

# **ET 301 Christian Theology 1**



**Teacher Handbook  
Leadership Institute of West Africa  
Church of the Nazarene**

**Note to students of this course:**

This student handbook was prepared by  
Rev. James Matthew Price, B.A., M.Div., Ph.D

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E-mail: [mprice@awfcon.org](mailto:mprice@awfcon.org) or [stephane.tibi@gmail.com](mailto:stephane.tibi@gmail.com)

October 2007

## **ET101 Christian Theology 1**

### **Syllabus**

### **Diploma Level and/or**

### **Certificate Level**

**Location of the Course:**

**Course Dates:**

**Name of the Instructor:**

**Instructor's Contact Details:**

**Course Description**

The first of two courses that could be called "practical theology." The first course emphasizes orthodox Christian doctrine while seeking to systematically identify those elements which are essential to the universal community of faith as well as identifying Wesleyan-Arminian distinctives.

**Course Rationale**

Everything that a pastor does—praying, counseling, preaching, leading in worship—can and in one sense *must* be understood theologically. Whether acknowledged or not, theological implications assert themselves throughout the entire pastoral task, from first to last, top to bottom, front to back, side to side. It is too much to claim that theology is most important topic so far as doing the work of a pastor, yet no other task as a minister makes any sense without theological awareness.

Even a seemingly non-theological task like conducting a church board meeting may be the occasion for theological reflection. For example, current approaches to God as triune suggest that the Trinity is itself the model for perfect human community, being more than one that yet always functions, acts, and believes as one. Applied to the church board situation, this may mean that the pastor does not dominate the meeting, but shares collegially with all present, working with them toward consensus or even unanimity.

It has been said that practical theology is the "crown jewel" of all theological study. This course is not strictly speaking a course in practical theology, and yet the practical dimension of theology must always be kept in view. Noted Nazarene theologian J. Kenneth Grider liked to talk about theology wearing overalls, meaning work clothes, and this example is exactly correct. Albert Outler has well defined John Wesley's theology as an example of a "folk theology" at its best. Regarding Wesley's theology as a whole, "practical divinity" is the operative watchword.

**Program Outcomes**

This module contributes to the development of the following abilities as defined in the *Africa Region Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* with adaptations for the Course of Study in English-speaking Africa West Field.

- CN 5 Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the theological foundations of Christianity.
- CN 6 Ability to explain how the theological foundations of Christianity proceed from Scriptures
- CN 7 Ability to explain scriptural holiness from a Wesleyan perspective.
- CN 13 Ability to explain the Nazarene position on speaking in tongues.
  
- CP 3 Ability to communicate effectively orally with cultural relevance
- CP 4 Ability to teach the Word of God

- CP 5 Ability to plan, participate in and conduct others in worship
- CH 1 Ability to take responsibility for one's own spiritual growth with the goal of becoming like Christ.
- CH 8 Ability to model Christ-like personal relationships within family, church, and community.
- CH 13 Ability to demonstrate a realistic self-understanding and take responsibility for personal and spiritual development.
- CX 3 Ability to apply this information to the ministries of the church.
- CX 8 Ability to make an integrated presentation of divine creation.

### The Distribution of the 4 Cs is:

**Content 60%**                      **Competency 20%**                      **Character 10%**                      **Context 10%**

### Course Outcomes

By the end of this course the learner will be able to:

1. Identify the foundations of Christian theology in the Scriptures, tradition, reason, and experience through detailed in-class overview (CN5, CN 6, CN 7)
2. Reflect on the biblical view of divine creation through in-class Bible study (CN 6, CP 3, CX 8)
3. Write a paraphrase of the "Nazarene Agreed Statement of Faith" in their maternal or local language. (CN 7, CN13, CP 3)
4. Define key words in Christian theology through regular quizzes and homework. (CN 5)
5. Participate in a role play situation in which a Nazarene pastor is expected to state simply and briefly the distinctive theological positions of the Church of the Nazarene to other pastors and laity from other denominations. (CN 7, CN 13, CP 3 CH 8)
6. In assigned small groups, create and present a worship service based on the doctrine of the Trinity, including an order of service, sermon topic, songs, Bible readings, and prayer. Each group should submit the project in written form following the presentation (CN 5, CP 3, CP 5, CX 3)
7. Write in journal format and participate in small and whole group discussions that relate the course content to your spiritual life and ministry (CN7, CH 1, CH 13)

### Course Evaluation

Class attendance and Class Notes	10%	(100 points)
Role-play in Interdenominational Pastors' Meeting	10%	(100 points)
Paraphrase of Nazarene Belief Statement	10%	(100 points)
Small Group Project: Worship Service Planning	15%	(150 points)
Two to three page Response Paper	15%	(150 points)
Journal and/or Written Homework	5%	(50 points)
Vocabulary Quizzes	15%	(150 points)
Final Exam	20%	(200 points)
	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1000 points)</b>

### Course Recommended Reading

Each course within the Course of Study is intended to be textbook independent. This does not imply that course are textbook irrelevant or that the content cannot be enriched by selecting and requiring that students study a textbook along with the lessons provided in this faculty guide. Since this course material is used outside of North America, a specific textbook may not be available for the students. Therefore, the course does not rely on a textbook. The instructor may use this material without a textbook and/or select any doctrinally sound textbook that is available to the students.

The following books by Nazarene authors are used extensively in this course on Christian Theology. They provide a rich understanding of theology as offered in this course.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994.

*Investigating Christian Theology 1*. RIIIE Course of Study module. Kansas City: Clergy Development.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994.

Staples, Rob L. *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1991.

Staples, Rob L. *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2001.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972.

## Course Requirements

**1. Class attendance, attention, and participation** are especially important. Students are responsible for all assignments and in-class work. Much of the work in this course is small-group work. Cooperative, small-group work cannot be made up. That makes attendance imperative. Even if one does extra reading or writing, the values of discussion, dialogue, and learning from each other are thwarted. If one or two lessons are missed, the learning leader will require extra work before completion can be acknowledged. If more than one day is missed, the student will be required to repeat the whole module.

**2. Small-Group Work.** Nothing is more important in this course than small-group work. The class members will be assigned to groups of two to four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for many group explorations and discussion, including a debate on contemporary views of theology, developing a worship service, and reflecting on the divine origins of creation.

### Small Group Project: Worship Service Planning

Create a worship service around the theme of the Trinity. Each worship service should include an opening prayer, Scripture readings, three or more songs and/or hymns, the church at prayer, a children's sermon, a sermon (title and biblical passage only), and a closing benediction. Use scripture references and themes we have discussed in class.

### 3. Assignments

**Note for all Written Work:** This course has written homework assignments that are to be submitted in written form. The assignments are important. Even if homework is not discussed in class, the work is to be handed in. This gives the instructor regular information about the student's progress in the course. The normal time for homework to be handed in is at the beginning of each class session. **All** assignments are to be completed.

### Response Paper: The Uniqueness of the Christian Confession by Al Truesdale

Read the paper entitled "The Uniqueness of the Christian Confession." Respond to the paper in two-three pages using the following question as a guide to your response: **How does the uniqueness of the Christian confession make a difference in my daily life and ministry?**

## Recommended Course Outline

The class will meet for 30 hours according to the following outline:

Monday

1. Introduction to Christian Theology (Paraphrase of Agreed Statement of Belief)
2. The Work of Theology
3. Scripture: "The Oracles of God"
4. Tradition: Passing It On

Tuesday

5. Reason: Thinking It Over
6. Experience: Living It Out (Vocabulary Quiz)
7. Five Theological Models of Revelation

Wednesday

8. The Creator: Sovereignty, Theodicy, the Problem of Evil, The Solution of Love
9. The Creature: The Universe and Humanity
10. The Tragedy of Sin (Vocabulary Quiz)

Thursday

11. The Doctrine of the Trinity: Vital Center or Antique Relic (Small Group Project Presentation)
12. Biblical Foundations of the Trinity

13. Talking about the Triune God  
Friday
14. The Christian Life and the Trinity (Vocabulary Quiz; Final Exam—Written & Oral)
15. A Christian Response to Other Religions (Response Paper)
16. Christianity Engages Culture

Additional Notes:

### **Educational Assumptions**

1. The work of the Holy Spirit of Christ is essential to any process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request and expect the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values, stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class. Group work will take place in every lesson.
3. Every adult student has knowledge and experiences to contribute to the class. We learn not only from the learning leader and the reading assignments, but also from each other. Each student is valued not only as a learner but also as a teacher. That is one reason that so many exercises in this course are cooperative and collaborative in nature.
4. Journaling is an ideal way to bring theory and practice together as students synthesize the principles and content of the lessons with their own experiences, preferences, and ideas.

### **Learner's Ability to Complete Course Work**

A reasonable effort to assist every student will be made. Any student who has handicaps, learning disabilities, or other conditions that make the achievement of the class requirements exceedingly difficult should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to see what special arrangements can be made. Any student who is having trouble understanding the assignments, lectures, or other learning activities should talk to the instructor to see what can be done to help.

### **Instructor's Qualities and Availability**

The instructor has committed to preparing the content and being familiar with the objectives of the course. The instructor's life and attitude inside and outside of the course should reflect the lifestyle of Jesus Christ—the main subject of the New Testament story. Good faith efforts to serve the students both in and beyond the classroom will be made.

## Foreword

The following statements are from the course materials for *Investigating Christian Theology 1, from which much of the following course, is derived*, published by Resource Institute for International Education, Clergy Development, Church of the Nazarene International, Kansas City,

### Overall Hopes for This Course

1. To survey the grand heritage and great tradition of orthodox Christian theology. Our survey will touch on biblical foundations, selected historical developments, and some contemporary problems and restatements.
2. The tone of this course is intentionally *irenic* (leading to consensus and peace) rather than *polemic* (tending to seek conflict and emphasizing disagreement with other Christian traditions). To use a cliché, this means that we are more interested in building bridges than walls. Doctrines such as the trinity of God, Jesus Christ as fully divine and fully human, the reality of sin, and Jesus Christ as God's anointed Redeemer are universally accepted across the Christian spectrum.
3. Having said that, Wesleyan distinctives such as prevenient grace and entire sanctification will be stressed where appropriate.
4. To understand something of how theologians work and what theologians do, which also means to appreciate the craft of theological thinking. We do this remembering that the local pastor is also a theologian. We desire to appreciate theology as both an intellectual and a practical discipline.
5. It is important to see linkages between Christian theology and both ethics and worship.
6. At times we may engage in some theological analysis of culture.
7. Overall, the goal of a deeper knowing of the Triune God must motivate our every impulse. Recall that Søren Kierkegaard said, "Only that which edifies is true for me." This is our goal: edifying truth.

### A Few Governing Assumptions as We Begin

Virtually all systematic theologies have two or three central emphases that serve to govern and guide everything said, claimed, and articulated by that particular theology. Wesleyan or Nazarene theology has often been guided by:

- 1) the grace of God, especially the Wesleyan view of prevenient grace.
- 2) the hope that Christian theology may be seen as an integrated whole. The *ordo salutis* (Latin, meaning "the order of salvation") is for Nazarene theology the organizing principle of the whole. In "The Scripture Way of Salvation" John Wesley expressed the order of salvation in fluid and dynamic terms: "So that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory." Nazarenes have often stressed the two moments of justification (initial sanctification) and entire sanctification (Christian perfection). Wesley's quote means that both of these two "moments" need to be taken in the broader context of the entire drama of salvation.
- 3) the classic meaning of theology is that it is simply the study of God. To intend to study God may of course mean very many things, but it cannot mean *only* an intellectualistic and rationalistic approach to God. Experiential knowing of God has always been important for Nazarene people. Studying God must always lead to praising Him. *Orthodoxy* (right or correct doctrine) cannot finally be separated from *Doxology*, the true worship of God. These must be wedded to correct conduct or action, which is *Orthopraxis*. These three realities—Doxology, Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis—in some ways function as a "holy trinity" of theological method and formulation. They can be conceptualized separately, but each needs the other two to be completed.
- 4) Phineas F. Bresee, one of the founding pastors of the Church of the Nazarene, believed that Nazarene theology ought to be characterized by this dictum, which was not original with him, and yet reflected his way of theologizing and Christian ministry: *in essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things love*.

# 1. Introduction to Christian Theology

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## Learning Activity: "On the Street" Scenario

You are walking down the street. Someone comes to you [a pastor or a lay person] and says, "I know you are a Christian. What I want to know is what you believe?"

How would you respond to this person? How did you know what to say? (Note that some words are well known by Christians but not others. What are some of those words?: sanctified, son of God, spirit, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, fallen nature, evil, Jesus Christ, perfect man, Savior, Word of God)

Gather in groups of three or four. Each group's participants should share at least one local language in common. Discuss possible responses to this scenario. Assign someone to take notes and report on your discussion.

After the discussion point out the following theological affirmations. Then, have each of the group work on a paraphrase/translation of these statements into a local language. Discuss the difficulties in translation :

## Agreed Statement of Belief: Church of the Nazarene

- We believe in one God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.
- We believe that man is born with a fallen nature, and is, therefore, inclined to evil, and that continually.
- We believe that the finally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.
- We believe that the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race; and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.
- We believe that believers are to be sanctified wholly, subsequent to regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.
- We believe that our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place."

--Paragraph 26, *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*

## 2. The Work of Theology

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Michael Lodahl, *The Story of God*, pp. 13-16

Key terms: theology

**Theology** (Gr., *theos* = God, *logos* = word, study)

The primary task of theology is to **MAKE SENSE** of the biblical story, to tell it again in today's world.

The Story of God begins: "*In the beginning God . . .*"(Genesis 1:1)

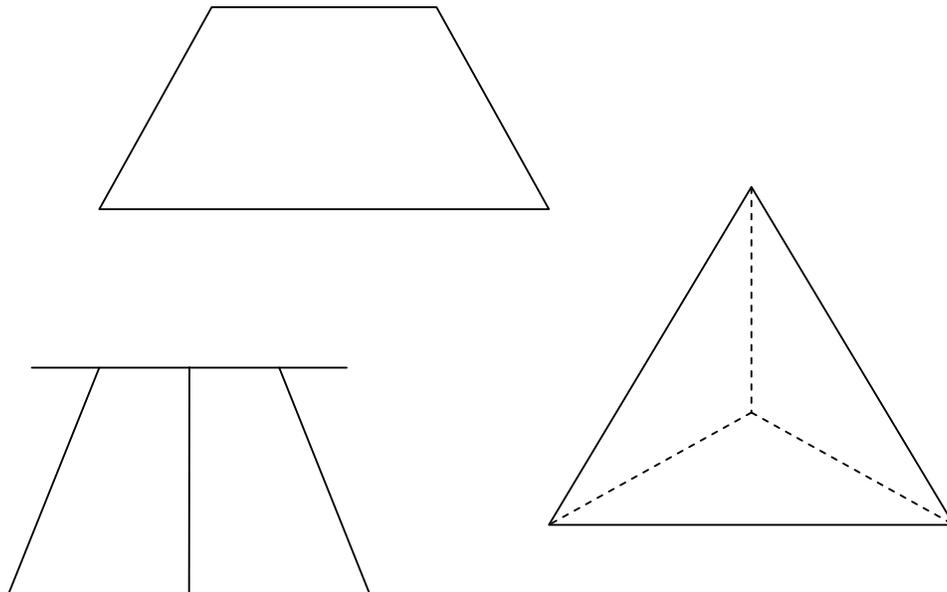
Two ideas to remember:

- 1) God is the primary Actor in the Bible and in Christian theology
- 2) God is active on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis
- 3) God's people are also involved in God's Story that began in the Bible

To undertake the study of theology is to become a **THEOLOGIAN**—have questions and ask them in all seriousness is a requirement. As theologians we think, we wonder, we marvel at God's work in the world, in other people's lives, and in our lives.

To study theology is not only an educational task, but an opportunity to **WORSHIP** God as we learn more about Him. (What we believe is found in our worship ; how we worship reflects what we believe.)

We can organize the study of theology through the use of what is called the **WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL**, a way to visualize the parts of how to think about theology.



Scripture is rightly interpreted in dialogue with the other sources, just as Scripture serves as the ultimate check of the other three. Wesley never wrote out this outline, but it was his "theological method"; it was his way of doing theology and biblical interpretation.

### 3. Scripture: "The Oracles of God"

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Michael Lodahl, *The Story of God*, 13-24

**Key words:** history, covenant, event, interpretation, inspiration

Theology is **COMPLICATED** and difficult. There are no easy answers to life's hard questions.

Regardless of the struggle we have in working out an **UNDERSTANDING** of our theology, we have a common starting point as Christian theologians—the Bible.

