

Who are we?

# Outline of Exploring Theology Session 2: Who are we?

- Recap of Session 1

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- Read some Scripture
- Questions & Reflections on the question 'Who are we?'
- Summary
- Closing prayer



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- We explored what shaped our answers
- How do we know someone's identity?
- Importance of story
- God's story — in a sentence!

# Opening prayer

Almighty God,  
you have made us for yourself,  
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:  
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,  
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city  
where we shall see you face to face;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.



# Two more definitions of theology

“There really is no more beautiful thought in all reality than the thought of God. I believe that theology is ultimately just that: thinking the thought of God and worshipping the Reality who is God.”

Katherine Sonderegger (2012)

“If you are a theologian you truly pray.  
If you truly pray you are a theologian.”

Ponticus Evagrius

‘Chapters on Prayer’ in *The Pratikos and Chapters on Prayer*  
trans. John Eudes Bamberger, Cistercian Publications (1981)

# Lectio Divina

- Read (Lectio)
- Meditate (Meditatio)
- Pray (Oratio)
- Contemplate (Contemplatio)

## Genesis 1:26-27 - Lectio

26 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.’

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

## Genesis 1:26-27 - Meditate

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.

## Genesis 1:26-27 - Pray

Then God said,  
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and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,  
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So God created humankind in his image,  
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## Genesis 1:26-27 - Contemplate

Then God said,

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and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

So God created humankind  
in his image,

in the image of God  
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Who are we?

- Draw up a list of things that identify you.

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- 3 things that only God will know about you





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- If you were to imagine your life as a film, what would it look like?
- What would be the key moments in the film?
- Who would be the other key characters? There might be other main characters, others would be walk-on parts.
- Which actor would you like to play you?!

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- Would it be a drama?
- Would it be a comedy?

- What kind of ending would the film have?



To be continued ...

- What kind of ending would the film have?
- What would the film title be?



- Can we talk about who we are without talking about the people we're in relationship with and the places we live?

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- Can we talk about who we are without talking about the people we're in relationship with and the places we live?
- If we tried to do that, what would the story look like?
- In other words, how much can you strip out of the story, how many people and places can you take out, and it still be a story that makes any sense in terms of your identity?



Imagine the film of your story, without other people or places. What would it look like?

In what ways do we make ourselves?

What are some of the bits that  
you've left out of your story?

In what ways do we make ourselves?

We didn't ask to be born. We didn't choose our parents, or where we were born, or when we were born, or which society we were born into.

What are some of the implications of this?

The importance of relationship, both to others (hence the question is 'Who are **we**?') and the world around us (the places where we find ourselves).

In the most basic sense, we can't create ourselves; our being created is something that has happened to us. And that the same goes for all that is around us and the other creatures we are in relationship with.

