

An outline of what we might study at St. Esprit Bible Study on Wednesday evenings.

We don't have to cover all of these topics, they are just broad suggestions and questions as a starting point.

1. What or who is God?

- The relationship between philosophy and theology when talking about God.
- What do the Creeds say about God, and who wrote them?
- Are there any 'proofs' for the existence of God?
- Can we know anything about God through nature?
- Can human beings know about God without God choosing to reveal him/herself?

2. What are the sources of theology and religious thought?

- The Bible and the principles of its interpretation. Literal and allegorical senses of scripture.
- What is the relationship between scripture and tradition?
- How do our personal experience and our capacity to reason become a sources for beliefs about God? Can we always trust our experience?
- What do we mean when we talk about 'revelation'? Is the Bible unchangeable 'revealed' truth?

3. What or who do Christians in particular think God is?

- Where did evil come from, if God is all good?
- What is the point of the doctrine of the Trinity?
- Can God suffer, or is God completely changeless?
- What do we mean when we say that God is Love, or God is Compassionate?
- What does the theology of icons teach us about God?

4. Who was Christ?

- What did early Christians think when they said that Jesus was both human and divine?
- How do we understand the incarnation?
- Is it correct to call Mary "The Mother of God"?
- Is Jesus unique in all of human history?
- Can we know anything about the real historical Jesus?

5. What is Salvation, and how does Christ 'save' us?

- Theories of atonement, propitiation, penal substitution, redemption, ransom, recapitulation, and Jesus as an example of love in action.
- Salvation and Theosis, or Deification.

6. What do we mean by human nature, and how does it relate to sin and grace?

- Are we all condemned through original sin?
- Is salvation unmerited, or do we have to earn it somehow?
- What role do we play in our own salvation, if any?
- Is everything predestined, including our salvation or perdition? Are we really free to choose?
- What roles do guilt, shame and repentance play when we talk about the grace of God?

7. What is the church for?

- How does salvation work in the context of belonging to a church?
- Should there be only one church?
- How does the church relate to the state?
- What role should popes, bishops, priests and deacons play in the church?

8. Baptism, confirmation, holy communion.

- What is sacramental theology?

- How do the sacraments work?
- What is the relationship between the sacramental and the magical?
- Is Christ physically present in the bread and wine?

9. How does Christianity relate to other religions?

- What happens to people who were born before the time of Christ?
- Is the religious instinct universal, or does Christianity claim something unique and special?
- How do we hold our Christian claims in a pluralist culture?

10. What will happen at the end of time?

- What will happen to creation?
- What do we believe about hell, heaven and purgatory?
- Should we pray for the dead?
- Will we be reincarnated?
- What is the Christian hope, and how do we live it?
- Are we immortal by nature?

1. I will prepare some passages for us to look at together, and have them available on the website and as handouts on Wednesday evenings.
2. We may want to spend more than one week on any given topic: this is not set in stone.
3. We will also examine the bible readings for the coming Sunday to see how they pertain to the topic we are covering on that particular evening.

I. According to theology and philosophy, what (or who) is God?

How did the earliest Christians think that pagan thought - particularly philosophy - related to what they believed about God?

Justin Martyr: (148 - 161 AD, written in Greek in Rome, influenced by Platonism)

We have been taught that Christ is God's firstborn, and we have proclaimed that he is the Logos, in whom every race of people have shared. Those who live according to the Logos are Christians, even though they might have been counted as atheists, like Socrates. We measure how good their philosophy is by relating it to how we think about the Logos. Because they didn't know the Logos in Christ, they often contradicted themselves. The Logos is about love, not about abstractions: because we believe that it was for our sake that he became a human being to share in our sufferings and bring us healing. Those who came before Christ could see this dimly, because God implanted the seed of the Logos in them.

Clement of Alexandria (200 AD)

Until the coming of Christ, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks to enable them to understand righteousness. Philosophy was a sort of preparatory training for true religion. It was a custodian to bring the Greeks to righteousness, just as the Jewish Law was a custodian that brought the Hebrews to Christ. Christ is the true perfection to which Greek philosophy and the Hebrew law were pointing.

Tertullian (220 AD Written in Latin)

Philosophy is worldly wisdom. The heretics use it as a weapon - they found in it ideas like the hierarchies of heavenly beings and the trinitarian nature of human beings; all this is just Platonism, not Christianity. What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? Our wisdom comes from Solomon, who taught that it was necessary to find God in the simplicity of our hearts. When we believe, we believe nothing more or less than Jesus shows us.

Augustine (400 AD)

Using the Exodus as a pattern, he says that there is no reason why Christians shouldn't plunder the riches of philosophy and put them to the service of preaching the gospel. Israel left all their heavy burdens back in Egypt, and carried off its gold and treasures: that's what we should do with philosophy.

The Nicene Creed (325 AD)

Against Arius

The Apostles Creed (700 AD)

A formal declaration of faith for those who wanted to be baptised. Twelve affirmations

Can the existence of God be proven?

Anselm of Canterbury (1079)

In the context of a devotional manual intended to help people to meditate, Anselm formulated what people have called the 'ontological argument' for the existence of God. He defined God as "That than which no greater thing can be thought." The Ultimate reality, or Being. He claimed that God cannot be thought of as not existing, because if the notion of God was just in our imagination, it would not be the greatest being imaginable, since our *idea* of God is inferior to God's *reality*. God - in God's very nature transcends everything that exists. Once a believer understands what the word God means, it is impossible for God not to exist for him or her.

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1272) *The Summa Theologiae*

Thomas believed that it was possible to deduce the existence of God through human reason, although he said that some things about God could only be known because of Christ's incarnation, and through the revealing power of the Holy Spirit. He thought you could logically deduce the existence of God in five ways.

1. Everything is in motion (from the planets to the tiniest breeze), everything is changing. The world is not static, it is dynamic. Each motion must have something that set it in motion, and that thing must have had something to set it in motion in its turn. There must be a single origin of all this motion, and that origin is God.
2. The argument of cause and effect: all effects have to be traced back to a single original cause, and that is God.

3. The world contains many beings whose existence is contingent on something else. They don't exist out of necessity. Only God can be said to exist out of necessity: God's existence (unlike ours) is not caused by another being. The original cause of being can only be someone whose existence is necessary, and that is God.
4. Truth, goodness and nobility exist in our world. But where do those values come from? Aquinas says that there must be something which is in itself true, good, and noble, and that something is God.
5. The world shows signs of being created by an intelligent force. The world looks designed for a purpose. The designer must be God.

Martin Luther (1518, defense of his Theses in Heidelberg)

Luther didn't think that human reason produced the soundest or best theology - let alone enable people to logically deduce the existence of God. He called theologians like Aquinas "Theologians of Glory". For Luther, the Cross was the only place to find the nature of God, and described people who believed this as "Theologians of the Cross." God can only be found revealed in and through the cross of Christ.

John Calvin (1559 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*)

According to Calvin, faith is not about believing or deducing that God exists, it is about trusting the promises of God. For him, Jesus is proof of the truth of God's promises. God is revealed to our minds and sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Doubt is therefore necessary "We therefore affirm that believers have a perpetual struggle with their own lack of faith, and are far from possessing a peaceful conscience, never interrupted by any disturbance."

John Locke (1690 *Essay concerning human understanding*) Empiricism and the Deists

The empiricists concentrated on gaining knowledge through an analysis of human experience. He claims that we take our small and simple human experiences (of existence, knowledge, power, pleasure, happiness etc), and then expand them, or enlarge them to form an idea of God. "For it is Infinity, which, joined to our ideas of Existence, Power, Knowledge etc., makes that complex idea, whereby we represent to ourselves the best we can, the supreme being." The idea of God is made up of human rational and moral qualities, projected to an infinite degree.

Blaise Pascal (1662 *Pensées*)

Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas. Pascal was a critic of the trend towards purely rationalistic defenses of the Christian faith. He thought that human reason had several weaknesses; it is dangerous to exalt the human mind over the human heart. There are an infinite number of things that are beyond human wisdom. Knowledge of God is of little use to anyone, unless it is accompanied by an awareness of human misery and of the possibility of redemption in Christ. Finally, it is very proper and even necessary for God to be partially concealed from us and to remain a mystery. If that weren't the case, humanity would become arrogant and too trusting in its own ability to discover the full truth. Humanity is obliged to seek assistance in the form of divine revelation.

John Henry Newman (1870 *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*)

The grounds of our faith don't lie in rational arguments or demonstrations. Our faith rests on a deep-seated intuitive or instinctive knowledge of God. Immediate and spontaneous feelings or revelations can't be grasped or expounded by reason alone. There is no knock-down argument for God's existence. But there are a series of considerations which, if you take them together, will persuade you of the truth of the gospel.

Karl Barth (1934, Paris Lectures to the Protestant Theological Faculty)

"Of all the sciences which stir the head and heart, theology is the fairest. It is closest to human reality, and gives us the clearest view of the truth after which all science quests. The task which is laid upon theology, and which it should and can fulfill, is its service in the Church, to the Lord of the Church. In theology, the Church seeks again and again to examine itself critically as it asks itself what it means and implies to be a Church among humanity. Theology is not a private subject for theologians only. Nor is it a private subject for professors. Fortunately, there have always been pastors who have understood more about theology than most

professors. Nor is theology a private subject of study for pastors. Fortunately, there have repeatedly been congregation members, and often whole congregations, who have pursued theology energetically while their pastors were theological infants or barbarians. Theology is a matter for the church.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1952 *Culture and Value*)

Wittgenstein wasn't impressed by the logic in the arguments for which were supposed to 'prove' the existence of God. He said that believers themselves don't base their faith on those arguments. "I think that what believers who have furnished such proofs have wanted to do is to give their belief an intellectual analysis and foundation, although they themselves would never have come to believe as a result of such proofs. Life itself can educate one to a belief in God. And experiences too are what bring this about. But I don't mean visions and other forms of sense experience, but sufferings of various sorts. Experiences, thoughts - life can force this concept on us."

Paul Clayton (2004) *In whom we live and move and have our being*

"Panentheism (Everything in God) The belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in him, but (as against Pantheism) that his being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe."

2. What do we use as sources when we think about Christianity?

Some of this week's questions:

- The Bible or "Holy Scripture"
What is the nature of the Bible's authority?
How do we interpret it? Is 'interpretation' necessary, or is the Bible's meaning self-evident?
- Because the Bible has been used to justify all sorts of beliefs - including things that are not even remotely Christian, how does the tradition of the church influence our reading of the Bible?
- What do we mean when we talk about revelation? Is revelation just the imparting of inside knowledge? Or is revelation more like the inauguration of an on-going relationship with God? Can we always trust our experience?
- Can we know anything about God from nature? If so, (or if not.....) what does that say about science, philosophy and other religions?

The Muratorian Fragment (Discovered in 1740 Composed in bad Latin in 190 AD - maybe later)

The earliest known list of the books of the New Testament. Difficult to translate and to read, because it's sometimes unclear. The first part of it is missing, so it begins with the Gospel of Luke. It makes no mention of Hebrews, James, or I and II Peter.

The document says that Paul wrote seven important letters (Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, Thessalonians, and Romans. (he wrote follow-up letters for the sake of clarification to the Corinthians and Thessalonians) Philemon, Titus and I and II Timothy were personal letters, and should not be read as having authority in general church discipline. Somebody writing in Paul's name also wrote letters to the Laodiceans and the Alexandrians. Jude and I and II John are acceptable, as is the Apocalypse of John and the letters of Peter, which are not universally acknowledged in all churches. The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon. The Shepherd of Hermas is inspiring reading, but it must be remembered that it was written by Hermas "in our times in the city of Rome".

Irenaeus (125 - 202 AD) *Against Heresies*

The defense of orthodoxy against Gnosticism. Tradition's task is to remain faithful to the apostolic witness in the face of non-Christian interpretations. For Irenaeus, tradition - the way in which the apostles had taught their successors - offers stability to the church and a defense against all the Gnostic positions.

"Scriptures contain a variety of statements, and it is not possible for those who do not know the tradition to find the truth in them. For this has not been handed down by means of writings, but by the living voice. Everyone who wishes to perceive the truth should consider the apostolic tradition, which has been made know in every church in the entire world. The apostles have, as it were, deposited this truth in all its fullness in this depository, so that whoever wants to may draw from this water of life. This is the gate of life; all others are thieves and robbers."

Tertullian (160 - 225 AD) ("What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?")

The importance of tradition and apostolic succession. He was disturbed by the intrusion of paganism into Christianity, and claimed that true Christianity depends on remaining true to, and historically continuous with the apostles. He was a lawyer by training, and wanted to establish guidelines on who was an acceptable or unacceptable teacher in the church. "The unity of the church is demonstrated by their sharing of the peace, by their title of brother and sisterhood, and by their obligation of hospitality. If the Lord Jesus Christ sent out the apostles to preach, no preachers other than those which are appointed by Christ are to be received. If anyone wants to claim that they are teaching with apostolic authority, let them unfold the order of their bishops, showing that there is a succession from the beginning, so that their first bishop had as his precursor and predecessor an apostle or some apostolic man who was associated with the apostles."

