA)* is a kind of theism that emphasizes God as the "supernatural revealer of values." This view is generally held by Protestants such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, Soren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth, among others.

### **Assaults on theism**

*Atheism.* There have been many criticisms of the theistic God by a number of nonbelievers throughout history, but the most recent one is by Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is an atheist and rejects the God of the Old Testament. He is, however, tolerant of the nonanthropomorphic and nonpersonal God, such as that believed in by Einstein. Awed by the immensity of the universe, Einstein, according to Dawkins (2007), declared himself to be "a deeply religious nonbeliever." Dawkins quotes Pirzig (1975) from the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* to highlight the title of his book. Pirzig states, "When one person suffers from a delusion it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called Religion." Dawkins (2007) then assaults the anthropomorphic and supernatural nature of God to show that God is man-made:

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The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sado-masochistic, [and] capriciously malevolent bully.

Some atheists also cite the first law of thermodynamics to show that the law of conservation of matter and energy indicates that matter is eternal: it has no beginning and no end. God is therefore a useless hypothesis (see Grünbaum 1998).

*Agnosticism.* In his lecture, "Why I am not a Christian," delivered in 1927, Bertrand Russell, a logician, pacifist and freethinker, upheld rational intellectual honesty. The essay which was later published in a book edited by Edwards (1957) examined all of the proof for God's existence and found them logically unconvincing. He likewise looked into the arguments for the nonexistence of God and also found them unconvincing. He argued that to believe in God (theism) without logically valid arguments is intellectual dishonesty. To believe otherwise (atheism) is also intellectual dishonesty. Therefore, to be intellectually honest, one must become an agnostic. He tried to explain the origin of religion. He said it is partly fear – the fear of the unknown, the mysterious, defeat, or death – and partly a wish to feel "you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes." Russell, however, in practice acted as if there was no God. That is why, popularly and pragmatically, he would claim to be an atheist.

## **Nontheistic monotheism**

*Qualified Monotheism (SNN)* is the belief in an impersonal God. An example is Aristotle's God (Unmoved Mover, Pure Thought), who thinks of nothing but His own perfection.

*Deism (SPN)* is a belief in a personal nonanthropomorphic God who created the universe perfectly with all of its laws and left it to work on its own, never to interfere with it again. He is an absentee God. This is the religion of Voltaire, Jose Rizal, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine et al.

*Humanism (NPN)* is the belief that God is Humanity and Humanity is God. It is "personalistic" in the sense that it is basically humanistic, but not "supernatural" and not "anthropomorphic" as in the theistic God. This is the religion of August Comte and the Humanists such as John Dewey, Roy Sellars and Corliss Lamont. They believe the best in human beings – his or her highest aspirations – become God.

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*Pantheism (SPN/SNN/NNN)* is a religious system that considers the Universe as God and God as the Universe (or "God is all and all is God"). It can be personal nonanthropomorphic or nonpersonal nonanthropomorphic. This is the God of Benedictus Spinoza (SNN), Albert Einstein (NNN) and Georg Hegel (SPN) et al.

*Panentheism (SPN)* believes that God is everywhere immanent in the universe. God is not the universe, but greater than the universe. God maintains order in the universe. This is the God of Alfred North Whitehead and the Process Theologians such as Charles Hartshorne, Santiago Sia and John Cobb, among others.

*Agnostic Realism (SNN)* is the belief that we can infer God's existence from his handiworks but we can never know His attributes, that is, whether He is good, merciful, just, etc. We cannot help describing God because of His awesomeness; however, these are merely symbolic gestures on our part in an attempt to reach Him. This is Herbert Spencer's God.

*Impersonal Idealism (NNN)* is the belief that universal and valid ideal principles or human values constitute God. Edward Gleason Spaulding states that, "God is the [impersonal] totality of values, both existent and subsistent and of those agencies and efficiencies with which these values are identical."

*Religious Naturalism (SNN)* believes that God is the tendency in nature towards perfection, or God's purposive handiwork is the perfection of man. This is the God of the Evolutionists such as C. Lloyd Morgan, Samuel Alexander and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, among others.

*Mysterianism (SPN)* is the belief that God is Cosmic Mind. Matter is nothing but condensed mind. This is the type of God which Chandler (2001) depicted in his book, *The Mind Paradigm*. This is similar to Brahman, especially of the Advaita Vedantic type.