The power of the Bible lies in its ability to offer encouragement, hope, and **TRANSFORMATION** to those who hear its message.

The basic **CONVICTION** of the biblical writers is "God acts in—interacts with—human history to bring about His saving purposes."

God wants to lead human beings into a saving relationship with Him as well as the goal of redeeming all of creation (Romans 8:18-25).

The Jewish biblical tradition—known to Christians as the Old Testament—remembers God as the One who saved the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt through the Exodus and entered into a covenant with them on Mt. Sinai.

**Covenant** means "**AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO SIDES**"

The Christian biblical tradition—the Old and New Testaments—focus on how the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ offers the hope of salvation not only for Israel (the old covenant), but for all who would believe (trust) in God (the new covenant).

The Bible tells the story of a "**LOVING GOD WHO ACTS FOR OUR SALVATION.**"

#### History of God

According to John Wesley, the Bible is a "history of God" at work.

History is the **INTERPRETATION** of events. For example,

##### Example #1:

*"Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided." (Exodus 14:21)*

What was the event? (The actual fact) **THE WIND BLOWING.**

How was the event interpreted? (How that fact is viewed later on) **"THE LORD SWEEPED THE SEA BACK...AND TURNED THE SEA INTO DRY LAND"**

##### Example #2:

Event: The Resurrection has been affirmed by Christians as an event that truly happened in first-century Palestine. The apostle Paul confirms this in 1 Cor15:3-4.

Interpretation: The Early Christians saw God's raising to life of the crucified Jesus as the event in history **that brings salvation to all who believe** (1 Cor 15:14,17).

Therefore, God revealed Himself to humanity through Jesus Christ. God inspired the apostles and other biblical writers to tell the Story of God to future generations.

### **Inspiration of the Scriptures**

"To be a Christian means to believe that the biblical interpretations of history are inspired (inspire = breath into), that the human writers of the Scriptures were given **UNIQUE** direction and insight by God in order to **INTERPRET** correctly God's presence and activity in **HISTORICAL** events" – Michael Lodahl, 22

#### **Nazarene Article of Faith: The Holy Scriptures**

"We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith." (*Manual*, p. 27 paragraph 4)

Inspiration does not mean **WORD-FOR-WORD** dictation by God to the biblical writer. "**Inspiration** is the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of the Bible in such a way that their writings become the expressions of God's will." A.E. Sanner

No other books or speeches can be said to be inspired other than the 66 books of the Bible found in the Old and New Testaments. To a lesser extent, God continues to inspire His people today to understand what has been written in the Bible.

John Wesley said, "The Spirit of God not only inspired those who wrote [the Bible], but continually inspires, supernaturally assists those that read it with earnest prayer." (*Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*)

## **4. Tradition: Passing It On**

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Michael Lodahl, *The Story of God*, 25-30

**Key terms:** tradition, Christian perfection, sanctification, synoptic, holiness, catholicity

Tradition is the **PROCESS** of **PASSING** on the Story of God to the next generation by providing a "lens" or **perspective** for reading, understandings, and applying the Scriptures to our lives.

We inherit our Christian tradition, but we also contribute to it by preaching, teaching, writing, testifying, and living well.

We are not determined by our traditions, but we are deeply **SHAPED** by them.

**There are three main streams of Christian tradition:**

Roman Catholicism, Greek and Russian Orthodoxy, and Protestantism.

Our theological tradition is Wesleyan found in the Protestant stream of Christianity. It becomes our perspective for understanding and applying the Bible to our lives.

John Wesley (1703-1791) and his brother Charles were two important figures in the great evangelical revival that swept through 18<sup>th</sup> century England. John Wesley was a part of the Church of England throughout his life, though his followers were called Methodists. Their goal was to "spread scriptural holiness through the land." In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this revival continued

to spread throughout North America in other groups that would eventually become the Church of the Nazarene in 1908.

What was unique about Wesley's approach to theology?

**SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS** or Christian perfection, meaning perfection in love that had nothing to do with abstract or legalistic ideas of absolute, sinless perfection, but with a relative perfection of relationships "perfected" by love.

In his own words, "**CHRISTIAN PERFECTION**...is nothing higher and nothing lower than this: the pure love of God and man—the loving God with all our hearts and soul and our neighbor as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers [emotions], words and actions. I ask no more."

Wesley said nothing new, but **REDISCOVERED** and re-emphasized the heart of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ taught this emphasis on holiness from Moses' law on loving God and neighbor as found in each of the Synoptic Gospels (syn=together, optic=to see) (See Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-24, Luke 10:25-37; Deut 6:4-5, Lev 19:18, 34)

Christian perfection is "**TO LOVE AS GOD LOVES US.**" Sanctification is being made new in Christlikeness in order to love as God loves us and others. To be sanctified is to be made holy.

## What is holiness?

- 1) Holiness is **PERSONAL** and **EXPERIENTIAL** (based in experience). Holiness is not a thing or an "it." Holiness is a relationship in which we can stand, by grace, before God. It is not enough to believe that in the historical event of Christ's death or resurrection or that God loves us. We need the Holy Spirit to impress upon us the reality of God's sacrificial love in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul taught that "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Romans 8:16) Those in the Wesleyan tradition have been characterized by "an awareness of God's presence in human life is constantly to be expected and can actually be experienced." (1 John 3:24)
- 2) Holiness is **LOVING**. To be filled with God's love meant that there was no room for sinful attitudes or actions, for sin is essentially lovelessness, a lacking of love for God and others. God calls us to a perfection in love (1 John 4:18). "If God who is love created us to love Him and others, then we are perfect—we are being and doing what we were created to be and to do—when we love as God loves us—that is, wholly and sacrificially.
- 3) Holiness is **EXPANSIVE**. Wesleyan tradition holds firm in love for God and others, so it entails "an acceptance of, and openness toward, those of differing traditions within the Christian faith. Holiness was not, for Wesley, a narrow and constricting way of life that encourages a superiority complex. Holiness is not holier than thou. In fact, many Roman Catholics attended Wesley's preaching services. Wesley sought common ground with those in other Christian traditions. In his words, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? . . . If it be, give me thine hand" (2 Kings 10:15 (KJV)). I do not mean, "Be of my opinion." You need not. Neither do I mean, "I will be of your opinion. I cannot . . . Keep your opinion; I, mine, and that as steadily as ever . . . Let all opinions alone on one side and the other: only, "give me thine hand." . . . "If thine heart is as my heart," if thou lovest God and all mankind, I ask no more: "Give me thine hand." . . . [and] love me with a very tender affection, as a friend that is closer than a brother, as a brother in Christ."

In a letter to a Roman Catholic, Wesley wrote, "I hope to see you in heaven. And if I practice the religion above described, you dare not say I shall go to hell. You cannot think so. None can persuade you to it . . . Then if we cannot as yet think alike in all amiss. For of one point none can doubt a moment: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him (1 John 4:16)."

The Wesleyan tradition encourages Nazarenes to be *good catholics*, so to speak. In other words, we should be open or friendly to other Christian traditions, known as **CATHOLICITY**, and a desire to learn from and benefit from others, as well as to share our insights with others. (See Preamble to the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene: "that we may cooperate effectually with other branches of the Church of Jesus Christ in advancing God's kingdom...")

At the same time, being from the Wesleyan holiness tradition, makes us distinct from all other Christian traditions. Let's look at those distinctions.

### Roman Catholics and Protestants

<b>Roman Catholics</b>	<b>Protestants</b>
Mediator between humans and Jesus is found in Mary	<b>ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANS IS JESUS CHRIST</b>
Pope is authority over all of the church	<b>AUTHORITY IS IN JESUS CHRIST AS HEAD WITH A VARIETY OF CHURCH GOVERNMENTS</b>
Seven sacraments: baptism, communion, confirmation, absolution, marriage/ordination of priests, last rites	<b>TWO SACRAMENTS INSTITUTED BY JESUS CHRIST: BAPTISM AND LAST SUPPER</b>

### Protestants: Wesleyan and Reformed

	<b>Reformed/Calvinism</b>	<b>Wesleyan holiness perspective</b>
T	Total Depravity	<b>AGREE, BUT PREVENIENT GRACE WOOS US</b>
U	Unconditional Salvation	<b>CONDITIONAL SALVATION (RESPONSE TO GRACE)</b>
L	Limited Atonement	<b>UNLIMITED ATONEMENT (AVAILABLE FOR ALL)</b>
I	Irresistible Grace	<b>RESISTIBLE GRACE (HUMAN RESPONSE)</b>
P	Perseverance of the Saints	<b>WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT OFFERS ASSURANCE, BUT ONE CAN STILL "BACKSLIDE"</b>

### Holiness: Wesleyan and Charismatics

<b>Wesleyans</b>	<b>Charismatics</b>
Sign of Spirit-filled life is holy living	<b>SIGN OF SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS TONGUES SPEAKING</b>

### Something to Think About:

- How does the Wesleyan understanding of holiness lead to catholicity (friendliness toward other Christian traditions)?
- You are in an interdenominational pastors' meeting. You are asked to introduce yourself as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene. What will you say? (Think about

the Wesleyan distinctives when compared to Roman Catholics, Calvinists, and Charismatics. How are these distinctives experienced in your local church?)

## 5. Reason: Thinking It Over

Lodahl, *The Story of God*, pp. 31-48

**Key Terms:** reason, general revelation, special revelation, argument, kosmos, telos, ontos

Reason is the **HUMAN ABILITY TO THINK, REFLECT, CONSIDER, AND MAKE SENSE OF OUR LIVES, EXPERIENCES, AND BELIEFS.**

Our ability to reason also allows us to entertain doubts. Many theologians have tried to justify Christian beliefs through reason (rational proofs) in order to avoid doubt. However, many of these attempts have led to understandings about God that have not been acceptable to other believers. These attempts at rational proofs lead to a bland philosophical deity. The Bible itself just assumes that God exists without a need to **"PROVE"** God's existence.

The Bible at times still hints that it is permissible to offer rational **ARGUMENTS** for faith. (See Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20). These passages support what is known as general revelation

**GENERAL revelation** is the belief that God the Creator and Sustainer of all the world purposely leaves evidences of His presence and power in the created order that are accessible to human observers.

These biblical writers wrote from within the perspective of the history of God's saving acts, or what is called special revelation.

**SPECIAL revelation** is the belief that God the Redeemer and Savior is revealed through the historical acts found in testimony of the inspired Holy Scripture.

We can understand the revelation of God in this way:

General revelation (God's existence revealed in creation)	is to→	<b><u>NATURAL THEOLOGY</u></b> (human discourse about this God)
	as	
Special revelation (God's character revealed in historical acts of Scripture)	is to→	<b><u>REVEALED THEOLOGY</u></b> (human discourse about this God's saving acts)

There have been many arguments, or reasons, given for God's existence.

### **Arguments for God's Existence** (briefly review these arguments)

**Cosmological Argument** (Greek, kosmos=world, universe)

--Plato, the Greek philosopher

This argument centers on the first cause of all that exists. The question is:

"Why is there anything at all, rather than nothing?" Martin Heidegger

--Why is there anything, what is the cause of all that exists? The answer is that there is a Creator of everything.

--the logic of the argument, according to critics, makes one think, "Well, who created God?"

But, the strength of this argument is that it defines God as something separate from the rest of creation. God is creator, the reason for all existence.

**Teleological Argument** (Greek, telos=goal, aim)

--Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) that the order and design observable in our world speak of an Orderer and Designer, rather than the alternative in which reality happened by accident and chance.

--Humans constantly ask questions of purpose: "Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?"—a mind probing for reasons, order, design. Our wonder at creation points to a Creator

Cosmological and Teleological Arguments derive from **NATURE**, the second pair of arguments for God's existence arises from **HUMAN** thought and experience.

**Ontological Argument** (Greek, ontos=being)

--Anselm (1033-1109) that God is "a being that than which none greater can be thought."

--God must be since the greatest being that I can think of must also be a reality.

--Perfect being must be, or it is not perfect.

--A good meditation on the meaning of the word God

**Universal Sense of Ought, or Moral Conscience**

--Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) that the previous arguments are speculative, but have no place in practice.

Kant observed that everyone has a conscience—or a concept of right and wrong, though this concept might change from person to person. But still, one's conscience tells when we act rightly or wrongly

--Three postulates:

- 1) Freedom for human will (we cannot be condemned for an action unless we could have done otherwise)
- 2) Immortality for humans (there must be something beyond this life, since humans are sometimes punished in this life for doing right and applauded for doing wrong)
- 3) There must be a God who can guarantee immortality and perfect justice.

Fortunately, none of these arguments actually proves the reality of God—and that is a good thing. If God could be "proven" then there would be no room for doubt. Without doubt, there would be no alternative for faith—and no room for a relationship with God. We live by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)

**John Wesley on Reason**

"Let reason do all that reason can: Employ it as far as it will go. But, at the same time, acknowledge it is utterly incapable of giving either faith, or hope, or love; and, consequently, of producing either real virtue, or substantial happiness. Expect these from a higher source, even from the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Seek and receive them, not as your own acquisition; but as the gift of God. Lift up your hearts to Him who "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." He alone can give that faith which is "the evidence" and conviction "of things not seen." He alone can "beget unto you a lively hope" of an inheritance eternal in the heavens; and He alone can "shed his love abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you."

John Wesley, "Sermon 70: The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," in *Works*, Vol. 2, 600.

As we live out our days, we stand upon which certainty?

"The certainty of proof" or "The certainty of faith"

We do not make a stand for God by the “certainty of a proof” but through a “certainty of faith” (Heinrich Ott), which is shown by how a person responds to the God revealed in the Biblical story in everyday, one-on-one personal engagement.

Closing thought:

“No piece of rational evidence can remove the risk of belief in the God whose story the Scriptures tell.” (Lodahl, p. 39)

## 6. Experience: Living It Out

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Lodahl, *Story of God*, pp. 40-48

**Key terms:** assurance, prevenient grace, synergism

John Wesley weathered a period of deep uncertainty and doubt about his relationship with God—the turning point came on May 24, 1738: “In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given *me* that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.”

Assurance—“The Spirit itself bore witness to my spirit that I was a child of God, gave me an evidence hereof, and I immediately cried, ‘Abba, Father!’” Wesley used **BIBLICAL** language to define the experience of assurance.

Read **Romans 8:14-17 & Galatians 4:4-6**.

The expression “Abba Father” is found in three places in the New Testament, here and in Jesus’ words of Mark 14:32-36. Paul may have known about this earliest Christian gospel. The Holy Spirit was, is, at work witnessing of God’s presence and power in our lives.

Religious **EXPERIENCE** needs to be viewed in this biblical context to be properly understood. Religious experience “might often involve a deep yet conscious offering of ourselves to the divine will” just as Jesus did in accomplishing the will of the heavenly Father. “The Spirit who witness to our hearts that we are God’s children is the Spirit of Gethsemane.” (Lodahl, pp. 43-44)

The principle here: “any so-called experience of God must always be judged in the light and the context of Scripture, because the Spirit who is working in our hearts and lives will not work contrarily to what is revealed in the Bible. Both our expectation and our experience of God’s presence in our lives are, and out to be, forged and formed by the biblical narratives of God’s saving acts.” (Michael Lodahl, 44)

### What makes our experience Christian or human?

Wesley followed the lead of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch theologian James Arminius (1560-1609) who held to the reality of

**prevenient grace** (Latin, pre=before, vene=come)

“grace that comes (or goes) before us” means simply that:

“God is lovingly and graciously *present* and *active* in every human life.” (Lodahl, 45)

Prevenient grace is simply “God not **giving** up on anyone.” That “no living human being is without at least some light, some glimmering, flickering awareness of the Holy.” (Lodahl, 45)

God’s prevenient grace works through the human conscience  
to make us aware of His presence and work in our lives.

In Wesleyan theology, the Spirit who enlightens every person necessarily does so with respect to (and for) that person's own distinctive culture, ethics, and even religious beliefs." (Lodahl, 45)

This leads to **synergism** (Greek, syn=together, erg=work) "the idea that God is pleased to cooperate with human beings *where they are*—in all their humanity, in all their social and historical particularity—as He begins to move them to where they *ought to be*." (Lodahl, 46)

### How do we approach other "religiously experienced" people?

Three following passages found in the Book of Acts in the New Testament:

#### Acts 10:34-35

<sup>34</sup>Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism <sup>35</sup>but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

#### Acts 14:16-17

<sup>16</sup>In the past, he let all nations go their own way. <sup>17</sup>Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills you hearts with joy.