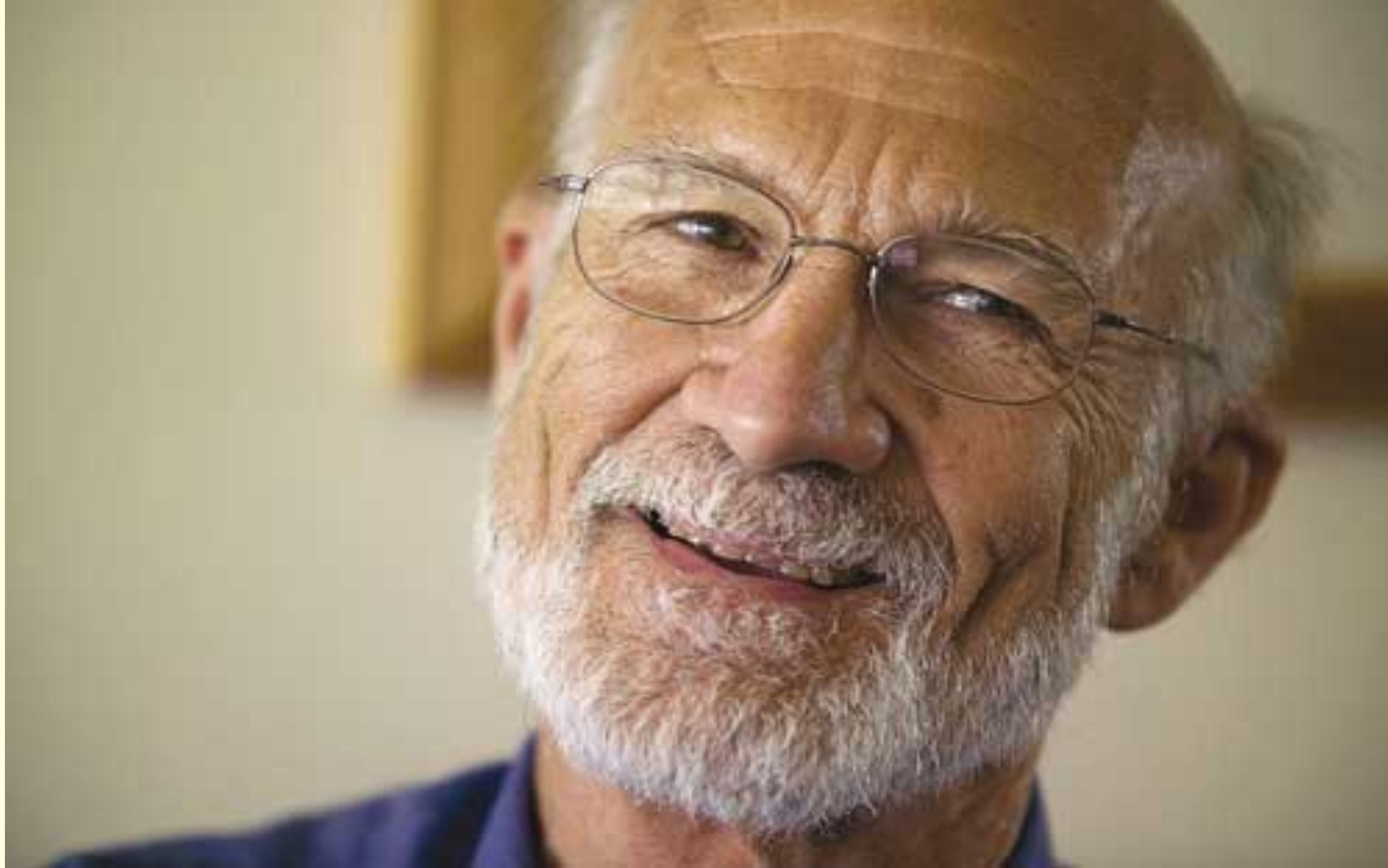


But in another sense, in our time and place, we are encouraged to create our identities.

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And this act of creation has become more important in our time.

How we tell our story matters.



Stanley Hauerwas (1940-)

“We live at a time when we believe we should have no story, except the story we chose when we had no story.”

Stanley Hauerwas

“We live at a time when we believe we should have no story,  
except the story we chose when we had no story.  
We call this freedom.”

Stanley Hauerwas

The relationship between God's story and ours.

How interwoven do we want this story to be?

What's the story?

Is it God's story?



Is it God's story?

Or is it ours?

Is it God's story?

Or is it ours?

Or both?



Jon Roxborough

Robert Jenson (1930-2017)

“God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead,  
having before raised Israel from Egypt.”

- There are characters: God, Jesus and Israel
- There are places: Egypt
- There are events: the raising of Jesus, and before that the raising of Egypt
- And these events are related, the one makes sense of the other — in other words, there's a relationship between them that stretches across time

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Stanley Hauerwas

- At this point of your life, what are your most important relationships?
- Ditto, what are the most important places in your life?

‘Who is God?’ and ‘Who are we?’



## **Genesis 1:27**

So God created humankind  
in his image,

in the image of God  
he created them;

male and female  
he created them.

## Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.

# Eucharistic Prayer

This is our story.

This is our song:

Hosanna in the highest.

“God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead,  
having before raised Israel from Egypt.”

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- If someone where to look at our lives, what would it tell them about God's character?



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- Take a moment to consider your story, the characters and the locations. Where is God in your story?
- In what ways do our individual stories identify God?
- If someone were to look at our lives, what would it tell them about God's character?
- How do our stories fit into God's story?

- How do we learn to speak of both God and us?

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- How do we learn to speak of how God's story and our stories interweave?

Why is the Bible important?

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- We imagined our lives as if they were a film
- Importance of relationships and places
- Our being created and our creating our own identities
- How do God's story and ours interweave?

# Closing prayer

Almighty God,  
you have made us for yourself,  
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:  
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,  
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city  
where we shall see you face to face;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.