

"A to Z of Church Terminology"

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Advent

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth; they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement. The lighting of candles on an Advent wreath was imported into Britain from northern Europe in the nineteenth century, and is now a common practice. The first Sunday of Advent is the first Sunday of the Christian year. This is usually the last Sunday in November or the first Sunday in December. By the way the last Sunday of the Christian year is known as "Christ the King" or "the Sunday next before Advent".

Further reading: Common Worship: Times and Seasons; "Celebrate the Christian Story" by Michael Perham

Atonement

The word atonement is used in Christian theology to describe what is achieved by the death of Jesus. William Tyndale introduced the word in 1526, when he was working on his popular translation of the Bible, to translate the Latin word "*reconciliation*". In the Revised Standard Version the word "*reconciliation*" replaces the word atonement. Atonement (at-one-ment) is the reconciliation of men and women to God through the death of Jesus. But why was reconciliation needed? Christian theology suggests that although God's creation was perfect, the Devil tempted the first man Adam and sin was brought into the world. Everybody carries this original sin with them which separates them from God, just as Adam and Eve were separated from God when they were cast out of the Garden of Eden. So it is a basic idea in Christian theology that God and mankind need to be reconciled. However, what is more hotly debated is how the death of Jesus achieved this reconciliation. There is no single doctrine of the atonement in the New Testament. In fact, perhaps more surprisingly, there is no official Church definition either.

Further reading:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/whydidjesusdie_1.shtml

Archdeacon

An Archdeacon exercises certain statutory duties within a geographical area in his/her own right and not as delegate of the Diocesan Bishop. The Archdeacon's work is responding to a theology of order and covers a wide range of responsibilities: enforcing compliance by each parish to have its church building inspected at least once every five years; annual visitations; induction of any priest who has been instituted to a Benefice; identifying the need for pastoral re-organisation and negotiating with all other interested parties; conducting enquiries when there has been a serious breakdown in pastoral relationships; having a special interest in the clergy houses; convening and conducting an extraordinary meeting of a PCC; the enforcement of the DAC faculty jurisdiction; serving in a priestly orders; and an ex-officio member of Diocesan Synod.

Further reading: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/35856/statduties.doc>

Baptism

Baptism is a symbol of welcome and belonging to the family of the church. It's a Sacrament, which means: "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given to us". In some denominations people are not baptised until they are old enough to make the promise to

follow Jesus Christ for themselves. Then as adults they are ceremonially dunked beneath a pool of water in a similar way to Jesus (Matthew 3: 13-17). On the other hand, Anglicans and Roman Catholics prefer to sprinkle water over a baby's head as a symbol of new life and of being washed clean from sin (often called "Christening"). In this ceremony parents and godparents promise to bring the baby up in the Christian faith following Jesus's example. Confirmation is a ceremony in church in which the young person reconfirms the promises to follow Jesus that were made on their behalf at baptism.

Further reading: "Christianity - an introduction"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/christianity/questions.shtml>

Benefice

The term benefice (as distinct from "parish") originally denoted a grant of land for life in return for services. In church law, the incumbent (for example the "Rector") was required to perform certain spiritual duties and in return the office holder was granted some form of assets to generate revenue. Historically, once in possession of the benefice, the holder had lifelong tenure unless he failed to provide the required minimum of spiritual services or committed a moral offence; but with the passing of the 1968 Pastoral Measure and subsequent legislation, this no longer applies and many ancient benefices have been joined together into a single new one. Today a typical rural benefice consists of several parishes (subdivision of a county); each having their own church and clergy. Civil and parish boundaries are not always the same.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Blessing

Formal blessings are given by bishops, priests and deacons sometimes at the start of worship but usually at the end of Holy Communion to assure the congregation of God's favour. The minister raises their right hand and makes the sign of the cross with it over people or objects, such as water being set apart for baptism or the wedding rings during a marriage service. A benediction is specific form of prayer seeking God's help, blessing and guidance, usually at the end of worship service. A blessing can also be a request for permission, as in "gaining your parents' blessing" would consist of having been granted consent. Clergy will normally receive a blessing from their ecclesiastical superiors to begin their ministry. It is also possible for a person to "bless" God. The terminology arises as a response to the blessings bestowed by God: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2; KJV). These occurrences of "bless" are usually translated "praise" or "extol" in modern versions.