#### Acts 17:26-28

<sup>26</sup>From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. <sup>27</sup>God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup>'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

- Peter and Paul who preached these words moved "from recognition of God's gracious presence among all human beings and cultures to the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the decisive Revelation of that same God." (Lodahl, 47)
- So a Wesleyan will not belittle another's conception or experience of the divine ("faith of a servant"), but will "lift up Christ" as the One through whom all religious beliefs, practices, and experiences are to be sifted and judged ("faith of a son")." (Lodahl, 47)
- "In the Wesleyan tradition, then, there is a confidence in God's gracious presence to all life in its every dimension, and certain attentiveness to lived experience, an authentic openness to learning from the world around us." (Lodahl, 47-48)

The Gospel, according to the Wesleyan tradition, says, "You are welcome to God's kingdom."

### Prayer of St. Augustine

"God, always the same, let me know myself, let me know you. I have prayed. . . . God our Father who exhorts us to pray, who makes it possible for us to pray, our entreaty is made to you, for when we pray to you we live better and we are better. Hear me groping in these glooms, and stretch forth your right hand to me. Shed your light on me, call me back from my wanderings. Bring yourself into me so that I may in the same way return to you. Amen."

## 7. Five Theological Models of Revelation

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(Briefly review these models of revelation)

- Have the students read through and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of revelation when viewed in terms of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, which necessarily includes personal experience

### Revelation as Doctrine

Francis Schaeffer represents this perspective when he writes, "God has spoken in a linguistic propositional form, truth concerning himself and truth concerning man, history, and the universe." (From *The God Who Is There* (Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 93) Faith would then be mental and moral assent to the propositions that can be clearly discovered in the Bible.

#### Advantages of the revelation as doctrine approach are chiefly these:

- Those who live their Christian lives according to this plan have a clear and distinct sense of where they stand as Christians. Most if not all ambiguity, perplexity, and confusion are swept away, leaving only the clear and piercing light of Christian truth.
- Likewise, someone who is schooled in this approach to revelation will be able to give a clear and convincing account of his or her Christian faith. Propositional revelation is a powerful tool for Christian apologetics.
- Because all are clear as to where they stand, a lively sense of mission and outreach is fostered.

#### Weaknesses include:

- Does the Bible make any self-sustaining claims of propositional infallibility? In other words, is the revelation as doctrine model even supported in the Bible?
- This model is highly authoritarian. It is based on *Thus Saith the Lord* rather than on *Come, Let Us Reason Together*.
- In communications as a whole, propositions ordinarily play a rather minor role.
- God really reveals not propositions, but rather *himself*.
- This model of revelation does not promote "dialogue" with other religions, and not even with other Christians who are not convinced of the truth of propositional revelation.

### Revelation as History

Here revelation means the "mighty acts" through which God reveals himself in history.

#### Strengths of revelation as history would be:

- The Bible seems to depict a God who acts, first of all in the history of Israel, and in the fullness of time in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. This way of understanding the Bible is sometimes called the *Heilsgeschichte* approach, a German compound word meaning "holy history," or (better) "the history of salvation."
- God is a God who acts, who willingly engages people where they need Him the most, in their respective histories.
- Not only does God act, but in the Bible God consistently acts on behalf of the poor, a point picked up today by liberation and African- American theologians.

#### Weaknesses:

- As suggested above, it is very difficult to determine exactly *what* is an act of God.
- Should "event" be elevated over "word" in the Bible? The Incarnation is the "Word made flesh." In the Old Testament Israel was often reminded to "Hear, O Israel."
- Much of what is found in the Bible is not really historical material at all, for example, the Wisdom literature.
- Although there is history in the Bible, the consistent viewing of things through the lens of history has only been possible since the rise of "historical consciousness," which is barely two hundred years old. Earlier periods in the history of the church may not have used history as a means of interpretation. James Barr, for example, has written "It is certain that our

forefathers, emphatically as they understood that Christian faith was implanted in earthly reality, in space and time, flesh and blood, were able to do this without accepting 'history' as an organizing bracket in their theology at all." (From "Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology," in *New Theology*, No. 1, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean Peerman (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 72)

### **Revelation as Inner Experience**

Revelation as inner experience is more concerned with the *reception* of revelation than with the *giving* of revelation.

#### **Advantages of viewing revelation as inner experience include:**

- Promotes the devotional life
- May lead the gifted to write poetry and hymn lyrics that edify the Body of Christ
- May also further dialogue with other religions, because Christian religious experience may be similar in some ways to followers of other religions

#### **Weaknesses**

- Seems to assume that one is "spiritually gifted" in much the same way that some people have a "knack" for music, art, or the study of languages. But not everyone is religiously "musical" in exactly that way. This model may therefore be somewhat elitist and exclusive.
- Certainly there are instances in the Bible of "ecstasy" before God, but we must also remember that some of the prophets complained that they were deaf, dumb, and blind when it came to the knowledge of God.

### **Revelation as Dialectical Presence**

Dialectics is a "call and response" to Christian theology and living. Presence implies that whatever the first apostles felt and believed when in the presence of Jesus Christ is also available to us today.

#### **The advantages of the dialectical presence view are:**

- Has some foundation in the Bible, especially in the prophets and the "message about the cross" (1 Cor 1:18).
- Because this view of revelation centers in Jesus Christ, it gives new force and meaning to the subjects of sin and redemption.
- The emphasis on Word and Spirit may also lead to a renewed interest in the doctrine of the Trinity.
- May lead to strong preaching, with its heavy emphasis on the Word of God made available in Jesus Christ.

#### **A basic criticism of this persuasion would be:**

- The stress on Jesus Christ is to be praised, but this may lead to what is sometimes called "Christomonism," meaning that revelation is *nowhere found* but in Jesus Christ. This seems like an extreme position, which may work against the idea mentioned above of *general revelation*, wherein God is known through nature, creation, art, beauty, history, politics, family life, and so forth.

### **Revelation as New Awareness**

This model is close to revelation as inner experience, although that idea is here expanded and "radicalized." "New awareness" means cosmic consciousness in ways that mere inner experience does not. To be in the company of new awareness is also to appreciate the unity of all world religions.

## **Summarizing the Five Models**

In the carefully chosen words of Avery Dulles, here are summary statements of all five of the models we have discussed:

- **Revelation is divinely authoritative doctrine inerrantly proposed as God's word by the Bible or by official church teaching.**
- **Revelation is the manifestation of God's saving power by His great deeds in history.**
- **Revelation is the self-manifestation of God by His intimate presence in the depths of the human spirit.**
- **Revelation is God's address to those whom He encounters with His word in Scripture and Christian proclamation.**
- **Revelation is a breakthrough to a higher level of consciousness as humanity is drawn to a fuller participation in the divine creativity.**

Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983).

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## **Something to Think About (Question for discussion or future exam)**

All Christians agree in one way or another that Jesus Christ reveals the truth about God. For you and those you minister among, how does Christ reveal the reality of God?

## 8. The Creator: Sovereignty, Theodicy, the Problem of Evil, the Solution of Love

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**NOTE TO TEACHER:** Use this activity to begin this session. The students may work individually or with a partner. After 15-20 minutes, continue with the session.

**Key words:** creation ex nihilo, dualism, monotheism, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, moral evil, natural evil, theodicy, sovereignty, shalom, sin, original sin, responsibility, solidarity, predestination, prevenient grace

### The God Who Creates

#### Bible Study about Creation (Small Group or Individual Study)

PART 1: Bible Passages about the Creation:

- |                           |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| A. <u>Psalm 19:1</u>      | B. <u>Genesis 1:3</u>     | C. <u>1 Timothy 4:4</u>                 |
| D. <u>Jeremiah 10:12</u>  | E. <u>Psalm 24:1</u>      | F. <u>John 1:3</u> (possible for 5 & 6) |
| G. <u>Genesis 1:1</u>     | H. <u>Psalm 74:16-17</u>  | I. <u>Hebrews 1:2</u>                   |
| J. Psalm 8:1 (not used)   | K. <u>Genesis 1:26</u>    | L. <u>Psalm 8:6</u>                     |
| M. Exodus 4:11 (not used) | N. <u>Colossians 1:16</u> | O. <u>Psalm 33:6</u>                    |

PART 2: Creation Statements

Find a verse (or verses) that

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <u>D-Jer. 10:12</u>      | 1) teaches that creation came about by God's power, wisdom, and understanding.             |
| <u>K-Gen 1:26</u>        | 2) says human beings were created in God's image.  |
| <u>A-Ps 19:1</u>         | 3) says the heavens declare the handiwork of God. ( <b>Possibly J-Psalm 8:1</b> )          |
| <u>L-Ps 8:6</u>          | 4) shows that humankind is responsible to God for the care of the earth and its creatures. |
| <u>G-Gen 1:1</u>         | 5) the earth was created out of nothing. ( <b>Possibly F-John 1:3</b> )                    |
| <u>O - Ps 33:6</u>       | 6) the earth was created by God's word. ( <b>Possibly F-John 1:3</b> )                     |
| <u>E-Ps 24:1</u>         | 7) tells us to whom all creation belongs.  |
| <u>I - Heb 1:2</u>       | 8) reveals the role of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in creation.                          |
| <u>H - Ps 74:16-17</u>   | 9) teaches us that God created the days and the seasons.                                   |
| <u>N-Colossians 1:16</u> | 10) reveals who created all things in heaven and earth.                                    |
| <u>B Gen 1:31</u>        | 11) asserts the original goodness of all that God had made.                                |
| <u>C-1 Tim 4:4</u>       | 12) our response to the original goodness of all things must be thanksgiving.              |

## Biblical Understanding of Creation

1. All that there is, or could be, owes its existence to the sovereign God. The idea of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) is not explicitly found in Genesis, but does not violate the spirit of Genesis.
2. God is a *creator* and not merely an *arranger* or *designer* of materials that were already there.
3. Creation is basically good, although evil soon perverts and ruins God's good world.
4. Because God created all things good, the presence of evil in the world does not count against God's goodness.
5. Creation is the work of the entire Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
6. The goal toward which creation is headed is expressed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
7. Therefore creation is the first link in the chain that is the Christian doctrine of redemption: *creation—covenant—salvation*.
8. Reconciliation should be thought of as occurring on a cosmic scale, enveloping thrones, powers, dominions, principalities, and authorities, and not merely individual souls.

## The New Creation

As there will be no more death, and no more pain or sickness preparatory thereto; as there will be no more grieving for or parting with friends; so there will be no more sorrow or crying. Nay, but there will be a greater deliverance than all this; for there will be no more sin. And to crown all, there will be a deep, an intimate, an uninterrupted union with God; a constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the Three-[in]-One God, and of all the creatures in him!

John Wesley, Sermon: "The New Creation" in *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 2, Sermons II: 34-70, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 500.

## Dualism and Monotheism

In a dualistic worldview, good and evil are **EQUALS**—God and Satan are co-conspirators in helping or hurting humankind. Evil is considered to have as much influence in the world as Good. This is not the case for Christians.

We believe in one God—**MONOTHEISM**—all other objects in the universe—the planet, humankind, the angels, even Satan are creatures not the Creator. God is one and only Good and His creation is Good. However, creation has been corrupted by evil and disobedience (more about this later).

Any dualism compromises the **SOVEREIGNTY** of God—that God is truly God above and beyond all else.

Three safeguards that Christians use to protect God's sovereignty (as if God needed us to protect Him!). In any case, these safeguards are the "omni-"doctrines: Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence (Lodahl, p. 53ff)

## **Omnipotent**

"There is no other **POWER** against whom God must compete."

Extreme version—"everything that happens does so because God...causes, wills, or directly makes it happen." (Also, the Calvinistic view)

## **Omniscience**

God "**KNOWS** all things."

Extreme version—God knows all even the details of the future (foreknowledge) so that God is never surprised. There is debate at this point between Calvinists and Arminians. Arminians believe in divine foreknowledge, but it did not cancel out a person's freedom to respond to God's grace. Calvinists would rather emphasize God's sovereignty rather than human freedom. Arminians affirm both—God's sovereignty and human freedom.

## **Omnipresence**

"God is **PRESENT** to every point in the entire universe at every moment." There is no place where God is not.

### **Summary of the Omni- Doctrines**

Many theologians have been suspect of the "omni" doctrines. They emphasize "abstract analysis and deductive logic" about what God "must be in order to be God," and less to the God encountered and described in the biblical story.

One issue that raises concerns about the "omni" doctrines is the presence and problem of **EVIL** in the world.

## **Problem of Evil and Theodicy**

**Theodicy** (theos=God; dike=justification) is a method of justifying God's way in the world, specifically in the face of great human suffering.

The problem of evil asks this question,

"How can a good and loving God allow a world with so much senseless suffering?"

### **The problem of evil challenges the "omni" doctrines:**

A omnipresent God would certainly be aware of the presence of evil

An omniscient God would certainly know how to overcome this evil

An omnipotent God would certainly be able to enforce victory over evil; and

A God of love presumably would desire to be rid of evil.

Yet evil does not disappear.

We must be honest in our theology and not ignore the presence of suffering around us.

### **Moral evil & Natural evil**

Moral evil suggests evil is the result of the human abuse of freedom by choosing sin that leads to evil.

The freewill defense works best in the area of omnipotence—God allows His creation to be as it is, even allowing his creatures to reject Him. This view of divine power can be viewed as empowerment. **The mystery of the divine-human relationship includes the notion that God might share His power to create ("go forth and multiply") as well as to destroy (Cain's murder of Abel).**

Nature evil limits how much we can put against human decisions. There is evil and destruction in the natural world—earthquakes, damaging storms, floods, etc. Natural evil leaves human lives at the mercy of unpredictable and destructive forces beyond our control.

### **This is where Job helps us understand the problem of evil and suffering.**

Job is being afflicted by evil through Satan's hand (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7), but we learn also of evil's limitations.

Satan is created and sustained by God. To blame our experiences of evil and destruction upon Satan only pushes the problem back one step, for God remains the sovereign source of all things—including the devil. When Job finally gets God's attention in chapters 38-41—God does not hesitate to take responsibility for all the world's joys and pains.

In Job 38-41 "God speaks of the immensity of the oceans, light and darkness, snow and hail, floods and thunderbolts; God calls to Job's mind dew and ice, constellations and clouds, and even clods of dirt. Also God speak of lions and ravens and mountain goats, of deer and donkeys. The ox is God's, as well as the ostrich, and the horse and hawk and hippo. This majestic address from the whirlwind might inspire in us, as it did in Job, an awe in the presence of God's creative imagination, for the created order is ... brimming with life and vitality that God alone can contain, sustain, and integrate its immense variety and precarious harmony. It seems, in fact at times to totter on the brink of chaos." (Lodahl, 57)

In Job 41:8-33 God speaks of His handiwork in making the "Leviathan" or **CROCODILE**. "Lay your hand on him; remember the battle; you will not do it again!...No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him; who then is he that can stand before Me?...Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth there is terror...His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes forth from his mouth...When he raises himself up, the mighty fear, because of the crashing they are bewildered...Nothing on earth is like him, one made without fear." (Job 41:8, 10, 14, 21, 25, 33)

The crocodile was important in Canaanite mythology. The crocodile represented Lotan, a seven-headed monster of the swirling, chaotic seas—a personification of the chaotic elements of the universe conquered by the act of creation. The crocodile represents the **CHAOTIC** elements of creation that God overpowers as its Creator.

What if we what we call 'natural evil' could be interpreted as the occasional intrusions of 'chaos' into predictable, structured order of our lives? "Remember that it is his suffering that inspires Job's questions of God, and that it is God's whirlwind address on the Leviathan, the monster of the chaotic deep, that finally silences those questions. This 'monster' is indeed God's creation, but that does not stop it from threatening or injuring us." (p. 59)

### **God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16)**

Two perspectives on Creation:

Creatio ex nihilo (Creation out of nothing) & Creatio ex amore (Creation out of love)

--Paul van Buren

Jesus Christ was at the beginning (John 1:1, 14; Col. 1:15, 17). "If Christ is at the very center of the Christian doctrine of creation, it will mean that God's act of creation reflects the very self-giving, self-surrendering love embodied in the Crucifixion." (Lodahl, p. 60).

- God's omnipotence is not with a ruling fist, but an open, bleeding hand. God does not hoard power, but shares it.

- God's omniscience is found in the intimacy of Creator with creation, not having an impersonal computer-like knowledge. Ex., the Hebrew word "yada" (to know) as in "Adam *knew* Eve."
- God's omnipresence is does not force his presence but waits for our recognition of His presence.

### **Sovereignty of Love**

Divine sovereignty is really a "sovereignty of love." "The God revealed in Jesus' suffering with and for us is a God who is vulnerable, who shares in the pain of human suffering."

