

IMAGO DEI

Advent Study Book



**WAIKATO &
TARANAKI
ANGLICANS**



WELCOME

Nau mai, haere mai ki tenei aratohu ako mo te Taenga Mai.

Welcome to this study guide for Advent.

This little book is designed to stimulate your thinking about what it means to be made in the image of God (*imago Dei*). It invites you to explore questions and answers that have occupied the Judeo-Christian tradition for thousands of years; ever since God declared that we were made in God's image.



You shall resemble the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might?

Page 1

- *Introduction*
- *Image and Likeness*
- *The Patristics*



I am the way and the truth and the life

Page 5

- *Introduction*
- *The Essence of God*
- *Metaphysics: beyond the physical*
- *God is relational / love / truth*
- *In the beginning*
- *Dominion + Subjugation = Care of Creation*



That they may have life & have it abundantly

Page 9

- Well-being
- Sabbath
- Models of Well-being
- "You ruins it"
- Br Lawrence
- On the seventh day
- Sanctuary



May contain traces of truth

Page 13

- Truth and Well-being
- Post-truth
- Integrity and Dis-integration
- Integrity and Well-being
- Hard-wired for Truth
- Application



Advent Study Credits

Page 17



Advent Study One

**YOU SHALL RESEMBLE THE LORD YOUR GOD
WITH ALL YOUR HEART, SOUL, AND MIGHT?**



The Creation of Adam, Michaelangelo (1512)

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Gen 1.26-27 (NRSV)

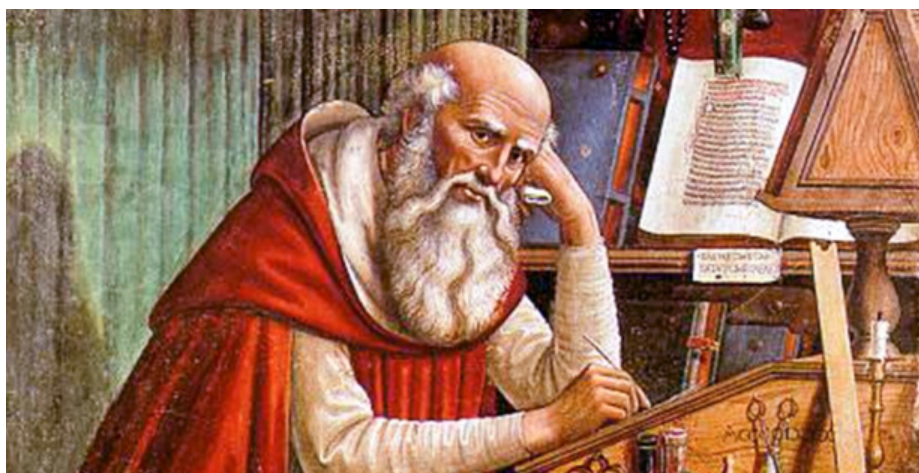
Introduction

Advent anticipates. Its whole character looks toward the arrival of Jesus the Christ. All our hoping and yearning is focused upon the incarnation or embodiment of God - that moment when God took on human form. In Colossians, St Paul describes Jesus as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation ... in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col 1:15,19). This statement profoundly influences who we believe Jesus to be. The reference to 'image of God' recalls Genesis but locates Christ's beginning before human creation. From that time the *pleroma*—or fullness—of God took up residence within Jesus. Christ was fully saturated with God. That makes Jesus the ultimate bearer of the *imago Dei* (image of God). At Christmas we remember the revelation of that fullness. During Advent, we take the opportunity to think about what that means.

The phrase *imago Dei* comes from the Vulgate. This was the Latin translation of the Bible produced largely by St Jerome at the end of the 4th century. It was called the Vulgate because it was the version most commonly used (once upon a time vulgar meant 'common' or 'ordinary'). For over 1000 years it was *the* translation for western Christians. The phrase *imago Dei* is repeated throughout Scripture: Gen 1.26-27, and 9.6; Col 3.10; Heb 1.3 and of course 2 Cor 4.4: "Christi qui est imago Dei" ("Christ is the image of God").

As Christians, we believe that we are created in the image and likeness of God. For some this has been understood literally, but what else can it mean? How do you understand yourself as created in the image of God? How does that relate to others? Does that influence the way that you imagine what God looks like? What does it even mean to resemble God? Are their implications beyond the physical?

