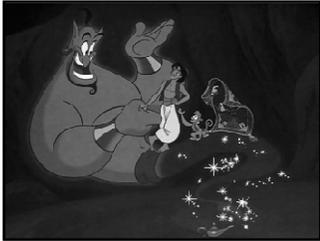


Worldview Apologetics

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Week 9: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

MTD: The Basic Idea

God's chief end is to help us feel good.



- The Five Points of MTD**
1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
 2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
 3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
 4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when he is needed to resolve a problem.
 5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

Moralistic / Therapeutic / Deistic

- *Moralistic*
 - We should all try hard to be good, moral people
 - Being a good person means being nice to others
- *Therapeutic*
 - Religion makes us better, nicer, happier people
- *Deistic*
 - God is out there, but keeps a safe distance
 - We speak to God, but God doesn't speak back

MTD: Theology

- There is a God who created the world
- God watches over the world... from a distance
- God is out there primarily for our benefit
 - A combination of Divine Butler & Cosmic Therapist
- God is only sporadically involved in the world
 - God can intervene in answer to our prayers
 - Generally things run without God's involvement
 - In short: *God is real when I need God to be real*

MTD: Anthropology

- We were created by God (somehow)
- We are spiritual beings: not purely physical
- The universe basically exists for our benefit
- Our goal in life is to feel good about ourselves
- An essentially *Pelagian* view of human nature:
 - We're born morally neutral (neither good nor bad)
 - We're free to choose between good and evil
 - God will help us out if we need it and we ask him

MTD: Knowledge

- We inherit beliefs from our parents/culture
- We're guided by personal experience/feelings
- *Pragmatism*: truth is what works best for me
- Knowledge of God: *pluralistic mysticism*
 - Not based on logic, reason, etc.
 - Not based on verbal divine revelation (e.g., Bible)
 - Different understandings of God are equally valid
 - No one really knows what God is actually like

MTD: Ethics

- There are some universal moral principles
 - But those principles are simple and few in number
- The basic principle: "Be nice to other people."
- Some other important moral principles:
 - "Treat others with respect and fairness."
 - "Work hard and try to be successful."
 - "Look out for your friends and family."
 - "Don't get into trouble with sex."
 - "Don't be intolerant or judgmental."

MTD: Salvation

- Our basic problem is... *human misery*
 - We don't have the things we wish we had
 - We don't feel good about ourselves and others
- The solution is... *divine therapy*
 - *Prayer*: God will give us what we want if we ask
 - *Heaven*: God will fix everything up in the end
- Different religions work for different people
- Good people go to heaven, bad people to hell

Tool #2: Explanation

- What does MTD do with Jesus Christ?
 - Was Jesus a great moral/religious teacher or not?
- Jesus' teachings:
 - No one is good enough (Matt. 5:20; 7:11; 15:19)
 - We're saved by faith, not by works (Luke 18:9-14)
- Jesus' suffering and death:
 - Ordained by God and necessary for our salvation
 - Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 8:31 & 10:45; Acts 4:27-28

Tool #3: Experience

- Could MTD survive outside of America?
 - Does it fit the experience of non-Americans?
- Christians in other parts of the world...
 - Sincerely believe in Jesus and pray to God, yet experience poverty and persecution – and joy!
- MTD's superficial view of God and suffering
 - A shallow anthropocentric worldview
 - An unstable halfway-house between Atheism (no purpose) and Biblical Theism (higher purpose)

Tool #8: Hope

- How can I know that I will end up in heaven?
- MTD worldview
 - How do I know I've been good enough?
 - Optimism... but with no foundation
- Christian worldview
 - I know I can't be good enough!
 - Jesus is a powerful savior and a perfect substitute
 - Optimism... and with a firm foundation
