

GOD 4. There is the belief in the existence of God, versus the belief there is no God. There is no evidence for the existence of God - while there is ample evidence that God does not exist.*
But to have a belief in a concept of God does not necessarily mean one accepts God as the creator and overseer of the universe who rules our lives, cares for us and redeems our sins.
Thus many people enjoy being part of a religious community and while they partake in religious festivities, they - somewhat paradoxically - don't believe a traditional, religious God exists.**

**God's existence is disproved by religions claiming exclusivity for the rightness of their belief - how could a caring God welcome some believers but reject others?*

Thus - importantly - if God existed, there would be no competing religions, but a commonly understood, easily observable by all, omnipresent divine authority.

Besides, with a caring God, how does one explain the suffering resultant from rife, destructive religious fundamentalism? How, in fact, does one explain evil?

This is one of the most powerful arguments for the non-existence of God: Either God wanted to eliminate evil, but he could not - or he could, but didn't want to.

Hence God is either impotent or evil. What choice! Believers now say, 'grief purifies us and with all that evil, God teaches us mercy.' Some lessons, dear God!

the·ism

the belief in the existence of a benevolent, omnipotent, omniscient God, who created, sustains and rules the world, who is involved, interested and answers prayers

de·ism

a belief in God based on reason rather than revelation, and involving the view that God has set the universe in motion but does not interfere with how it runs

non-the·ism

non-theists understand God as a symbol of human values, ethics and source of compassion and support; many schools of Buddhism are considered non-theistic

pan·the·ism

holds that God is the universe and is found in nature

a·the·ism

without proof of God's existence, it's clear no God exists

ag·nos·ti·cism

we can't know if God exists or not, but could be convinced if proof is at hand (agnostics keep an open mind)

***The belief in a traditional God is so illogical and the existence of that God so unlikely, it is probable that many outwardly religious people don't believe in God.*

Thus while they inwardly may reject God but outwardly adhere to the customs of their religious community, they may well have their own personal spiritual beliefs.

Indeed, it is likely some clerics are quietly convinced non-theists. They won't feel this stance compromises their beliefs or their position within their congregation.

There is this very droll story about two priests - good friends, so they could talk about anything - who stay up all night and discuss whether God exists or not.

*After much deliberation (and probably a good deal of veritas found in vino***) they agree God doesn't exist. But in the morning the one finds the other in prayer.*

"What are you doing - I thought last night we had agreed that God does not exist?" "Oh well, indeed; but tell me - what does that have to do with anything?"

**** In vino veritas (in wine is the truth) is a phrase that refers to the circumstance that people seem to become uninhibited and tell the truth when they drink alcohol.*

John Cornwell, director of the Cambridge Science and Human Dimension Project, says: "Sensible theologians, in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, don't understand God as an object. Hence they don't perceive of God as some kind of 'button-pusher' who sets things going."

***A 45 year old regular church-goer said "when I was in my teens I was called to confirm my belief in a traditional God, the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. I said to the minister 'I just think this is all rubbish' and he replied 'well, you know, I think you're right.'"*

Churchgoers keen to take a pew despite their disbelief, Leesha McKenny, SMH, 7 Jan 2012