These are some of the questions raised when we begin to unpack what it might mean to be created in the image of God. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will explore how human efforts to ask and answer such questions might influence our understanding of who we are as bearers of God's image. For many, this question ultimately becomes: what kind of being is a human being?



*St Jerome (c.347-420)
Born Bethlehem,
Palestine; feast day
September 30,
biblical translator and
monastic leader,
traditionally regarded
as the most learned of
the Latin Fathers.*

Ghirlandaio, Domenico:
Saint Jerome in His Study

Image and Likeness

Let's start with our own physical creation. In Genesis 1.26, God proclaims: "Let us make humankind in our image (*selem*), according to our likeness (*demût*)."
A literal interpretation of this could claim some physical resemblance between God and humankind; and some have understood it in this way. Theologians like Jenson however, reject any such claim outright. He states: "Clearly the point is not that we look like God. We do not."

So how can we understand Scripture? The Hebrew words *selem* (image) and *demût* (likeness), are arguably complementary and just used for emphasis and exposition. However, Maly argues that, under ordinary circumstances, *selem* means an "exact copy or reproduction" while *demût* communicates "resemblance or similarity." Fortunately, others propose that *selem* is flexible enough to embrace "the concrete and the abstract." This means we can think about likeness on many levels: material, mental, moral and much more.



*Elymais silver
tetradrachm*

In addition, there is wide agreement that—throughout the ancient near east—bearing the image of a god denoted divine authority, and the Genesis narrative confirms that such authority is available to “every human being, male and female.” That authority is directly connected to care for creation (Gen 1.28-30), and so suggests that being like God carries some moral implications as well. However, before we consider that aspect, let’s give some thought to how the early church approached the imago Dei.

The Patristics

The Patristics (or Church Fathers) were those early Christian saints, scholars and martyrs who were at the forefront of Christian theology. They were the pioneers who navigated Scripture, creed and doctrine from about 100 to about 450 CE. Here’s a sample of how imago Dei thinking was variously understood.



Irenaeus (c. 130-200CE), in *Against Heresies*, preferred a more literal interpretation of imago Dei. He argued that the “complete [hu]man” has a soul “to which is united the flesh which was fashioned in the image of God.” This has a Platonic (or Greek philosophical) flavour that threatens to separate body from soul. This separation is called dualism, and it’s not Christian. In our tradition, heart (intellect),

soul (spirit), and might (body) capture the indivisible wholeness of our being - they are interdependent.

Writing at a similar time, Tertullian explains that it is not our outward appearance that resembles God, but rather our essential being. This runs the risk of diminishing the body and prioritising divine essence.



Origen (c.184-253), takes a slightly different angle proposing that humans received the “dignity of the image of God, but the fulfilment of the likeness is reserved for the final consummation.” Dignity means something like ‘worth’ in this context; so there is something special or valuable about our physicality. However, for Origen, humans won’t truly resemble God until the end times. This converts our likeness to

God into an ongoing project - so we are *being* conformed to the image of God. (We’ll say more about that in the weeks ahead.)

In the 4th and 5th centuries, Saint Augustine steered the conversation away from any physical resemblance to God and concluded that: “The image of the Creator is to be found in the rational or intellectual soul of man, being implanted in the soul’s immortality.” Although this view dominated imago Dei theology for some time, it ultimately reflects a Platonic emphasis on soul.

So where does that leave the body?

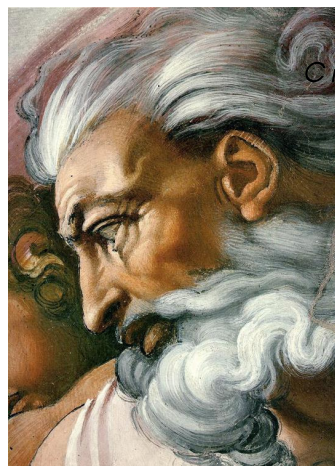
In Advent, we anticipate God becoming em-bodied. At Easter we celebrate the rising of Christ's body - a real, tangible body, with a hole in its side that you could put your fingers in. There is no suggestion that the resurrected Jesus was reduced to some immaterial, spiritual essence. Indeed, St Paul goes on to remind us that our bodies are Temples to the Holy Spirit - in some way the *pleroma* or fullness of God is part of us too. We even describe ourselves as belonging to the body of Christ. We are God's physical creation and that is something God celebrated from the very beginning.