Hippolytus (170 - 235 AD) The typological interpretation of scripture

Eve / Mary Tree of life / Cross Jonah in the whale / Christ in the tomb Isaac / Jesus Passover / Last Supper. Popular through middle ages (especially in artistic juxtapositions), and in Eastern Orthodox Church. Isaiah 18:2 "Ah, land of whirring wings which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, which sends ambassadors by the Nile, in vessels of papyrus upon the waters! Go you swift messengers, to a nation, tall and smooth...." Hippolytus typologically interprets the papyrus boat. "The oars of the ship are the churches. The sea is the universe in which the church, like a boat on the open sea, is shaken but does not sink, because she has Christ on board as an experienced navigator. At the center she has the prize of the passion of Christ, carrying with her his cross. Her prow points east, and her stern to the west. The two steering oars are the two Testaments, the ropes are taut, like the love of Christ. She carries water on board, like the washing of baptism. Her sail receives the breath of the Spirit. The sailors stand to port and starboard, like our holy guardian angels."

Clement of Alexandria (150 - 215 AD) *Stromata* Fourfold interpretation of scripture (Quadrige)

"The meaning of scripture is to be understood by us in four ways, in addition to the literal sense. As displaying a sign, as establishing a command for right conduct, or making known a prophecy."

1. The literal sense.
2. The allegorical sense - i.e. what we should believe
3. The moral sense i.e. what we should do; how we should behave
4. The anagogical sense (literally, *leading above*) i.e. what we should hope for - a prophecy, the end of time.

Origen (184 - 253 AD) The three ways of reading scripture

Origen draws a distinction between 'uneducated' and 'educated' Christians - a distinction which not everyone acknowledged (needless to say....) He claims that different Christians are at different levels of maturity, and read and interpret the Bible accordingly. His three ways of reading scripture are related to our distinction between body, mind and spirit. "A human being consists of body, soul and spirit, so also does the scripture which is the gift of God designed for human salvation." "First, the simpler sort (of Christians) are edified by what may be called the 'body' of Scripture. This is the name I give to the immediate acceptance. Secondly, those who have made some progress are edified by the 'soul' of scripture. Thirdly, the perfect are edified by the spiritual law, which contains the shadow of the good things to come."

Augustine (390 AD) Two ways of reading the Old Testament

The Manichaean sect founded by Mani in the Sasanian Empire in the 200's - was a form of dualistic Zoroastrianism which saw the world as a forum for the equal powers of good and evil. They interpreted the Old Testament in a very literalistic way, and dismissed it as the work of the Evil One. Augustine maintained that they were reading it only literally, and they needed a veil lifted from their eyes so that they could read it allegorically. "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life (II Corinthians 3:6) "God gave humanity a pedagogue whom they might fear, and later gave them a master whom they might live. In these commands of the law which Christians may not now lawfully obey, such as the Sabbath, circumcision, sacrifices and the like, there are contained such mysteries that every religious person may understand that there is nothing more dangerous than to take whatever is there literally, and nothing more wholesome than to let the truth be revealed in the Spirit. This is what happens to those who earnestly and piously, not proudly and wickedly, seek the sense of the scriptures. The secret truths are conveyed in figures that are to be brought to light by interpretation."

Jerome (347 - 420) Patron Saint of Translators

"I beg you, my dearest brother, to live among the sacred books, to meditate on them, to know nothing else, to seek nothing else. Does this not seem to you a bit of heaven here on earth? Do not take offence on account of the simplicity of Holy Scripture or the unsophistication of its words, for these are due either to translation faults or have some deeper purpose. For Scripture offers itself in such a way that an uneducated congregation can more easily learn from it, and the learned and the unlearned can discover different meanings in the same sentence. "

Vincent of Lérins (434 AD) The role of tradition.

Vincent thought that Augustine had introduced some speculative and unhelpful ideas into Christianity; especially when arguing for predestination. "Holy Scripture is not accepted in a universal sense. the same statements are interpreted in one way by one person, in another by someone else, with the result that there seem to be as many opinions as there are people." He laid down three criteria by which authentic Christianity can be identified. Ecumenicity (believed by everywhere) antiquity (being believed always) and consent (being believed by all people.

Ludolf of Saxony (1300 - 1378) The role of the imagination

"If you want to draw fruit from these mysteries, you must offer yourself as present to what was said and done through our lord Jesus Christ with the whole affective power of your mind, with loving care, with lingering delight, thus laying aside all other worries and care." Ignatius Loyola read him before developing his *Spiritual Exercises*. "Be present at Christ's birth and circumcision, Go with the wise men to Bethlehem. Be there at his death, to have compassion on him and to grieve with him. Touch his body with a kind of devout curiosity, handling one by one the wounds of your savior who has died for you. Read then of what has been done as though they were happening now."

The Council of Trent (1545 - 1563) Scripture and Tradition

A Roman Catholic reaction to what they thought of as Protestant irresponsibility in relation to the questions of the authority and interpretation of Scripture.

1. Scripture is not the only source of revelation; tradition was a vital supplement, which Protestants irresponsibly denied.
2. The Protestant lists of canonical books are deficient, they lack the apocryphal books.
3. The Vulgate translation (Jerome's version) of the bible is reliable and authoritative.
4. The Church is the only authority in biblical interpretation, against the rampant individualism of the protestant interpreters.

The French Protestant reaction (1559)

WE know these books to be canonical, and the sure rule of our faith, not so much by the common accord and consent of the Church, as by the testimony and inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit which enables us to distinguish them from other ecclesiastical books which, however useful can never become the basis for any articles of faith. We believe that the word contained in these books has proceeded from God and receives its authority from Him alone, and not from human beings.

James I (1604)

"The whole scripture is directed by God's spirit, thereby to instruct the whole Church militant, till the end of the world. It is composed of two parts, the Old and New Testament. The ground of the former is the law, which shows our sin and contains justice. The ground of the other is Christ, who pardoning sin, contains grace." The translators of the King James Version laid great store around translation as a spiritual exercise: "Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well (which is deep) without a bucket or something to draw with."

3. God and Nature What is Revelation?

Some of this week's questions:

- Can we know anything about God from nature? If so, (or if not.....) what does that say about science, philosophy and other religions?
- What do we mean when we talk about revelation? Is revelation just the imparting of inside knowledge? Or is revelation more like the inauguration of an on-going relationship with God? Can we always trust our experience? What do we mean when we talk about inspiration? What do we mean when we talk about the inspiration of the Bible? What role does tradition play in communicating revelation or inspiration?

Martin Luther: Revelation in Christ

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. God does not want to be known except through Christ, nor can He be known in any other way. He is the mirror through which we see God and know his will.

BUT: Romans 1:19-20 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. "There is a twofold knowledge of God - General and Particular. All people have the general knowledge that: God exists, he has created heaven and earth., that he is righteous, that he punishes the wicked etc... But what is the point of knowing that God exists if you don't know what his will is for you? You will just end up worshiping an idol. General knowledge about God exists, but there is a more specific knowledge of God that exists in the Christian community.

John Calvin *Institutes* 1559

"There is within the human mind, and that by natural instinct, a sense of divinity. So that no one might take refuge in the pretext of ignorance, God frequently renews and sometimes increases this awareness, so that all people, recognizing that there is a God and that he is their creator, are condemned by their own testimony because they have failed to worship him and give their lives to his service..... There has been no region since the beginning of the world, no city, no home that could exist without religion. This fact in itself points to a sense of divinity inscribed in the hearts of all people." Calvin says we can know about God from two places:

- A 'natural knowledge' implanted in our minds - an 'instinct'.
- Knowledge of God that comes from an inspection of the natural world.

Calvin inspired an interest in natural theology in the Reformation world - he provided a great impetus to the development of biology and the physical sciences in the Lowlands. (Zacharias Jansen and the invention of the microscope). "We know God in two manners. First by the creation, preservation and government of the universe, which is before your eyes as a most beautiful book, in which all creatures, great and small, are like so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God." (Confession of faith of Reformed Walloon and Flemish Churches (1561).

Sir Thomas Browne *Religio Medici* 1642

He was a physician in Norwich, England, and a scholar and early scientist. "To make a revolution every day is the nature of the sun, because of that necessary course which God hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve but by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion. Now this course of Nature God seldom alters or perverts, but like an excellent Artist, hath so contrived His work that with the self same instrument, without a new creation, he may effect his obscurest designs." (He calls God a 'skillful geometrician' The most famous quotation from his book is, "Art is the perfection of Nature. Nature is the Art of God.")

von Zinzendorf (1700 - 1760) Moravian pietist preacher and hymn writer.

The experiences of faith can't be contradicted by reason! Zinzendorf is reacting against the trend of his day which saw reason as the fundamental arbiter in faith and theology.

1. Faith can be grasped without reason; if not, you'd have to be intelligent to be religious.

2. Religion has to be grasped through experience alone, without any concepts. Otherwise disabled, deaf or blind person couldn't be religious.
3. The truth of experience is worth more than the truth of concepts. It is better to be ignorant than a fool.
4. Conceptual understanding becomes more and more complicated with age, education etc. Understanding through experience only deepens; it doesn't change.

Jonathan Edwards (1703 - 1758)

The growing challenge to Christian theology posed by the rationalism of the enlightenment. Jonathan Edwards saw harmony between the 'book of nature' and the 'book of Scripture'. A religion of nature (rationalism) could only find its fulfillment in the Christian gospel.

"The works of God are but a kind of voice or language of God to instruct intelligent beings in things pertaining to Himself.. Wherever we are, and whatever we are about, we may see divine things excellently represented and held forth. The immense magnificence of the visible world in inconceivable vastness, the incomprehensible height of the heavens, is but a time of the infinite magnificence, height and glory of God's world in the spiritual world."

William Paley (1743 - 1805) *Natural Theology* An influence on Charles Darwin, who read this book.

A great advocate of natural theology. "In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there. I might possibly answer, it had lain there forever. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground? When we come to inspect the watch, we perceive that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose. The inference is that the watch must have had a maker, that there must have existed, at some time, and at some place or other, an artificer who formed it for the purpose to which we find it actually to answer; who comprehended its construction and designed its use. " Paley was impressed by Newton's discovery of celestial mechanics - the entire universe conceived of as a complex mechanism. Mechanism implies design - especially at a time which saw the birth of the industrial revolution in England.

John Henry Newman 1837

The Anglican 'middle way' - the *via media*, between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. The Protestants tended to emphasize Scripture ALONE, whereas the Roman Catholics placed their emphasis on the *magisterium* - that is, the teaching office of the church, which was needed to understand and interpret Scripture. Newman tried to synthesize the two approaches

Archibald Alexander Hodge (1797 - 1878) 'The Old Princeton Theology'

"The sacred writers were so influenced by the Holy Spirit that their writings are as a whole and in every part God's Word to us - absolutely infallible when interpreted in the sense intended, and hence clothed with absolute divine authority."

Plenary inspiration: All parts of the Bible - the Bible as a whole - is the Word of God.

Verbal inspiration: The language, the individual words and the thoughts of the Bible express the thought God intended to convey with infallible accuracy.

God didn't just produce the words: he produced the historical context in which the words were possible "The natural and the supernatural interpenetrate.

God gave the writers supernatural revelation, by vision or by language.

God inspired the writers, acting on and through their natural faculties in all they wrote.

Inspiration: The background 'pulse' of God's presence = a constant experience.

Revelation: Given only 'when needed' A truth that the writer could otherwise not know about.

John Meyendorff (1926 - 1992) Living tradition

"Dead traditionalism cannot be truly traditional. It is an essential characteristic of patristic theology that it was able to face the challenges of its own time while remaining consistent with the original apostolic Orthodox faith. Simply to *repeat* what the Fathers said is to be unfaithful to their spirit and to the intention embodied in their theology..... True tradition is always a living tradition. Its content is not an abstract proposition, it is the living Christ himself."

Wilhelm Herrmann (1846 - 1922) What is revelation?

God communicating directly with us, in a way that we can be sure that he speaks clearly to us and hears and considers our speech in his operations. It is only on God's terms. "He does not suffer men to reach him through any efforts of their own." Revelation doesn't mean forcing yourself to believe in doctrine, like: "You must believe that God made the world; that men sprang from a single pair; that God's son became a man; that God's demand for the punishment of the guilty has been satisfied by the death of his Son. He who determines so to believe will only cause distress to his soul. We leave all these fruitless endeavors at religious self-help behind, when we entirely reject the idea that we are to believe doctrines. God makes himself known to us, so that we may recognize him, through a fact - on the strength of which we are able to believe in him. That fact is the appearance of Jesus in history. Through the man Jesus we are lifted up into a true fellowship with God. Doctrines are only a way of avoiding the person of Jesus." Herrmann believed that it is possible to arrive at a certainty of faith through the subjective impression which the Jesus of the gospels makes on the sensitive reader.

Emil Brunner (1930s)

The personal nature of divine revelation. Influenced by Martin Buber (*Ich und du* - I and you 1927) I - you relations are personal. I - it relations are impersonal. Our relationship with God is of the first sort: it is mutual. Revelation isn't the communication of information. If so, God would be an *it*. If God is a "You", then revelation has to take the form of a personal disclosure.