Further reading: "Blessing" <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/blessing/>

Christ (ians)

*Christ is not Jesus' surname! "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Messiah* meaning *Anointed One*. It is used in the Old Testament for when priests and kings were being anointed to their office in the same way that Samuel anointed David the shepherd boy to become the King of Israel. It means someone specially appointed by God for a task. By the time that Jesus was on the scene, many Jews were expecting the ultimate Messiah, (perhaps a priest, a king or even a military figure) who would be specially anointed by God to intervene decisively and change history. Jesus Christ fulfilled God's revelation by bringing reconciliation between God and the human race. *Followers of the Way* (Acts 9:2) soon*

became known as Christians (Acts 11:26). Frederick Buechner has said that: "A Christian is one who is on the way, though not necessarily very far along it, and who has at least some dim and half-baked idea of who to thank. A Christian isn't necessarily any nicer than anybody else. Just better informed." Christianity is now the most popular religion in the world with over two billion adherents. The UK has six million people who are actively practising and 42 million who see themselves as nominally Christian.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

Church

The *Church* is the Christian community and not just the building! In its primary meaning, the *church* denotes all those, in Earth and Heaven, who acknowledge Jesus as Lord – the assembly of the faithful. Lesslie Newbegin has said that: "The church is the provisional incorporation of humankind into Jesus Christ... provisional in the sense that not all humankind is so incorporated; and provisional in the sense that those who are so incorporated are not yet fully conformed to the image of Christ... the Church will be recognisable as the bearer of this mission on which the Father sent the Son and on which the Son sent the Church, in so far as the scars of the Passion are recognisable in its body.... The church is not as something drawn out of the world into a building, but the church sent out into the world." In its secondary meanings, the *Church* is a building, a denomination (for example the Roman Catholic Church) a defined area (such as the Church of England). It is also used as an adjective to describe those things or people associated with the Church (for example, Church Wardens). The *Church* is quite different to the *parish* or the *benefice*...

Further reading: Lesslie Newbegin, "On being the Church for the world", Missionary Theologian, A Reader, Paul Weston (ed), SPCK, (2006)

Creed

Most religions have a core of common characteristics including scriptures or holy books, sacred meetings and essential beliefs. A *Creed* is a formal statement of religious belief. The Latin origin is *credo* ("I believe"). The early Church was blighted by theological disputes over the nature of God; therefore, to avoid heresy the church's core beliefs were summarised into creeds that would be useful especially for baptism candidates. In Christianity, the two most commonly used today are the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed; although there are others such as the Athanasian and Chalcedonian. The Apostles Creed is quite concise and originates from the Church in Rome in about 390AD. The Nicene Creed is more comprehensive and addresses some issues about the nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It was devised in 325AD and amended in 381AD. Some denominations including the Church of the Brethren and the Quakers, also known as Religious Society of Friends, do not have a formal creed. Creeds are important today to avoid being drawn into the many offshoots of Christianity which have novel concepts and are often led by a strong, sometimes over dominant leader. Many of the major sects and those most popular in the modern world emerged before 1900. Some new sects have arisen since the 1970s; often led by individuals who declare themselves to be a messiah figure. They frequently operate in very strict regimes.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Deacon

There are three "orders" of clergy: bishops, priests and deacons. A deacon can undertake pastoral duties, preach and teach, assist in leading worship, conduct baptisms and funerals,

administer Holy Communion but not celebrate the Eucharist. Deacons cannot: solemnise a marriage, give absolution or blessing. In the Church of England a person is typically ordained as a deacon then after 12 months is ordained as a priest. S/he still remains a deacon but has an overlay of also being a priest. Some of those ordained as deacons are content to remain as permanent deacons and a minority of priests become bishops. There are just three orders but a multitude of jobs!