Scar of Bethlehem, Banksy (2019)

Reflections and Questions

So where does that leave us? We are male, female, intersex, and in some way we all resemble God? We are culturally and ethnically diverse, and still bear the stamp of the Creator? What do you make of this? Is your physical resemblance to God important - and why do you think that? How have images of God influenced your understanding of who God is? In whose image has God been made and how does that work theologically?



Creation of Adam,
Michelangelo
(1512)



Reconstruction,
Richard Neave
(2015)



Papa,
Octavia Spencer
"The Shack" (2015)



"Let us make
humankind in
our image."

Warning

There is a temptation to set the body aside in favour of essential human characteristics. Any list is likely to dehumanize someone somewhere. In the same way that some have insisted only able bodies reflect God, others have asserted that only rational minds reflect God. This has a significant impact on people living with disabilities, Alzheimers, dementia, etc. So beware of tidy lists and tick boxes when it comes to determining what kind of being is a human being ...



Advent Study Two

I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE



God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

1 John 4.16-17 (NLT)

Introduction

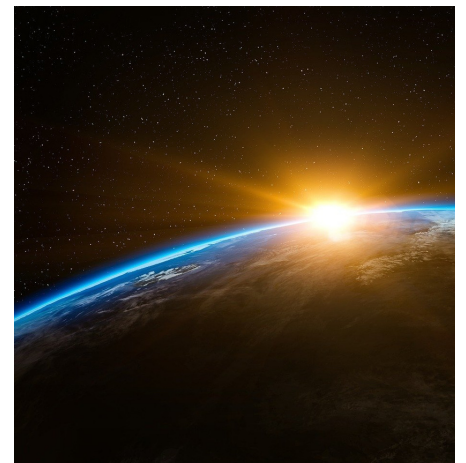
Sometimes our efforts to determine what God looks like start with ourselves. Of course, this makes sense, we are after all made in God's image. However, it is worth acknowledging that copies are not always quite as good as the original ... The Fall - the narrative that describes what went Wrong - makes it clear that we do not reflect God perfectly. In fact, one might argue that our difference has become like the children's game "Telephone" (also unhelpfully known as *Chinese Whispers* and *Russian Scandal*). We have scrambled God's original resemblance, and are less than perfect imitators of Christ.

So rather than look at the reflection, this week we will look at the source.

The Essence of God

Before we go any further, let's pause a moment and consider what we are about to attempt: an analysis of the essence of God. Isaiah reports: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55.8-9).

Just saying.



Nevertheless, Scripture does demonstrate something of the character and essence of God.

- What qualities come to mind? God is _____
- What does God do that reveals what God is?

Metaphysics: beyond the physical

Metaphysics describe the nature of things and the relationships that exist between them - particularly those things that exist beyond (*meta*) the physical (*physics*) and our senses. When we talk about the Trinity, our language can often head in a metaphysical direction. The Creeds (Nicene, Apostolic, Athanasian, etc) record the Church's effort to make sense of our foundational Christian mystery: we believe in one God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thinking that describes the nature/essence/character of God is called ontology (words about being or existing).



Beyer Studio, 'Trinity Window,' Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother, Avondale, Pennsylvania

Below, we will look at some of the Nicene language used to describe God. (*This is just a selection. The images and words in brackets are an interpretation designed to encourage reflection.*)



Father
(parent)
Almighty
(all powerful)
Creator
(of all things)



Son
(child)
Lord
(*lit.* 'bread-keeper')
Incarnate
(en-fleshed)



Holy Spirit
(sacred force)
Giver of Life
(provider)
Prophet Speaker
(inspirer)

- Ask yourself what it would mean to do these things in the image of God: to parent; to create things; to be a child; a provider; a life-giver; an inspirer ...
- What do we mean as Christians when we talk about power? Consider these phrases from ANZPB/HKMOA Daily Devotions for Tuesday (pp. 114-118).

"to shame the strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness ... you are the king; you make a cross your throne, you wear a crown of thorns ... the highest must be like the lowest, the chief like a servant ... Jesus is among us like a servant."

God is Relational

The Trinity is described variously in terms of relationships: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of Life; etc. We often get caught up more on the terms than their significance. God is in relationship within the Godhead. God is also in relationship with us. Therefore to reflect God, we must also be in relationship with ourselves (yes, have a think about it), with others, and with God.



Reproduction of Rublev's "Hospitality of Abraham" with relational geometry overlaid.