## **Polytheism**

*Animistic Polytheism (SPA)* believes in innumerable gods and goddesses, good and evil spirits that are personifications of specific values or objects, such as the gods of fertility, love, seas, thunder, rivers, trees, rocks, etc.

*Henotheism (SPA)* is a type of polytheism where there is a finite pantheon of gods and goddesses with one god as supreme, for example, Zeus of the ancient Greeks and Jupiter of the Romans.

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## RELIGION AS A WAY OF LIFE

This type of religion affirms a way of life that is based on an ultimate reality without a transcendent God. Lara Shapiro believes that some Chinese religious positions simply view religion to be a meaningful way of life without belief in a supernatural being. This is the case with the Yin-Yang worldview, Daoism, and Confucianism. To quote Shapiro (*Religion and the Supernatural*, n.d.): "Daoism and Confucianism are religions, they are practices and ways of living based on philosophies of the ultimate reality, but neither Daoism nor Confucianism believe in a supernatural dimension." Buddhism is also a religion without God.

## RELIGION AS A RELATION

Raj Mansukhani believes that if we define God simply as a type of relation, then God exists whenever one creates a meaningful ethical relation with others. The godly relation must be symmetrical as in the Golden Rule. However, this is a secular God, not the traditional anthropomorphic God of the holy books. According to Mansukhani (2005):

To say that "God is relation" is to say that God is not an individual thing. God is not a self-existing being with certain properties. Rather, God is found wherever certain beings relate to one another in a particular way—for example, when I treat someone else with compassion and respect. In this paradigm, God is not the being who is the source of certain values (the values of compassion and respect, for example); nor is God the being who commands us to act in particular ways, or who suffers with humanity. God is also not an entity which imbues certain relations with spiritual significance. If God is a type of relation rather than a being, we can no longer speak of God as a creator, a father, a mother, or a friend. All these descriptions of God is senseless because they are applicable only to individual things. If God is a relation, then God can only exist *between* things or *among* things. To use a term from Martin Buber, God is found in "the between."

God-is-dead theologians have proclaimed the death of the transcendent God who has ceased to be meaningful and who has died "in our hearts." The precursor of this view is Friedrich Nietzsche. Among the God-is-dead theologians are Gabriel Vahanian, John Robinson, Paul van Buren, William Hamilton and Thomas J. J. Altizer, and the Jewish Richard Rubenstein, who believes in a return to paganism. The secular God that replaces the transcendent God is one that exists in the meaningful moral relationships that we develop with other human beings.

## **RELIGION BASED ON THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN SELF**

Eliade (1974) first used the term *Homo religiosus* to refer to humans as essentially religious beings. Eliade used this term *Homo religiosus* to mean that in almost any kind of situation and object, we find evidence of the sacred – the manifestations of the power that transcends us. Spirit is apt to show itself during times of need, disasters, jublations, hopelessness, and the like. This is called a hierophany. Everything that is not sacred (religious) is profane (secular).

Curtis (2008<sup>9</sup>) believes, following Dennett (1991), that the "human brain" is the computer hardware, while "culture" is the computer software. Geertz (1973) finds this analogy less useful in understanding social relations as the self interacts with others. There seems to be something much deeper than the general culture as software, something more primordial such as "accessibility of public symbolic structures" that help form social human beings, culturally speaking. Curtis (2008) argues that these "public symbolic structures," at a deeper level, constitute the foundation of the self; they are also the foundation of culture as software. They constitute the operating system, a special kind of deep level software that allows the computer hardware (the human brain) to use another software (e.g., culture). Religion historically "has provided material that is the operating system for the human brain in three specific ways: emotional, existential, and social" – which together constitute the tripartite foundation of the self. Moreover, Curtis (2008) argues that religion – defined as "cultural systems (funds of general meaning)" that are "organized around a particular worldview or social group" – has arisen historically "to help structure the experience of 'newly' emotional creatures."<sup>10</sup> Our time now is the 21st century, but Curtis affirms that the tripartite foundation of the self is still at work, religiously speaking.

