Defining Religion—Taxonomies

Metaphysical taxonomy
1. Supernature as different in kind or in degree. [Dualism to Pantheism.]
2. The supernatural as one or as many. [Monotheism to Polytheism]
3. The supernatural as impersonal or as personal. [God/Allah to Being/Spirit]
4. The supernatural as all-powerful to powerful. [Omnipotence to Limited powers]
5. The supernatural as in control or to no longer controlling. [Theism to Deism.]
6. The supernatural as uncontrollable or as controllable. [Puppetmaster to Magic.]
7. The supernatural as benevolent or as malevolent. [As Love to as Fear.]

Ethical taxonomy
1. Range from complete denial of natural dimension to partial compromise. [Aasceticism to Compatibilism]
2. Rules as consequence-oriented (Heaven/Hell) or as taboo/duty (e.g., Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6:6)
3. Powerless to achieve grace/enlightenment (e.g., Calvinism) versus powerful to achieve grace/enlightenment (some Buddhisms). Catholicism as midway.

Epistemological taxonomy
1. Is the supernatural knowable? [Gnostic to agnostic]
2. How do I relate cognitively to the supernatural? [Rational to non-rational: reason to mysticism to faith.]
3. Directness of access: Access to the supernatural as experiential or as non-experiential. [Mystic to natural theology to faith]
4. Systematicity: One’s beliefs about the supernatural as not necessarily consistent, argued or as internally consistent and argued. [Parables to Theology]

Human Nature taxonomy
1. Power: Noble quest to Humility.
2. Goodness: Original Sin to Made in the image of God.
3. Likeness to God.
4. Dualist vs. integrationist.

Social taxonomy
1. Institutional or not.
2. Individual quest or collective. [E.g., Protestant/Catholic, Theravada/Mahayana]
3. Elitism or universal.
4. Monastic or socially engaged.