

Year 3 (2012): Week 4

GUILD SEMINAR

Week 4: "Creation"

Overview: "Creation"

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Vocabulary of Creation

Creatio ex nihilo means “creation out of nothing.” In theology, this represents the idea God creates the universe from nothing other than the resource of his own existence.

Creatio continua means “continuing creation.” This term is used to indicate that God’s involvement with creation is ongoing. Traditionally, this affirmation has been developed under the Doctrine of Providence, where it has usually been organized under three headings:

Conservatio means “Preservation.” In theology, the continued existence of the world is not something one can take for granted. The doctrine of Divine Preservation explains that God, who created the world, continues to sustain it in being.

Concursus means “Concurrence.” Christian theology affirms God’s continued involvement and interaction with creation. The doctrine of Divine Concurrence accounts for “the cooperation of divine and creaturely action in which divine providence participates with secondary causes in their action and effects.”¹

Gubernatio means “Governance.” Theologically, this refers to God’s supervision and guidance of history toward its appointed goal and end.

¹ Owen C. Thomas, Introduction to *God’s Activity in the World: The Contemporary Problem*, ed. Owen C. Thomas (Chico, Calif.: Scholar’s Press, 1983), 2. Barth treats *concursus* under the heading *das göttliche Begleiten*, “the divine accompanying.”

Vocabulary of Evil

Concerning the problem of evil, four terms are useful.

Privatio Boni means “privation of the good.” This theory sees evil as a parasite, a quasi-reality that has no existence in its own right, but rather exists only as a “privation”—a lack, neglect, corruption or misuse—of something which in and of itself is good.

Natural Evil refers to the harm that can come through the laws, changes and chances of the natural world. It includes the suffering one kind of animal (sharks) may cause another (seals) as each seeks to preserve its own good. It also includes the harm resulting from earthquakes, storms, and other such dangerous occurrences.

Moral Evil refers to the harm intelligent creatures do to themselves and others. Here too the notion of *privatio boni* applies: St. Augustine taught that sins are misguided choices in the search for happiness.

Theodicies are theories that attempt to reconcile the affirmations of the Doctrine of Creation with the realities of suffering and evil.

A Word to the Wise

Migliore opens his discussion of “The Providence of God and the Mystery of Evil” with a statement about the goal, and the limits, of theology.

He begins with this reminder that our quest is for a comprehensive and coherent worldview.

“In Chapter 1, I defined theology as faith seeking understanding and said that one aspect of this task is the quest for wholeness and coherence in our thinking about God, ourselves, and the world in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.” (DM, 117).

Then he adds a caveat:

“Our quest for coherence, however, must resist the temptation to build a system of ideas that pretends to know more than we do and thereby loses touch with both faith and lived reality. While we can have confidence in the truth of God revealed to us in Christ, our knowledge of God is not exhaustive. Just as the condition of faith is that of seeing only dimly (1 Cor. 13:12), so all theology is necessarily ‘broken thought’ (Barth).” (DM, 117).

This caveat applies with particular force, he now says, with respect to theology’s attempts to offer solutions to the problems of suffering and evil.

“This fact comes home to us nowhere more forcefully than when we affirm the providence of God in the face of the reality of radical evil in the world. In relation to divine providence and the ‘problem of evil,’ the efforts of theology to clarify the claims of faith seem pitifully weak and unsatisfying.” [DM, 117].

It is especially important to keep this cautionary note in mind when addressing the suffering of persons in deep distress or crisis. In such moments, teaching usually isn’t called for, but rather empathic listening.

Abraham Lincoln’s famous letter to a mother who had lost all her sons in battle would be well-remembered by all pastors: “I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming.”

Yet underneath the empathy, certain questions remain and, eventually, they will re-surface.

Keith Ward has spoken insightfully regarding the unspoken, but present, theological questions beneath the experience of suffering. Ward:

“One must never confuse the pastoral with the doctrinal. Of course it would be absurd to say to someone suffering agony, ‘Do not worry; you will soon be very happy.’ What one can offer, often all one can offer, is shared experience, silent companionship and preparedness to listen and care. Grief, desolation and sorrow are real, and not to be denied. The doctrinal question, however, is always silently present. Does this desolation and pain have a meaningful place in one’s life? Can it possibly be seen as an integral part of a desirable existence, an existence willed by a loving God?”²

² Keith Ward, *Divine Action: Examining God’s Role in an Open and emergent Universe*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2007), 58.