Curtis (2008) notes, however, that to be religious is not necessarily to have a religion. "Religious" is not "religion" and "neither are necessarily supernatural or even nonscientific." *Homo religiosus* as a basic religious nature only means that "we all need some of what religion provides even if we find it in secular places, in scientific constructions that have nothing to do with a God or gods." Zepp (1997; see Curtis 2008) says that religion has served the function of bringing people together. The religious has a sense of space and time where they can combine in an interactive social cohesion. In this respect, Zepp views shopping malls as having a religious dimension.

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## **RELIGION AND ETHICS**

Religion and ethics are obviously intertwined as there exist myriad studies of Christian ethics, Islamic ethics and so on. But first, let us clarify the meaning of ethics.

### **Ethics and Mores**

Ethics is the study of what "ought" to be. It is a theoretical study and is otherwise referred to as the study of morality. We are interested in how life ought to be lived, morally speaking. As a branch of philosophy, ethics has three components (Feiser 2003): "metaethics" studies the sources and meaning of ethical terms; "normative ethics" does the more practical task of examining the moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct; and "applied ethics" examines controversies such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment or nuclear war.

Mores pertain to the existing morality, the "what is." It is usually the business of ethics to supplant mores. The "what ought" is believed to be a better alternative to the "what is." In this lecture, we are more concerned with normative ethics.

The ethical life is based on religious tenets. But can there be ethics without religion? The answer is obviously affirmative. We read the ethics of Plato and Aristotle, the utilitarian ethics and the ethics of Kant, among others, which are based on reason or on what is natural. But can there be ethics among atheists and agnostics?

It is generally assumed that the theistic God is the source of all values, such that if there is no God, then there is no source of values. Consequently, Godless people – the agnostics and atheists – are believed to be immoral. A third group, the deists – though they acknowledge God's existence – live a life that ignores the presence of God. Nowadays, we have arguments to the effect that atheists, deists, and agnostics can still be ethical, although not all of them. Similarly, a number of religious people have also led immoral lives.

### **Agnostic Ethics**

If there is no God, it is necessary to invent values. The agnostic Bertrand Russell studied the existing morality and desired to make moral reforms. In one way or another, this led him to trouble. Some of these moral reforms were conventionally called immoral. Russell, e.g., believed that Victorian moral values could slowly be modified by gradually revealing certain body parts in public. The logic was that the public would get used to them over time and develop a better



appreciation of the body. Victorian gentlemen were aroused upon seeing the ankle of a woman. However, if they were conditioned from youth to see the human body, then eventually the human body would just be considered a natural object. Russell also held with deep conviction pacifist values and joined pacifist demonstrations that sometimes led him to spend time in prison.<sup>11</sup>

## **Deistic Ethics**

Like the agnostic, the deist lives a life as if there is no God. Deism is the Enlightenment compromise between theism and atheism. It tries to exult the dignity of the human person in a world where God is absent, but which is not exactly an atheistic world. Deism is an assent – a "Yes!" – to human existence minus God. The deist believes that man can solve human problems and failures through the use of reason because these problems are all human creations. The person must create or invent values. He cannot say, "I cannot solve this problem. I will just leave it to God," because God is nowhere in sight.

## **Atheistic Ethics**

### **Christian atheistic ethics**

George Santayana is sometimes called a Christian atheist; in fact, Butler (1986) called him a "Catholic atheist." A Spaniard educated in the United States, Santayana wrote his philosophy in the English language. His parents taught him that religion is a fiction, is false and thus is bad. He agreed with his parents as to the fictive nature of religion, but nonetheless considered it to be good because, in his view, anything that could be read or seen as fiction must be something to be enjoyed. We read fictional novels and short stories, we go to fictional movies and plays, and we empathize with or enjoy them. In the case of religion, though it is fictional, it also serves a social function. Therefore, Santayana regularly went to church to experience and enjoy the social feeling of religion that included meeting old friends and forging new acquaintances.<sup>12</sup>

## **Existentialist ethics**

The French existentialist Sartre (1964) postulates the nonexistence of God in order to affirm the humanity of man. While the deist simply considers God as absent, Sartre considers the idea of God as inimical to the transformation of the person into an absolute freedom. The person is not determined by his past, his heredity, or his environment – not even by God. Man can make decisions; he can make choices even in the most depressing situation – even while in prison – choices which he and he alone can decide upon. While it is true that he or she may be influenced and even seek counsel from others, the final decision is his or

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her own. And the person, having absolute freedom, also has an absolute responsibility. When he or she makes a choice, he or she chooses not only for himself or herself, but for all of humanity. In a Godless world, man creates his own values. One must decide what he or she wants himself or herself to become in the future, for he or she is one's own project.