Two modern, 'interpersonal' problems with the idea that God can be met with directly in scripture:

Rudolf Bultmann 1941 Demythologization.

"Can Christian preaching expect modern people who accept the mythical view of the world as true? To do so would be both senseless and impossible. It would be senseless, because there is nothing specifically Christian in the mythical view of the world as such. It is simply the cosmology of a pre-scientific age. It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles. Our task is to produce an existentialist interpretation of the dualistic mythology of the New Testament."

Phyllis Trible b. 1932 Depatriarchalizing in Biblical interpretation

"Born and bred in a land of patriarchy, the Bible abounds in male imagery and language. For centuries interpreters have explored and exploited this male language to articulate theology, and to instruct human beings - female and male - in who they are, what rules they should play, and how they should behave. So harmonious has seemed this association of scripture with sexism, of faith with culture, that only a few have even questioned it. Feminism is a prophetic movement, examining the status quo, pronouncing judgment and calling for repentance." Three main approaches or perspectives:

- Uncovering the cases of inferiority, subordination and abuse of women in scripture.
- Discerning within scripture a critique of patriarchy - discovering and recovering traditions in the Bible that challenge the culture. (God as midwife in Psalm 22:9-10 God as giving birth to us: Deut 32:18. Emphasis on the stories that talk about the role of women - e.g. the two women who protected Moses, Shiprah and Puah. The serpent talking to the woman as representative of the whole human race - not just the men. "The first woman is theologian, ethicist, hermeneut and rabbi. Defying the stereotypes of patriarchy, she reverses what the church, synagogue and academy have preached about women." Trible calls this a 'remnant theology'.
- To offer sympathetic readings of abused women. "The betrayal, rape, murder and dismemberment of the concubine in Judges 19 is a striking example. A feminist approach, with attention to reader response, interprets the story on behalf of the concubine as it calls to remembrance her suffering and death."

4. What or who do Christians in particular think God is?

Some of this week's questions:

- Where did evil come from, if God is all good?
- Can God suffer, or is God completely changeless?
- What do we mean when we say that God is Love, or God is Compassionate?

Athenagoras of Athens 177 BC Are Christians atheists?

Pagans accused the early Christians of being atheists, because they denied the divinity of the Roman pantheon and refused to worship the Emperor. The charges took hold easily, because Christians tended to meet in secret and few people knew what they believed. "So we are not atheists, in that we acknowledge one God, who is uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible and without limit. He is apprehended only by the intellect and the mind, and is surrounded by light, beauty, spirit and indescribable power. The universe was created and ordered, and is presently sustained through his Logos; for we acknowledge also a 'son of God'. It was through his action that all things were made, in that the Father and the son are one. He came forth to be the pattern and motivating power of all physical things. We affirm that the Holy Spirit, who was active in the prophets, is an effluence of God, who flows from him and returns to him, like a beam of the sun."

Irenaeus (190 AD) What is the significance of evil?

"When humanity was little, it was only a child. It had to grow and reach full maturity. God prepared a place for humanity which was better than this world. A paradise of such beauty and goodness that the Word of God constantly walked in it, and talked with humanity, prefiguring the future time when he would live with human beings and talk with them, associating with human beings and teaching them righteousness. But humanity was a child; and its mind was not yet fully mature, and thus humanity was easily led astray by the deceiver." Unlike Augustine (354 - 430) Irenaeus isn't saying that we are guilty of 'original sin'. He says that we were created weak and powerless, and so we lost our direction.

Tertullian (160 - 225 AD) Against the Platonists, who argued that God created the universe from pre-existent matter.

"My opponents say: 1) God could not have created anything out of himself, because whatever he created would then be part of himself. 2) God is totally good, and therefore wanted to make something totally good. But evil is found in creation. That evil must have come into being as a result of something else, not from a good God, and that 'something else' was matter. 3) If God is now Lord, and if God is forever Lord, he must have been Lord over something for all time: and that 'something' was matter.

I say: Everything required to be created; including matter. There was no matter before God came into being, otherwise you have to posit God's imperfection and incompleteness.

Origen (185 - 254) God created from pre-existent matter.

God fashioned the world from pre-existent matter. The process of creation is more like imposing an order on the world. The influence of Plato on Origen is very pronounced in his views on pre-existent matter.

Origen (185 - 254) What is the relationship between God and evil? What is *necessary evil*?

"God does not create evil; still, he does not prevent it when it is shown by others, although he could do so. But he uses both evil and those who show it for necessary purposes. For through those in whom there is evil, he brings distinction and testing to those who strive for the glory of virtue. Virtue, if unopposed, would not shine out nor become more glorious by being tested. Virtue is not virtue if it be untested and unexamined. Similarly, concerning the devil himself, if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that he had been forcibly prevented from sinning, or that the will to devil had been taken away from him after his sin, then at the same time there would have been taken from us the struggle against the wiles of the devil, and there would be no crown of victory in store for those who struggled."

Augustine (354 - 430) What is the relationship between good and evil?

Manichaeism provided a simple explanation for the origin of evil. There are in fact two deities: the evil or defective deity opposes the true and righteous God. The Manicheans were dualists.

"What will the cause (of our movement away from God) be? I have to answer that I do not know. While this will sadden you, it is nevertheless a true answer. For that which is nothing cannot be known. But hold to your opinion that no good thing can happen to you, to your senses or to your intelligence or to your way of thinking, that does not come from God. All good is from God. The movement of turning away, which we admit is sin, is a defective movement, and all defect comes from nothing. If you fear it, all you have to do is simply not to will it. If you do not will it, it will not exist."

Aquinas Can God sin?

"To sin is to fall short of a perfect action. Hence to be able to sin is to be able to be deficient in relation to an action, which cannot be reconciled with omnipotence"

Origen (185 - 254) Can God suffer?

"The savior descended to earth to grieve for the human race, and took our sufferings on himself before he endured the cross and deigned to assume our flesh. If he had not suffered, he would not have come to share in human life. What is the suffering which he suffered for us beforehand? It is the suffering of love. God Has taken our ways upon himself, just as the Son of God bore our sufferings. The Father himself is not impassible." BUT: "The Word remains the Word in his essential being and does not suffer what the body or soul suffers; that he comes down at a certain time to be with him who cannot behold the splendor and brightness of his godhead, and as it were becomes flesh, until he who has received him in this shape, being gradually raised to a higher level by the Word, may be able to gaze upon what I may call his primary form."

Anselm of Canterbury (1033 - 1109) If God can't suffer, how can God be compassionate? Theopaschitism

"But how are you merciful, yet at the same time impassible? For if you are impassible, you do not feel sympathy. And if you do not feel sympathy, your heart is not miserable on account of its sympathy for the miserable. Yet this is what compassion is. Yet if you are not compassionate, where does such great comfort for the miserable come from? So how, O Lord, are you both compassionate and not compassionate, unless it is because you are compassionate in terms of our experience, and not in terms of your own being. Therefore you are compassionate, in that you save the miserable, and you are not compassionate, in that you are not affected by any sympathy for misery." Anselm didn't want to admit any suggestion that God suffers. It would be undignified and bring God down to the human level.

Alexander of Hales (1185 - 1245) An English Franciscan says that God was not obliged to suffer, but he chose to suffer in Christ.

"In our own case, the possibility of suffering is linked to the necessity of suffering, and the will not to suffer cannot prevent suffering from taking place. In the case of the Lord, however, the possibility of suffering is not linked with the necessity of suffering. It is linked with a (voluntary) inclination to suffer." William of Ockham (1287 - 1347) made the same distinction between God's Absolute Power, and God's Ordained Power.

Julian of Norwich (1373) God as our loving and kind mother

"In this way, I saw that God rejoices to be our Father, and also that he rejoices to be our mother. God's love never allows us to lag behind. All this is due to God's innate goodness, and comes to us by operation of his grace. We need have no fear of this. We make our humble complaint to our beloved Mother, and he sprinkles us with his precious blood, and makes our soul pliable and tender. Beautiful and sweet is our heavenly mother in the sight of our souls. There is no higher state in this life than that of childhood, because of our inadequate and feeble capacity and intellect, until such time as our gracious mother shall bring us up to our Father's bliss."

John Owen (1616 - 1683) The Omnipotence of God, and its importance to Reformed and Puritan traditions. All is one; whatever God doth, and towards whomsoever, be they high or low, rich or poor, good or bad, all are the works of his hands, and he may deal with them as seems good unto him.

Hans Küng (b. 1928) A critique of the Patristic and Medieval idea of God's impassibility

"Medieval theology, like that of the early church, as a result of its dependence on classical Greek philosophy, was inclined much more to a metaphysic of being than to a metaphysic of becoming. And the notion of God's immutability, taken over from Greek metaphysics, served the apologists well in the struggle against Stoic

pantheism and Gnostic and Manichaeic dualism and for stressing the eternity and constancy of God. But the idea created a variety of difficulties for the apologists and the later fathers in their Christology, and it was the same with the scholastics when they came to reflect on the Christological question. The mystery is to be sought in the fact that God, to whom the metaphysicians have out of fear of imperfection have denied life and becoming, in fact lives, acts and becomes in perfection and from perfection. It means taking seriously the God who is wholly other, in whom being and becoming, remaining himself and going out from himself, transcendence and descendance, are not mutually exclusive."

Jürgen Moltmann (b. 1926) *The suffering of God The Crucified God*

"The early Fathers insisted on God's inability to suffer. An inability to suffer was the only contrast to passive suffering that was recognized in the early church. there is, however a third form of suffering - active suffering, the suffering of love, a voluntary openness to the possibility of being affected by outside influences. If God were really incapable of suffering, he would also be as incapable of loving as the God of Aristotle, who was loved by all, but could not love. Whoever is capable of love is also capable of suffering, because he is open to the suffering that love brings with it. Although he is always able to surmount that suffering because of love. He loves from the fullness of his being, and suffers because of his full and free love. On the cross, God calls to God, and dies to God. Only in this place is God 'dead' and not dead. What proceeds from this event is the Spirit of abandonment and self-giving love who raises up abandoned men."

Anne Carr (1934 - 2008) *Feminism and the maleness of God The problem of referring to God as He / She Father / Mother*

"Some feminist theologians call for the use of multiple metaphors and models for God and for the divine-human relationship, since none alone is adequate. One suggestion is the metaphor of God as 'friend'. there is a biblical basis for this in Jesus' saying about laying down one's life for one's friends, his reference to the Son of Man as a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus *is* the parable of God's friendship with people. Gospel writers depict his presence as transforming the lives of his friends. Friendship to the stranger, both as individual and as nation or culture is a model 'on our increasingly small and beleaguered planet where, if people do not become friends, they will not survive. The metaphor of God as friend corresponds to the feminist ideal of communal personhood, an ideal that entails non-competitive relationships among persons and groups that are characterized by mutuality and reciprocity rather than dualism and hierarchy. The theme of God's friendship is intensified in the life and death of Jesus, who reveals a God who suffers for, with and in people and invites them into a community of suffering with God and for others."

5. The Trinity is a distinctively Christian understanding of the nature of God.

- What are the reasons for thinking of God in this way?
- What things about the Doctrine of the Trinity do we find hardest to understand?
- What are the benefits of thinking of God in a Trinitarian way?
- Is God 'really' Three in One, or is this just the way in which God wants to be understood by human beings?

The earliest disputes in the Christian church were to do with the question "how can Jesus be God and a human at the same time?" Even though the early Church used Trinitarian formulae, there wasn't much concentration on the doctrine of the Trinity as such until about three hundred years after Christ's earthly ministry.

Basil of Caesarea (329 - 379) *The Cappadocian Fathers The question of the Holy Spirit*

What does the Spirit do? The Spirit plays a role in sanctification and deification of the believer. If the Spirit performs functions which are specific to God (creation, renewal, sanctification), it must follow that the Spirit shares in the divine nature. "It is not possible when one hears this name of Spirit to conceive of a limited nature which is subject to change and variation, or at all like any other creature. On the contrary, we must raise our thought to the highest level and think of a substance endowed with intelligence, of infinite power, of a greatness which knows no limit, which cannot be measured in times or ages, and which lavishes its good gifts. All who are in need of sanctification turn to the Spirit, all those who seek him who live by virtue, for his breath

refreshes them and comes to their aid in the pursuit of their natural and proper end. The spirit provides life. The spirit possesses abundant fullness. The spirit abides in himself, but is also present everywhere. He is shared without being affected; he remains whole and yet gives himself in the sharing, like a sunbeam whose warming light shines on the one who enjoys it as though it shone for him alone, yet it also lights the land and the sea, and mingles with the air. Souls in which the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual and send for their grace to others. From here comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of the mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, the sharing of the gifts of grace, heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, being made like God, and, greatest of all - being made a god.

Gregory of Nazianzus (380) Why is the doctrine of the Trinity not explicitly stated in scripture?

"The Old Testament preached the Father openly and the Son more obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son, and hinted at the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit dwells in us, and is revealed more clearly to us. It was not proper to preach the Son openly, while the divinity of the Father had not yet been admitted. Nor was it proper to accept the Holy Spirit before the divinity of the Son had been acknowledged. Instead, by gradual advances and partial ascents, we should move forward and increase in clarity, so that the light of the Trinity should shine." The Trinity as a human discernment of the realities which are disclosed by the process of divine revelation. The Trinity as the climax of the long and cautious process of reflection and analysis.