Challenges

The Nicene Creed begins by affirming faith in God as the Creator:

“We believe in one God,
The Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
Of all that is, seen and unseen.”

Question for Discussion:

In keeping with his usual pattern, Migliore begins his discussion with a challenge to traditional treatments of this doctrine.

- (1) What challenge does he lead with, and what is his response?
- (2) If you were writing an introduction to theology, where might you begin your presentation of the doctrine of Creation?

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Migliore leads with Lynn White, Jr.'s critique representing the environmental movement.

Arguably, a stronger challenge comes from the perception that a theology of creation has been replaced by the rise of science.

Alternatively, one might start with the argument that the problems of suffering and evil have undermined belief that the Creator of this universe is both omnipotent and good. We hear this from philosophers, theologians, and the poet Archibald MacLeish:

I heard upon his dry dung heap
That man cry out who cannot sleep:
'If God is God He is not good,
If God is good He is not God;
Take the even, take the odd,³

Rather than immediately delving further into these challenges, we will begin by attempting to understand the themes of the doctrine of Creation as they have been traditionally understood. Then we can then circle back to the challenges and see how well the tradition is able to address them.

³ Archibald MacLeish, *J.B.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), 14.

Five Themes with Five Surprises

Daniel Migliore names several “themes” of the Doctrine of Creation, and with each theme we find a surprise.

Transcendence: Kenosis

The first theme is God’s *radical transcendence*. Traditionally, this is associated with the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*.

A surprise associated with this theme is the concept of divine *kenosis*, a word that means “to empty.” In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, the word is used of Jesus, who:

“Though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.” [Philippians 2:6–7]

Used in connection with the doctrine of Creation, the word suggests that God in some sense has constrained, even “emptied” himself of power in relation to the universe he has created, so that it can enjoy and exercise its own autonomy.

Migliore quotes Emil Brunner: “The kenosis, which reaches its [highest] expression in the cross of Christ, began with the creation of the world.” [Brunner quoted in DM, 101]

Dependence: Freedom

The second them is the world’s *radical dependence* on its creator. Traditionally, this has been understood to mean that, at every moment, God holds the universe as a whole, and each of us individually, in being. Were God to withdraw from the universe, it would collapse into non-being.

A surprise associated with this theme is its assertion that our dependence on God is the source, not the antithesis, of our autonomy and freedom. Here is Karl Barth making this point:

The very fact that this God rules as creator means that in their own way, and at their own time and place, all things are allowed to be, and live, and work, and occupy their own sphere, and exercise their own effect upon their environment, and fulfill the circle of their own destiny.⁴

And again:

⁴ Barth, CD III.3, 148–49.

The omnipotent operation of God not merely leaves the activity of the creature free, but continually makes it free. Where the Word and Spirit are at work unconditionally and irresistibly, the effect of their operation is not bondage but freedom. We could almost put it in this way, that the bondage which results from the operation of the Word and Spirit is itself true freedom.⁵

Intrinsic Value: Value by Adoption

A third theme is that the creation is good. As we read in Genesis: “And God saw that it was good.” Traditionally, this has meant rejection of what is called “metaphysical dualism,” which sees the universe as divided between opposing forces of darkness and light, as though they were equal. It has also meant that the animate and inanimate creatures of this universe are not considered valuable only insofar as they may perform certain services and functions, but rather are valuable “intrinsically,” or in their own right. [DM, 103]

A surprise associated with this theme is that this affirmation of creation’s goodness rests to some degree on an important assumption, that we see creation in the full context of the story of redemption. Its goodness is fully comprehended only in relation to the disclosure of its redemption and consummation in Christ.

Barth identifies the purpose for which this universe was made as “the covenant of grace . . . the reconciliation of the world with God . . . the redemption of man . . . the hushing of the sighing of all creation” and the revelation of God’s glory in the crucified and Risen Lord.⁶ With Barth, the values of this universe find their full meaning and worth in relationship to these events. The world has intrinsic value, to be sure, but also added value, “by adoption” as it were, as its constituents take on roles as servants and instruments of grace—and it becomes the theater for the advent of Emmanuel, God with us. This is true for each of us. Beyond our own worth, we find a share in this drama of surpassing value and importance.

Coexistence

A fourth theme is perhaps in and of itself surprising: “The co-existence and interdependence of all created beings.” [DM, 104] Migliore again points to Karl Barth who, he says, “speaks of coexistence as the ‘basic form’ of humanity, by which he means that we are human only in relation to God and to each other.” [DM, 105].