If you live in a western-libertarian-capitalist-individualist world, this call to live in-relationship is more difficult. Libertarians prioritise privacy and freedom. Capitalism pursues the accumulation of personal wealth. Individuals are concerned with themselves and their priorities. Christianity proposes a very different Way called collectivism. This prioritises the group over the individual; advocates for the sharing of resources; and highlights the importance of interdependence.

'Body of Christ' theology reminds us of our dependence on one another. In the context of *imago Dei*, does it spark any other thoughts or questions for you?

God is Love

Christian relationship is not just geometric. It is characterized by love. Specifically, the love that God has for us. This gratuitous love is unbounded, self-giving, self-sacrificing, and perfect. So, we are not just called into any relationship, we are called to love one another as Christ has loved us. That's the *imago Dei* relationship. How's that working for you?

A Latvian ring given by a parent to a child. It symbolizes the unique individual bound together with others. "One for all and everyone for one."



God is Truth

In John 14.6, Jesus defines himself as "the truth." Christ is not simply the source of truth, but the substance of truth. This is an ontological statement, that is, a claim about the essence of God. We are called to become like Christ - to be conformed to his image.

- What are the ethical implications of this for you and your community of faith?
- What does truth-telling look like at work/in the home/at church?
- What is the relationship between truth and love?

"In the beginning when God created ..."



The Joy of Creation
Bill Bell (2020)

Fundamentally, God is the Creator and we are God's creatures in creation. That is the first thing that Scripture reveals to us. However, that's not the only thing that is happening. God is also installing order, developing systems, defining relationships, and establishing the structures that enable flourishing.

- What does it mean for us to be creators in the image of God?
- How broad (or narrow) is your definition of what it means for a creation to have purpose and enable flourishing?

Dominion + Subjugation = Care of Creation

The English translation of Genesis 1 has not always been interpreted helpfully. The language of dominion and subjugation (in verses 26 and 28), has led some to believe they have divine permission to abuse creation. That interpretation was never intended. In fact, the emphasis is on stewardship and the responsibility to care for creation. We have been entrusted with ensuring the ongoing fruitfulness of the world we live in. When we protect the environment we reflect the priorities of God.



- What do you do as an image-bearer to enable flourishing; to protect the environment; and to understand climate change?
- What does your community of faith do as stewards of creation?

Reflections and Questions

Last session we considered the significance of our creation in the "image and likeness." Today we moved toward the source and explored some of the characteristics of God that we are called to resemble. When you think about our credal tradition, God as relational/love/truth, creation, and the care of creation - what stands out for you? What resonates and what makes you uncomfortable? What is the Spirit saying as you anticipate Christmas?



Advent Study Three

THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY



"And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation."

Genesis 2.2-3 (NRSV)

Well-being

Since the 1960s the terms *wellness* and *well-being* have become increasingly familiar. However, the word *well* goes back much further. One of its earliest meanings was *abundantly*. When linked with its watery homonym *well*, it invites theological reflection. Jesus routinely uses the language of living water (Jn 4.13-15, 7.37-39) and abundant life (John 10.10). This richness underlies God's will for us. Put simply, 'well-being' can express God's desire for us to live the fulness of life sustained by living water. Christ is the Life, the Spirit is the Living water - and we are called to reflect those images of God.

🕒 So, how well is your well-being?

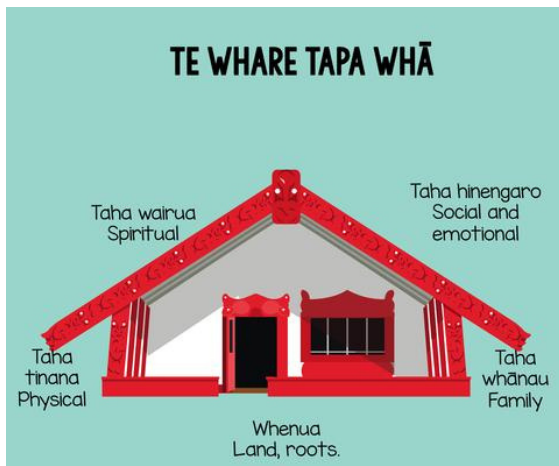
Sabbath

The Sabbath is the day of rest. The day on which God took up residence in God's creation. It is an acknowledgement of work undertaken and a gift. The context is important. The Sabbath is a response to the creative work that has been undertaken over the preceding six days. That productivity is honoured with rest *and* reflection.

🕒 How do you define 'Sabbath taking'?