The other existential atheist, Camus (1955), looks at life as the great absurd. Since there is no God for him, the human struggle for survival is pointless and ridiculous. One is born into the world, which is not of his own making, One is brought up at home, plays within the neighborhood, goes to church, studies in school from nursery to college, earns a degree, works, get married, has children, raises them, puts them in school and so on. This is a cycle that goes on and on and on. And, for what? One wakes up in the morning, takes a bath, eats a breakfast, goes to work, eats lunch, continues working, goes home, eats supper, watches television and goes to bed. The next morning one does the same routine. Again, for what?<sup>13</sup>

It is akin to Sisyphus (Camus 1955), punished by the gods for committing a certain offense. Sisyphus is condemned to roll a rock up the slope of a mountain, never to ultimately succeed. When the rock reaches the top of the mountain, it rolls back down again. Sisyphus goes down to the plain and again pushes the rock uphill. His life is a ridiculous, repetitious one. It is a pointless life. There are, however, two responses to this kind of life. The first one is to succumb to the absurd, surrender to it and commit suicide. The other response is to face the absurd, confront it and somehow make ethical sense out of it by creating meaning within it. We are condemned to die whether we like it or not, but the difference between the suicidal man and the condemned man is that the suicidal man trembles before the absurd and allows it to swallow him, while the condemned man bravely faces the absurd, finds or creates meaning within it and even attempts to make his life happy. Sisyphus' life may be absurd, but Sisyphus somehow learns to accept it and consoles himself that, despite everything, "all is well." That is the "recipe for the absurd victory" (Camus 1955).

## **THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are three theological considerations I would like to present in this paper. First, some theologians believe that the theistic God can be redeemed. One of these is Paul Tillich. He argues that human beings work within a circumscribed finitude (existence). Whatever lies beyond human finitude cannot be understood or reached by linguistic or even mystical terms. It is pointless to determine whether God exists or not. To say that God exists is to bring him into the realm of human finitude. God is infinite or eternal, i.e., beyond finitude. God is the ground

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of being, our ultimate concern. According to Tillich, "God does not exist. He is being itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him." (see Paul n.d.) We can know God only when God reveals himself symbolically to us through the anthropomorphic language that we humans can understand and the cultural context prevailing at the time. It is through God's revelation that we recognize the presence of God.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, some people believe that we can transcend the first law of thermodynamics (the conservation of matter and energy), which says that matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed. I believe that we humans discovered the law of conservation as one of the laws of nature. We did not create the laws of nature. From our finite human point of view, we cannot create or destroy matter and energy. However, from the divine point of view, if God created the universe, together with the laws of nature, then only God can destroy matter and energy (or the universe). If time and space are within the Big Bang cosmogony, then the moment before the Big Bang must be part of Eternity, which is phenomenologically meaningless to us because we do not have an experience of it. However, we can have a conception of it as when we conceive of God as eternal (see O'Brien 1995).

Lastly, there are metaphysical systems that recognize the presence of God within the realm of scientific facts. In particular, I am referring to Alfred North Whitehead's God in his book, *Process and Reality* (1927) where he made use of the present results of astrophysics and conceived of God as man's fellow traveler. It is God who maintains order in the universe. I also refer to Keith Chandler's God in *The Mind Paradigm* (2006) where God is conceived as a cosmic mind that continually does experiments in trying to perfect the evolutionary creation of the universe through mathematical computations. These are supernatural and personal, but nonanthropomorphic, types of God.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the following: (1) In using the word "religion" it is important for us to be clear what type of religion we are referring to, unless it is clear in the context that what is meant is the theistic God. This is the type of religion that Richard Dawkins rejects in his book, *The God Delusion*. (2) It is an error to assume that, if one rejects God, then he or she is necessarily bad or unethical, as it is likewise erroneous to assume that, when a person has a religion, then he or she is necessarily good or ethical. (3) If we want to maintain a democratic world, we need to not only be tolerant to all types of religion as symbolic systems, but also to those whose religiosity and spirituality are different from ours.<sup>15</sup> and (4) while it appears that the theistic God is redeemable, it should

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be interpreted as a concept within a contemporary context in order to become meaningful in today's postmodern world.