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Devil

God has given people free will - the ability to choose between right and wrong for themselves. God has shown people how they should live, most notably by the Ten Commandments (a list of religious and moral rules that were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai) as well as Jesus Christ own life and teaching but it is up to each person to decide whether or not to follow God's instructions. The story of humanity's battle with good and evil is told in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). As well as a power for good there is also a power for evil. Traditionally this is said to be Satan, one of the archangels who disobeyed God and was thrown out of heaven (Luke 10:18). In the form of a serpent, Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit in the Garden of Eden. Satan tempted Job, and also tempted Jesus to give up his ministry. Some people choose to ignore the Devil whereas others make the opposite mistake of suspecting him to be lurking behind every lamppost! To take the Devil seriously is to also take seriously a human being's total and spine-chilling freedom. As already mentioned, Satan was an angel who even in Heaven itself was free to leave.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

Diocese

The Church of England comprises two Provinces; each led by an archbishop Canterbury (for the South) and York (for the North). Each province is broken down into several diocese or geographical areas each with a bishop and often an assistant bishop or suffragan bishop. These two provinces cover England, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, the Isles of Scilly and even a small part of Wales. There are 41 in England (42 including the Diocese in Europe). Each of the English dioceses has a structure of boards and councils responsible for different aspects of the Church's work, e.g. Ministry, Mission, Education, Social Responsibility. Each diocese is divided into several archdeaconries.

"The Structure of the Church of England" <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure.aspx>

Eternal life

Eternal life is being with God in heaven. The Apostles' Creed testifies: "I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." In this view, eternal life commences after the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, although in John's Gospel there are references to eternal life commencing in the Earthly life of the believer as though we can have a foretaste of Heaven. Frederick Buechner gives a helpful definition: "When you are with someone you love, you have little if any sense of the passage of time, and you also have in the fullest sense of the phrase a 'good time.' When you are with God, you have something like the same experience... We think of Eternal Life, if we think of it at all, as

what happens when life ends. We would be better to think of it as what happens when life begins."

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

Eucharist

The Eucharist is a re-enactment of the Last Supper, which was the final meal that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples before being arrested and soon afterwards crucified. The prayers and readings in a Eucharistic service are a reminder of what happened in that final meal. Two thousand years later the solemn words and actions of Jesus Christ are still very relevant. Those participating drink a sip of wine (or grape juice) and eat a tiny piece of some form of bread, both of which have been consecrated. It's a Sacrament, which means: "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given to us". At the meal Jesus ate bread and wine and instructed his disciples to do the same in memory of him. Those who receive the bread and wine must be baptized and are normally confirmed although sometimes the Bishop will allow children of parents who attend church regularly to also receive without having yet been confirmed. The word "Eucharist" is derived from "thanksgiving" in the Greek language. Anglicans normally refer to Holy Communion. Those of a more Catholic persuasion call it the Mass whilst those of a more Protestant outlook call it the Lord's Supper.

Further reading: <http://www.kencollins.com/glossary/liturgy.htm#eucharist>

Evil

All religions teach the difference between good and evil, but have different beliefs about evil and suffering. Christians believe that when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and turned away from God they brought sin into the world and turned the whole human race away from God. Their disobedience introduced evil to an otherwise perfect world. An alternative understanding of the story would emphasize that Adam and Eve did wrong because they 'gave in' to temptation. The problem of evil and suffering is one of the most common reasons people have for not believing in God. Christian Science solves the problem of evil by saying that it does not exist except as an illusion. Buddhism attributes evil events in this life to sins having been committed in an earlier life. Christianity, on the other hand, ultimately offers no theoretical solution at all. It merely points to the Cross, where God Himself experienced the darkest and most obscene evil, yet by His glorious resurrection this victory provides wonderful benefit for the entire human race.