Models of Well-being



Sir Mason Durie developed his well-being model-*Te Whare Tapa Whā*-in 1984. He proposed that when all the dimensions of our lives are in balance we will thrive. The model arose from his experience at Te Aute School in Central Hawke's Bay and has been hugely influential in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides a solid and indigenous framework for attending to our physical, spiritual, relational, and familial needs.

Human Resource specialists CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development), extend the well-being framework to seven critical areas:

- Health: Physical health, physical safety, mental health
- Good work: environment, management, demands, autonomy, reward
- Values/Principles: leadership, ethics, inclusivity
- Collective/Social: employee voice, positive relationships
- Personal Growth: career development, emotional, learning, creativity
- Good lifestyle choices: eating, leisure activity, rest
- Financial Wellbeing: fair pay, retirement planning, financial support



Abbey of Saint Scholastica, Subiaco, home of St Benedict's Cave

In the monastic tradition however, well-being was expressed in a different way: rule of life. The most famous was written by Benedict of Nursia in about 512. Fundamental to this work was the golden rule of *Ora et Labora* - pray and work. Each day the monks devoted eight hours to prayer, eight hours to sleep, and eight hours to manual work, sacred reading and/or works of charity.

- What does well-being mean to you?
- How do you measure your well-being?
- What does your Rule of Life look like?

"You ruins it"

In Sir Peter Jackson's version of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Gollum is appalled by Samwise Gamgee's stewing of two rabbits. Sam insists: "There is only one way to eat a brace of coneys." Gollum replies, "You stupid fat hobbit, you ruins it!"



The Two Towers (2002)

For some, the rigidity of rules, regulations, and schedules ruin their connection to God. This problem normally arises where the emphasis falls on the structure over the Spirit. The key is to begin with those spiritual practices that fill you up, rather than wring you out.

- 🕒 What spiritual practices do you find most helpful? How do you connect with God? What do you struggle with?

Brother Lawrence (1614-1691)

Brother Lawrence (a Frenchman born Nicholas Herman), described himself as "a great awkward fellow who broke everything." After some years of military service and several injuries he finally joined a discalced Carmelite monastery as a lay brother; primarily working in the kitchen and subsequently repairing sandals.



Br Lawrence lived by the mantra 'give your all for the all.' He was known for his wisdom, humility and devotion. He prioritised a constant communion with God in all things; he made the love of God the aim of all his actions. Every potato peeled, dish washed, sandal stitched, or conversation had, was to be an expression of love for God. He called this "The Practice of the Presence of God." His whole life was determined by that rule of life.

On the seventh day ...

Previously, we noted that God took up residence in creation on the seventh day. God's presence fills the whole of creation at all times and in all places. God's focus is creation. Indeed, God so loved the world that he gave his only son. We are God's priority. In this way Br Lawrence's practices reflect God's.

As Christians, the sabbath has become Sunday. Strictly speaking, Sunday is the first day of the week, but it is also the day on which Jesus rose from the dead and walked with the disciples to Emmaus to break bread. Every Sunday that we meet for Holy Communion we remember and *reflect* that day.



Sanctuary

Sanctuary - a sacred place. In medieval England sanctuary was a legal procedure defined in both canon and secular law. It was a last resort for those accused of crimes, often when they were being chased by the community. If the accused could make it to holy ground the community was legally bound to provide hospitality/manaakitanga for 40 days. Sanctuary gave you respite; an opportunity to negotiate terms or reconcile.



*Turtle Lake
Hamilton Gardens*

A sanctuary is a place in which we enter God's presence. It may be real or it may be imagined. Some people have a particular place they go to in their head to talk with God. This creates a context for conversation. Finding this space (literally or otherwise), responds to God's presence in our world and desire to meet with us. The more time we spend in the company of God, the more we will resemble God's image.



The process of discipleship is often described as formation because it changes people. Like earthen vessels, we begin as a lump of clay and God gradually shapes us. It can be a very messy business...

Reflections and Questions

Ultimately, all the time that we invest in trying to be like God, we are also investing in our own well-being. The human project (the *telos* of humanity) is to become like Jesus. Our ultimate conformation to the image of God will not take place until the *eschaton* (end times) when Jesus returns. In the meantime, we work together as the body of Christ for communal well-being.

- What does your contribution to communal well-being look like?
- Is it helpful to think of your life as an ongoing project?
- What is sanctuary for you? Where do you feel God's presence most keenly?



