

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

jack.driver-szekely@stmellitus.ac.uk

dogmatics is the self-examination of the Christian Church in respect of the content of its distinctive talk about God

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I/1*, 11.

FUNCTIONAL THEOLOGY

J.Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway into the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 11-17.

SESSION AIMS

- Introduce the subject of theology
- Explore the role of faith within theology
- Begin to critique the sources we use for our theological knowledge and understanding.

The God of the Gospel, therefore, is neither a thing, an item, an object like others, nor an idea, a principle, a truth, or a sum of truths. God can be called the truth only when "truth" is understood in the same sense of the Greek word *aletheia*. God's being, or truth, is the event of his self-disclosure, his radiance as the Lord of all lords, the hallowing of his name, the coming of his kingdom, the fulfillment of his will in all his work.

Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1964) 9.

WE PRACTICE THEOLOGY WHENEVER WE THINK OR SPEAK ABOUT GOD. WE ARE DOING THEOLOGY WHEN WE PRAY, WORSHIP, READ SCRIPTURE, TEACH OTHERS ABOUT THE FAITH AND MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT HOW TO LIVE IN A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. IN THIS SENSE, EVERY CHRISTIAN PRACTICES THEOLOGY EVERY DAY.

Keith Johnson, *Theology as Discipleship* (London: IVP Press, 2015), 17.

the content of divine revelation cannot be handed down, even in its Scriptural form, without being interpreted by the Church under the guidance of Christ and the Spirit

Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation*, 172-173

POTENTIAL FURTHER READING

- Barth, Karl. *Evangelical Theology*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1964: 1-10.
- Evans Jr., James. *We Have Been Believers: An African Systematic Theology*. Second Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012: 1-11.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. Revised Edition. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988: 3-12.
- Williams, Rowan. *On Christian Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000: 3-15.



NATURE

TASK

theology must move among three poles - the biblical gospel, the heritage of the Church and the thought forms of the contemporary world. It employs these three in seeking to articulate the unchanging confession of Jesus in a changing context and thereby to speak to the issues of succeeding generations

Stanley Grenz, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*, i.

in short it is an integrated presentation of Christian truth, however perceived, that "system" connotes here: wherever one chooses to start has implications for the whole, and the parts must fit together

Sarah Coakley, *God Sexuality and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity*. (Cambridge: CUP, 2013.), 41.



THE MINISTRY OF THE POINTING HAND

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

- What are the implications for where we choose to start theologically?
- What are some of the dangers of theology? How might you respond to these?
- How might different sources engage with theology?
- To whom should theology be primarily addressed?
- What might be the distinction between functional and formal theology?

Christian faith is at bottom trust in and obedience to the free and gracious God made known in Jesus Christ. Christian theology is this same faith in the mode of asking questions and struggling to find at least provisional answers to these questions.

Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 4th Ed. (Grand Rapids: W.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2023), 3.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS ACCOMMODATED TO OUR CAPACITY.

Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Sixth Edition (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2017), 300.

Systematic theology provides accounts of Christian teaching which aim at comprehensiveness and coherence, setting forth the content of Christian belief in its entirety with attention to the congruity of its parts

John Webster, *God Without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*. Volume I: God and the Works of God. (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 44.

THEOLOGY INDEED BECOMES QUESTIONABLE WHEN IT CEASES TO ASK ITSELF WHAT POWERS IT IS IN FACT SERVING AND WHOSE INTEREST IT MAY BE PROMOTED

Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 4th Ed. (Grand Rapids: W.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2023), 9.

Si comprehendis non est Deus

1) INTRODUCTION

2) IS IT WRONG TO KNOW THINGS?

- The problem we face
- The justifiable fears of doctrine
- You are a theologian

3) DISCUSSION

4) CAN I FIND GOD?

- Sources
 - Scripture
 - Experience
- Natural Theology
- The Response to the Great War

5) DISCUSSION

6) HOW DOES GOD FIND US?

- Faith as a gift
- The ministry of the pointing hand

Christian doctrine is the response of the Christian church to God, as he has revealed himself, especially in Scripture and through Jesus Christ. It is an obedient, responsible and faithful attempt to make sense of the cluster of astonishing and exciting possibilities opened up by the coming of Jesus Christ... doctrine is a complicated matter, which is not adequately described simply as 'Christian teachings.'

Doctrine serves four major purposes. It aims:

- 1) to tell the truth about the way things are.**
- 2) to respond to the self-revelation of God.**
- 3) to address, interpret and transform human experience.**
- 4) to give Christians, as individuals and as a community, a sense of identity and purpose.**