

# What Do Christians' Believe?

## *An Introduction to Theology*

### Some Theological Questions

- Does God exist?
- What do we believe about the God? What is God's nature? What is this thing called the "trinity?"
- How does God act in the world?
- If God's creation is good, then why is there evil in the world?
- What does Jesus have to do with my salvation? What is the atonement?
- What does "resurrection" mean?
- What is "church" all about?
- What is the final judgment?
- Is there a place called "hell?" "Limbo?" "Purgatory?"

## What is “Theology?”

*Fides quarens intellectum*  
“Faith seeking understanding”

Anselm

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*Christian faith is no sedative for world-weary souls, no satchelfull of ready answers to the deepest questions of life. Christian faith invariably prompts questions, sets an inquiry in motion, fights the inclination to accept things as they are, continually calls in question unexamined assumptions about God, ourselves and our world.*

Daniel Migliore, 1991

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*Christian faith causes us to think.*

Edward Schillebeeckx, 1981

## How do we “do” theology?

<b>Biblical Theology</b>	Detailed study of OT and NT as primary witnesses to work and work of God.
<b>Historical Theology</b>	Traces development of Christian thought through time.
<b>Philosophical Theology</b>	Uses resources of philosophy to examine meaning of Christian faith in light of personal reason and experience.
<b>Practical theology</b>	Deals with the practical application of theology into works of ministry (i.e., pastoral theology).
<b>Systematic theology (constructive theology)</b>	The preparation of a faithful, coherent, timely, and responsible articulation of the Christian faith. It is a continuous process

## Questions

1. Are the proclamation and practices of our lives and the church true to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as attested to in scripture?
2. Do the proclamation and practice of our faith communities give rise to an adequate expression of the whole truth of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ?
3. Do the proclamation and practice of our faith community represent the God of Jesus Christ as a living reality?
4. Does what we do lead to transforming praxis in our personal and social lives?

*We must ask these four questions simultaneously*

## **Questions for Today:**

- 1. How do we know God exists?**
- 2. Can Christians prove the existence of God to non-Christians?**
- 3. How can a rational person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century still believe in a divine being that supposedly created all things?**
- 4. How might a Christian convince a person of such rational thought that God exists?**