Advent Study Four

MAY CONTAIN TRACES OF TRUTH



"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

John 1.14 (NRSV)

Truth and Well-being

Pinocchio is a moral tale written in 1883 to warn children against the risks of lying. The original story concluded with Pinocchio being hung. However, the author was persuaded to extend matters so that the puppet might be redeemed. We remember the story now for the little puppet whose nose grew when he lied. His redemption only came when he rescued his father, committed to caring for him, and stopped lying. After this, he became a 'real boy.'

Last session, we ended with some thoughts about the human project (teleological enterprise). Many theologians have proposed that being human is an ongoing endeavour. The ultimate end is perfect conformation to the image of God. At that point we will embody truth.

🌱 Any initial thoughts or reactions?

Post-truth

In 2016, the Oxford Dictionaries' word of the year was 'post-truth.' The editors defined it—somewhat benignly—as an adjective "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." In his article, *Post-Truth and Vices Opposed to Truth*, Stewart Clem reframes post-truth as "truth indifference" and offers "an account of widespread cultural indifference to truth as structural sin." Other commentators go beyond this to demonstrate that post-truth is pre-fascism. In such a world, facts are not just subordinated to opinion, they are irrelevant. In this way, ideology supersedes truth. At the same time, post-truth behaviour takes advantage of human gullibility and cognitive bias to literally distort reality. The resulting contradiction and confusion disfigure human well-being: human dissemblance prevents divine resemblance.

Integrity and Dis-integration



As Christians we are called to embody Christ; to be conformed to his image. That which is contrary to God's image corrupts our teleological enterprise to be holy as God is holy. It jeopardises the quest for human well-being which is a wholeness and integrity established in truth. While physical, spiritual, mental, and relational health are conventional markers of human well-being, I propose that their foundation must be truth. Christian truth is the communal effort to become like Jesus who is the Truth. It is an ongoing virtue-based activity that discovers truth through humble dialogue. It is profoundly opposed to post-truth phenomena which erode well-being and dis-integrate humans.

- 🕒 What do you make of this? Post-truth is pre-fascism? Post-truth distorts reality? Human dissemblance prevents divine resemblance? Post-truth dis-integrates?

Integrity and Well-being

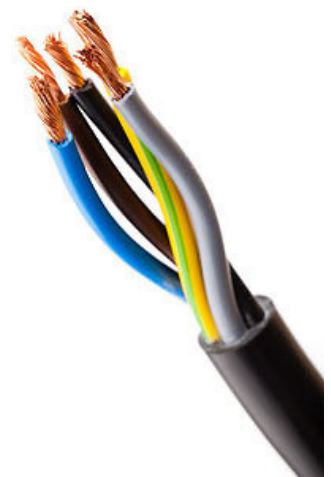
We are accustomed to thinking of integrity as a moral virtue. I encourage you to think of it in structural terms as well. If a building lacks integrity, it falls over. If a person lacks integrity there are similar consequences.

Integrity itself is constructed from truth. Truth is not just the verifiable facts of science but the essence of God. This means that truth is also relational. That is, it is derived from our connection with God. Truth is a gift from God that defines what is real. We receive truth by communicating with God.

- 🕒 How does God communicate with you?
- 🕒 How does God communicate with the body of Christ?

Hard-wired for truth

Social psychology professor Timothy Levine posits that humans operate with a "passive presumption of honesty due to a failure to actively consider the possibility of deceit at all." This feature is compounded by a natural truth bias that makes us "intrinsically gullible." From a theological perspective, we may propose that humans are hard-wired for truth because they are created in the image of God. Unfortunately, this makes us extremely vulnerable to post-truth manipulation.



Quick Summary

Truth

God is Truth
Truth is from God
Truth is fundamental to
human well-being

POST
TRUTH

Truth is Irrelevant
Post-Truth is from humans
Post-Truth dis-integrates
human well-being

Application

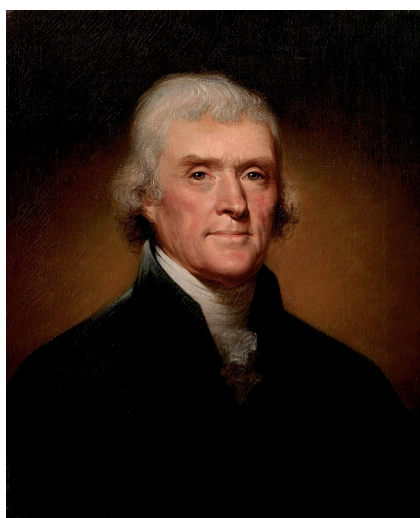
Theology can sometimes be accused of escaping from the clutches of relevance. Our challenge is to apply our theology to our world. We are, after all, stewards entrusted with the care of creation, formed in the image of God to uphold the values of truth, while called into loving-relationship with one another and God as the body of Christ, and attentive to the practices of well-being that conform us to Jesus ...