## NOTES

1. Paper delivered on 4 December 2007 at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, upon the invitation of the Islamic and Civilization Section, School of Humanities.
2. Professor R. Gripaldo is the executive governor of the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society. He is the former chair of the Philosophy Department, De La Salle University, Manila. He has published six books, edited four books, and published over 70 papers either as chapters of books or as articles of national and international journals. He has read numerous papers in international philosophical conferences in such places as Athens, Istanbul, Tehran, Washington, D.C., Puchon City (South Korea), Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, Depok (Indonesia), and now Penang. He is the editor-in-chief of *Φιλοσοφία: International Journal of Philosophy*.
3. The word "religious" has at least three senses, depending upon the context: "devoutness," "gathering together," and "regularity." A person may have a religion but is not religious in the sense that he is not a "devout believer." He goes to church every Sunday but gambles in a nearby cockfighting arena afterward and later in the evening womanizes in nightclubs. A religious person ought not to do these prohibited activities. On the other hand, the word "religious" is used in a lax, liberal sense as in *Homo religious*, where the person is thought to be "essentially" religious even while shopping because he goes to malls or other places where people "gather together." This is the sense which Ira Zepp Jr. uses in his book, *The New Religious Image of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as Ceremonial Center* (1977). One may, of course, disagree with this interpretation. The third sense is "regularity in attendance." It is in this sense that we sometimes say a person "religiously" goes to the casino every Friday evening. Our concern here is whether a person can have a devout spirituality ("religious") even if he does not believe in a transcendent God.
4. In Christian theology, at least three items are added: Christology or the study of the God-Man nature of Jesus Christ (divine manifestation of God to destroy incarnate error); eschatology or the study of the end of the world; and soteriology or the study of the soul's salvation (see Sahakian and Sahakian 1965).
5. Aquinas presents the Five Ways: (A) Cosmological: (i) First-Mover Argument, (ii) First-Cause Argument (aetiological aspect of the cosmological proof), (iii) Argument from Contingency; (B) Teleological: (iv) Argument from Purpose or Design; and (C) Mixture of Cosmological and Teleological: (v) Argument from Degrees of Perfection. See Aristotle's *Metaphysics* [1941, A. (XII), chaps. 1–10] and Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (1945, Q2, Art.3).

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6. Mabel and Lewis Sahakian (1965) enumerate eight proofs: (a) ontological (necessary being), (b) aetiological (first cause), (c) cosmological (design), (d) teleological (purpose), (e) axiological (values), (f) anthropological (human nature), (g) epistemological (meaningful universe), and (h) religio-empirical (*Homo religiosus*).
7. Except for Chandler's arguments, the Sahakians (1965) discussed the arguments of late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as those of John Fiske and William James. Dawkins (2007) and Russell (1957) also discussed some proofs. Trundle (1998–99) presented a scientific reinterpretation of the arguments of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.
8. For this section of the paper, *cf.* Sahakian and Sahakian (1965).
9. The journal reference on Curtis appeared in November 2007 although the issue date of the journal is January 2008.
10. Italics are my own.
11. See the interesting biography of Russell by Clark (1975).
12. Hans Vaihinger's (1924) philosophy of "as if" appears similar to Santayana's insofar as religion is concerned. For Vaihinger, God is a fiction and yet for some reason we go to church "as if" there is God.
13. See also Camus's works, *The Stranger* (1988) and *The Rebel* (1971).
14. Tillich's God is supernatural, personal, and nonanthropomorphic (SPN). It is similar to the Islamic God.
15. Some religious systems may have seeds of democratic ideals and can lead to a republican type of democracy. However, there are, likewise, seeds of intolerance in some religious systems that declare nonconformity to one's established religion as heretical and should be persecuted. In the United States and in the Philippines, there is the doctrine of the separation of church and state. This doctrine, when properly implemented, carries the democratic ideal of tolerance to all religious positions.

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