Continuing Creation: Premise of Faith

A fifth theme is that God continues to guide creation toward the fulfillment of its purpose. Traditionally, this been to emphasize the point that God’s work as creator

⁵ Ibid.,150.

⁶ Barth, CD III.3, 45.

was not confined to the beginning, *creatio ex nihilo*, but is continuous, *creatio continua*. In making this point, Migliore cites John Calvin: "To limit the word of God the creator to a single moment of the past would be, as Calvin said, 'cold and barren.'" [DM, 105].

A surprise associated with this theme is that it, too, depends on a premise of faith in Christ. Migliore:

"The creative activity of God continues and has a goal. To be sure, this purposive activity of the creator and the purposefulness of the world cannot be directly 'read off' what we perceive and experience. It is an affirmation of faith, not an empirical observation. . . . While the world described by scientific investigation is open to a faith interpretation, the evidence does not require that it be interpreted in this way. . . . Yet if we take as our central clue God's way with the people of Israel and the decisive confirmation of that way in Jesus Christ, we are led to confess that creation has a purpose. . . . The purpose for which God created the world is decisively disclosed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ." [DM, 105].

Subtleties

Migliore calls our attention to certain nuances within traditional teaching about Creation and the problem of evil that are worth highlighting and remembering.

A distinction between finitude and evil. Migliore points out that in certain respects the vicissitudes of life contribute to its goodness. “God has created a world in which there is both birth and death, both rationality and contingency, both order and freedom, both risk and vulnerability.” In and of itself, this dynamism is one of the good things about creation. Thus, as Migliore suggests, “while finitude and mortality constitute the ‘shadow’ side of life as created by God, they cannot be called inherently evil.” [DM, 119]

The notion of Divine Concurrence affirms natural autonomy and human freedom. Thus it is misleading to look to God as the “cause” of events such as “tyranny, injustice, social breakdown, war” etc. Rather, these are better understood as events that God does not will, but which do happen with “God’s permission.” [DM, 122]

The notion of Divine Governance affirms that God can direct even events that he does not will to serve his purposes. For Augustine, as Migliore explains, as God permits evils such as tyranny and injustice to occur he also uses them to accomplish greater purposes. “God exercises sovereignty over evil by bringing good out of what by itself is only negative and destructive.” [DM, 122]

This implies Divine-Creaturely “compatibilism.” This controversial notion means that human and divine freedom do not exist in a zero-sum relation, where humanity activity implies passivity from God, or vice-versa. Rather, God’s activity and human activity are compatible. Augustine understood that God had been active in his life even through his own sinful choices. Migliore: “The divine purpose [in Augustine’s life] was worked out not coercively, or from the outside as it were, but precisely in and through Augustine’s own free decisions and actions.” [DM, 122].

This means that God’s providential activity is largely hidden. God acts in all things, but what we see and experience are the workings of nature, our own choices, and the choices of others. As Calvin once put it, providence doesn’t usually come to us naked, but “clothed within its means.”

This implies a spirituality that is at the same time both active and prayerful. The doctrine of Providence leaves room for hard work, taking responsibility, recognition of risk, acceptance of consequences—combined with gratitude, trust and confidence in God. Barth describes the Christian as the one “who will always be the most surprised, the most affected, the most apprehensive and the most joyful in the face of events. He will not be like an ant which has foreseen everything in advance, but like a child in a forest, or on Christmas Eve; one who is always rightly astonished by events, by the encounters and experiences which overtake him, and the cares and duties laid upon him. He is the one who is constantly forced to begin afresh, wrestling with the

possibilities which open out to him and the impossibilities which oppose him. If we may put it in this way, life in the world, with all its joys and sorrows and contemplation and activity, will always be for him a really interesting matter, or, to use a bolder expression, it will be an adventure. . .⁷

The following is a funeral homily that expresses this theology in connection with a very interesting story, in response to a specific question.

⁷ Barth, CD III.3, 242–43.

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Christoph Keller, III
St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
May 23, 2011

Charles Raymond Mather, Jr.

The Prayer Book catechism tells us there are seven kinds of prayer, as follows.

Penitence, is our heart's confession that we have failed or fallen short in some responsibility. Petition, is our request for help and strength. Intercession, is our request for help and strength for others. Thanksgiving, is gratitude for something God has done for us. Oblation, is offering something we will do for God. Praise, is celebrating God as wise and great. Adoration, is knowing God as kind and good.