And all of that has ethical implications.



Being controversial?

Back in 1802, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in which he insisted that church and state be kept separate. This has subsequently been interpreted to mean 'religion and politics don't mix.' Rubbish. Total rubbish.



*Thomas Jefferson
US President*

Jesus of Nazareth was an unambiguously political figure. There is an undeniable link between Christianity, ethics, and politics. Christians use theology to navigate those links. For Christians to be relevant they must be engaged with their context. There is seemingly no limit to the ethical crises we face or the varied and contrary theological takes on them. That means we must also equip ourselves effectively. This short study series offers a framework for navigating such issues in the context of our creation in the image of God. On the final page, we will test the framework.

Please remember the note about 'loving-relationship' ...

Christians, Covid, and Vaccination

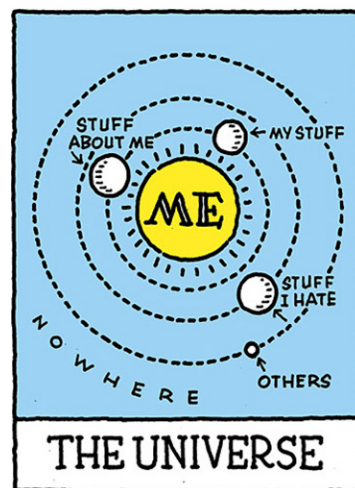


At one level, Covid has been a story of staggering statistics.

- Online sources report that more than 7.5 billion vaccines have been administered.
- There have been 255,668,681 Covid cases reported globally.
- More than 5 million people have died.
- The impact on impoverished countries can only be estimated.

There is no doubt that this pandemic is real and dangerous. It has also raised a series of ethical questions and responses for us to consider. As you think about the questions and statements that follow, try to *put aside your personal opinion* and focus on developing a theological response.

Try to think in terms of the incarnation that we anticipate in Advent. Ultimately, how is your response informed by your creation in the image of the God who became fully human? Below each quote, I have added a few keywords to and questions consider.



Theology in Action

🌐 "My body, my rights!"

*Whose body?
What rights?
Individual v Collective*

🌐 "God will protect us."

*How?
What does God's protection look like?
What about them? The ones who die.*

🌐 "No passport, no entry to my church"

*My church?
Entry to church by approval only?
Inclusion v Exclusion*

🌐 "It's a conspiracy!"

*What is truth?
How do we discern truth?
What does truth achieve?*

Final thoughts

Advent launches the Christian new year. It is a time to reset our practices and re-orient ourselves for the grand liturgical narrative ahead of us: Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and so on ... With each year we move closer to becoming the new creation. I hope that this year you have already changed shape a little - already experienced God's *trans-formation* of you. May you have the courage to allow God to mould you. May you encounter the image of God in the mystery of the incarnation and in one another as you try to be the image and likeness of the One who loves you.

Arohanui, Stephen



Advent Study Credits

"To God be the Glory, great things God has done."