It is good thing that God knows our suffering, but we also seek a **DELIVERANCE** from evil. "If the Cross bespeaks [tells of] God's willingness to suffer at the hands of creation, to feel with us the pangs of chaos as it threatens and sometimes harms us, then the **resurrection** reminds us that God is the victorious Power."

God creates us with a purpose—**SHALOM**, or "an all-embracing sense of well-being that will permeate all creation, a vision of peace that sustains God's own struggle against the destructive effects of our human freedom."

We do not celebrate the idea that God determines every event in our lives, but that "God's **LOVE** for us is the one indestructible power in the universe":

(Romans 8:22-23, 37-39)

<sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup>Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(much of the previous lecture is based on Lodahl, *Story of God*, 51-62)

### **Something to Think About (Response paper)**

(OPTIONAL) Choose one of the following questions and write a two-page response paper.

- Using the concepts of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, describe how does God eventually brings victory over evil?
- What imagery does the Bible use to illustrate beautiful order (creation) and destructive power (chaos) founding nature? How might God might be responsible for natural evil in the world? How is God victorious over the destructive forces found in nature? (see Job 38-41; Romans 8:35-39)

## 9. The Creature—The Universe and Humanity

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### The Universe as Creation

Lodahl, *Story of God*, pages 63-66

Sun, moon, animals were worshipped by Canaanite people who surrounded and lived near the Israelites of the Old Testament. In Genesis 1, these **IDOLS** or **false gods**—sun, moon, animals—are pronounced as creatures of the one God the Creator of all things. (Lodahl, 64)

Themes of creation narrative of the Bible—

- 1) "**WHO** of creation"
- 2) All that God creates is **GOOD** (1 Tim 4:4; 6:17)

John Wesley wrote, "Love the creature as it leads to the **CREATOR**" (Plain Account, 13): meaning, it's in creation that makes possible the meeting place between God and humanity—God enters into his creation to make it "very good."

### Humanity: The Creature in the Creator's Image

Lodahl, *Story of God*, pp. 67-72

The question central to the idea of theological anthropology: "**WHO AM I?**"

#### Some observations on Genesis 1 & 2—

- 1) the creation account suggests a progression in the creation processes of God, from simpler to more complex, from one day to the next;
- 2) the creation of human beings occurs on the same day as other land creatures—humans are "fellow creatures among and within all of God's created works."
- 3) Yet God addresses Adam (Hebrew, "land" "humanity") the male and female and gives us dominion over and responsibility for creation.
- 4) The crown of creation: humanity. Psalm 8:5-6: "*What is man?... Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty! Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet.*"
- 5) The creature is called into relationship and responsibility. Humanity made in the image of God.
- 6) John Wesley noted that humans were created "to exist and to love."  
"Authentic relationship ("to love") cannot occur without a strong sense of selfhood/personal identity ("to exist")"
- 7) Humans are "finite creatures of dust, yet also creatures with whom God desires to maintain a covenantal relationship."
- 8) "We are those creatures clearly able to respond to Him, to answer His questions" in our relationship with Him (Genesis 3:9) and in our relationships with others (Genesis 4:9).
- 9) Humans are given the power to "name" the other creatures: to give order, meaning, and structure to creation—the power to create and to destroy.

To be created in God's image means that we have a **RESPONSE**-ability to Him and to all the creation that surrounds us.

## 10. The Tragedy: Doctrine of Sin

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### Human “Response-ability” and Sin

The possibility of disobedience is needed for there to be authentic responsibility (response-ability) for our actions. However, sin is a **PERVERSION** of God’s intentions and God’s purpose for creation.

Though, sin is never excusable, it is at its root **DISOBEDIENCE** in the face of God’s love for us.

Sin leads to giving up or turning away or hiding from God—to reject our need to answer for our actions.

We know Adam’s story in the garden (Genesis 3). Adam’s story is our story, too. We know good and evil, we know the struggle with temptation, we know the disobedience against the divine will, and in trying to rationalize sinful actions and project our guilt on others.

Read Genesis 3. As a small group, read the story of the Fall. Respond to the questions:

**What is the progression of events in this story? (What happens, who is speaking)**

**How does this story introduce the ideas of temptation, sin, guilt, and shame?**

### Sin a Many-Headed Monster

According to Nazarene theologian Rob L. Staples, the biblical evidence (especially the story of the Fall in Genesis 3) shows sin to be a many-headed monster:

- Sin begins in a questioning of divine authority.
- Sin is essentially the attempt to become like God.
- Sin is not only an individual transgression against a holy God, but also has a social dimension.
- Sin involves the breaking of fellowship.
- Sin includes the denial of responsibility.
- Sin robs life of meaning and purpose.
- Sin always ends in our alienation from the Lord God.

From “Sin” in Rob Staples, *Words of Faith*, 43-44.

### Sin and Human Solidarity (Original Sin)

Genesis 2:18: (“**IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE**”)

- No person is an **ISLAND**, completely detached from the rest.
- All of us are **INTERCONNECTED**—
- This solidarity underlies the Christian doctrine of **ORIGINAL SIN**.

"Sin is the distortion of our very being—the human self rejects authentic relationship to God and others and turns in upon itself, thus poisoning the very relationships without which we cannot truly live." (p. 80)

As Romans 5:12, 18 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned" and that "through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." (Romans 5:12, 18)  
What does this mean?

"No human deed, word, thought, or even attitude occurs in **ISOLATION**."—Lodahl, 80

## The Story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)

Read Genesis 4. Summarize the story in the space below.

Summary: They are brothers—from the same family—but this kinship does not prevent sin's growing. It may, in fact, encourage its spread." In this story, God does not intrude or supercede Cain's free will. Though God does provoke Cain with His questions (Genesis 4:6-7). God tries to woo Cain away from a destructive path, but God does not force His will.

***Where was God when Cain was making the fateful decision to murder his brother? God was right there trying to persuade Cain to do otherwise. (Lodahl)***

## Original Sin and Preventive Grace

### The Ripple Effects of Original Sin

- To **ENTHrone** ourselves as the center and lord of our worlds.
- God presented Cain with a choice, making Cain responsible, but it also shows how sin contaminated the relationship between creature and Creator, and between humans.

### Preventive grace

- God's loving presence at all times gives human beings a **SOLIDARITY** to sin—allows us to choose against the chains and bondage of sin.

"Whether we like it or not, our lives are intertwined in such a way that the sin of one person exercises destructive effects throughout the human race, like the ripples of a pebble thrown in a pond." Michael Lodahl

## The Shackles of Sin

Sin is an "**ABUSE** of human freedom" and "**TURNING AWAY**" from God's love". Humans are called to freedom *not to do as we please* but *to love and serve others*.

Martin Luther called sin "the self curved in upon itself" rather than turned outward in servanthood to God and others.

## **Original sin = "THE SINFUL ORIENTATION OUT OF WHICH SINFUL ACTIONS ARISE"**

"But if God creates us for, and toward, a life of self-giving love, it becomes clear that sin is not essentially an aspect of human nature as created and willed by Him. Sin is an intruder. Sin is not to be identified with natural human limitations, finitude, or shortcomings; rather, it is essentially the fundamental act of rebellion against the God who is Love. And that act of rejection is the basis of estrangement (of being a stranger) from God. This does not mean that God sees human beings as strangers, but that we can, through our rejection of His love, estrange ourselves from Him and turn Him into a stranger to ourselves. But if God creates human beings for fellowship with himself and with one another, then to make ourselves strangers to His love is 'to miss the mark,' the New Testament's primary metaphor for sin. It is to 'fall short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23): to fall short of God's likeness and image in our lives, to miss the mark of God's ideal calling for us in Christ Jesus." Michael Lodahl, *The Story of God*, page 83

## **The New Testament metaphor for sin = "TO MISS THE MARK"**

### **Augustine & Pelagius—Solidarity or Solitary**

We are in this together in solidarity toward sin—with an inclination to disobey God—and not our own Adam or Eve—wholly good being tempted to sin for the first time all over again. This was the point of the famous debate between Augustine (354-430) and the British monk Pelagius.

#### **Augustine:**

- Adam's sin has resulted in humanity's universal bondage to sin, while emphasizing human solidarity
- Human beings are incapable of choosing anything but sin, and only divine grace can save us
- He claimed that certain human beings are divinely favored and chosen by God (predestination), since it cannot have been the human's choice to believe and repent

#### **Pelagius:**

- Feared that many would dismiss responsibility for their own actions
- Adam's sin does not negatively affect human freedom, except in giving us a poor example of how to behave
- Human freedom is not essentially hindered by Adam's sin
- God's grace is manifested quite naturally in our God-given freedom
- He claimed we are our own Adam and Eve and disregarded human solidarity toward sin

Later debates pushed Augustine's and Pelagius's views to the extremes.

**We wish Augustine** realized that his view on predestination made humans "little more than enslaved pawns on a cosmic chessboard." "Augustine's views lapsed into the extremes of strict Calvinism: "God decrees certain individuals for salvation, since human beings, enslaved to sin, can have no real choice in the matter—God is merciful to save anybody."

**We wish Pelagius** realized that human beings live in solidarity, (what I do affects what you do and vice versa); and none of us enters the world with a clean slate—we enter a history filled with sin and violence.

"We are born into a world dominated by the 'me-first,' self-centered orientation; we are members of one another, and thus the sin of our ancestors continues profoundly to affect,

even to infect, us all. It is the reality, already there before us and into which we are thrown at birth, the Pelagius apparently failed to appreciate.”

Pelagius missed the biblical and experiential reality of human solidarity, Augustine seems to have missed the biblical narrative’s emphasis upon human responsibility and the biblical call to human beings to cooperate willfully with God’s intentions for human life.”

This tension between solidarity/sin and individuality/responsibility would be resolved in the Wesleyan emphasis on prevenient grace.

**solidarity/sin ↔ individuality/responsibility = prevenient grace**

**Prevenient grace** is “that God is ever present in our lives, enabling us, if we will, to desire and even choose His will for us. His gracious presence and Word can be resisted, but if yielded to, we can be liberated to the true freedom of loving servanthood toward God and neighbor.” (Lodahl, 84-85)

### **Something to Think About (Possible Homework, Discussion, or Exam Question)**

- In what ways does the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) teach us about original sin and human freedom?
- What were the major points of disagreement between Augustine and Pelagius? How does the Wesleyan doctrine prevenient grace help in resolving this disagreement?

## **11. The Doctrine of the Trinity: Vital Center or Ancient Relic**

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Read Together the Nicene Creed. Then, offer the **Reasons for the Contemporary Revival of Trinitarian Theology**

### Nicene Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man,  
and crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;  
He suffered and was buried,  
and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven,

and sitteth on the right hand of the Father,  
and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and Giver of life,  
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;  
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy universal and apostolic church;  
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

### **Reasons for the Contemporary Revival of Trinitarian Theology**

- To return to the riches of Christian antiquity and recover again the connection between Christian theology and Christian devotion/spirituality at the heart of trinitarian theology.
- To stress what all Christians have in common. The ecumenical power of the doctrine of the Trinity.
- To discern how the doctrine of the Trinity separates Christian doctrine and proclamation from the other religions of the world. For some, however, this conversation will also lead them to explore "points of contact" between the Christian Trinity and trinity-like features of other world religions.
- To ask how the Trinity influences and shapes our Christian ethics, or how this teaching ought to shape our ethics, our social organizations, and our politics.

### **Singing the Trinity**

We are going to examine closely two great Trinitarian hymns of the church. They are "Holy, Holy, Holy!" and "Come, Thou Almighty King."

One of these hymns is nearly 250 years old and the other is 175 years old.  
***In your opinion, how are these ancient hymns still speaking to us today? In what ways are the names for God used in these hymns still effective in communicating the Gospel in today's world?***

The older of these hymns names God as "Almighty King," "Incarnate Word," and "Holy Comforter." These are not the same as God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, but there is no mistaking the meaning.

## Trinitarian Hymns

### Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee  
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
Which wert, and art, and ever more shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Tho' the darkness hide Thee.  
Tho' the eye of sinful man Thy Glory may not see;  
Only Thou art holy—there is none beside Thee  
Perfect in pow'r, in love, in purity.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky, and sea.  
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Words: Reginald Heber, 1826. Music: 'Nicaea,' John B. Dykes, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1861. Sing to the Lord

### Come, Thou Almighty King

Come, Thou Almighty King, Help us Thy name to sing.  
Help us to praise. Father all glorious, O'er all victorious,  
Come, and reign over us, Ancient of Days.

Come, Thou Incarnate Word, Gird on Thy mighty sword.  
Our prayer attend. Come, and Thy people bless, And give Thy word success.  
Spirit of holiness, On us descend.

Come, Holy Comforter, Thy sacred witness bear in this glad hour.  
Thou, who almighty art, Now rule in ev'ry heart  
And ne'er from us depart, Spirit of pow'r.

To Thee, great One in Three, Eternal praises be  
Hence evermore. Thy sov'reign majesty May we in glory see,  
And to eternity Love and adore.

Words: Some as 'Anonymous'. Others credit Charles Wesley, 1757. Music: 'Italian Hymn,' Felice de Giardini, in *The Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes Sung at the Chapel of the Lock Hospital*. Sing to the Lord

## Praying the Trinity

**Origen** (c. 185-c. 254), an important early theologian for the Eastern church, was the first Christian to write a systematic theology. He **believed all prayer should be directed to God the Father, through God the Son (for He is after all, the only Mediator between God and humanity), in the power of God the Holy Spirit.**

Does God grade and judge the quality of our prayers? We hope not, for we should all fail. God looks on the heart that prays more than on the correctness of the words spoken or the theologies expressed.

But even so, should we not avoid erroneous theology in our prayers, especially our public prayers, if at all possible? It often happens that in their prayers, Nazarene pastors are not careful to pray in a trinitarian way, at Christmas and Easter especially. It often happens that someone will address a prayer to God the Father, and then midway through the prayer will thank "You" (meaning, still, God the Father) or sometimes even "You, Father" for either coming to live on earth in the Incarnation, or even dying on the Cross.

But it is false, and for some even heresy, to say that God the Father died on the Cross for our sins. It was *not* God the Father, but God the Son who died on the Cross. **To claim it was God the Father on the Cross is the heresy known as patripassianism, the passion of the Father (we will say more on the subject of "The Triune Cross" later). Similarly, it was *not* God the Father who became Incarnate, but rather the *Word of God the Father who came to live among us.***

Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing  
O come, let us adore Him!  
O come, let us adore Him!  
O come, let us adore Him—  
Christ the Lord!

From "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

To take an elementary example, **if God the Father became incarnate, then to whom was Jesus Christ praying while He was on earth? If the Father came into flesh, then Jesus was praying not to the Father, but to himself.**

However, **the doctrine of the Trinity asserts time and time again that *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all share the same essence and nature.* To say that it was the Word of the Father who came to live among us is indeed to say that nothing other than the fullness of God was in the flesh in Jesus Christ.**

As he does so often, **C. S. Lewis** artfully and powerfully explains how God as triune is present in the **humble act of prayer:**

An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers. (*Mere Christianity*, p. 127)

C. S. Lewis does not mention the Holy Spirit by name, although the Spirit of Christ standing alongside the praying man is present as the Holy Spirit of God. **Lewis does give the "three-personal Being" three inseparable, and yet distinguishable, roles: the goal the man is trying to reach, the power helping him reach the goal, and the road by which he can travel to his goal.**

**Optional written exercise:** Write a prayer using the form of prayer *to* God the Father, *through* God the Son, *in* God the Spirit. This might be a prayer that could be used during Sunday morning worship or a very personal prayer. *Why is such a prayer to the One True God and not to three Gods?*

## The Trinity and Worship

Our worship is the gift of participating, through the Spirit, in what Christ has done and is doing for us in his intercessions and communion with the Father.

—Alan J. Torrance

**If we understand worship within the doctrine of the Trinity, we escape human ritual, and worship in spirit and truth. Torrance writes:**

It is precisely the theological insight that **God's grace actually includes the provision of the very response demanded by it that distinguishes Christian worship from religious ritual.** Christian **worship becomes thus the free participation by the Spirit in something that God perfects on our behalf,** whereas **worship as religious ritual is a human task,** namely one that ultimately can be little more than the vain attempt on the part of finite creatures to approach the "Transcendent."

Is worship religious ritual or worship in spirit and truth? Can worship occur anywhere, with anyone, at any time? If so, what does that say about where we meet, does it matter? If so, what does that say about the Church and church planting movements? If worship does not need a priest, does worship need to be led by an ordained minister? (No.) If we really mean we worship in spirit and in truth it means we can worship at any time, with anyone, at any time.