Hilary of Poitiers (300 - 368) The Christian faith relies on revelation, not reason.

"Preserve the piety of my faith without contamination, that I may always hold fast to what I possess, that is, what I professed in the creed of my regeneration when I was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Grant that I may adore you our Father, and your Son together with you, and that I may be worthy of the Holy spirit who is from you through your only begotten Son."

St. Augustine (400 - 416) on the Holy Spirit as love.

"Scripture teaches us that the Holy Spirit is neither of the Father alone nor of the Son alone, but of both, and this suggests to us the mutual love by which the Father and the Son love one another. The love which is of God and is God is especially the Holy Spirit.

Cyril of Alexandria (376 - 444) The expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria. The murder of Hypatia.

The Spirit as the locus of unity in the church.

All of us who have received the one and the same Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, are in a sense merged together with one another and with God. For if Christ, together with the Spirit of the Father and himself, comes to dwell in each one of us, though there are many of us, then it follows that the Spirit is still one and undivided. He binds together the spirit of each and every one of us. "

St. Augustine (400 - 416) The Trinity and psychological analogies.

The Trinity and the concept of love: a lover, a beloved and their mutual love.

"When I love anything there are three things present: I myself, what I love and love itself. For I cannot love unless I love a lover; for there is no love where nothing is loved. So there are three things, the lover, the loved and love." Augustine then elaborates this distinction in relation to the human mind loving itself and loving knowledge. "In the case of the three things by which the mind knows and loves itself, the trinity of mind, love and knowledge remains. There is no intermingling or loss of identity. The mind is distinct in itself, and is itself called mind, even though it is termed knowing, known or knowable in relation to its knowledge, and loving, loved or lovable in relation to the love with which it loves itself. The three are inseparable from each other, and yet each one of them is a distinct substance, and all together are one substance or essence." Augustine says that the mind is the apex of creation, and God has made us in God's image, therefore it is in the mind that we should look for traces of God's Trinitarian relations. Mind - Knowledge - Love. Memory - Understanding - Will. The human mind is an image of God.

Richard of St. Victor, Augustinian abbey in Paris. (1165) on love within the Trinity. Sharing, partnership.

The Social Trinity, rather than the psychological Trinity.

"If we concede that there exists in the true divinity some one person of such great benevolence that he wishes to have no riches or delights that he does not wish to share with others, and if he is of such great power that

nothing is impossible for him, and of such great happiness that nothing is difficult for him, then it is necessary to acknowledge that a Trinity of divine persons must exist. 1 There is nothing which gives more pleasure or which delights the soul more than the sweetness of loving. Only someone who has a partner and a loved one in that love that has been shown to him possesses the sweetness of such delights. So it follows that such a sharing of love cannot exist except among less than three persons. As the happiness of the suypremely powerful ONE cannot be lacking in what pleases him, so in the divinity it is impossible for two persons not to be united to a third."

Thomas à Kempis (Germany, 1380 - 1471)

"What good does it do to you if you dispute loftily about the Trinity, but lack humility and therefore displease the Trinity? It is not lofty words that make you righteous or holy or dear to God, but a virtuous life. A humble peasant who serves God is much more pleasing to him than an arrogant academic who neglects his own soul to consider the course of the stars." Reaction against Medieval scholasticism: two of their key questions in Paris, "Can God become incarnate as a cucumber? Can God turn prostitutes into virgins? Will hair and nails grow after the resurrection?"

Karl Barth (1886 - 1968) The Otherness of God

"The Gospel proclaims a God utterly distinct from humanity. Salvation comes to them from him, because they are, as human beings, incapable of knowing him, they have no right to claim anything from him. The Gospel is not one thing in the midst of other things, to be directly apprehended and comprehended, the Gospel is the Word of God, the Primal Origin of all things, the Word, which, since it is ever new, must ever be received with renewed fear and trembling. God stands over and against humanity and everything human in an infinite qualitative distinction, and is never, ever identical with anything which we name, experience, conceive or worship as God."

Leonardo Boff (b. 1938) Brazil, Rio de Janeiro

"In what sense can the Trinity be called "Gospel", good news, to people, especially to the poor and oppressed? Any Christian coming into contact with the debates on the Trinity for the first time might well form this impression: the Christian faith developed intellectually in the Hellenic world; Christians had to translate their doxology into a theology appropriate to that world in order to assert the truth of their faith. We need to go beyond the understanding of Trinity as logical mystery and see it as saving mystery. The Trinity has to do with the lives of each of us, our daily experiences, our struggles to follow our conscience, our love and joy, our bearing the sufferings of the world and the tragedies of human existence; it also has to do with the struggle against social injustice, with efforts at building a more humane form of society, with the sacrifices and martyrdoms that these endeavors so often bring. If oppressed believers come to appreciate the fact that their struggles for life and liberty are also those of the Father, son and Holy Spirit, working for the kingdom of Glory and eternal life, then they will have further motives for struggling and resisting; the meaning of their efforts will break out of the restricting framework of history and be inscribed in eternity, in the hearts of the absolute Mystery itself. We are not condemned to live alone, cut off from one another. We are called to live together and to enter into the communion of the Trinity. If the Trinity is good news, then it is so particularly for the oppressed and those condemned to solitude."

Paul Jewett (d. 1991 Pasadena California)

Now that we have finished our treatment on the nature of God, it is fitting that we add a few comments on our speech about God, as that speech in its traditional form reflects a use of language that many regard as sexist. If the woman like the man is created in the image of God, and is therefore as much like God as the man, then female imagery is just as capable as is male imagery of bearing the truth that God is a Trinitarian fellowship of holy love. After all, women have as much to do with origins, at the human level, as men. If we describe the relationship between the first and second persons of the Godhead analogically as begetting and being begotten, may we not as well, still speaking analogically describe it as a bearing and a being born. Since God is like a woman as well as a man, may God not be likened to a mother who eternally bears a daughter as well as to a father who eternally begets a son? And may not a mother also breathe the spirit as well as a father? Do not women have breath as well as men? There is nothing either in the concept of God, nor in the concept of incarnation that leads by logical entailment to masculinity.

6. Who was Christ?

- What did early Christians think when they said that Jesus was both human and divine?
- How do we understand the incarnation?
- Schleiermacher (1762 - 1834) "Now, if the distinctive essence of Christianity consists in the fact that in it all religious emotions are related to the redemption wrought by Jesus of Nazareth, there will be two ways in which heresy can arise. Either Christ's human nature will be so defined that a redemption in the strict sense cannot be accomplished; *or* the Redeemer will be defined in such a way that He cannot accomplish redemption."

Ignatius of Antioch (103 AD)

"Jesus Christ was of the family of David, the child of Mary, who was truly born, who ate and drank, who was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, in full view of heaven, earth and hell, and who was truly raised from the dead. But if as some godless people, that is unbelievers, say, he suffered in mere appearance - being themselves mere appearances - then why am I in bonds?" The term *Docetism* was derived from the Greek verb *dokein*, meaning 'to appear' or 'to seem'. It refers to the Docetist belief that Christ wasn't really human, and so only *seemed* to suffer.

Irenaeus of Lyons (150 AD) A disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Evangelist

"Saturninus came from Antioch.... like Menander, he taught that there is one unknown Father, who made angels, archangels, virtues, power; and that the world and everything in it was made by seven angels. Humanity was created by these angels. He also declared that the savior was unborn, incorporeal and without form, being a human being in appearance only. The God of the Jews was one of the angels, and because the Father wanted to destroy all the rulers, Christ came to destroy the God of the Jews and to save all who believed in him. He was the first to say that two kinds of human beings were fashioned by the angels, one bad and the other good. The savior came to destroy evil human beings and save the good. Marriage and procreation, they declare, is of Satan." Gnosticism's connection with docetism and dualism.

Tertullian (160 - 225 AD) ("What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?) Patripassianism

The Father suffered both in and as the Son.

"The devil is opposed to the truth in many ways. He has sometimes even attempted to destroy it by defending it. He declares that there is only one God, the omnipotent creator of the world, only to make a heresy out of that uniqueness! He says that the Father himself descended into the virgin, was himself born of her, himself suffered; in fact that he himself was Jesus Christ. It was Praxeas, a restless foreigner, who first brought this kind of perversity from Asia to Rome. He put the holy Spirit to flight and crucified the Father."

According to the adherents of Patripassianism, the only distinction in the Godhead was a succession of modes or operations. In other words, the Father, the Son and the Spirit were just modes of the same divine entity.

"The Word was in the flesh, but we must ask how the word was made flesh, whether by transformation into flesh, or by being clothed with that flesh. The latter is surely the case. We must believe that God's eternal nature precludes change or transformation. Transformation involves the destruction of what originally existed: what is transformed ceases to be what it was and begins to be something else. But God does not cease to be, nor can he be other than what he is. It follows that his incarnation means that he comes to be in flesh and through flesh is revealed, seen and touched. If he was incarnate by transformation and change of substance, Jesus would then be one substance made of two, of flesh and spirit, a kind of mixture, as electrum is an amalgam of gold and silver.. But we see a twofold mode of being, not confused but conjoined in one person Jesus, who is God and human. and the proper quality of each substance remains so intact that the spirit carried out in him his own activities; the powers the works and the signs, while the flesh underwent the experiences proper to it: hunger, thirst, weeping for Lazarus; troubled even unto death; and, at the last the flesh died."

Arius (250 - 336 AD) "There was a time when he was not." A Libyan Berber, active in Alexandria Arianism
".....these men are heretics and unlearned in the faith; some of whom say the Son is an effluence, others a projection, others that he is co-unbegotten. We cannot even listen to these faithless things, even though the

heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths. But what we say and think we both have taught and continue to teach: The son is not unbegotten, nor part of the unbegotten in any way. Before he was begotten or created or appointed or established, he did not exist. The son has a beginning, but God is without beginning." Arius thought that the Son outranks other creatures, though he shares their essentially created and begotten nature.

Athenasius (296 - 373) "*Athenasius contra mundum*" Alexandrian patriarch, exiled five times. He asked the question: What if Arius' denial of the divinity of Christ is correct? What are the consequences for our salvation? He says only God can save. God alone can break the power of sin and bring us to eternal life. Creatures - however exalted they may be - stand in need of a savior.

Apollinarius of Laodicea (died in 390) Apollinarianism. The denial of a human soul or a human mind in Christ. If the Logos assumed human nature in its entirety, how could the Logos remain uncontaminated by the weakness of human nature? "We confess that the Word of God has not descended upon a holy man, which is what happened in the case of the prophets. Rather, the Word himself has become flesh without having assumed a human mind - that is, a changeable mind, which is enslaved to filthy thoughts - but which exists as an immutable and heavenly divine mind."

Gregory of Nazianzus (329 - 390) Constantinople, one of the Cappadocian Fathers. "What has not been assumed has not been healed. It is what is united to his divinity that is saved." Christ had to take fallen human nature upon himself in order to heal, renew and redeem it. If Christ assumed an incomplete human nature, then human nature was not redeemed. "We do not separate the divinity from the humanity. The Only Son before all ages has in these last days assumed human nature for our salvation; in his flesh passible, in his Deity impassible, in the body subject to limitation, yet unlimited in the Spirit; at one and the same time earthly and heavenly, tangible and intangible, comprehensible and incomprehensible, that by one and the same person, a perfect human being and perfect God, the whole humanity, fallen through sin, might be recreated. Let others not grudge us our total salvation, or endue the Saviour only with the bones and nerves and mere appearance of humanity. "

Cyril of Alexandria (376 - 444) The "Proud Pharaoh". Hypatia and the Alexandrian Jews. The union between the divinity and humanity in Christ was total. No change occurred in the divinity as a result. "In declaring that the Word was made to be incarnate and made human, we do not assert that there was any change in the nature of the Word when it became flesh. But we say that the Word, in an indescribable and inconceivable manner, united personally to himself flesh endowed with a rational soul, and thus became a human being. And it was not by a mere act of will or favor, nor simply adopting a role or taking to himself a person."

Alexandria (Cyril)

Union
Unification
Union of natures
Interpenetration

Antioch (Nestorius)

Conjunction
Combination
Connection
Union in will - of good pleasure

Leo the Great (400 - 461) *The Tome of Leo* The Latin Church comes up with a conciliatory approach. "The properties of each nature were preserved in their totality, and came together to form one person. Humility was assumed by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality to eternity; and to pay the debt that we had incurred, and inviolable nature was united to a nature that can suffer. Thus there was born true god in the entire and perfect nature of true humanity, complete in his own properties and complete in ours. The humility of the personhood and the majesty of the diety exist in reciprocity. Just as the divinity is not changed by his compassion, so the humanity is not swallowed up by the dignity. The Word withdraws not from his equality with the Father's glory; the flesh does not desert the nature of our kind."

The monophysite controversy. The Eastern and Coptic churches.

Our creed says that there are 'two natures' in Christ - the divine and the human. The monophysites rejected this. They said there is only one nature in Christ, and that nature is divine.

