

Theistic Arguments: The Craig Program, 6

Edwin Chong
March 27, 2005

Basic-Belief Argument

- # God can be *immediately known and experienced*.
- # Not really an argument for God's existence.
- # Rather, it's the claim that we can know that God exists wholly apart from the arguments simply by immediately experiencing Him.
- # This is the way people described in the Bible knew God [John Hick].
- # God was not inferred to be the best explanation of their religious experiences; rather in their religious experience they came to know God *directly*.
- # Philosophers call beliefs like this *properly basic beliefs*.

Properly Basic Beliefs

- # Properly basic beliefs are not based on some other beliefs; rather they are part of the foundations of a person's system of beliefs.
- # Examples of properly basic beliefs:
 - Reality of the past;
 - Existence of the external world;
 - Presence of other minds like our own.
- # Properly basic beliefs cannot be proved; but that doesn't mean that they are arbitrary.
- # They are grounded in the sense that they are formed in the context of certain experiences.

March 2005

3

Grounding for Belief in God

- # Belief in God is a properly basic belief grounded in experience of God, as we discern him in nature, conscience, etc.
- # But what about those who claim to have properly basic beliefs that are inconsistent with belief in God?
- # William Alston: in such a situation, neither party knows how to demonstrate to the other that he alone has veridical (true), rather than delusory, experience.
- # But this standoff does not undermine rationality of belief in God: for even if the believer's process of forming his belief were as reliable as can be, he'd still have no way of giving a proof of this fact.
- # How to break this deadlock? Alston: do whatever is feasible to find common ground, like logic and empirical facts.

March 2005

4

Craig-Edwards Debate 2002

- # Listen to the debate between William Lane Craig and Brian Edwards, Easter 2002:
<http://media.gospelcom.net/rzim/Nzdebate2.mp3>