

Summary: “The Belief Scale”

Designed by the psychologist prof. Dr. Dirk Hutsebaut, based on the typology of David M. Wulff (professor of psychology in Wheaton College, U.S.A.)

Inclusion versus exclusion of transcendent belief (vertical axis)

Does someone believe in God, or not? Is there a transcendent God involved in the structure of someone’s philosophy of life?

Literal versus symbolic interpretation of religion (horizontal axis)

The way in which religious content is being experienced and processed: in a literal or symbolical way.

Literally, closed and unchanging

Inclusion of transcendence

Exclusion of transcendence

Symbolic, open and dynamic

The specific combination of these four dimensions results in four different options for coping with religious beliefs.

Four cognitive religious belief styles / belief attitudes / approaches to religion and faith:

1. Literal belief or Orthodoxy
2. Literal disbelief
3. Relativism
4. Post-critical belief

Literal belief or Orthodoxy

literal affirmation
certainty
religion is good
tendency to intolerance
fundamentalism / fanaticism

Literal disbelief

literal disaffirmation
certainty
religion is bad
tendency to intolerance

Literally, closed and unchanging

Inclusion of transcendence

Exclusion of transcendence

Post-critical belief

symbolic affirmation
uncertainty
religion is good
tendency to tolerance

Relativism

symbolic disaffirmation
uncertainty
neutral attitude to religion
tendency to tolerance

Symbolic, open and dynamic