John of Damascus (750 AD)

"Previously there was absolutely no way in which God, who has neither a body nor a face, could be represented by any image. But now that he has made himself visible in the flesh and has lived with people, I can make an image of what I have seen of God, and contemplate the glory of the Lord, his face having been revealed."

The Scottish poet, William Dunbar (1510)

Rorate coeli desuper! (pour down you heavens from above)
 Heavens, distill your balmy showers
 For now is risen the bright day star,
 from the rose Mary, flower of flowers.

Sinners be glad and do penance
 And thank your maker heartily
 For he that you might not come to
 To you is come full humbly.

Luther and the communication of attributes in Christ.

Jesus Christ was crucified.

Jesus Christ is God.

Therefore God was crucified.

Jesus Christ suffered and died.

Jesus Christ is God.

Therefore God suffered and died.

Dorothy L. Sayers (1893 - 1957)

"That you cannot have Christian principles without Christ is becoming increasingly clear, because their validity as principles depends on Christ's authority, and as we have seen, the Totalitarian States, having ceased to believe in Christ's authority, are logically quite justified in repudiating Christian principles. If the average man is required to believe in Christ and accept his authority for Christian principles, it is surely relevant to inquire who or what Christ is, and why his authority should be accepted. But the question, "What think ye of Christ?" lands the average man at once in the very knottiest kind of dogmatic riddle. It is quite useless to say that it doesn't matter particularly who or what Christ was or by what authority he did things, and that even if he was only a man, he was a very nice man and we ought to live by his principles: for that is merely humanism, and if the average man in Germany chooses to think that Hitler is a nicer sort of man with still more attractive principles, the Christian humanist has no answer to make. It is not true at all that dogma is hopelessly irrelevant to the life and thought of an average man. If the average man is going to be interested in Christ at all, it is the dogma that will provide the interest. the trouble is that, in nine cases out of ten, he has never been offered the dogma. What he has been offered is a set of technical theological terms which nobody has taken the trouble to translate into language relevant to ordinary life."

Daphne Hampson (b. 1944)

Is Christianity compatible with feminism? "Why has this question now come upon the scene? What has changed in human relations between men and women, or how is it that women sense themselves differently such that this matter has become urgent? In other ages, the female seemed in some sense to be 'included' in the male, in a way in which this is no longer the case. Men were normally held to represent women also. Humanity could then as a whole be thought to be summed up in Christ. Mistaken biological beliefs, such that the male alone was thought to be a full human being, underlay western culture, making this seem more plausible. Today men are not in the same way held to represent women: there are two sexes and women represent themselves. A symbol which is a male symbol appears in our culture to represent maleness, in a way in which earlier this may not necessarily have been the case. Hence the urgency of the question as to whether Christ is an inclusive symbol, and the feeling of many women that it is not."

7. What is Salvation, and how does Christ 'save' us?

- The link between Christology (Who was Jesus?) and Soteriology (how does Jesus 'save' us?)
- Theories of atonement, propitiation, penal substitution, redemption, ransom, recapitulation, and Jesus as an example of love in action.
- Salvation and Theosis, or Deification.

Irenaeus (125 - 202 AD) Jesus as ransom

"Thus the powerful Word and true human being, ransoming us by his own blood in a rational manner, gave himself as a ransom for those who have been led into captivity. The apostate one unjustly held sway over us, and though we were by nature the possession of Almighty God, we had been alienated from our proper nature, making us instead his own disciples. God obtained what he wished through persuasion, not by the use of force, so that the principles of justice might not be infringed. The Lord therefore ransomed us by his own blood, and gave his life for our life, his flesh for our flesh."

Irenaeus (125 - 202 AD) Recapitulation

"When the Word which exists from the beginning with God became incarnate and became a human being, he recapitulated in himself the long history of the human race, obtaining salvation for us, so that we might regain in Jesus Christ what we had lost in Adam, that is, being in the image and likeness of God." Irenaeus goes over the main points at which Adam failed, and then contrasts Adam's failure with Christ's success. Restoring humanity to the situation which existed prior to the entry of sin into the world.

Clement of Alexandria (150 - 215 AD) Example of love

Consider the mysteries of love, and you will then have a vision of the bosom of the Father, whom the only-begotten God alone has declared. God himself is love, and for the sake of this love he made himself known. And while the unutterable nature of God is as a Father, his sympathy with us is as a mother. It was in this love that the Father became the nature which derives from woman, and the great proof of this is the Son whom he begot from himself, and the love that was the fruit produced from his love. For this he came down, for this he assumed human nature, for this he willingly endured the sufferings of humanity, that by being reduced to the measure of our weakness, he might raise us up to the measure of his power."

Athenasius (318 AD) On the Incarnation of the Word Soteriology's link with Christology

"Therefore, assuming a body like ours, because all people were liable to the corruption of death, the Word surrendered it to death for all humanity, and offered it to the Father. He presented it to the Father as an act of pure love for humanity, so that by all dying in him, the law concerning the corruption of humanity might be abolished, and that he might turn back to a state of incorruption those who had fallen into a state of corruption, and bring them to life by the fact of his death, by the body which he made his own, and by the grace of his resurrection. The Word thus takes on a body capable of death, in order that, by partaking in the Word that is above all, this body might be worthy to die instead for all humanity, and remain incorruptible through the indwelling Word."

Pseudo-Hippolytus (uncertain date - before 370) The Cosmic Cross. Redemption not just for people. Easter

"This tree is for me a plant of eternal salvation. by it I am nourished, by it I am fed. By its roots, I am firmly planted. By its branches, I am spread out, its perfume is a delight to me, and its spirit refreshes me like a delightful wind. I have pitched my tent in its shadow, and during the heat I find it to be a haven full of fragrance. This tree of heavenly proportions rises up from the earth to heaven. It is fixed, as an eternal growth, at the midpoint of heaven and earth. By its peak which touches the height of the heavens, by its base which supports the earth, and by its immense arms subduing the many spirits of the air on every side, it exists in its totality in every thing and in every place."

Rufinus of Aquileia (340 - 410 AD) Monk. Born near Venice. Translator of Origen. The Mousetrap (Also to be found in Augustine: The Lord's cross was the devil's mousetrap: the bait which caught him was the death of the Lord.) "The purpose of the incarnation was that the divine virtue of the Son of God might be like a kind of hook hidden beneath the form of human flesh, to lure on the prince of his world to a contest; that the Son

might offer him his human flesh as a bait and that the divinity which lay underneath might catch him and hold him fast with its hook. Then, just as a fish when it seizes a baited hook not only fails to drag off the bait but is itself dragged out of the water to serve as food for others, so he that had the power of death seized the body of Jesus in death, unaware of the hook of divinity which lay hidden inside. The gates of hell were broken, and he was, as it were, drawn up from the pit to become food for others."

Theodoret of Cyrrihus (423 AD) Bishop of Cyrrihus in Syria

"The Lord takes upon himself the curse that lay on all humanity and removes it by a death which was not required by justice. He himself was not under the curse, but he endured the death of sinners; and he contends in judgment with the vengeful foe of all our human nature, becoming the champion and advocate of our nature. He says, with justice, to our harsh tyrant: 'You are trapped, you villain, and ensnared in your own nets. Why have you nailed my body to the cross and handed me over to death? What kind of sin have you found in me? What breach of the law did you detect? If the smallest fault is found in me, you would have every right to hold me, in that death is the punishment of sinners. But if you find nothing in me which God's law forbids, but rather everything which it demands, I will not allow you to hold me wrongfully. What is more, I will open the prison of death for others also, and I will confine you there alone. Since you have eaten what was not to be eaten, you will vomit all that you have swallowed. I have paid the debt, and it is right that those who are imprisoned on account of that debt should now be set free to enjoy their former liberty and return home.'"

Simeon the New Theologian (1000 AD) Byzantium Salvation as **Deification**

"But your nature is your essence, and your essence your nature. So uniting with your body, I share in your nature, and I truly take as mine what is yours, uniting with your divinity, and thus becoming an heir, superior in my body to those who have no body. As you have said, I have become a son of God, not for the angels, but for us, who you have called Gods. Glory be to your kindness and to the plan by which you became human, you who by nature are God, without change or confusion, remaining the same, and that you have made me a god, a mortal by my nature, a god by your grace, by the power of your Spirit, bringing together as god a unity of opposites."

Anselm of Canterbury (1033 - 1109) **Satisfaction** Balancing out an injustice. Making restitution. Objective.

1. God created humanity righteous, with a view to giving them eternal blessedness.
2. The state of blessedness is dependent on human obedience to God. But because of sin, humanity can't achieve the necessary obedience; leaving God's plan frustrated.
3. Because it's impossible for God's plans to be frustrated, there is a means to remedy the situation. Something must be done to purge human sin.
4. Humanity can't provide the necessary satisfaction. It doesn't have the resources to do the job.
5. A person who is both God *and* a human being could do the job. He would have the ability (as God), and the obligation (as a human being) to pay the required satisfaction.

Peter Abelard (1079 - 1142) The **love** of God for humanity, shown through Christ. Too subjective?

"We are joined through his grace to him, and to our neighbor by a bond of love. Just as all have sinned, so they are justified without respect of person by this supreme grace which has been made known to us in God. Now it seems to us that we have been justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God in this way: through this singular act of grace made known in us - in that his son has taken our nature on himself, and persevered in this nature, and taught us by both his word and his example, even to the point of death - he has more fully bound us to himself by love. As a result, our hearts should be set of fire by such a gift of divine grace, and true love should not hold back even from suffering for his sake. The deeper love within us not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also secures for us the true liberty of the children of God, in order that we might do all things out of love rather than out of fear."

Thomas Aquinas (1265 AD) Satisfaction

"Proper satisfaction comes about when someone offers to the person offended something which gives him a greater delight than his hatred of the offence. Now Christ by suffering as a result of love and obedience offered to God something greater than what might be exacted in compensation for the whole offence of humanity; firstly because of the greatness of his love, and secondly because of the worth of the life which he laid down for

satisfaction, and finally because of the comprehensiveness of his passion and the greatness of the sorrow that he took upon himself." Later critics of this idea (the Socinians) said that it was wrong to say that God requires intermediaries in order to forgive sin.

John Calvin (1509 -1564)

"Man was driven into exile, along with his descendants, in order that, having lost the horn of plenty, he should be miserable and experience all kinds of work and every ill; seeking food, sweating and suffering cold; often hungry, often thirsty, always wretched. Finally, God took pity upon this unfortunate and thoroughly unhappy man. Though the sentence which he passed upon him was correct, he nevertheless gave his only and much-loved Son as a sacrificial victim for such sins. By reason of this amazing and unexpected mercy, God commended his own love towards us more greatly than if he had rescinded this sentence. Therefore Christ, the Son of God, was both conceived through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin. He was finally raised up on the cross, and through his own death delivered the human race from eternal death. " God bearing the penalty for sin was a more effective demonstration of the love of God for humanity than the mere rescinding of any penalty that was due.

George Herbert (1633)

Having been tenant long to a rich lord,
Not thriving, I resolvèd to be bold,
And make a suit unto him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancel th' old.
In heaven at his manor I him sought;
They told me there that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession.
I straight returned, and knowing his great birth,
Sought him accordingly in great resorts;
In cities, theaters, gardens, parks, and courts;
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
Of thieves and murderers; there I him espied,
Who straight, Your suit is granted, said, and died.

John Donne (1571 - 1631)

WILT thou love God as He thee? then digest,
My soul, this wholesome meditation,
How God the Spirit, by angels waited on
In heaven, doth make His temple in thy breast.
The Father having begot a Son most blest,
And still begetting—for he ne'er begun—
Hath deign'd to choose thee by adoption,
Co-heir to His glory, and Sabbath's endless rest.
And as a robb'd man, which by search doth find
His stolen stuff sold, must lose or buy it again,
The Sun of glory came down, and was slain,
Us whom He had made, and Satan stole, to unbind.
'Twas much, that man was made like God before,
But, that God should be made like man, much more.

8. The origin and nature of Sin. What is sin? Is it so bad that we can't be saved without a redeemer?

Irenaeus Here someone may raise an objection. "Could not God have made humanity perfect from the beginning?" Yet one must know that all things are possible for God, who is always the same and uncreated. But created beings and all who have their beginning of being in the course of time, are necessarily inferior to the one who created them. Things which have recently come into being cannot be eternal; and not being eternal, they fall short of perfection for that very reason. And being newly created they are therefore childish and immature, and not yet fully prepared for an adult way of life. And so, just as a mother is able to offer food to an infant, but the infant is not yet able to receive food unsuited to its age. In the same way, God, for his part, could have offered perfection to humanity at the beginning, but humanity was not capable of receiving it.

Tertullian "I find the origin of discontent in the devil himself, since from the beginning he was discontented and annoyed that the Lord God had subjected the whole of the world to the one who he had created in his own image, that is, humanity. Envy was the cause of his deceiving the man. What offence is ascribed to humanity before the sin of discontent? Humanity was blameless, the intimate friend of God and the steward of paradise. But when he succumbed to discontent he ceased to care for God, and ceased to have the power to be content with heavenly things. Discontent had no difficulty in gaining the upper hand over humanity, and causing it to do things which were offensive to God."