Those are the seven kinds of prayer. More on that, in just a minute, because this has to do with a question Robbi Davis asked me about her father.

Charles Raymond Mather, Jr. was born March 6, 1931. In this vicinity, he was mostly known as Robbi's dad, the kindly gentleman who showed up here a few, short years ago. Elsewhere, Charles was much more known, though under a different name.

Ray Mansfield was the name Charles used as a program host for WMGM TV, Channel 40, in Atlantic City. Thursday, the station announced his death on the evening news. The bulletin read:

A longtime member of the NBC 40 Family has died. Ray Mansfield, who was host of NBC 40's "Lets Talk Antiques," passed away this morning at his home in Arkansas. Ray was involved with the show since it first began airing here back in the 1970's, and became the show's host in 1991. "Lets Talk Antiques" continued on NBC 40 until 2005. In 2006, Ray moved out to Little Rock, Arkansas to live with his daughter. Ray Mansfield was 80 years old.

As Ray Mansfield, Charles wrote a syndicated newspaper column too.

If you didn't know all that, join the club.

Charles didn't seem to care whether many of us knew any of that, or not. Being known just as Robbi's dad, grandfather to Maggie and Parker, was more than fine with him. It made him happy.

How this father and daughter discovered one another is a story Charles Dickens might have written. I'm going to tell you the story, because it is a wonderful story that needs to be said out loud— especially in church.

Until five years ago, neither Charles nor Robbi guessed the existence of the other. Robbi's mother was Eloise Deweese, my friend. In 2006, when Eloise died, she left

behind a letter to her daughter. As Scott and Robbi were sorting through her things, they found the letter. Scott read it over first, looked at Robbi and said, “I think you had better sit down.”

“Dear Robbi,” Eloise began. Thus, Robbi learned her father was not who she had thought it was—and good riddance, because the man she had thought it was had left her mother in the lurch, and had never given Robbi as much as a kind word or warm smile. The real father, she now learned, was a certain Charles Mather, who might or might not still be living somewhere in the vicinity of Philadelphia. At a dark moment, he had been Eloise’s friend. One night, the friends had been intimate together. Eloise moved away without telling Charles she was going to have a baby. Charles, who never married, was never given reason even to suspect that he might be a father. Eloise raised Robbi by herself, a devoted, protective mother.

So now, at last, Robbi knew her father’s name.

With assistance from a friend, Scott and Robbi did a little sleuthing, hoping to find the right Charles Mather who might or might not be living in the vicinity of Philadelphia. That is a pretty large haystack, in which to go looking for the right Charles Mather.

Come October 2006, the phone rang at Charles’s home. It was a relative of his, I think a nephew, who probably began by asking him if he was sitting down. There was a woman down in Arkansas who said she believed she was his daughter, her mother’s name was Eloise. Could this possibly be true? Charles’s eyes, I am sure, got big. If so, said the nephew, here was the name and number, if Charles would like to call. The woman was hoping that he would.

Charles took a few days to absorb this information, almost two weeks. Then, on a Sunday morning, he called and left a message, which Robbi listened to coming home from church. She got home, sat down, composed herself, and made the call. They talked for an hour, and it was tender, loving, wondrous and beautiful—the stuff almost of fairy tales.

Now we come to Robbi’s question. It seemed to Robbi that, in this process of her discovering her father, a rather implausible string of coincidences occurred. Was this, Robbi’s finding Charles, the work of God?

There are two, simple, opposite approaches to this kind of question, that are both non-Christian. To those who believe in fate, there are no accidents in life. Everything is determined by an unseen, uncaring force. When something happens, bad or good, it was simply meant to be. The opposite non-Christian view is that there is nothing more to life than the laws of probability and chance. Lady Macbeth was speaking for this view in saying: “Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

We Christians can be tempted toward either of those simplistic answers. There is a fatalistic kind of Christian faith that sees life as all God’s doing, not our own. There is an

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opposite kind of Christian faith that sees life as all our doing, rather than the Lord's. Neither view does justice to the gospel.

In the gospel, we see life as both God's doing, and our own. We receive both gifts, and tasks, from God.

The gifts begin from the moment of conception. At birth, we arrive as creatures made in God's own image, possessing divine-like abilities to think and love. Each of us also comes with our own special gifts and talents. From early in his life, Charles's gifts, for example, included a kind and gentle spirit, a fine aesthetic sensibility, and a flair for communication.