Further reading: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/god/chgoodandevilrev1.shtml>

Faith

The word "faith" is commonly understood as: "complete trust or confidence in someone or something". A person demonstrates true faith by believing God will fulfill his promises even though they haven't yet materialized. Hebrews chapter 11, verse one puts it like this: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The Christian faith can feel a bit like anticipating your own birthday; by having confidence based on past experiences that God will provide new and fresh surprises! Another understanding of "faith" is having a "strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof". The Scriptures and the Gospels, the Apostolic Church and the early Church Fathers, are the foundations of Anglican faith and worship in the 44 self-governing churches that make up the Anglican Communion.

Further reading: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/being-an-anglican.aspx>

Filioque

Sunday-by-Sunday during worship the vast majority of Christians around the world say the Nicene Creed, which gives public affirmation of the essential beliefs of the Christian faith. However, there is one significant difference in the ways that Western Christians (such as Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Protestants); and Eastern Christians (including Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox) proclaim the Nicene Creed, and this is in what we say about the Holy Spirit. The original version of Nicene Creed in 325 and 381 states: "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified..." In the early medieval period in the West, a small but important addition was made: "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified..." Known as the 'filioque' clause from the Latin meaning "and the Son", these words were never added by a Church Synod or council. In the late sixth century Western theologians introduced these three extra in order to strengthen the Nicene Creed's proclamation of the divinity of the Son, and only centuries later was it ordered to be inserted in the Creed by the Emperor Charlemagne. It then spread around the Western Church, including medieval England where it passed into the heritage of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. There are signs that this centuries long argument may at last be reaching a resolution.

Further reading: <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/10/anglicans-encouraged-to-drop-filioque-from-nicene-creed.aspx>

Forgiveness

To forgive is to stop feeling angry or resentful towards someone for an offence, flaw, or mistake. Two types of forgiveness appear in the Bible: God's pardon of our sins, and our obligation to pardon others. This subject is so important that our eternal destiny depends upon it. God's plan of salvation was to send Jesus, his only Son, into the world as a perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the human race. The Gospels describe how Jesus often forgave people: the woman caught in adultery, the paralytic lowered through the ceiling, the woman who anointed his feet with oil, Peter for denying he knew Jesus, those who crucified him and the criminal alongside on another cross. Jesus way of dealing with widespread sins, trespasses and debt is a key element of the Lord's Prayer: "...and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us". (Matthew 6:12) In this prayer we are submitting our stubborn pride so that God can minister forgiveness and overcome any barrier that would stop us from forgiving those who have hurt us. The first to apologize is the bravest, the first to forgive is the strongest and the first to forget is the happiest.

Further reading: Psalm 51, Acts 10:39-43

God

God is usually conceived as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe who somehow exists as a superintending presence in the world although not normally evident to human awareness in the same way as for other beings and things. There are many different ideas about God: monotheism, deism, theism, pantheism, polytheism,entheism, atheism and agnosticism. It is impossible to prove or disprove that God exists beyond the various conflicting ideas that people have dreamed up. It has been said that God cannot be expressed but only experienced. The world's religions strive to reach God whereas Christianity makes the

startling claim that God in the person of Jesus the Christ somehow shrunk Himself down to become a human being. The Hebrew Bible foretells the birth of Jesus at what we now celebrate as Christmas whilst the New Testament provides a gripping account of the marvellous events, which followed.

Further reading: The Seekers Handbook: the complete guide to spiritual pathfinding, John Lash, Crown (1990)

Gospel

The English word *gospel* is the modern form of *godspell*, which means *good news*. We use it to translate the Greek word *euangelion*, which also has the literal meaning of *good news*.

When the New Testament was being written, an *euangelion* was a public proclamation that a new king had conquered his enemies and had ascended to the throne. The first four books of the New Testament are gospels, by announcing that Jesus is Lord, telling us how He ascended to His throne and to convincing us to submit to His Lordship. Although these four gospels contain historical facts, they are not intended to be biographies but more like press releases. In John 21:25, the author plainly states that his book doesn't record everything about Jesus' life and actions. The term *gospel* therefore refers to any of the following:

- A written or oral proclamation that Jesus is the King of the universe
- One of the first four books of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.
- A portion from one of these first four books when read aloud in church during worship.