Tertullian and inherited guilt. - the corporate nature of guilt.

But if the blessing of the fathers was destined to be transmitted to their posterity, without any merit on their part, why should not the guilt of the fathers be passed on to their sons, so that the transgression as well as the grace would spread through the whole human race?

Origen and the Image of God

"And God said, let us make man in our image and likeness" (Gen 1:26). He then adds, "In the image of God he made him", and is silent about the likeness. This indicates that in his first creation man received the dignity of the image of God, but the fulfilment of the likeness is reserved for the final consummation; that is, that he himself should obtain it by his own effort, through the imitation of God. The possibility of perfection given to him at the beginning by the dignity of the image, and the in the end, through the fulfillment of his works, should bring to perfect consummation the likeness of God.

Ambrosiaster (Would-be-Ambrose) 384 A case of mistranslation.

"In whom- that is, in Adam - all have sinned" (Romans 5:12) Notice that he uses the masculine (in quo) though he is speaking about the woman, because his reference was not to the sex, but to the race. So it is clear that all have sinned in Adam collectively, as it were. He was himself corrupted by sin, and all that were born were therefore all born under sin. From him therefore all are sinners, because we are all produced from him. The Greek text of Paul's letter to the Romans makes it clear that the neuter meaning is intended. It should be translated "in that all have sinned in Adam", not "all have sinned in Adam". This mistranslation had a big influence on Augustine's teaching on 'original sin'.

Gregory of Nyssa (330 - 395 AD) Human longing for God

The past is about paradise.

The present is about a loss of God's immediate presence and all the joys of paradise

The future is about the potential recovery of those joys of paradise in heaven

The more that we believe that the good, on account of its nature, lies far beyond the limits of our knowledge, the more we experience a sense of sorrow that we have to be separated from this good, which is both great and desirable. We mortals once had a share in this good, which now eludes our attempts to comprehend it. What was high has been made low; what was created in the image of heaven has been reduced to earth; what was created for immortality has been destroyed by death; the one who lived in the joys of paradise has ended up in this place of drudgery and illness. So when our Lord says "Blessed are those who mourn", I believe his hidden teaching to be this; the soul should fix its gaze on the true good, and not be immersed in the illusion of this present life.

Augustine (418 AD) Humanity is intrinsically evil because of original sin

Human nature was certainly originally created blameless and without any fault, but the human nature by which each one of us is now born of Adam requires a physician, because it is not healthy. But the weakness which darkens and disables our good natural qualities did not come from the blameless maker, but from original sin, which was committed by free will.

Pelagius (354 - 420 AD) England and Rome The Pelagian controversy

Everything, good and evil, concerning which we are either worthy of praise or of blame, is done by us, not born with us. We are not born in our full development, but with a capacity for good and evil'; we are begotten without virtue as much as without fault, and before the activity of the individual will there is nothing in humans other than what God has placed in them.

Martin Luther (1515)

"Since the saints are always conscious of their sins, and seek righteousness from God in accordance with his mercy, they are always reckoned as righteous by God. Thus in their own eyes, and as a matter of fact, they are unrighteous. But God reckons them as righteous on account of their confession of their sin. They are sinners in fact, but righteous in hope. It is like the case of a man who is ill, who trusts the doctor who promises him a certain recovery and in the meantime obeys the doctor's instructions, abstaining from what has been forbidden to him, in the hope of a promised recovery. Now this man who is ill, is he healthy? The fact is that he is a man who is both ill and healthy at the same time. In the same way, we are at one and the same time sinners and righteous people. We have the beginning of righteousness, and so always continue more and more to seek it, while realizing that we are always unrighteous." Luther says we don't have to be perfectly righteous before we can be accepted by God. Sin doesn't point to unbelief, or God's failure, rather it points to the continued need to entrust one's person to the gentle care of God.

Daphne Hampson (1944) Oxford, Harvard, St. Andrew's

The doctrine of Sin has always been fundamental to theological anthropology. That this is the case may in itself be significant. Human beings have been seen as in opposition to God. God is considered good'; humans, by contrast with God, sinful. It has also affected the way in which women have been conceived in relation to men. Sin is connected with what is 'below' and with our bodily nature; and woman comes to be associated with sexuality. However, the primary understanding of sin in the tradition (which has been a male tradition, for theology has been male) has been that sin is in the first instance not sensuality but rather pride. Here again we may think of the conceptualization to have fitted a male dynamic; for men have been the ones who have been in a position to be proud.

Niebuhr sees sin in its basic form to be pride. Sin comes to be, not necessarily but inevitably, in a situation of angst; that anxiety which having no definite object, consists in a basic disease. In their anxiety, human beings are faced with two possibilities. Either they can trust in God; or they fall into sin. Sin can be of two kinds: pride, in which human beings attempt to set themselves up in the place of God, or sensuality, in which human beings try to get rid of any sense of themselves and bury themselves in others or in the things of this world. Niebuhr has been criticized by feminist theologians on two counts; firstly that he doesn't offer a good analysis of the situation in which most women find themselves; moreover that women's failings are typically other. Secondly, he has an extraordinarily individuated concept of the human being, who finds himself essentially caught up in competitive relationships. He sees the human being as monadic rather than as having an essential relationality.

9. If humanity is created in God's image, what does that mean?

Three preliminary points:

1. Aristotle and his followers believed that human beings, as rational creatures, are set apart from other beings. We have the divine spark of reason. Reason was associated with immortality, and the body with mortality.
2. That was not a universal ancient view. Some religions believed that the world and human beings were God's body; that matter and spirit were so closely intertwined that they couldn't be separated; the body and immortality were inextricably linked.
3. Irenaeus and some other early Christians accepted Aristotle's and Plato's view of rationality being the seat of our likeness to God, but with serious reservations. They said that the human body itself is made in the image of God: "For by the hands of the Father, that is by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not a part of man, was made in the likeness of God." The Son is modeled after the Father, so humans are modeled after the Son and therefore bear a physical likeness to God. God is therefore revealed through embodied acts; not just in thinking, reason and psychology. We grow into the likeness of God by acting through our bodies. Modern mystics like Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen and Parker Palmer have drawn on the early Christian ascetics to celebrate the physical body, the natural world, and their relationship to the imago dei.

Models for the Imago Dei

The Functional model:

God is the head of all things: the created universe and the unseen realms. God is not just the authority figure; God is the caregiver of creation. Humankind is the ruler over the creation or the earth. Humanity is given authority and the wisdom necessary to exercise that authority. Common to many ancient religions, and to the Hebrew scriptures. Kings rule by divine mandate as 'children' of the gods. If we believe this, what does it say about people with profound disabilities?

The Substantive model:

The image of God in humanity is located not in authority or in a physical likeness, but in the psychological and spiritual makeup of the human being. The **rational** soul mirrors the divine soul. Humanity was shaped by God in the same way as an artist makes a sculpture or a painting of a human being. Our likeness with God is located in reason or will. God is present in humanity whether or not an individual person acknowledges the reality of that image.

Patristic theologians held to this belief. They believed that the essential likeness of God in humanity wasn't utterly corrupted by the fall; it was just put on hold until Adam's punishment was completed. That's why patristic theologians make a sharp distinction between the words "image" and "likeness" in the Genesis account. Augustine was a major proponent: (the Trinity - Memory, Intellect, and Will) Calvin and Luther agreed that some of our 'likeness' was lost because of the fall, but some fragments remained. "Man lost the image of God when he fell into sin." Luther.

The Relational model:

The main tenet of this belief is that you have to be in relationship with God in order to possess the 'image of God. The **relational** soul mirrors the divine soul. Our ability to establish and maintain complex and intricate relationships make us more like God.

The Imago Dei and universal human rights. Beginning with Lanctantius. Jurgen Moltmann used the Imago Dei as a model for Ecumenical human rights when he said that the Imago Dei required three things when it came to human's relationships between themselves. - Democratic relationships when humans rule others. - Cooperation and fellowship with other humans. - Cooperation with the environment. - Responsibility for generations yet unborn who will be created in God's image.

Imago Dei and feminism

Feminist theologians have claimed that the body is critical for self-understanding and relating to the world. They have attempted to make meaning out of the entire bodily experience of humanity, in order to overcome historical prejudices which viewed the male body as being inherently superior to the female body.

Imago Dei and Trans-Humanism

What would happen to the Imago Dei if attempts to transform the human through technological means succeeded? Pharmacological enhancement, nanotechnology, cybernetics, computer simulation. Where is the Imago Dei if Technological Singularity is achieved (the point at which humans are supposed to be able to engineer the next phase of human evolutionary development)? Can we have Christology in which Jesus is a Cyborg with divine/human natures? Isn't the idea that humans are formed from the dust and also stamped with the divine image a sort of trans-humanism already?

Some historical texts

Tertullian the difference between the Genesis 1:26 statements, "Image of God" and "Likeness of God" "In Baptism, death is abolished by the washing away of sins; for the removal of guilt also removes the penalty. Thus humanity is restored to God into his likeness - because he had hitherto been in his image. The state of being in the image of God relates to his form; in the likeness refers to his eternity: for humanity receives back that Spirit of God which at the beginning was received from God's inbreathing, but which was afterwards lost through falling away."

Origen

"And God said 'let us make man in our image and likeness'" (Gen. 1:26). He then adds: "In the image of God he made him" (Gen 1:27) and is silent about the likeness. This indicates that in his first creation man received the dignity of the image of God, but the fulfillment of the likeness is reserved for the final consummation; that is, that he himself should obtain it by his own effort, through the imitation of God. The possibility of perfection given to him at the beginning by the dignity of the image, and then in the end, through the fulfillment of his works, should bring to perfect consummation the likeness of God."

Lactantius (340 - 320 A.D.) Advisor to Constantine I, born in Numidia in North Africa.

I shall now speak about what is due to other people, although what is due to people still equally relates to God, since humanity is the image of God. The first duty of justice concerns God and binds us to him; the second concerns humanity. The name of the first is religion; the name of the second is mercy or humanity. God made us naked and fragile in order to teach us wisdom. In particular he gave us this affection of piety in order that we might protect our fellow human beings, love them, cherish them, defend them against all dangers and give them help. The strongest bond which unites us is humanity. Anyone who breaks it is a criminal and a parricide. Now it was from the one human being that God created us all, so that we are all of the same blood, with the result that the greatest crime is to hate humanity or do them harm. That is why we are forbidden to develop or to encourage hatred. So if we are the work of the same God, what else are we but brothers and sisters? We must therefore show humanity if we want to deserve the name of human beings. And showing humanity means loving our fellow human beings because they are human beings, just as we are ourselves.

Gregory of Nyssa Human longing for God. Having been created in God's image, and lost God, we have a nostalgia for home.

"The creation story tells us that humanity was formed in the image of God, and lived in paradise, enjoying what grew there. So if we once possessed those gifts, we can only grieve over our sadness when we compare our previous happiness to our present misery. What was high has been made low; what was created in the image of heaven has been reduced to earth. When we compare the joys that we once knew with our present misery by setting our sadness alongside that of a better life, we cannot but be sad. So when our Lord says: "Blessed are those who mourn." I believe his hidden teaching to be this: the soul should fix its gaze on the true Good, and not be immersed in the illusion of this present life."

Hildegard of Bingen (1098 - 1179) Abbess of Rupertsberg, Germany

"Now when God looked at the man, he was well pleased, in that God had created him according to God's image and likeness, and declared him to be the greatest of God's miracles. Man is the work of God perfected, because God is known through him; allowing him to proclaim and praise God through the quality of his mind in the embrace of true love. Yet man needed a helper in his likeness. God therefore gave him such a helper in the form of his mirror image - woman - in whom the whole of the human race lay concealed. This was to be

brought forth through the power and in the strength of God, just as God produced the first man. The man and the woman were thus complementary, in that one works through the other. Man cannot be called man without the woman. In the same way, the woman cannot be called woman without the man. Neither can exist without the other. Man signifies the divinity of the Son of God, in the same way as the woman signifies his humanity."

Emil Brunner (Swiss Protestant)

God, who wills to glorify himself and to impart himself, wills humanity to be a creature who responds to his call of love with a grateful, **responsive** love. God wills to possess humanity as a **free being**. God wills a creature, which is not only, like other creatures, a mere object of his will; as if it were a reflector of his glory as creator. He desires from us an active and spontaneous response in our creation. He who creates through the Word, who as Spirit creates in freedom, wills to have a reflex which is more than a reflex: a free spiritual act. Only thus can his love really impart itself as love. Only an I can answer a Thou. Only a self which is self-determining can freely answer God. The free self, capable of self-determination, belongs to the original constitution of humanity as created by God

Humanity is, and remains, **responsible**, whatever its personal attitude to its creator may be. Humanity may deny its responsibility, and may misuse its freedom, but it cannot get rid of its responsibility. Responsibility is a part of the unchangeable structure of the human being.

From the standpoint of sinful humanity, the Imago Dei is existence in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Jesus Christ is the true Imago Dei, which humanity regains when through faith it is in Jesus Christ. He restores to us that existence in the Word of God which we had lost through sin. True human existence is existence in the love of God. When the human heart no longer reflects the love of God, but itself and the world, humanity no longer bears the image of God.