Again Torrance writes:

Christian worship shares in a human-Godward movement that belongs to God and which takes place *within* the divine life. It is precisely into and within *this* that we are brought by the Spirit to participate as a gift of grace. . . . Worship is not some valiant subjective response, therefore. It is a gift of grace which is realized vicariously in Christ and which is received and participated in by the Spirit.

Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 311, 313, 315

## 12. Biblical Foundations of the Trinity

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### A Classic Doctrine Biblically Rooted

The doctrine of the Trinity does not merely set forth God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, as three cars on a railroad track. That is a **crucial difference between a triad and a trinity**. Three of anything—political figures, football players, or Nazarene general superintendents—could conceivably be a triad. But a **trinity assumes oneness** of essence and purpose not found in a triad.

The **Gospel of John** appreciates and develops the **triunity** of God more than any other New Testament book. Jesus' declaration in **John 10:30, "The Father and I are one,"** is really the *beginning point* of the doctrine of the Trinity.

### **Triunity** of God developed best in the Gospel of John John 10:30, "The Father and I are one" (See also John 14-17)

Jesus' discourses in **John 14-17 are often highly Trinitarian**. The Holy Spirit is not always explicitly present. Yet whenever the Father and the Son are in intimate relations, the Holy Spirit is present even if not explicitly mentioned. Recall that Augustine believed the Holy Spirit to be the "bond of love" between Father and Son. For Augustine God the Father is the Lover, God the Son the Beloved, God the Spirit the Love Itself.

**Jesus at his death had said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46); but the first Christian martyr, Stephen, cried out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59).**

—Jaroslav Pelikan, *Melody of Theology*, 257

The God and Father of Jesus Christ, even in the Old Testament, was not necessarily a "solitary God" who kept to himself. While the Old Testament does not specifically develop a doctrine of the Trinity, we can observe that **God in the Old Testament is often accompanied by His Word, His Wisdom, and His Spirit**. The principle of *multiplicity-in-unity* characteristic of the Triune God is strongly suggested by the testimony of the Old Testament.

It is not possible to "prove" the Trinity from the Old Testament, but **some scriptures seem to anticipate the doctrine**. The "thrice-blessed Name" of **God is to be found, and the plural "we" and "us" also, suggesting multiplicity within God. See Genesis 1:1-2, 26; Numbers 6:23-26; Isaiah 6:2-3, 48:16.**

## Trinity in the Bible

Attributes of Deity				
Omnipresence		Father	1 Kings 8:27	
		Son	Matthew 28:20	
		Spirit	Psalms 139:7	
Omniscience		Father	Psalms 147:5	
		Son	John 16:30	
		Spirit	1 Cor 2:10	
Omnipotence		Father	Psalms 135:6	
		Son	Matthew 28:18	
		Spirit	Romans 15:19	
Holiness		Father	Rev 15:4	
		Son	Acts 3:14	
		Spirit	Rom 1:4	
Eternity		Father	Ps 90:2	
		Son	Micah 5:2; John 1:2, Rev 18:17	
		Spirit	Heb 9:14	
Truth		Father	John 7:28	
		Son	Rev 3:7	
		Spirit	1 John 5:6	
Lord		All Three	Luke 2:11; Rom 10:12; 2 Cor 3:17	
Everlasting		All Three	Rom 16:26; Heb 9:14; Rev 22:13	
Almighty		All Three	Gen 1:17; Rom 15:19; Rev 1:8;	
Powerful		All Three	Jer 32:17; Zach 4:6; Heb 1:3	
<b>Works of Deity</b>	Creation of World	Father	Gen 2:7; Ps 102:25	
		Son	John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2	
		Spirit	Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30	
	Incarnation	All Three		Luke 3:15 Heb 10:5
		Resurrection of Christ from the dead	Father raised Him	Acts 2:32; 13:30; Rom 6:4; Eph 1:19,20
	"	Christ involved	John 2:19; John 10:17,18	
	"	Spirit involved	Rom 1:14	
	Sanctify	All Three		Heb 2:11; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 1
	Life	All Three		Deut 30:20; Rom 8:10; Col 3:4
	Eternal life	All Three		John 10:28; Rom 6:23; Gal 6:8
Raise the dead	All Three		John 5:21a; John 5:21b; 1 Peter 3:18	
Divinely Inspire	All Three		Mark 13:11; 2 Cor 13:3; Heb 1:1	
"Each of the persons of the Trinity have distinctive ministries but they always act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works wrought [done] by God throughout the universe." page 241				

**From Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993, pp. 238-241**

## Old Testament Scriptures

### Genesis 1:1-2, 26

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

### Numbers 6:23-26

"The Lord bless you  
and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace."

### Isaiah 6:1-3, 48:16

"I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs . . . and they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:1-3)

"Come near me and listen to this: 'From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there.' And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me, with his Spirit." (Is 48:16)

The **three clearest New Testament testimonies** to the doctrine of the Triune God are probably:

## New Testament Scriptures

### 2 Corinthians 13:14 (some English translations combine v. 14 with v. 13 i.e. The Good News Bible

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."

### Hebrews 9:14

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!"

The Hebrews passage shows the necessary mutual relations among Father, Son, and Spirit. It speaks powerfully to the Trinity as a mystery of salvation.

### Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

## Looking at the Biblical Evidence of the Trinity

(Small Group Activity)

Divide the class into three groups and have them examine the Scriptures for 15-20 minutes. Look up the Bible references and make a list of the characteristics of the Trinity. For Group 1, it will be God's oneness. For Group 2, it will be the relationship between Father and Son, or Son and Spirit (dyadic). For Group 3, it will be how God is three in one (triadic). Some verses in each group only make a small reference to the subject of unity, dyadic, or triadic relations in the Trinity.

### Group 1

These passages make the point of God's *oneness*. Remember the Trinity does not teach there are three Gods but rather ***One God in Three Persons***. So the message of the unity of God is one we keep always in view. The **belief in three gods is called the heresy of tritheism**, picturing three thrones in heaven. People who pray *first* to God the Father, and *then* to God the Son, if the first prayer is unavailing, and *finally* to the Holy Spirit, may be engaging in a form of tritheism.

Study: Dt 6:4; Mt 23:9; Mk 10:18, 12:29; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:4, 6; Gal 3:20; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 1:17, 2:5; James 2:19, 4:12.

### Group 2

There are also passages that are *dyadic* in nature, linking the **Father and the Son, or the Son and the Holy Spirit**. As mentioned before, whenever two of the three Persons are present, it can confidently be said that the third is there also.

These passages are Rom 1:4, 6:4, 8:11; 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; 1 Tim 1:2, 3:16; 1 Pet 1:21.

### Group 3

*Triadic* passages linking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit include the following passages: Acts 2:32-33; 1 Cor 6:11, 12:4-5; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Gal 3:11-14; Eph 3:1-6, 4:4-6; 1 Thes 5:18-19; 2 Thes 2:13-14; Heb 10:29; 1 Pet 1:2, 3:18.

## Small Group Project (Worship Service on the Trinity)

Stay in the small groups from the previous project. Now, create a worship service around the theme of the Trinity. Each worship service should include an opening prayer, Scripture readings, three or more songs and/or hymns, the church at prayer, a children's sermon, a sermon (title and biblical passage only), and a closing benediction. Use scripture references and themes we have discussed in class.

## 13. Talking about the Triune God

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### The Triune God

#### The Nazarene Article of Faith: The Triune God

"We believe in one eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign of the universe; that He only is God, creative and administrative, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose, that He as God, is Triune in essential being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (Manual, p. 26)

Among the Early Church fathers there were many clever ways of referring to the Triune God.

- A **root that sends forth a branch**, which in turn sends forth a shoot, would do nicely. There are three—root, branch, shoot—and yet these three function obviously as one.
- The **sun, with its body or essence, its heat, and its light**, might be another, although this word picture was in danger of falling into **modalism, meaning there was insufficient distinction from Father to Son to Spirit**.

If the **Trinity is pictured as a family**, who would be the originating source of this family? Recalling that the first Christians were monotheists, the unquestioned was God the Father. However, the **Father did not "lord it over" the Son and the Spirit, but was rather to be thought of as the "first among equals."** Some used the analogy of the **three torches to establish this point. God the Father was the originating flame, and passed his flame on to the Son, who passed it to the Holy Spirit. But remember that throughout it is the same flame, and therefore the same divine essence shared from Father to Son to Spirit.**

Today, we may hear clever analogies as water existing in three states—liquid, gas, frozen—and an egg with its white, its yolk, and its shell. Even a pie with its filling, its top crust, its bottom crust, has sometimes been thought to illustrate the Trinity.

At times in the **development of trinitarian doctrine, there was undoubtedly some *subordinationism* in play, where God the Father was subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, thought to be better than the Son or the Spirit.** The early theologian Irenaeus (c. 130 - c. 200) spoke of the Son and the Spirit as the "two hands" of God, which at least has the potential to place the Son and Spirit on a less plane than God the Father. The tendency toward subordinationism had to be resisted.

The Council of Nicea, the first ecumenical council (AD 325), staunchly **opposed the heresy Arianism, which taught that the Son or Logos was a creature, and hence not "coessential" with God the Father.** Historically, the divinity of the Holy Spirit was the last to be established. It was not until the end of the fourth century that Christian orthodoxy firmly taught the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Prior to this the Spirit was often depicted as the mouthpiece of the Old Testament prophets, the one by whom the Bible was inspired, but not always as *fully divine* in the same sense as the Father and the Son.

## Two Famous Trinitarian Analogies

### Psychological Analogy

- Augustine developed what is often referred to as the “psychological” analogy of the Trinity

Augustine stressed more what the three Persons had in common than what distinguished them. He believed the three differed from one another only in terms of their relations. In other words, the Father is *not* the Father in relation to himself. The Father is not His own Father! Similarly with the Son, He is Son in relation to the Father, but God in relation to himself.

- Augustine famously declared that *each is in each, all are in each, each is in all, all are in all, and all are one.*

Augustine believed much **evidence of the triunity of God existed within each person.** That was the point of the psychological analogy. By reflecting on one’s own mind or consciousness, one could learn something about the operations of the Triune God.

- Every human mind is characterized by *memory, understanding, and will.*

**These three cannot function to fullest capacity without constant reliance upon the other two.** That was Augustine’s point, and it must be stretched to the Triune God also. **Each of Father, Son, and Spirit depends on the other two for the unity that characterizes the Triune God.**

### Social Analogy

The Cappadocian Fathers, three Greek-speaking theologians of the fourth-century Eastern Church (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa).

- The Cappadocian fathers advanced what has come to be known sometimes as the “social” analogy of the Trinity.

There idea contrasted with Augustine who began his thinking about the Trinity by trying to grasp the *whole* of God.

- Typically the Cappadocian fathers started their thinking with *God the Father*, and from there moved to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Subordinationism was a danger largely avoided by these theologians.** One of them said, famously, that whenever **he contemplated the Three, he was driven to behold the One, and whenever he thought of the Three, he was compelled to welcome the One. Trinitarian theology must never sacrifice the One for the sake of the Three, or the Three for the sake of the One.**

- Social analogy looks to the phenomenon of persons in relationship for a clue to the mystery of the divine life.

The social analogy fills out and completes the psychological analogy. One writer has written that “the social analogy of the Trinity is needed to correct and complement the psychological analogy.

Gregory of Nyssa spoke of Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. Each of these **men has his own distinct identity, and yet all of them share in the common essence of humanity.** That is the easiest way to state the social analogy.

## **Immanent and Economic Trinity**

The Triune God has often been discussed under two aspects. These are the *immanent* Trinity and the *economic* Trinity. The immanent Trinity has also sometimes been called the *essential* or the *ontological* Trinity, because the investigation into the immanent Trinity seeks to know the true inner nature of God.

Roughly speaking, the **immanent Trinity is “who God is,”** whereas the **economic Trinity is “what God does,”** because God flows out of himself into the economy of creation, grace, and redemption.

We will return to these ideas later.

### **OPTIONAL MINI-LECTURE:**

#### **God Who Loves**

Sometimes these newer ideas of God are referred to as “open theism” or even “freewill theism,” since these new ideas stress God’s total availability for His creatures and His creation. In evangelical circles, at least, the one book that started this conversation moving is *The Openness of God*, written by Clark Pinnock and four others.

One of the writers of this book, John Sanders, later wrote a related book, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence (1998)*. In this book Sanders explains the **basic difference between the Triune God and the God of theism**, whom he calls the Neoplatonic God:

A trinitarian metaphysic is illuminating in this regard. Beginning with a trinitarian God of love who enters into loving personal relations with his creatures gives some direction to the doctrine of providence. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit love one another. They are involved in a tripersonal community in which each member of the triune being gives and receives love from the others. Relationality is an *essential* aspect of God. **The tripersonal God is the perfection of love and communion—the very antithesis of aloofness, isolation and domination.** God is no solitary potentate forcing his will on others. The members of the Trinity mutually share and relate to one another. In this view personhood is the ultimate ontological category. Personhood, relationality and community—not power, independence, and control—become the center for understanding the nature of God. Whereas the main motif of the Neoplatonic God concept is that of distance and unrelatedness, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity asserts that to be God is to be related in love. (175-176)

#### **God For Us**

Catherine Mowry LaCugna, in her book *God for Us (1993)*, believes **Ephesians 1:3-14 is a great trinitarian text.** In some versions the word “predestined” appears in this passage, and it is probable that Nazarene theologians have focused on that word when they have

thought of this text, because “predestined” seems to support some of the doctrines of Calvinism.

[Read the text aloud—Eph 1:3-14—all one sentence in the original Greek]  
Set aside the controversy over “predestined” and now look at this text as a trinitarian text, because of what it teaches of the mystery and glory of salvation.

**Why is this passage a great biblical and trinitarian text regarding salvation?**

**[review briefly the following section: it is quite complex and difficult to explain in one session. Students should use the page for future reference.]**

**The 5-4-3-2-1 God: The Aquinas Formula**

(briefly survey this material in a brief mini-lecture)

With Thomas Aquinas, following Augustine, the theology of the inner dynamism of God reached a kind of finality. A memory device of a 5-4-3-2-1 formula was used to teach seminarians:

**God Is Five Notions**

A notion is what distinguishes each divine Person from the other two. Here are the five notions:

- Innascibility or ingenerateness, referring to God the Father, who is the Source of His own being, hence ingenerate.
- Paternity, referring also to God the Father, how He fathers or generates the Word from all eternity. The Word does not come into existence in time, but is eternally generated. If this is not true, He would be a creature.
- Filiation, referring to the reality of the Son’s being eternally generated from the Father.
- Spiration, referring to the reality of the Holy Spirit’s being breathed out or spirated by God the Father and God the Son. This spiration is from the standpoint of the Father and the Son.
- Procession, referring to the Holy Spirit’s perspective of being breathed forth by Father and Son.

**God Is Four Relations**

All of the five mentioned above, except for ingenerateness, describe relations. They are hence the four relations within the Godhead.

Begetter to Begotten (Father to Son)	Fatherhood
Begotten to Begetter (Son to Father)	Sonship
Spirator to Spirated (Father and Son to Holy Spirit)	Spiration
Spirated to Spirator (Holy Spirit to Father and Son)	Procession

## God Is Three Persons

Three of these four relations constitute persons. They are paternity (the Father), filiation (the Son), and spiration (the Holy Spirit).

## God Is Two Processions

See Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), c. 1.

The two processions are being begotten (Jesus said in John 8:42, "I came from God") and being spirated, the Holy Spirit being breathed forth by the Father and the Son.

Some critics of the doctrine of the Trinity say that there is after all no difference between the Son and the Holy Spirit. At the most, they say, the Christian doctrine of God should be called a "binity" (God is two-in-one), but not a Trinity.

There is undoubtedly a very close relation between the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. While He ministered on earth, Jesus accomplished everything through the Holy Spirit.

In the terms of the immanent Trinity, the difference between the Son and the Spirit is that the Son *is begotten* while the Holy Spirit *is breathed or spirated or proceeds*.

***Technical Term: In the early Middle Ages the Latin term filioque was added to the Nicene Creed, and remains to this day. It was added by a Western pope, without adequately consulting the Eastern Church. Theologically, the filioque means the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Filioque means "from the Son."***

To this day Eastern Orthodoxy opposes the filioque. There are two main reasons for this opposition. For one, it seems to suggest there are two "principles of origination" within the Godhead, instead of just one, the Father. Eastern Orthodoxy does not elevate God the Father above God the Son and God the Spirit, because Son and Holy Spirit are coequal and co-essential with the Father. However, the Eastern approach does consider the Father to be "first among equals" in relation to the other two Persons and the "fountain of divinity" within the Godhead.