If life is a gift, it is a task as well. God calls us to live faithfully, responsibly, lovingly as God himself has shown us in his Son. There are almost endless ways of doing this, depending on our opportunities and gifts. We are free to be creative.

When God introduced creativity and freedom into human life, it made life unpredictable—both more wonderful and dangerous than fatalists, or Lady Macbeth, imagine. Many different kinds of things can happen, things terrible and beautiful, wondrous and strange. But in this freedom, in all the kinds of things that happen, bad and good, we never walk alone. God is with us, concerned, active, making purposeful connections and, at every juncture, giving us new gifts, new things to do.

This is why we have those several different kinds of prayer. Oblation and penitence show us taking action: offering service in the present situation, confessing when we fail to follow through. Petition and intercession invite God to take action in the situation, Good Shepherd that he is. We adore God in and for the gifts he gives us, such as hope and love. We praise God because we know, in Christ, that God is purposeful and good.

Being Christian is living through all seven kinds of prayer, discerning God's gift and task in each new situation. You know the song: "Three things we pray: to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day."

Now, having learned to see, love and follow God in every situation, we are ready to see and love him all the more when some blessed moment happens. That's what it was, in October, 2006, when Charles picked up the telephone to learn he had a daughter: a blessed moment. This was certainly a gift, a purposeful connection. With the gift, there was a task as well, because family is both gift and responsibility. Charles and his long, lost family joyfully accepted both the gift and the responsibility. This is life as God intends, where his will is done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Heaven is where Charles Raymond Mather Jr., now is —happy to wait, expectantly, for the next reunion.

Thursday morning, Robbi called her father, as she did almost every day. When he didn't answer, Scott went by to check. Charles was in his chair, having finished breakfast. His

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faithful puppy was at his feet. An unfinished glass of orange juice was in his hand. So peaceful was his death, he didn't spill the glass of juice.

Just a day or so before, Charles saw his daughter for the last time. His parting words were: "You have made me a very happy man."

Traditional Theodicies⁸

Divine Incomprehensibility This response to the problem of suffering and evil stresses the incomprehensibility of God. In the film, *Tender Mercies*, a broken down country singer (played by Robert Duvall) whose life has been salvaged by the love of a good-hearted, Christian woman (Tess Harper) loses his daughter in a car wreck. The man sadly reflects: "I don't trust happiness. I never have." His wife listens, but ventures no response.

Righteous Suffering There are times when suffering can be interpreted as an act of divine punishment or chastisement. In his second inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln offered this view in his interpretation of the Civil War:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Instructive Suffering The point here is that our sufferings can be the occasion for our turning to God. A well-known and much loved member of Alcoholics Anonymous used to say "Thank God I was an alcoholic. Otherwise, I'd have never amounted to a hill of beans." His suffering had been the occasion for his becoming a better man.

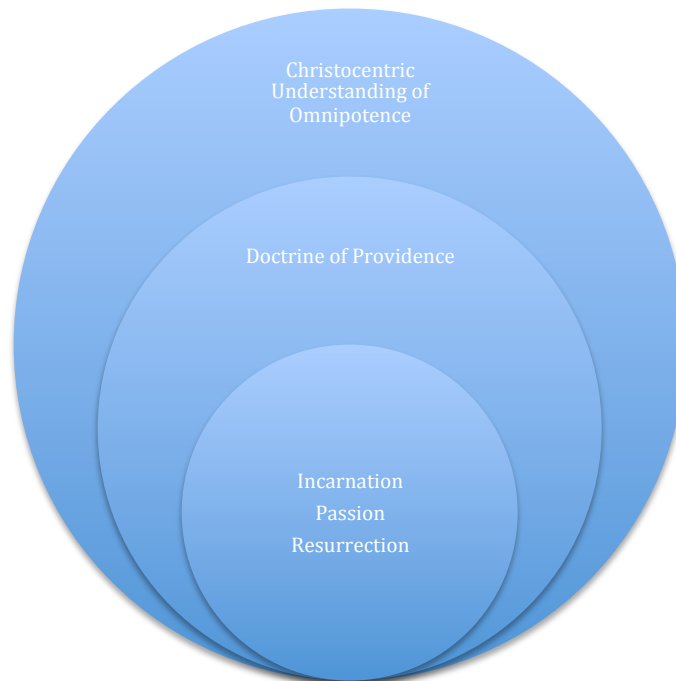
⁸ DM, 121–125.