Mary Hayter (English feminist theologian)

1. There has been a persistent tradition which declares that while the 'whole man' as male is in God's image, woman does not participate in the Imago Dei, or that woman is only in the divine image in a secondary sense. Diodore of Tarsus for instance, states that woman is not in God's image, but is under man's dominion. John Chrysostom understands Adam's sovereignty over the rest of creation, including woman.
2. It has been suggested that originally humanity was sexless or androgynous and that the fact of the two sexes was a result of the fall. Sexuality in general, and femininity in particular, came to be regarded with fear and suspicion by many Christians. This tallied with some of the motives behind ascetic and monastic movements and the effort to bring man to the level of an angelic, sexless life. I believe that Genesis 1:26-28 provides no evidence to support such views. Adam is referred to by the collective Hebrew noun for Mankind. Adam is not always a proper name.
3. A third approach to the relation of male and female in God's image has been to say that human sexuality is part of what it means to be like God. It must now be asked, therefore, whether or not the fact of the two sexes in humankind tells us anything about the deity. Some people have asserted that the use of divine plurals in Genesis 1, and the subsequent creation of mankind as male and female indicate the presence of sexuality in the godhead. In common with the Canaanite divinization of Sex, did the Hebrew believe that the human capacity for reproduction was a means by which man could become aware of kinship with God and gain access to divine power? Is it true to say that the Imago Dei resides in human sexual polarity? According to Karl Barth, the basis of the Imago Dei is to be found primarily in the marriage relationship. This has been much criticized by other scholars. It is preferable to see the Imago as finding its existential expression in the interrelatedness of man with others; regardless of whether the other is male or female. Yahweh in the Old Testament embraces the whole range of divinity; including any facets of masculinity or femininity which may be legitimately predicated of deity. John Macquarrie: "Already in the divine being there must be, though in an eminent way beyond what we can conceive, whatever is affirmative in sexuality and sociality, in masculinity and femininity. God transcends the distinction of sex, but he does this not by sheer exclusion, but by prefiguring whatever is of value in sexuality on an altogether higher level."

10. Christian relationships with other faiths

What is religion? Is it the revelation BY God of the Truth of God? Is it God bringing you into a relationship with the Divine by means of intuition, love, knowledge and experience? Or is it a strictly human phenomenon?

Ludwig Feuerbach (1841) (God is a projection of our human longings and fears, not an outside force. No transcendence, only an interiority)

"Consciousness of God is human self-consciousness; knowledge of God is human self-knowledge. God is the revealed and explicit inner self of a human being. Religion is the ceremonial unveiling of the hidden treasures of humanity, the confession of its innermost thoughts, and the open recognition of its secrets of love. Religion is the earliest and truly indirect form of human self-consciousness. For this reason, religion precedes philosophy in the history of humanity in general, as well as in the history of individual human beings. Initially, people mistakenly locate their essential nature as if it were outside of themselves, before finally realizing that it is actually within them. Humans objectified themselves but failed to recognize themselves as this object.

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

"Feuerbach fails to see that religious feeling is itself a social product, and that the abstract individual who he is analyzing belongs to a particular form of society." "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people". Marx argues that Feuerbach didn't go far enough. Social and economic changes have to be introduced which will eliminate the causes of religion in the first place. "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; the point is to change it."

Karl Barth (1886 - 1968) Religion is man-made. Christianity is not 'religion', it is revelation.

Revelation singles out the church as the locus of true religion. But this does not mean that the Christian religion as such is the fulfilled nature of human religion. It does not mean that the Christian religion is the true religion, fundamentally superior to other religion. We cannot differentiate and separate the Church from other religions on the basis of a general concept of the nature of religion. We begin by stating that religion is unbelief. It is a concern, indeed, we must say that it is the one great concern, of godless man. God in his revelation will not allow man to try to come to terms with life, to justify and sanctify himself. God in his revelation, God in Jesus Christ is the one who takes on himself the sin of the world. Revelation is the truth against which there is no other truth. No religion is true. It can become true only in the way that man is justified, from without. Religion is abolished by revelation. If defined in this way, we have no hesitation in saying that the Christian religion is the true religion.

Richard Dawkins (b. 1941)

Piaget's book on the worldview of children (Piaget 1975) demonstrated the correspondences of children's and premodern men's religion and worldview. It showed that modern children surmount this archaic worldview with 10 years at the latest, while premodern men adhere to this belief system all their lifetime. I have evidenced, upon some articles and a book that is to be published in 2015, that every element, which composes religions, roots in reason, mind, and psyche of children. Every child believes, like premodern adults do, the world be an artefact, born in actions of persons and powers. Both groups surmise human or divine magic may create every occurrence and the run of history. Both groups believe in award and punishment both in this world and the other one. Children believe in god, ghosts, and in magic of their parents and of adult people. Children by their sixth year regard parents and adults as being omniscient and almighty, as a kind of divinities. Children, older than six years, run then through a sceptical crisis. I have shown that this core element of ancient religions stems from the mentality of the child before his sceptical crisis, of his religious attitude towards his parents before his seventh year of life. On the whole, developmental psychology delivers the key to a comprehensive understanding of religion and religiousness. Sociology, general psychology, phenomenology, and evolutionary psychology do not explain religion but developmental psychology does so. Child or developmental psychology explains religion, atheism, and agnosticism at the same time. To my opinion, developmental psychology is the searched theory that explains both belief and disbelief.

If religion is divine revelation, how do we explain or cope with differences between religions?

Exclusivism maintains that the central claims of Christianity are true, and that where the claims of Christianity conflict with those of other religions the latter are to be rejected as false. Christian exclusivists also characteristically hold that Jesus Christ is the unique incarnation of God, the only Lord and Saviour. Salvation is not to be found in the structures of other religious traditions. Historically this view has been the orthodox evangelical position. Karl Barth was a major proponent of this view. It is through a personal experience of commitment to Christ that one receives assurance of salvation. The non-believers cannot receive such assurance since they are neither aware of the uniqueness of Christ neither do they acknowledge His lordship. The exclusivist begins with the Bible as the source of all knowledge about spirituality and salvation. The Bible is the criterion of all religious truth. The Bible relates the history of redemption, gives a foundation to personal faith, is a guidebook of the Christian community, and speaks about the future of the world that links up all history, life, and service with meaning and purpose. Exclusivism, thus, establishes the uniqueness and identity of Christianity among world religions. Such exclusivism can take either an extremist or a moderate viewpoint. The extremist view regards all non-Christian religions as demonic and enemies of Christian truth.

Inclusivism holds that although God has revealed himself definitively in Jesus Christ and that Jesus is somehow central to God's provision of salvation for humankind, they are willing to allow that God's salvation is available through non-Christian religions. Raymond Panikkar was a major proponent of this view. (The unknown Christ of Hinduism). Karl Rahner (b. 1904-d.1984); the Roman Catholic opponent of Karl Barth also argued for inclusivism. He raises the question of the salvation of those who have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. It is God in Christ who reaches out to the individual in his own personal religious history to save him. Rahner used the term 'anonymous' to denote people who experience the grace of God in Christ regardless of what religion they belong to. Inclusivism is based on two axioms: the first is that salvation is through Christ alone, the second is that God wills the whole world to be saved. God saves people through Christ alone; however, he makes this possible through ways that extend to all humanity.

Pluralism parts company with both exclusivism and inclusivism by rejecting the premise that God has revealed himself in any unique or definitive sense in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, God is said to be actively revealing himself in all religious traditions. Christian faith is merely one of many equally legitimate human responses to the same divine reality. John Hick is the most well-known figure from this position. While pluralists assert the validity of all religions, they also deny the finality of all religions. According to Hick, in the evolutionary scheme of things in which at isolated ages and places the early religions are succeeded by higher religions, it is the same message of God that comes distinctly to a particular group but in a different form from the others. Hick challenges the older view that Christ or Christianity must be seen at the center of religions. Rather, he says, God must be seen at the center of religions. The pluralistic contention is that although religions have different outward forms, all have the same source. What is the difference between this and relativism?

Dialogue of Evangelism	(convert the other to your religion)
Dialogue of Debate	(change the other religion in order to make it more amenable to your own)
Dialogue of Discussion	(discover yourself and help the other to discover themselves through dialogue)
Dialogue of Commonality	(find common ground - environment/women/war etc... and work together)

Justin Martyr (100 - 165) How did early Christians view paganism?

It is unreasonable to argue, by way of refutation of our teachings that we assert that Christ was born a hundred and fifty years ago, and to accuse us of implying that everyone who was born before that time was not accountable. We are taught that Christ is the first born of God. Those who lived according to the Logos are therefore Christians, even though they were regarded as atheists; among Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus; and among non-Greeks, Abraham, Ananias, Azanas and Misad, and Elias and many others.

Karl Rahner

Christianity does not simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an anonymous Christian. It would be wrong to regard the pagan as someone who has not yet been touched in any way by God's grace and truth. If,

however, he has experienced the grace of God - if, in certain circumstances, he has already accepted this grace as the ultimate, unfathomable entelechy of his existence by accepting the immeasurableness of his dying existence as opening out into infinity - then he has already been given revelation in a true sense even before he has been affected by missionary preaching from without. The Church will not so much regard herself today as the exclusive community of those who have a claim to salvation but rather as the historically tangible vanguard and the historically and socially constituted explicit expression of what the Christina hopes is present as a hidden reality even outside the visible Church.

Clark Pinnock (1937 - 2010) Canadian theologian Exclusivist on the basis of Christology

Theological pluralists have a problem with Christology. Were Jesus to be decisive for all nations, that would be uncondusive to dialogue and cooperation among the religions. Threefore, ways must be found to interpret historical data so as to eliminate finality claims from Christology. They must be deminished so that they do not constitute a barrier to interreligious peace. Pluralists hope that there is a way to read the New Testament without coming up with a Christ who has to be normative for everybody in the world. If his uniqueness could be relational for escample, that would create fewer problems. The New Testament effectively resists any attempt of this type to rid it of the unwanted belief in the finality of Jesus Christ. Efforts to revise Christology downward are difficult to accept because they go against the evidence. The effort to rid the New Testament of the doctrine of the finality of Christ must be pronounced a failure.

John Hick (1922 - 2012) Pluralist

Now it seems to many of us today that we need a Copernican revolution in our understanding of the religions. The traditional dogma has been that Christianity is the center of the universe of faiths, with all the other religions seen as revolving at various removes around the revelation in Christ and being graded according to their nearness to or distance from it. But during the last hundred years or so we have been making new observations and have realized that there is deep devotion to God, true sainthood, and deep spiritual life within these other religions; and so we have created our epicycles of theory, such as the notions of anonymous Christianity and of implicit faith. But would it not be more realistic now to make the shift from Christianity at the centre to God at the centre, and to see both our won and the other great world religions as revolving around the same divine reality? Salvation/liberation occurs through a total self-giving in faith to God as he has revealed himself through Jesus Christ; or by the total self-surrender to God which is Islam; or by transcending self-centeredness and experiencing an underlying unity with Brahman; or by discovering the unreality of self and its desires and thus experiencing nirvana. Along each path the great transition is from the sin or error of self-enclosed existence to the liberation and bliss of Reality-centeredness.

11. The Last Things

Reincarnation / metempsychosis / Transmigration

The views expressed in: Hinduism / Buddhism / Jainism / Kabalistic Judaism / Druids / Orphic religions and Pythagoras.

The continuation of the tradition in the time of the Cathars, the Paulicians and the Bogomils.

Its revival at the time of William James and the flourishing of psychic research at the end of the nineteenth Century.

St. Jerome's translations of Origen's "On First Principles" Origen seems to believe in transmigration

The following passage is a convincing proof that he holds the transmigration of the souls and annihilation of bodies. 'If it can be shown that an incorporeal and reasonable being has life in itself independently of the body and that it is worse off in the body than out of it; then beyond a doubt bodies are only of secondary importance and arise from time to time to meet the varying conditions of reasonable creatures. Those who require bodies are clothed with them, and contrariwise, when fallen souls have lifted themselves up to better things, their bodies are once more annihilated. They are thus ever vanishing and ever reappearing.'

John Chrysostom The classic early Christian rebuttal

"As for doctrines on the soul, there is nothing excessively shameful that they [the disciples of Plato and Pythagoras] have left unsaid, asserting that the souls of men become flies and gnats and bushes and that God himself is a [similar] soul, with some other the like indecencies. . . . At one time he says that the soul is of the substance of God; at another, after having exalted it thus immoderately and impiously, he exceeds again in a different way, and treats it with insult, making it pass into swine and asses and other animals of yet less esteem than these" (Homilies on John 2:3, 6 [A.D. 391]).