The second reason is that the filioque ties the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ in an exclusive way. The Holy Spirit cannot be present or do His work without being directly linked or yoked to Jesus Christ. As we suggested above, the work of Jesus Christ on earth was always undergirded by the Holy Spirit. Jesus needed the Spirit in His life. But must the Spirit *always* be tied to the Person of Jesus Christ in an explicit and identifiable way?

If the Spirit cannot be conceived of apart from Jesus Christ, does this blunt the missionary effectiveness of the Holy Spirit? Does the Spirit go into countries and lands *before* missionaries arrive and start preaching about Jesus Christ? The Wesleyan principle of prevenient grace suggests the Spirit does go before and plant seeds.

Today, sometimes a compromise formula is used. Instead of "proceeds from the Father and the Son" it may be said "proceeds from the Father *through* the Son."

## God Is One Nature

See  
LaCugna,  
God for Us,  
154, 167,  
168, and  
179-80 n.  
133.

We have stated many times that Christian theology is monotheistic, testifying to the oneness of God. But monotheism must be seen in the light of the triune premise, such that God is one nature with three identities or in three Persons.

This is perhaps the closest theology can come to describing and defining the inner workings of God. In some ways it is a beautiful accomplishment, but the question immediately arises as to its practical usefulness for living the Christian life. In her challenging but rewarding book, the late Roman Catholic theologian Catherine LaCugna argued that for God to be truly *for us*, we must stress what she calls the *oikonomia* (the economy of God *for us* in creation and redemption) over against *theologia* or the immanent Trinity of God-in-himself.

Elsewhere, LaCugna expresses her basic thesis in these words:

from  
Catherine  
Mowry  
LaCugna,  
"The  
Practical  
Trinity,"  
The  
Christian  
Century  
(July 15-  
22, 1992),  
678.

It used to be that a new doctrine of the Trinity meant a new way to explain "God's inner life," that is, the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to one another (what tradition refers to as the immanent Trinity). But now both Catholic and Protestant theologians who are working to revitalize the doctrine of the Trinity have shifted "inner life." Instead, by returning to the more concrete images and concepts of the Bible, liturgy and creeds, it has become clear that the original purpose of the doctrine was to explain the place of Christ in our salvation, the place of the Spirit in our sanctification or deification, and in so doing to say something about the mystery of God's eternal being. By concentrating more on the mystery of *God with us*, *God for us*, and less on the nature of God by Godself, it is becoming possible once again for the doctrine of the Trinity to stand at the center of faith—as our rhetoric has always claimed.

## Conclusion

**Conclude the lecture with these words from the apostle Paul:**

"I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

—Colossians 2:2-3

## Teaching the Trinity

from Rob L. Staples, *Words of Faith*. Beacon Hill Press, 2001, pp. 25-26

Although evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity is found throughout the Bible, there is no direct reference in the Bible where God says, "I am Trinity; three persons in one substance" as the creeds later said it.

Yet God reveals Himself in Scripture in three ways:

"I *am*."  
"I am *here*."  
I am here *for you*."

Question: "How is it that God *is*, and that God is *here*, and that God is here *for us*?"

Answer: the Triune God.

"The 12 disciples of Jesus were devout Jews. As such, they believed in the God of Deuteronomy 6:4, the one Lord of Israel. But they had met a man named Jesus who called them to follow Him. As they followed Him, they at first had no comprehension of His deity. But after Calvary and the Resurrection, they realized that when they had been in the presence of Jesus, they had been in the presence of God. What God? Not some second God, but precisely the one God of Deut. 6:4, whose glory they had seen in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

"Then after His ascension, when Jesus was no longer with them, and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they became aware of God in yet a third way. God was living within them! What God? Not some third God, but the one God of Israel who is also the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"With that kind of experience, the early Christians began to understand the 'threeness' of God, and eventually the theologians began to construct doctrines of the Trinity." (p. 26)

"God the Father is God beyond us—the Creator and Governor of the universe."

God everywhere and always—in *all* places and in *all* times.

"God the Son is God beside us—the Redeemer who came into our world and became one of us."

God is God there and then—in *one* place and in *one* time.

"God the Holy Spirit is God within us—the indwelling Comforter and Sanctifier."

God is here and now in *my* place and *my* time.

God who is triune in essential being—God with three "faces"  
(English *person*, French *personne*, NT Greek *prospon* "face"; Latin *persona* "mask")

### God works for us and in us to conform us into His image:

"The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face towards you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

## 14. Christian Life and the Trinity

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### Who Is a Person?

#### *Old*

For many centuries, the definition of a person given by the early medieval philosopher Boethius was widely accepted and rarely questioned. He believed a person is “an individual substance of a rational nature,” substance here not meaning something solid, as a block of wood, but that which essentially characterizes something, and in which its reality coheres and “hangs together.”

This old definition stresses **INDIVIDUALITY, UNIQUENESS, SINGULARITY**, all of which are proven by our **RATIONAL** capacities.

#### *New*

Serious immersion in trinitarian theology offers the promise of a *new definition* of what it means to be a person. That new definition is simply this: **to be is to be related**. Here, **relation** is synonymous with **COMMUNITY, FELLOWSHIP, and MUTUALITY**.

Much Nazarene practice reinforces the view of person—and inevitably of salvation also—as a strictly individual entity. We seem concerned only about our private salvation, not caring about anyone else. The doctrine of the Trinity can help us to realize we are saved for the sake of the new creation in Jesus Christ, saved for membership in the Body of Christ, saved not to diminish or escape personal responsibility, but **saved to accept ever-wider spheres of responsibility**.

The key word is **interdependence**. Person as we see it in the Triune God is **theonomous person, that is, “The human person is named with reference to its origin and destiny in God.”** The extremes of *autonomy* (complete independence) and *heteronomy* (total dependence upon others for one’s identity) are avoided in *theonomous* living.

### The Reality of Perichoresis (*peri*=around, *choresis*=dance, “dance around”)

The Greek word *perichoresis* is one that every beginning student of trinitarian theology should learn. It refers to the **mutual indwelling of Father, Son, and Spirit, each one in the other two**.

#### **Perichoresis means:**

- the divine persons mutually inhere in one another, draw life from one another.
- being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion.
- For God to be a divine person is to be *by nature* in relation to other persons. Each divine person is irresistibly drawn to the other.

- While there is no blurring of the individuality of each Person of the Trinity, there is also no separation. There is only the communion of love in which each person comes to be . . . entirely with reference to the other.
- Each Person expresses both what He is (and, by implication, what the other two are), and at the same time expresses what God is: ecstatic, relational, dynamic, vital.
- *Perichoresis* provides a dynamic model of persons in communion based on mutuality and interdependence.

Based on ideas from Greek theologian John of Damascus from Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1973), 270-278

## Analogies of perichoresis

- many **lamps** lighting a house, and yet all lamps equal a single, unified light.
- if **perfume** is sprayed, all of the air is fragrant. It is not possible to know where the scent begins and ends.
- every physical object has **three dimensions**. Can one separate the object from its dimensions? No. Each of the three dimensions implies the reality of the other two.
- since these images are *impersonal* (as well as the others we have previously discussed, **source-stream-river; root-trunk-branch**), some have suggested "**the divine dance**" image be used. In that the Church of the Nazarene has historically had serious reservations about the propriety of dance, this image should be used with caution. Perhaps an image of equal fluidity, grace, and motion can be used.

### *Question for Discussion:*

To what degree does your family life resemble the Trinitarian life of perichoresis, which is in some ways an "open door" policy? The Father is always open to receive the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son receives the Father and Spirit, and the Father and Son are always welcomed by the Holy Spirit.

## Trinitarian Life from God, through Us, to Others

Regarding how the Trinity impacts our lives as Christians before God and in the company of one another, the summary statement from Catherine LaCugna is especially good.

Trinitarian faith means living God's life: living from and for God, from and for others. [It] means living as Jesus Christ lived: preaching the gospel; relying totally on God; offering healing and reconciliation; rejecting laws, customs, conventions that place persons beneath rules; resisting temptation; praying constantly; eating with modern-day lepers and other outcasts; embracing the enemy and the sinner; dying for the sake of the gospel if it is God's will. [It] means living according to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit: training the eyes of the heart on God's face and name . . . responding to God in faith, hope and love.

From Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1973), 400-401

**Optional guide for the teacher (if there is time, lead the student through this activity): After reading the statement, make a list of all the virtues, gifts, expectations, and privileges she enumerates.**

Virtues: forgiving, submission, humility.

Gifts: the Gospel, persistence, communion with God and others, openness, Holy Spirit's power, God's presence and initiation in one's life

Expectations: God's presence, the importance of others, forgiveness, sacrifice, abandon before God, unconditional response to God

Privileges: God's full attention, friendship, community, grace, honor for and from others, death in honor of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit's guidance.

### **How can we accomplish all of these things?**

Communion with God, contemplation of His word, community with other believers, abandonment of one's self in the bounty of God, hospitality, grace gifts.

### **List several scripture references that support what LaCugna is suggesting:**

(Summarize this section with the following statements)

### **The Main Contributions of the Doctrine of the Trinity to Christian Ethics**

None of the three Persons is egocentric or selfish, for the Triune God has not three minds, but one mind. These are the contributions the Triune God makes to Christian ethics:

- the idea of **COMMUNITY**
- regarding the other **BETTER** than oneself,
- willingness to give up one's own selfish ideas for the good of the **WHOLE**

### **A Note on Richard of Saint Victor (optional conclusion)**

Richard of Saint Victor was a twelfth-century theologian of the school of Paris. He believed the idea of God must contain the idea of love, that love was God's truest expression.

Love is itself a social idea. For Richard, love that is isolated and keeps to itself is not true love at all. Stanley Grenz explains Richard's meaning here:

Supreme love requires another, equal to the lover, who is the recipient of that love; and because supreme love is received as well as given, it must be a shared love, in which each person loves and is loved by the other. Finally, because supreme love must desire that the love it experiences through giving and receiving be one that is shared with another, it is not merely mutual love between two but is a love fully present among three and only three.

Richard believed the idea of love demonstrated or even proved the reality of the Triune God. Any two of the three divine Persons could experience mutual love back and forth between themselves, but for this love to be complete, that *mutual* love must be taken and *shared* with the third Person, hence completing the circle of divine love that means that God is One.

From *The Social God and the Relational Self*  
(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 31.

## 15. A Christian Response to Other Religions

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The following readings should be used to start a class discussion on how the Wesleyan holiness tradition approaches other Christian groups or religious faiths.

### Wesleyan Holiness Perspective on Reaching Others for Christ

Holiness theology is filled with an **optimism of grace** that at its best elicits rather than thwarts compassion and empathy to those outside the reaches of the established church.

—Floyd T. Cunningham "Interreligious Dialogue: A Wesleyan Holiness Perspective,"  
in *Grounds for Understanding: Ecumenical Resources for Responses to Religious Pluralism*,  
ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 189

#### Define optimism=hopeful.

**God's grace** allows us to have compassion on others, especially those with other religious beliefs. We have compassion on them before we correct their beliefs.

Sure, we should guard the Christian faith like Paul (2 Tim 4:7).

But we rely on God's grace in the ministry of outreach and evangelism,

**He can change their hearts better than we can change their minds.**

Holiness churches may offer to interfaith dialogue the nuances they carry of Wesleyan theology: **first**, a dynamic understanding of Christ's prevenient grace, which reaches and is active within all human beings; **second**, an understanding that human beings may enjoy now full assurance of present salvation from sin, guilt, fear, and shame; **third**, a way of and emphasis upon discipleship.

—Floyd T. Cunningham, *Ibid.*, 191

Particularly in Evangelical circles, suggestions of some truth existing in other religions, or of some possibility of salvation among those who have never heard of Christ, are typically charged with a lack of appreciation for the indispensable role of divine grace in salvation. But this cannot be said of [John] Wesley. He quite clearly grounds all salvation in God's grace. If he differs from other theologians who would rule out any possibility of salvation among the heathen, it is not in the *need* for grace, but in the *nature* of God's grace. In other words, **the convictions that lead Wesley to suggest that a truly loving and just God would judge the heathen in terms of their response to the light of initial universal revelation are the same convictions that had led him earlier to reject unconditional predestination.**

--Randy L. Maddox, "Wesley and the Question of Truth or Salvation Through Other Religions,"  
*Wesleyan Theological Journal* 27 (Spring-Fall, 1992), 19.

### Possible Questions based on the readings:

- What aspects of the Wesleyan tradition allow us to be open to people of other faiths?
- How are you empowered to be a witness for Christ?
- What is it about grace that makes the Christian faith unique?

Conclude the discussion by reading this paragraph and recognizing the significant role of prevenient grace in the Christian witness:

### **The Centrality of Grace**

In Wesleyanism there is a continuity of grace . . . Prevenient grace is the beginning stage of that soteriologically motivated and christocentric flow. The next stage is "convincing" or convicting grace, by which the individual knows himself or herself to be a sinner. Without that self-knowledge there can be no onward progress toward God. By grace and the work of the Holy Spirit men and women come to know their true spiritual conditions. They are enabled to know whether or not they enjoy peace with God. Prevenient grace provides this light. It shines through certain societal and religious conventions, as well as through individual consciences. The religions of the world are instruments of this light, since men and women come to know their moral failures or triumphs through them. Within them is an imprint and witness to the Truth, which, though not recognized as such, is Christ. Where this imprint and witness in other religions is, may be judged by Christians on the basis of biblical revelation.

--Floyd T. Cunningham, "Interreligious Dialogue," 193-94.

### **Introduce Course Requirement of a Written Response Paper**

#### **The Uniqueness of the Christian Confession by Al Truesdale**

Read the paper entitled "The Uniqueness of the Christian Confession." Have students respond to the paper by writing two-three pages using the following question as a guide to their response: **How does the uniqueness of the Christian confession make a difference in my daily life and ministry?**

### **The Uniqueness of the Christian Confession**

By Al Truesdale

The Gospel of John declares, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14, RSV). John is responding to and affirming what God did in His Son, Jesus Christ. When the Apostle Paul says, "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation" and adds, "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself" (2 Cor. 5: 17, 18), he is bearing witness to God's action in Christ. Through Christ God is reconciling the world to himself. When Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responded, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:15-20, RSV). These are responses the Holy Spirit inspired. They are accounts men created.

The Christian faith is just that, a faithful response to what God has accomplished in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son. Christians do not create that story; the eternal God does. So the Christian faith is not simply one world religion competing with other world religions. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, and the Son of God, Redeemer of the world. By faith they respond to what God has done. In obedient words and actions they repeat God's great deed in Christ. The Father, the Holy Spirit, the inspired Scriptures, and the Church bear witness to Christ. For he is the true light that has shined in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it (see, Jn 1:1-13). Anyone who in any way attempts to compromise or back away from this witness pulls away from Christ and denies his or her faith.

If the Scriptures are true, as we certainly believe them to be, then no one comes to salvation, comes to know God, except through Jesus Christ. To all who will receive him, who will believe on his name, the Lord Christ will give "power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12, RSV). The world, the Apostle Paul says, did not know God through its own wisdom. Rather, in God's own wisdom it pleased Him to make Christ Jesus "our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30, RSV). "We

preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23-24, RSV).

When we study religions such as Islam or Buddhism we must leave absolutely no doubt—none—regarding Jesus Christ in whom the One eternal God became the incarnate Redeemer. Nevertheless, millions and millions of people around the world continue to practice religions that do not make the Christian confession regarding Christ. We must ask about the significance of those religions and about their relation to the Christian faith.

Let us remember that in the Wesleyan Tradition we believe that through the prevenient activity of the Holy Spirit, God is now working in all persons to draw them to Christ. After all, it is not God's will that any persons should perish, but that all should come to eternal life (see, Jn 3:16-21). The Gospel of John tells us that Christ the True Light of God who came into the world "enlightens every man" (Jn 1:9, RSV). We believe that the Holy Spirit acts in many ways and through unexpected means to lead persons to become candidates for an enlightened and transforming encounter with Christ. How the Spirit accomplishes this, and the strange tools he sometimes uses, never ceases to amaze us.

Jesus said, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd" (Jn 10:16, RSV). This verse certainly does not mean that non-Christian religions are suitable means of salvation. But it should tell us something about how we should approach persons of other religions when we are engaged in evangelization. If the Holy Spirit is already preveniently working in all persons, then no one is a total stranger to God. We should approach others "not as though they are *aliens, strangers, foreigners, oddities*, but rather as if they were indeed *other or potential sheep*. That one little difference in perspective and attitude—viewing them as potential sheep to be cultivated rather than wolves to be feared—may in fact make all of the difference" (Leupp, *Investigating Christian Theology 1*).