Migliore's (Barthian) Critique of Traditional Theodicy

“The traditional Theodicies summarized above have undoubtedly offered comfort and support to countless believers in particular situations. An element of truth is present in each of them. But they are all marked by a lack of sustained attention to the gospel story in their thinking about divine Lordship and in their response to the reality of evil. In the late twentieth century, all theodicy must be tested both by ‘the brutal facts of modern historical life’ and by the biblical witness to the love of God in Jesus the crucified. This situation compels faith to re-think all inherited understandings of God, and in particular the ideas of divine omnipotence and omnicausality that are often presupposed in traditional doctrines of providence.” [DM, 125]

Waste in Evolution

Lisbon Earthquake



Holocaust

Threat of Nuclear Annihilation

Recent Theodicies⁹

Protest Theodicy accepts that God is omnipotent, while challenging belief that God is compassionate and good.

Process Theodicy accepts that God is compassionate and good, while challenging belief that God is omnipotent.

Person-making Theodicy, espoused traditionally by Irenaeus and recently by John Hick, holds that “the possibility and experience of evil are conditions of the possibility of growth toward free and mature humanity in the image of God.” [DM, 130]

Liberation Theodicy issues a call to participate in God’s struggle against suffering and oppression.

⁹ DM, 111–15.

Theology and Science

In Week 2, we referred to these remarks by the Harvard Evolutionary biologist, Ernst Mayr:

“The belief that the world was created by an Almighty God is called creationism. . . . The beliefs of creationism are in conflict with the findings of science, and this has resulted in a controversy between creationists and evolutionists. . . . More or less similar creation stories are found in the folklore of peoples all over the world. They filled a gap in mankind’s desire to answer the profound questions about this world that we humans have asked ever since there has been human culture. We still treasure these stories as part of our cultural heritage, but we turn to science when we want to learn the real truth about the history of the world.”¹⁰

It is interesting to compare that statement to this one by Daniel Migliore:

“The Christian doctrine of creation is not a quasi-scientific theory about how the world came into being. It is a deeply religious affirmation, shaped by the experience of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It gives expression to our faith awareness that we are contingent, finite beings whose very existence is a gift from God. The stories of Genesis 1 and 2 are not scientific descriptions but rather poetic, doxological declarations of faith in God, who has created and reconciled the world and each one of us.” [DM, 113]

Later, Migliore claims support for a “growing consensus among many theologians and scientists” that faith and science, rather than “at war,” can and should each be a source of influence and enrichment to the other. Migliore:

“Stanley L. Jaki argues persuasively that assumptions which made modern science possible—that observed entities are objectively real, that they possess an inherent rationality, that they are contingent, and that the universe is a coherent whole—are entirely congruent with the Christian doctrine of Creation.” [DM, 115]

¹⁰ Ernst Mayr, *What Evolution Is* (New York: Perseus Books Group / Basic Books, 2001), 4–5.

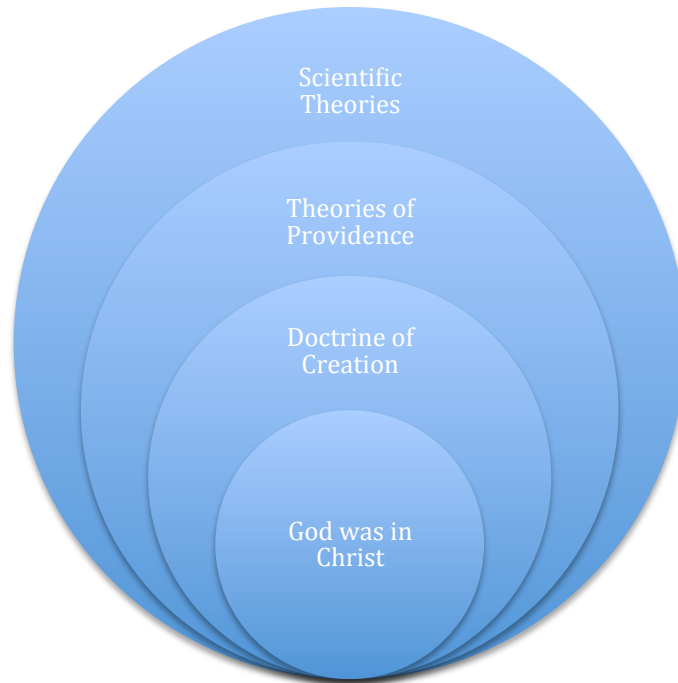
In his book *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*, Stephen Barr suggests that there is, and has been for a long time, a “warfare” going on. It is not, however, between “religion and science” but rather between two worldviews. Barr writes:

“The fact of the matter is that there is a bitter intellectual battle going on, and it is about real issues. However, the conflict is not about religion and science, it is between religion and materialism. Materialism is a philosophical opinion that is closely connected with science. It grew up alongside science, and many people have a hard time distinguishing it from science. But it is not science. It is merely a philosophical opinion. . . . The basic tenet of so-called ‘scientific materialism’ is that nothing exists except matter, and that everything in the world must therefore be the result of the strict mathematical laws of physics and blind chance.”¹¹

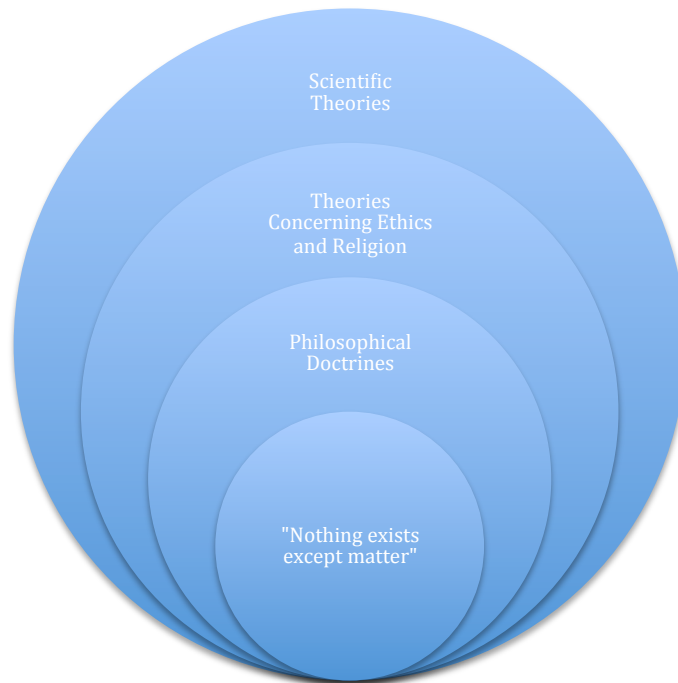
Following Barr, and using our model for intellectual traditions, we might compare Christianity and Materialism in this way:

¹¹ Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 1.

Christian Tradition



Metaphysical Naturalism (Materialism)



Models and Metaphors

Migliore offers definitions for these three well-known models for understanding God in relation to the world. [DM, 110]

Theism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Belief that God is the Transcendent Creator of the World."
Pantheism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Belief that the world is a mode of God's being."
Panentheism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Belief that the world and God are mutually dependent."

Not being satisfied that any of "these positions, as stated, is entirely adequate to a trinitarian doctrine of God an creation," Migliore goes on to offer an "inventory of models and metaphors for[better] understanding this relationship" between God and world. [DM, 110-113]



First, some suggest an analogy between human *generation*, or procreation, and God's giving life to the world.

Second, some suggest an analogy between human building or *fabrication*, and God's construction of the world.

Third, some suggest an analogy between the way water flows, or *emanates*, from a spring, and the creation's source in God.

Fourth, some suggest that God is to the world as the human *mind is to the body*.

Migliore is open to metaphorical insights along these lines, while also citing weaknesses with such conceptions.

The analogy he finds most illuminating suggests that God is to the world as an artist is to her own creation.

"The model of creation as artistic expression seems particularly appropriate for a trinitarian theology. The idea of God as an uninvolved and distant creator (a typical characterization in the Western philosophical tradition) is totally inadequate from a biblical perspective. On the other hand, the newly revived panentheistic description of the world as God's body, while emphasizing the intimacy of the relationship between God and the world, fails to depict appropriately either the freedom of God in relation to the world or the real otherness and freedom of the world. The model of artistic expression is attractive because it combines the elements of creative freedom and intimacy of relation between artists and artistic creation. Just as the

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love of God is freely expressed and shared in intertrinitarian community, so in the act of creation God brings forth in love a world of free creatures that bear the mark of divine creativity." [DM, 113].