Works Consulted

- Anglican Church in Aoteroa, New Zealand and Polyneisa. 2019. *A New Zealand Prayer Book | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*. Auckland: Harper Collins.
- Aquinas, Thomas. 1265-1274. *Summa Theologiae*.
- Augustine. 1952. "Lying." In *Lying*, Volume 16, Treatises on Various Subjects (The Fathers of the Church, edited by Roy Deferrari, 47-110. Catholic University of America Press. Accessed September 6, 2021.) <http://web.mit.edu/aorlando/www/HT610Augustine/On%20Lying.pdf>.
- Augustine. 2010. "On the Free Choice of the Will." In *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*, edited by Peter King, translated by Peter King, 3-127. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burton, Lorelle, Drew Westen, and Robin Kowalski. 2012. *Psychology*. 3rd. Milton, QLD: John Wiley & Sons.
- Clem, Stewart. 2017. "Post-Truth and Vices Opposed to Truth." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 37 (2): 97-116.
- Harrison, Carol. 2021. "The Nature of Virtue." In *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, by Carol Harrison, 80-114. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 1989. Holy Bible - New Revised Standard Version. Grand Rapids.
- Jenson, Robert W. 2016. "The Image of God." Chap. 6 in *A Theology in Outline : Can these Dry Bones Live*, by Robert W Jenson, 63-71. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lawrence, Brother. 2013. *The Practice of the Presence of God* (in Modern English). Translated by Marshall Davis. -: (Independently published).
- Levenson, Jon D. 2004. "Genesis." In *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by Adele & Brettler, Marc Zvi Berlin. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, Timothy. 2014. "Truth-Default Theory (TDT): A Theory of Human Deception and Deception Detection." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 33 (4): 378-392.
- McFadyen, Alistair. 1993. "Truth as Mission: The Christian Claim to Universal Truth in a Pluralist Public World." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46 (4): 437-456.
- McIntyre, Lee. 2018. *Post-Truth*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Nikolaj, J, L I Pedersen, and M Lynch. 2018. "Truth Pluralism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Truth*, edited by M Glanzberg, 544-572. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Peppiatt, Lucy. 2012. *The Disciple : On Becoming Truly Human*. Eugene, OR.: Cascade Books.
- Schroeder, Max. 2018. "The Moral Truth." In *The Oxford Handbook of Truth*, edited by M Glanzberg, 580-601. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sim, Stuart. 2019. *Post-Truth, Scepticism & Power*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Snyder, Timothy. 2017. *On Tyranny*. Vintage Digital.
- Ward, Keith. 2010. *More than Matter: What Humans Really Are*. Oxford: Lion Hudson.
- Wenham, Gordon J. 2003. "Genesis." In *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, edited by James D Dunn and John W Rogerson, 32-71. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Wright, N. T. 2020. *God and the Pandemic : A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath*. London: SPCK.
- Zizioulas, John. 1997. *Being as Communion*. Crestwood, NY: Vladimir's Seminary Press.

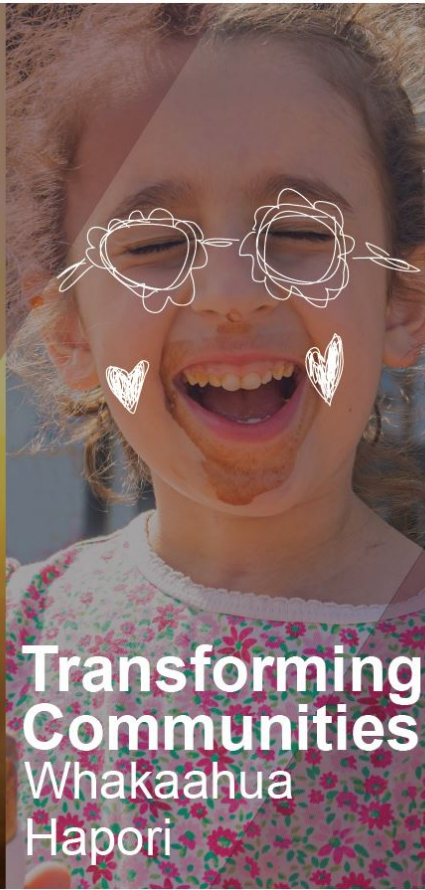
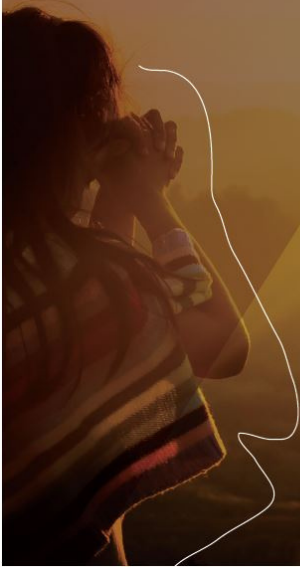
Images & Text

Unless stated otherwise, the images used in this free study guide have been downloaded from <https://pixabay.com/> a free image library. Thank you pixabay!

Text and typesetting, Ven Stephen Black - stephen@wtanglican.nz. Advent 2021.

**Marked by
Gratitude**

Ngākau
Whakawhetai



**Transforming
Communities**
Whakaahua
Hapori



**Growing
Disciples**
Tupuranga
Ākonga

We seek to be

A family in God, who are followers of Christ



**WAIKATO &
TARANAKI
ANGLICANS**