### **Response Paper: How does the uniqueness of the Christian confession make a difference in my daily life and ministry?**

## **Is Jesus the Only Way? Three Views**

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There are many ways of approaching the general question we are now investigating. **One way that is often repeated features a three-way analytical distinction**

### ***Exclusivism***

**This is the tried and true position that Christianity is the only true religion.**

This is the tried and true position that **Christianity is the only true religion**. In fact, many who follow this position would not be happy in calling Christianity a religion. For them, any *mere religion* is almost by definition a human creation. The most ingenious people have created the most ingenious experiments in thinking and have called the results *religion*.

**Karl Barth** is one theologian who believed in ***religionless Christianity***. Simply put, Barth thought religion is a sign, not of belief, but of unbelief. **Religion, thought Barth, is what happens when we approach God through our own initiative and try to fashion Him in our own image**. Religion is our *screaming* at God *presumptuously* rather than *listening* to God *humbly*. Jesus Christ as the revealed Word of the Father must be the center of the Christian proclamation.

**Those who are fond of saying that Christianity is not a religion but is rather a relationship *with* God the Father, *through* God the Son,**

Those who are fond of saying that Christianity is not a religion but is rather a relationship *with* God the Father, *through* God the Son, and *in the power* of God the Spirit are probably exclusivists.

### ***Inclusivism***

Inclusivism suggests that the truths of other religions can be found implicitly in Christianity. Whatever is of value in Hinduism, for example, may be found in a parallel form within Christianity. In that sense Christianity is inclusive of all religious value, worth, and virtue.

The Roman Catholic theologian **Karl Rahner** may be a representative of inclusivism through his teaching of **"anonymous Christianity."** Rahner's main point seems to be grace. If someone is not a Christian, yet lives his or her life according to the light and grace given by the Lord God, then this person is "anonymously" a Christian, whether or not it is acknowledged.

This sounds like an attractive idea, but its logic cannot be limited only to Christianity. Would not anyone rightly be considered, for example, an "anonymous Buddhist" if he lived according to Buddhist teachings, even if he did not know he was doing so?

### **Pluralism**

This word means, in essence, that all of the great faith paths are legitimate, true, redemptive, and salvific.

The word "pluralism" may mean different things to different persons, according to the context of meaning. But in this case the word means, in essence, that **all of the great faith paths are legitimate, true, redemptive, and salvific.**

**John Hick** is a representative figure. He believes the great **faith traditions of the world should center on the unity they have in God, who is expressed in different ways by each, rather than being divided by competing savior figures.** "And we have to realize that the universe of faiths centers upon *God*, and not upon Christianity or upon any other religion. He is the sun, the originative source of light and life, whom all the religions reflect in their own different ways." Not surprisingly, John Hick downplays the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, disagreeing with the orthodox view that Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God and the Second Person of the Trinity. (From his book of essays and lectures, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 71.

The Roman Catholic theologian **Hans Kung** has spoken of the **religions of the world as being the "ordinary" paths to wholeness and salvation, with Roman Catholicism as being the "extraordinary" path.** Today, Kung might accept that not only is Catholicism salvific in an extraordinary sense, but so also are Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Is Kung's distinction between the "ordinary" and the "extraordinary" ways of salvation a satisfactory resolution of the question of Christianity among the religions of the world? If not, is the *exclusivism*, *inclusivism*, and *pluralism* distinction more defensible?

## Statements from Karl Barth (Concluding statements)

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Karl Barth is one of the theological pillars for what was called the *exclusivist* position we looked at. From Karl Barth, "The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion," in *Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings*, ed. John Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 35, 43.

Some of his representative statements are:

"Religion is unbelief. It is a concern, indeed, we must say that it is the one great concern, of godless man." **Barth can say this because he believes religion is a human attempt to approach God; to make God into our own image. This may be different than common ideas about what religion really is.**

"We can speak of 'true religion' only in the sense in which we speak of a 'justified sinner.' "

"No religion is true. It can only become true, i.e. according to that which it purports to be and for which it is upheld. . . . Like justified man, true religion is a creature of grace. But grace is the revelation of God. No religion can stand before it as true religion. No man is righteous in its presence." **Religion—the human search for God—becomes true only when God's grace confronts us with the revelation of the one holy God, our search is complete not when we find God, but when He finds us, and opens His arms and welcomes us into relationship with the Lord God Almighty through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

*Questions for Discussion:* Do you agree with these statements? Why or why not?

**Optional Discussion/Debate:**

### Do Judaism and Islam Constitute a Special Case?

It is customary to call Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (listing them here in the order of their respective historical appearances), the **three "Abrahamic monotheisms."** All of these three religions hold Abraham to be a decisive figure. In one form or another all three believe in divine revelation. Their followers may be said to be "**People of the Book,**" since various holy scriptures influence the faith communities each religion supports.

Knowing all of this, should we say that Judaism and Islam are special cases, not to be lumped uncritically with the other great religions we have mentioned? **Certainly history is on our side if we say that the vision of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam shows more overlap, convergence, and similarity than dissimilarity. Jesus Christ declared His oneness with His Father (John 10:30), and this Father is the same God known and worshipped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

Islamic thinking about God has traditionally and typically proceeded along lines that are very similar to, if not identical with, Judeo-Christian approaches. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the contemporary world has clouded the dramatic convergence shared among Yahweh, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and Allah. Regarding the Muslim view of God, an Islamic scholar has written:

At the heart of the Quranic message lies the full and plenary doctrine of God as both transcendent and immanent, as both majesty and beauty, as both the One and the Source of the manifold, as both Origin of Mercy and Judge of all human actions, as the Originator and Sustainer of the cosmos and the goal to which all beings journey. . . The Quranic doctrine of God reveals Him as being at once Absolute, Infinite, and Perfect, as the Source of all reality and all positive qualities manifested in the cosmic order.

*From Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "God," in Islamic Spirituality: Foundations, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 311.*

If the adjective 'biblical' were substituted in place of 'Quranic,' would a Jew or Christian take issue with the resulting description of the biblical God? Would a Jew or Christian dispute the Quranic description of God as 'the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward' (LVII, 3)?

Yet Christianity constitutes a special case unto itself in comparison with Judaism and Islam.

**At the conclusion of his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter identifies what separates Christianity from the Abrahamic monotheisms. He even addressed his remarks to any Jews who had ears to hear: "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).**

**Because Jesus of Nazareth is Jesus Christ, God's Anointed, the monotheism of Christianity is a *Trinitarian* monotheism, unlike the respective monotheisms of either Judaism or Islam. The divinity of Jesus Christ is what finally separates Christianity from either Judaism or Islam.**

Muslims believe Jesus to be one of the prophets leading up to the final and definitive prophet, Muhammad, and even accord Jesus the honor of a virgin birth, although they do not conclude from this that Jesus was divine. Jews likewise honor Jesus as a prophet, yet not the incarnation of the promised messiah they still await.

If Judaism and Islam constitute a special case, which I believe they do, we ought to treat adherents of these two monotheistic faiths with additional respect, while at the same time remaining open **to the power of the Holy Spirit to share the good news that Jesus is indeed the Christ and is in fact Lord of all!**

## 16. Christianity Engages Culture

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### Defining Culture

Culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, and values; is selective; is learned; is based on symbols; and is an abstraction from behavior and the products of behavior.

Christian ethicist H. Richard Niebuhr suggests several features of culture in his book *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1951), 32-39:

- culture is social
- culture is a human achievement
- one important way any culture expresses itself is through the values it promotes
- every culture is marked to one degree or another by pluralism

Intellectual historian Edward W. Said defines culture as follows:

First of all it means all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy [freedom] from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic [related to the beautiful] forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure. Included, of course, are both the popular stock of lore about distant parts of the world and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history.

Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), xii.

### The Five Paradigms of Christ and Culture

A synopsis of H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (1951)

Although it was published 50 years ago, many believe H. Richard Niebuhr's study, *Christ and Culture*, is still worth studying today. In that study Niebuhr advanced five typical answers to the question we have been here considering, "How does the church and Christianity relate to the surrounding culture?" Here are the answers Niebuhr provides:

#### **Christ Against Culture—the Antagonists.**

This group "uncompromisingly affirms the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects culture's claims to loyalty." In this statement we see two of the key descriptive words that come to define the broader issue: *authority* and *loyalty*.

#### **The Christ of Culture—the Accommodationists.**

People in this group sometimes spoke of "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." This is the liberal end of the spectrum. In another book Niebuhr offered this famous characterization of liberalism: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

#### **Christ Above Culture—the Synthesists.**

This position is somewhat close to "The Christ of Culture," except in this case Jesus Christ is still able to pronounce judgment on the culture, whereas for the accommodationists the dominant idea is to accept the culture as it stands. To say that Christ is "above" culture is obviously to say that the culture is functioning well when everything is ordered efficiently and effectively under His leadership and Lordship. Since Thomas Aquinas is the great representative of this position in the Middle Ages, it has sometimes been typical of Roman Catholic views.

### **Christ and Culture in Paradox—the Dualists.**

Some Lutherans hold to this approach, which bears some family resemblance to the antagonists, even as the accommodationists and the synthesists are close together. Dualists believe Christ and culture run on parallel tracks, never intersecting.

The Christian may live in two kingdoms at once. The Christian lives in the kingdom of law because of human depravity, but in the kingdom of grace because of God's mercy. While we continue to live on earth, these kingdoms will continue to do battle one against the other, and will never be united.

### **Christ the Transformer of Culture—the Conversionists.**

Niebuhr says Augustine is the chief exemplar of this point of view, and John Calvin and John Wesley have also represented it in Christian history. Nazarenes should sit up and take notice, since Wesley is so crucial to Nazarene theology. Some of the activities of the early Nazarenes—ministering to the poor and allowing the Holy Spirit to reign in freedom—correspond to this paradigm.

The antagonist would tend either to avoid or to criticize culture, and the dualist to despair of ever changing the ills of human society. The accommodationist would more or less accept the culture as it currently presented itself, and the synthesist would look for signs within existing social and cultural institutions that the grace and love of God were indeed present and active.

How then is the conversionist different? The conversionist takes into full account the dual reality of *both sin/law and grace/mercy*. The conversionist is neither foolishly optimistic nor negatively pessimistic. The conversionist believes humans can, with some success, work for the coming of the kingdom of God upon the face of the earth, while yet realizing that only God himself can give the Kingdom in its entirety.

## **Summary**

The **antagonist** would tend either to avoid or to criticize culture, and the **dualist** to despair of ever changing the ills of human society. The **accommodationist** would more or less accept the culture as it currently presented itself, and the **synthesist** would look for signs within existing social and cultural institutions that the grace and love of God were indeed present and active. The **conversionist** believes humans can, with some success, work for the coming of the kingdom of God upon the face of the earth, while yet realizing that only God himself can give the Kingdom in its entirety.

*For an analysis of Niebuhr's five typologies, see Geoffrey Wainwright, Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 388-98. See also the essays by Niebuhr ("Prologue: Types of Christian Ethics," 15-29) and John Howard Yoder ("How H. Richard Niebuhr Reasoned: A Critique of Christ and Culture," 31-89) in Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture, ed. Glen H. Stassen, D. M. Yeager, and John Howard Yoder (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).*

*(Optional Material for further presentation and discussion)*

### **Locating the Church of the Nazarene**

As may be evident, the Church of the Nazarene has historically often been found in "the Christ Against Culture" identity. Today, however, there is encouraging evidence that Nazarenes are embracing the fifth perspective, endeavoring through the indwelling Holy Spirit to produce genuine and Christian change in culture.

### Questions for Guided Discussion (Optional):

- Do you think this is true? Why?
- If this is thought to be not true, why it is not true?
- Have students share examples of how they observe Nazarene pastors and laypeople working to transform the surrounding culture in redemptive ways. Again seek clarification.

### Optional Closing Thoughts

This session has tended to reinforce what we already know, because we experience it every day. Namely, the world is changing to a world where pluralism and the multiculturalism are assumed as the norms for conduct, thought, and action.

To claim that *culture* is necessarily diverse and plural is not at the same time to claim that the Christian *gospel* is likewise diverse and plural. We affirm the insightful analysis given by Geoffrey Wainwright:

The Christian vision of reality has the grounds for its own universal claim written into it. It pictures a single consistent Creator with a constant purpose for all humanity (and indeed for the whole universe). The divine purpose for humanity is growth into the likeness of God as self-giving love (and God's purpose for other parts of creation must match that in appropriately transposed forms). When God's purpose for humanity is thus simply expressed, it is hard to credit that it cannot be grasped by the simplest human spirit or intelligence. In the nature of the case (it is a matter of self-giving love), acceptance of that purpose can only be by free response.

From *Doxology*, 358-59.

Wainwright believes the gospel is one, although its means and modes of expression should be various, so that every listener will hear the gospel in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways. To say that the gospel is one is not the same as to say that it is monolithic or capable of being expressed in only one way or using only one set of concepts. As Wainwright says, "Ever since the days of the New Testament, the Church has recognized that there are variant versions of a vision which remains recognizably one." From *Doxology*, 359.

For a Nazarene example see, Paul M. Bassett, ed., *Great Holiness Classics, Vol. 1, Holiness Teaching: New Testament Times to Wesley* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1997).

In former times it might have been thought that there were no significant developments regarding Christian holiness between the New Testament and the rise of Methodism in the 18th century. But Bassett's volume disproves this idea. Theologians and spiritual writers whom Bassett includes in this volume have much to contribute. This reinforces Wainwright's idea about there being "variant versions of a vision which remains recognizably one."

# Small Group Activity Guidelines

Educational research demonstrates that shared-learning activities, such as small group projects and discussion groups, raise the student's ability to gain and retain knowledge for practice outside the teaching environment. Students are able to develop critical thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis as they work in small group. Assigning small group projects help students to:

1. Learn how to work together in a team environment through positive interdependence.
2. Understand group processes, including process management, conflict management, synergism, collaboration, resource utilization, individual accountability, shared knowledge, cooperation, planning and problem solving.
3. Effectively and efficiently develop oral and written presentation skills.
4. Be better prepared for social interaction at work.
5. Explore and integrate a broader range of ideas and expertise.
6. Respond to different learning styles.
7. Supplement the knowledge of the facilitator/teacher.
8. Develop a sensitivity to and awareness of cultural and gender diversity.

When engaged in small group activities, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. When considering the formation of groups, take into account that it is desirable to balance the small groups by gender, age, geographical origin, local language, and experience. Try to bring as much diversity as possible to the group.
2. Select a spokesperson(s)/Leader(s) for the group to keep the team on task and for reporting back to the rest of the class about the small group's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The spokesperson(s) should also serve as the recorder(s) for the group.
3. Select a timekeeper for the group. Most small group activities should not exceed twenty minutes. The timekeeper's task is to keep the group moving forward and on task to complete the assignment within the allotted time frame.
4. During the course, students are encouraged to try to participate in as many small group roles as possible—spokesperson, recorder, timekeeper.
5. Solicit the facilitator/teacher's assistance at any time the small group is unable to stay on task.

## Evaluation for Small Group Project Presentation

Group 1	Members	Total time		Points	Total allowed	
			Content		50	
			Participation		50	
			Presentation		50	
			Total		/150	

Group 2	Members	Total time		Points	Total allowed	
			Content		50	
			Participation		50	
			Presentation		50	
			Total		/150	

Group 3	Members	Total time		Points	Total allowed	
			Content		50	
			Participation		50	
			Presentation		50	
			Total		/150	

Group 4	Members	Total time		Points	Total allowed	
			Content		50	
			Participation		50	
			Presentation		50	
			Total		/150	

Group 5	Members	Total time		Points	Total allowed	
			Content		50	
			Participation		50	
			Presentation		50	
			Total		/150	

**General Remarks:**

# Characteristics of Effective Writing for Students

(adapted from Avila University, Kansas City, Missouri)

## Main Idea

The paper is focused on a major point. The writer arrives at the point through clearly explaining why and how the major idea is important. The reader has very little doubt that the main idea is really the writer's main idea. The main idea is present from the beginning to the end of the paper, instead of several unrelated ideas scattered throughout. The paper shows a clear sense of purpose.

## Well-Organized

The paper is clearly developed. Transitions are clear from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. In other words, the writer has not simply made a series of unrelated or vaguely related statements. Rather, each statement and paragraph carries the reader closer to an understanding or appreciation of the writer's goal—the main idea of the paper.

## Support

The writer provides specific, concrete, and appropriate information from memory, observation, reading, interviewing, or other sources. The paper is well developed with examples, details, illustrations, and anecdotes.