The traditional orthodox view

1. It is contradicted by Scripture Hebrews 9:27 "it is appointed once for men to die, and afterward judgment"
2. It is contradicted by orthodox tradition in all churches.
3. It would reduce the Incarnation (referring to Christ's incarnation) to a mere appearance, the crucifixion to an accident, and Christ to one among many philosophers or avatars. It would also confuse what Christ did with what creatures do: incarnation with reincarnation.
4. It implies that God made a mistake in designing our souls to live in bodies, that we are really pure spirits in prison or angels in costume.
5. It entails a very low view of the body, as a prison, a punishment.
6. Reincarnation cannot account for itself. Why are our souls imprisoned in bodies? Is it the just punishment for evils we committed in past reincarnations? But why were those past reincarnations necessary? For the same reason. But the beginning of the process that justly imprisoned our souls in bodies in the first place—this must have antedated the series of bodies. How could we have committed evil in the state of perfect, pure, heavenly spirituality? Further, if we sinned in that paradise, it is not paradisaical after all. Yet that is the state that reincarnation is supposed to lead us back to after all our embodied yearnings are over.
7. Reincarnation schemes make men's spiritual advancement contingent upon his mortal efforts, attempting to make merit outweigh demerit. Christianity shows, however, that salvation cannot be earned by sinful man, but rather, it is merited by Jesus Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection for all who believe. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Also, many theories of reincarnation hold that man's spiritual, physical, and moral conditions are determined by a former life and therefore not under his control. Physically, this has led to a passive, pessimistic acceptance of untold misery that was actually unnecessary. Spiritually, it is even more devastating. The Bible reveals that no one is bound in his sins against his will, and though born under Adam's curse, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" ([1 John 1:9](#)). Through God's forgiving grace, "though your sins be as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool" ([Isaiah 1:18](#)). Consequently, the Christian does not worry about his merit outweighing his demerit, for his sins have been forgiven, God having promised, "I will remember their sins no more" ([Hebrews 8:12](#)).

The Resurrection Body

Theophilus of Antioch (conditional immortality)

Was humanity created merely mortal in nature? Certainly not. So is humanity therefore immortal? We do not accept this either. So maybe humanity is nothing? We do not say this either. What we do say is that humanity was by nature neither mortal nor immortal. If God had created humanity mortal, God would therefore be the author of human death. So God did not create humanity as either mortal or immortal, but, as we have said above, with the capacity for them both. If humanity inclined towards those things which relate to immortality by keeping the commandments of God, then it would receive immortality as a reward from God, and thus become divine. On the other hand, if humanity should incline toward those things which relate to death by disobeying God, then humanity would be the cause of its own death. For God created humanity free and with power over itself.

Origen (a spiritual resurrection body)

Now we ask how can anyone imagine that our animal body is to be changed by the grace of the resurrection and become spiritual? It is clearly absurd to say that it will be involved in the passions of flesh and blood. By the command of God the body which was earthly and animal will be replaced by a spiritual body, such as may be

able to dwell in heaven; even on those who have been of lower worth, even of contemptible, almost negligible merit, the glory and worth of the body will be bestowed in proportion to the deserts of life and should of each. but even for those destined for eternal fire or for punishment there will be an incorruptible body through the change of the resurrection.

Methodius of Olympus (300 AD) (a physical resurrection body)

So it seems that it is as if some skilled artificer had made a noble image, cast in gold or other material, which was beautifully proportioned in all its features. Then the artificer suddenly notices that the image had been defaced by some envious person, who could not endure its beauty, and so decided to ruin it for the sake of the pointless pleasure of satisfying his jealousy. So the craftsman decides to recast this noble image. Now it seems to me that God's plan was much the same as this human example. He saw that humanity, his most wonderful creation, had been corrupted by envy and treachery. Such was his love for humanity that he could not allow it to continue in this condition, remaining faulty and deficient to eternity. For this reason, God dissolved humanity once more into its original materials, so that it could be remodeled in such a way that all its defects could be eliminated and disappear.

Gregory of Nyssa

It seems clear that the argument of the apostle Paul agrees in every way with our understanding of the notion of resurrection. the resurrection is nothing other than the reconstitution of our nature to its pristine state. For we read in scripture that, in the first act of creation, the earth initially brought forth the green plant; then seed was produced from this plant; and from this seed, when it had been scattered on the earth, the same form of the original growth sprang up. Now Paul says that this is precisely what also happens at the resurrection. Human nature is changed into a far nobler state, and we are to hope for the return of human nature to its primal condition. The original process was not that of an ear of corn resulting from the seed, but of the seed resulting from the ear, after which the ear grew from the seed.

Augustine

The souls of the departed saints are not troubled by the death by which they are separated from their bodies. This is because their flesh rests in hope. Whatever humiliations it may seem to have suffered, it is now unable to feel them. For they do not (as Plato supposed) desire that their bodies should be forgotten; rather, they remember the promise given them by the one who always keeps his word, and who has given them the assurance of the preservation of the hairs of their head. (Luke 21: 18) For this reason, they look forward with patient yearning to the resurrection of the bodies in which they endured many hardships, but in which they will never again feel any pain. If they did not 'hate their own flesh' (Ephesians 5:29) when they subdued it by the law of the spirit (since through its weakness it opposed their will), how much more do they love it when it is itself destined to be spiritual. The spirit when subservient to the flesh is not inappropriately called fleshly: so the flesh in subservience to the spirit is rightly called spiritual, not because it is converted into spirit, as some infer from the scriptural text: "It is sown as a natural body, it will rise as a spiritual body" - (I Corinthians 15:42) but because it will be subdued to the Spirit, readily offering complete and marvelous obedience. And this will lead to the fulfillment of their desire, with the safe attainment of a secure immortality, with the removal of all feelings of discomfort, corruptibility and slowness. For this body will not only be better than it was here in its best estate of health; it will far surpass the bodies of the first human beings before sin.

12. Angels and Demons

Ancient religions, and the influence of Zoroastrianism; especially in the book of Enoch (grandfather of Noah, ascended physically into heaven). Cherubim and Seraphim. The Heavenly Court in the ancient world. Pantheism, pantheism, psychological projection. The Emerald Table; Hermes Trismegistus and the Golden Rule: As Above, so Below. (Thoth and Hermes).

Hebrew Scriptures

MALAK (messenger) meaning 'angel' occurs over 100 times. The Angel of the Lord (YHWH) The Angel of God (Elohim) Is this God appearing, or an angel? Early Christian authors (like Tertullian) thought that the expression The Angel of the Lord meant God himself. Eastern Orthodox belief often states that the Angel of

the Lord is a way of referring to Christ (The Logos of God) in the Hebrew Scriptures. The more influenced by Platonism a theologian is, the more likely they will say that God sends only angels to communicate, and never appears 'in person'.

New Testament

Gabriel, angels ministering to Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus refers to them often in his teaching about the last things in particular. Angels present at Gethsemane.

Matthew 22:30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Paul Ephesians 6:12 For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering.

Why does the Evil One have three names?

The Devil / Lucifer / Satan

Satan = Hebrew Sait with Arabic ending -an The accuser.

Lucifer = Isaiah 14:12 an invective against a fallen king of Babylon. Word only occurs once in the Bible.

Hebrew Helel, translated as the Shining One or Morning Star. The Morning Star was associated in the ancient world with Venus, or the Semitic goddess Inana, or the God Attar. He/she wanted to become the brightest spot in the sky, and failed when the sun rose. The Hebrews adapted the myth to put forward the ascendancy of Yahweh over the Babylonian divinities. Vulgate translates as Lucifer, and it came to designate the Evil One before the Fall, when he was one of God's favorite angels.

The Devil = Old English, from Latin Diabolos. (demon comes from daemon - power or dynamism)

The Nephilim

Genesis 6:4, a cross between the 'sons of god' and the 'daughters of men'. Often translated as giants, and once refers to the Philistine soldiers. May have nothing to do with the concept of angels or demons; though some have tried to make the link.

Named angels in the Hebrew Scriptures

Michael (translation: who is like God?), kindness of God, head of the angels

Gabriel (archangel) (translation: the strength of God), performs acts of justice and power

Raphael (translation: God Heals), God's healing force

Uriel (translation: God is my light), in charge of destiny

Samael (translation: the severity of God), angel of death

Sandalphon (translation: bringing together), battles Samael and brings humankind together

Jophiel (translation: Beauty of God), expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden holding a flaming sword and punishes those who transgress against God.

Guardian Angels

A major source of this idea is Jesus' saying in Matthew 18:10 "In heaven, [children's] angels always behold the face of my Father who is heaven." Acts 12:12; angel delivers Peter from prison. St. Jerome: "Great is the dignity of souls, for each one to have an angel assigned to guard it from its birth." The idea was deeply rooted in piety and devotion. Even before the fall of Adam and Eve angels had been given this assignment.

Egregore

From the Greek εγρηγορος, 'watcher'. Disputed connection with the idea of the corporate mind. A thought-form. Valentin Arnoldevitch Tomberg (1900-1973) 'one endeavours to collectively create an egregore for this special purpose: as a "group spirit" or the spirit of the fraternity concerned. This egregore once created, it is believed that one is able to rely on it and that one has an efficacious magical ally in it.' Is it possible to create a 'good' egregore? Good only radiates. Evil enfolds and subjugates. The psychic and mental energy of love would never give rise to the formation of an individualized psychic or astral entity; it would immediately put

itself wholly at the disposal of the celestial hierarchies, saints and God. therefore, although one can certainly engender demons, one cannot engender artificial Angels. If there are egregores of initiation orders and religious and other communities, they are always negative. The egregore of Catholicism for example is its parasitic double, which manifests itself as fanaticism, cruelty, 'diplomatic wisdom' and excessive pretensions.

Pseudo Dionysius (NOT the man mentioned in Acts 17:34 -a convert of Paul from the Areopagus). This Dionysius wrote in Syria around 480 - 510 AD. He was a neo-Platonist, interested in celestial hierarchies. The 'fraud' was exposed in the sixteenth century. He wrote a book called *Celestial Hierarchies*. (Similar to and maybe influenced Maimonides 1135)

C. S. Lewis writes about him in his book *The Discarded Image*.

"Our author differs from all earlier and some later authorities by declaring the angels to be pure minds, unbodied. In art they are represented as corporeal as a concession to our capacity. 'Such symbolism is not degrading, for even matter deriving its existence from the true beauty, has in the fashion of all its parts, some traces of beauty and worth.' This statement may be taken as proof that educated people in the Middle Ages never believed the winged men who represent angels in painting and sculpture to be more than symbols. It was pseudo-Dionysius whose arrangement of the angelic creatures into three hierarchies containing three species each was finally accepted by the church. The first Hierarchy contains three species, Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. These are the creatures closest to God. They face him with nothing between, encircling Him with their ceaseless dance. They are associated with heat and burning. (influence on the poets Spencer and Pope: 'the rapt Seraph that adores and burns') The second Hierarchy contains the κυριοτητες or Dominations; the εξουσιαι or Powers; and the δυναμεις, or Virtues. This does not mean moral excellences, but rather efficacies; as when we speak about the 'virtues' of a magic ring or medicinal herb. The activity of both of these Hierarchies is directed towards God. In the third and lowest Hierarchy we at last find creatures who are concerned with Man. It contains Princedoms (principalities, or Princes); Archangels and angels. The word Angel is both a generic name for all the nine species contained in the three Hierarchies, and also a specific name for the lowest. Princedoms are the guardians and patrons of nations (Michael the prince of the Jews according to Daniel 12:1). Divine things reach us through the mediation of angels - even in the most important matters like the Annunciation. Our author finds this principle confirmed in Isaiah 6:3. there the Seraphim are crying to one another "Holy, Holy, Holy" Why to one another rather than to the Lord? Obviously because each angel is incessantly handing on his knowledge of God to the angels next below him in rank. (tertium quid). This is the Medieval Model. And if the reader will suspend his disbelief and exercise his imagination upon it even for a few minutes, I think he will become aware of the vast re-adjustment involved in a perceptive reading of the old poets. He will find his whole attitude to the universe inverted. In modern, that is in evolutionary, thought Man stands at the top of a stair whose foot is lost in obscurity; in this, he stands at the bottom of a stair whose top is invisible with light."

Matthew 21:45 The Devil and his angels

Ezekiel 28 Enoch and Metatron The exaltation of humans and the demotion of angels meet in fantastic half creatures. 1) A mythological setting of the beginning. 2) A primal human figure who is exalted into a divine status. This figure is depicted also as a superior winged cherub with outstretched wings, whose exaltation involves the endowment of divine attributes and placement in the divine sphere. 3) A crisis related to the figure's elevated position. 4) Consequences involving expulsion from the divine location and demotion from former divine status.

The creative deity and the monster of chaos. Apocalyptic literature and the devil; the final battle and the burial of the devil in a deep hole.

Is the Devil real, or is the Devil a figure of speech for evil, or even for mental illness before it was properly understood?

Arthur Ashley Sykes (1684 - 1756)

In 1737 Sykes published *An enquiry into the meaning of demoniacs in the New Testament*. He rejected any belief in the existence of demons and regarded those possessed as simply suffering from mental illness.

The Unitarians and the Christadelphians, together with some other Christian groups and individuals view the devil in Christianity figuratively. They see the devil in the Bible as representing human sin and temptation, and any human system in opposition to God. Early Bible fundamentalist Unitarians and Dissenters taught that the miraculous healings of the Bible were real, but that the devil was an allegory, and demons just the medical language of the day.