## Style

Sentences are varied, and word choices are accurate. There is an absence of "clutter" or "padding." Phrasing is clear and direct. Tone is handled consistently; sentence length and word choice are appropriate to the audience and purpose of the paper.

## Mechanics

Punctuation, grammar, spelling, and aspects of format are correctly written. The writer has prepared the paper carefully with attention to appearance and other details. Opening paragraph, closing paragraph, and title are strong and contribute to the sense of purpose, focus, and unity of the writing assignment.

## Proofreading

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is my major point of the paper?
2. Have I supported generalizations, opinions, and conclusions with specific examples from the course material, texts, or personal experience?
3. Have I avoided using unnecessary words and clichés?
4. Have I proofread for spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors?

## For Teachers: Grading Rubric for Written Assignments

*Example: Response Paper worth a total of 150 points*

Identifies with clarity the main idea and maintains it through the paper	30 pts
Supports main idea with solid examples	30 pts
Avoids unnecessary verbiage and grandiose language	30 pts
No spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors	30 pts
Submitted on time to the instructor	30 pts

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary Quiz #1—Christian Theology 1—2007  
50 points**

Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word.

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. theology<br>_____            | a. relationship with God<br>perfected by love                  |
| 2. synoptic<br>_____            | b. working together  |
| 3. catholicity<br>_____         | c. God's existence revealed in<br>creation                     |
| 4. general revelation<br>_____  | d. an actual fact in history                                   |
| 5. history<br>_____             | e. process of passing on one's<br>perspective                  |
| 6. sanctification<br>_____      | f. how an event is understood by<br>later generations          |
| 7. argument<br>_____            | g. grace that goes before us                                   |
| 8. telos<br>_____               | h. being made Christlike                                       |
| 9. synergism<br>_____           | i. universal openness to other<br>Christian traditions         |
| 10. covenant<br>_____           | j. agreement between two<br>persons                            |
| 11. tradition<br>_____          | k. Matthew, Mark, Luke   |
| 12. ontos<br>_____              | l. God's character revealed in<br>historical acts of Scripture |
| 13. prevenient grace<br>_____   | m. purpose or goal   |
| 14. kosmos<br>_____             | n. the interpretation of events                                |
| 15. event<br>_____              | o. world   |
| 16. inspiration<br>_____        | p. human ability to think                                      |
| 17. special revelation<br>_____ | q. "breathed into"   |
| 18. reason<br>_____             | r. act of trying to prove<br>something                         |
| 19. holiness<br>_____           | s. Greek for "being"   |
| 20. interpretation<br>_____     | t. study of God  |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary Quiz #1—Christian Theology 1—2007  
50 points**

Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word.

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. theology<br>_____            | a. relationship perfected by love                              |
| 2. synoptic<br>_____            | b. working together  |
| 3. catholicity<br>_____         | c. God's existence revealed in<br>creation                     |
| 4. general revelation<br>_____  | d. an actual fact in history                                   |
| 5. history<br>_____             | e. process of passing on one's<br>perspective                  |
| 6. sanctification<br>_____      | f. how an event is understood by<br>later generations          |
| 7. argument<br>_____            | g. grace that goes before us                                   |
| 8. telos<br>_____               | h. being made Christlike                                       |
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| 10. covenant<br>_____           | j. agreement between two<br>persons                            |
| 11. tradition<br>_____          | k. Matthew, Mark, Luke   |
| 12. ontos<br>_____              | l. God's character revealed in<br>historical acts of Scripture |
| 13. prevenient grace<br>_____   | m. purpose or goal   |
| 14. kosmos<br>_____             | n. the interpretation of events                                |
| 15. event<br>_____              | o. world   |
| 16. inspiration<br>_____        | p. human ability to think                                      |
| 17. special revelation<br>_____ | q. "breathed into"   |
| 18. reason<br>_____             | r. act of trying to prove<br>something                         |
| 19. holiness<br>_____           | s. Greek for "being"   |
| 20. interpretation<br>_____     | t. study of God  |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary Quiz #2—Christian Theology 1—2007**  
**75 points**

Four (4) points for each correct answer.  
Total points possible 75 plus an additional five (5) bonus points  
Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. original sin        | a. God knows all   |
| 2. responsibility      | b. "humanity" in Hebrew                                    |
| 3. omnipotence         | c. interconnectedness                                      |
| 4. theodicy            | d. well-being or peace                                     |
| 5. reason              | e. missing the mark  |
| 6. moral evil          | f. God created out of nothing                              |
| 7. creatio ex nihilo   | g. ability to respond                                      |
| 8. prevenient grace    | h. trying to justify God in the face of suffering and evil |
| 9. omniscience         | i. God is everywhere at all times                          |
| 10. sin                | j. evidence of God in the created order                    |
| 11. monotheism         | k. destructive forces in nature                            |
| 12. general revelation | l. sinful orientation                                      |
| 13. dualism            | m. destined beforehand                                     |
| 14. holiness           | n. belief in one God                                       |
| 15. adam               | o. human ability to think                                  |
| 16. omnipresence       | p. good and evil are equal                                 |
| 17. natural evil       | q. evil resulting from human sinfulness                    |
| 18. shalom             | r. God never giving up on someone                          |
| 19. predestination     | s. God is all powerful                                     |
| 20. solidarity         | t. to be filled with love                                  |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary Quiz #2—Christian Theology 1—2007**  
**75 points**

Four (4) points for each correct answer.  
Total points possible 75 plus an additional five (5) bonus points  
Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. original sin        | a. God knows all   |
| 2. responsibility      | b. "humanity" in Hebrew                                    |
| 3. omnipotence         | c. interconnectedness                                      |
| 4. theodicy            | d. well-being or peace                                     |
| 5. reason              | e. missing the mark  |
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| 14. holiness           | n. belief in one God                                       |
| 15. adam               | o. human ability to think                                  |
| 16. omnipresence       | p. good and evil are equal                                 |
| 17. natural evil       | q. evil resulting from human sinfulness                    |
| 18. shalom             | r. God never giving up on someone                          |
| 19. predestination     | s. God is all powerful                                     |
| 20. solidarity         | t. to be filled with love                                  |

### KEY-Vocabulary Quiz #1—Christian Theology 1—2007

Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word.

Four (4) points for each correct answer.

Total points possible 75 plus an additional five (5) bonus points

1. theology	<u>t</u>	a. relationship with God perfected by love
2. synoptic	<u>k</u>	b. working together
3. catholicity	<u>i</u>	c. God's existence revealed in creation
4. general revelation	<u>c</u>	d. an actual fact in history
5. history	<u>n</u>	e. process of passing on one's perspective
6. sanctification	<u>h</u>	f. how an event is understood by later generations
7. argument	<u>r</u>	g. grace that goes before us
8. telos	<u>m</u>	h. being made Christlike
9. synergism	<u>b</u>	i. universal openness to other Christian traditions
10. covenant	<u>j</u>	j. agreement between two persons
11. tradition	<u>e</u>	k. Matthew, Mark, Luke
12. ontos	<u>s</u>	l. God's character revealed in historical acts of Scripture
13. prevenient grace	<u>g</u>	m. purpose or goal
14. kosmos	<u>o</u>	n. the interpretation of events
15. event	<u>d</u>	o. world
16. inspiration	<u>q</u>	p. human ability to think
17. special revelation	<u>l</u>	q. "breathed into"
18. reason	<u>p</u>	r. act of trying to prove something
19. holiness	<u>a</u>	s. Greek for "being"
20. interpretation	<u>f</u>	t. study of God

### KEY-Vocabulary Quiz #2—Christian Theology 1—2007

Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word.

Four (4) points for each correct answer.

Total points possible 75 plus an additional five (5) bonus points

1. original sin	<u>l</u>	a. God knows all
2. responsibility	<u>g</u>	b. "humanity" in Hebrew
3. omnipotence	<u>s</u>	c. interconnectedness
4. theodicy	<u>h</u>	d. well-being or peace
5. reason	<u>o</u>	e. missing the mark
6. moral evil	<u>q</u>	f. God created out of nothing
7. creatio ex nihilo	<u>f</u>	g. ability to respond
8. prevenient grace	<u>r</u>	h. trying to justify God in the face of suffering and evil
9. omniscience	<u>a</u>	i. God is everywhere at all times
10. sin	<u>e</u>	j. evidence of God in the created order
11. monotheism	<u>n</u>	k. destructive forces in nature
12. general revelation	<u>j</u>	l. sinful orientation
13. dualism	<u>p</u>	m. destined beforehand
14. holiness	<u>t</u>	n. belief in one God
15. adam	<u>b</u>	o. human ability to think
16. omnipresence	<u>i</u>	p. good and evil are equal
17. natural evil	<u>k</u>	q. evil resulting from human sinfulness
18. shalom	<u>d</u>	r. God never giving up on someone
19. predestination	<u>m</u>	s. God is all powerful
20. solidarity	<u>c</u>	t. to be filled with love

**Final Exam**  
**Christian Theology 1—2007**  
**Worth 200 points**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (10 points)

**Theological Vocabulary. Write clearly the letter of the correct definition beside the word. One (1) point for each correct answer. Forty (40) points possible.**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. theology            | a. relationship with God perfected by love                  |
| 2. synoptic            | b. working together   |
| 3. catholicity         | c. God's existence revealed in creation                     |
| 4. holiness            | d. an actual fact in history                                |
| 5. adam                | e. process of passing on one's perspective                  |
| 6. omnipresence        | f. how an event is understood by later generations          |
| 7. reason              | g. grace that goes before us                                |
| 8. inspiration         | h. being made Christ-like                                   |
| 9. special revelation  | i. universal openness to other Christian traditions         |
| 10. general revelation | j. agreement between two persons                            |
| 11. history            | k. Matthew, Mark, Luke                                      |
| 12. sanctification     | l. God's character revealed in historical acts of Scripture |
| 13. argument           | m. purpose or goal  |
| 14. telos              | n. the interpretation of events                             |
| 15. original sin       | o. world  |
| 16. synergism          | p. human ability to think                                   |
| 17. covenant           | q. "breathed into"  |
| 18. tradition          | r. act of trying to prove something                         |
| 19. ontos              | s. Greek for "being"  |
| 20. prevenient grace   | t. study of God   |
| 21. kosmos             | u. God knows all  |
| 22. theodicy           | v. "humanity" in Hebrew                                     |
| 23. reason             | w. interconnectedness                                       |
| 24. moral evil         | x. well-being or peace                                      |
| 25. dualism            | y. missing the mark   |
| 26. event              | z. God created out of nothing                               |
| 27. natural evil       | aa. ability to respond                                      |
| 28. sin                | bb. trying to justify God in the face of suffering and evil |
| 29. omniscience        | cc. God is everywhere at all times                          |
| 30. holiness           | dd. false doctrine  |
| 31. interpretation     | ee. destructive forces in nature                            |
| 32. monotheism         | ff. sinful orientation                                      |
| 33. economic trinity   | gg. destined beforehand                                     |
| 34. responsibility     | hh. belief in one God                                       |
| 35. omnipotence        | jj. human ability to think                                  |
| 36. creatio ex nihilo  | kk. good and evil are equal                                 |
| 37. heresy             | mm. evil resulting from human sinfulness                    |
| 38. shalom             | oo. what God does   |
| 39. predestination     | ss. God is all powerful                                     |
| 40. solidarity         | xx. to be filled with love                                  |

**Choose three (3) of the questions and respond with a clear and thoughtful response. Thirty (30) points possible for each response. Ninety (90) points possible for all three responses.**

- Using the concepts of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, describe how does God eventually brings victory over evil?
- What imagery does the Bible use to illustrate beautiful order (creation) and destructive power (chaos) founding nature? How is God victorious over the destructive forces found in nature? What hope does this give to people in your church and culture?
- In what ways does the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) teach us about original sin and human freedom?
- What were the major points of disagreement between Augustine and Pelagius? How do you think the Wesleyan doctrine prevenient grace helps to resolve this disagreement?

**Choose one (1) and respond as completely and clearly as possible. Seventy (70) points are possible.**

- How does the Wesleyan understanding of holiness lead to catholicity (friendliness toward other Christian traditions)?
- You are in an interdenominational pastors' meeting. You are asked to introduced yourself as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene. What will you say? What distinctives will be appropriate to discuss?

**BONUS:** Name at least two heresies associated with the Trinity and describe how they are doctrinally incorrect. Twenty (20) points limit.

# Final Exam Study Guide

## Christian Theology 1

### Oral exam question / or alternative written question worth 70 points

- All Christians agree in one way or another that Jesus Christ reveals the truth about God. For you personally, how does Christ reveal the reality of God?

### Study Guide

Models of Revelation

Omni doctrines

Problem of Evil (chaos in creation)

Original sin and solidarity (Cain and Abel)

Augustine and Pelagius

Catholicity

Theological distinctives

### Final Exam Vocabulary Quiz—KEY

1. theology	t	a. relationship with God perfected by love
2. synoptic	k	b. working together
3. catholicity	i	c. God's existence revealed in creation
4. holiness	xx	d. an actual fact in history
5. adam	v	e. process of passing on one's perspective
6. omnipresence	cc	f. how an event is understood by later generations
7. reason	p	g. grace that goes before us
8. inspiration	q	h. being made Christ-like
9. special revelation	l	i. universal openness to other Christian traditions
10. general revelation	c	j. agreement between two persons
11. history	n	k. Matthew, Mark, Luke
12. sanctification	h	l. God's character revealed in historical acts of Scripture
13. argument	r	m. purpose or goal
14. telos	m	n. the interpretation of events
15. original sin	ff	o. world
16. synergism	b	p. human ability to think
17. covenant	j	q. "breathed into"
18. tradition	e	r. act of trying to prove something
19. ontos	s	s. Greek for "being"
20. prevenient grace	g	t. study of God
21. kosmos	o	u. God knows all
22. theodicy	bb	v. "humanity" in Hebrew
23. reason	jj/p	w. interconnectedness
24. moral evil	mm	x. well-being or peace
25. dualism	kk	y. missing the mark
26. event	d	z. God created out of nothing
27. natural evil	ee	aa. ability to respond
28. sin	y	bb. trying to justify God in the face of suffering and evil
29. omniscience	u	cc. God is everywhere at all times
30. holiness	a/xx	dd. false doctrine
31. interpretation	f	ee. destructive forces in nature
32. monotheism	hh	ff. sinful orientation
33. economic trinity	oo	gg. destined beforehand
34. responsibility	aa	hh. belief in one God
35. omnipotence	ss	jj. human ability to think
36. creatio ex nihilo	z	kk. good and evil are equal
37. heresy	dd	mm. evil resulting from human sinfulness
38. shalom	x	oo. what God does
39. predestination	gg	ss. God is all powerful
40. solidarity	w	xx. to be filled with love

**Course Report**

**Course:** ET101 Christian Theology 1  
**Teaching Location :**  
**Instructor:**

**Student's Name :**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Mark</b>
Class attendance and Class Notes	10%	_____ /100 pts
Role-play in Interdenominational Pastors' Meeting	10%	_____ /100 pts
Paraphrase of Nazarene Belief Statement	10%	_____ /100 pts
Small Group Project: Worship Service Planning	15%	_____ /150 pts
Two to three page Response Paper	15%	_____ /150 pts
Journal and/or Written Homework	5%	_____ /50 pts
Vocabulary Quizzes	15%	_____ /150 pts
Final Exam	20%	_____ /200 pts
	100%	_____ /1000 pts

Final Mark

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Report**

**Course:** ET101 Christian Theology 1  
**Teaching Location :**  
**Instructor:**

**Student's Name :**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Mark</b>
Class attendance and Class Notes	10%	_____ /100 pts
Role-play in Interdenominational Pastors' Meeting	10%	_____ /100 pts
Paraphrase of Nazarene Belief Statement	10%	_____ /100 pts
Small Group Project: Worship Service Planning	15%	_____ /150 pts
Two to three page Response Paper	15%	_____ /150 pts
Journal and/or Written Homework	5%	_____ /50 pts
Vocabulary Quizzes	15%	_____ /150 pts
Final Exam	20%	_____ /200 pts
	100%	_____ /1000 pts

Final Mark

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Course : ET101 Christian Theology 1      Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Center \_\_\_\_\_      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Each student begins with 10 pts and earns 10 points for each session of attendance

**Fiche d'Enregistrement d'Etudiants**

#	Student Name	ID	Attendance									Total
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**ET 101 Christian Theology 1:** Date and Location \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Nom	Attendance /100	Role play /100	Paraphrase /100	Small Group Project /150	Response Paper /150	Journals & Written Homework /50	Vocab Quiz #1 /75	Vocab Quiz #2 /75	Final Exam /200	Sub- total	Two Absence (-25%)	Total / 1000
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