Strangely some of the Gospel's most ardent fans often end up turning it into bad news. For example, "It all boils down to the Golden Rule - just love thy neighbour." But what makes this bad news is that none of us are very good at it; often failing, even with our family and friends.

Further reading: <http://www.kencollins.com/glossary/bible.htm#Gospel>

Grace

The grace is giving thanks in prayer before and after meals but grace is also favour that's freely shown especially by a superior to an inferior. God's unmerited love and favor was shown toward sinners by the giving of his one and only Son (John 3:16). When a person realizes God's amazing gift of forgiveness this brings about contrition, penitence, repentance and grateful obedience. Grace is something you can never get but only be given. There's no way to earn it or deserve it or make it happen. The Christian faith asserts that people are saved by grace. There's nothing you have to do or can do except reach out and take it.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Heaven

The ancient Jews conceived of God residing in Heaven somewhere above the Earth. Many people still retain childish images of God as a bearded old gentleman sitting on a cloud but in later life some reject this and (perhaps wrongly) conclude they must be atheists. Medieval pictures of heaven and hell have also shaped the imagination of Christians all down the centuries but there is surprisingly very little in the Bible about "going to Heaven when you die". Jesus often spoke about "the Kingdom of Heaven"; not as a physical or otherworldly location but rather as an inner reality closely associated with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5). Heaven can be defined as the Presence of God, into which we hope to come in the life beyond the grave, but of which we can be aware of in this present life"

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Hell

Many people have grown up thinking of literally of Hell as an underground location full of worms and fire. In later life some people reject this and (perhaps wrongly) conclude that they must be universalists (the belief that in the end God will save everyone). It is evident that those who choose to live selfishly and with no thought of others frequently end up sad and lonely. Dante saw written over the gates of Hell these words: "Abandon all hope ye who enter here" and yet most Sunday mornings the Creed asserts: "He (Christ) descended into Hell" which must mean there is still hope in Christ!?

Further reading: "Surprised by Hope" Tom Wright SPCK (2007)

Holy

Only God is holy, just as only people are human. God's holiness is his Goodness. To speak of anyone as a saint or any object as holy is to say they have something of God's mark upon them. People, things, times and places can all be holy. It's usually easy to sense holiness but nearly impossible to define... for example, some Cotswold church buildings have a feeling of having been prayed in for centuries.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

Incarnation

The Christmas story is about God being born into the world He created. It's a mind-boggling concept, which many people struggle to accept. Some 2,000 years ago in Israel the prevailing Greek culture referred to God as Logos or Word, which St John uses in the opening chapter of his Gospel "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14). The Apostles Creed includes the line: "He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary..." The Christian faith affirms that the eternal Son of God took human flesh from his human mother and that this same Jesus, who lived at a particular point of history, is at one and the same time both fully God and fully human. Just like two sides of the same coin. One of the blunders religious people often make is trying to be more spiritual than God!

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Immortality

Immortality means death-proof; the body dies but the conscious soul goes on. The ancient Greek philosophers and Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, believe in reincarnation; that when the body dies the soul may eventually become attached to a new body during conception or at birth. Life after death is thought to be as natural as digestion after eating a meal. However, the Bible instead speaks of the dead person receiving a supernatural gift - resurrection. Some Christian theologians believe that at the time of death the soul leaves the body and waits for the great day of resurrection at the Last Judgment whilst others believe that with death, the person ceases to exist, and in a sense, resumes existence at the time of resurrection. In the Christian faith, immortality is granted to everyone but depends on people developing their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Further reading: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/immortal/>

Incumbent

An incumbent is simply an official who holds an office. In a church context it's the clergy person who the local bishop has licensed to have parochial (parish) responsibilities as the rector, vicar or curate. In the Church of England this person is in charge of the parish or benefice (a group of parishes). Hundreds of years ago a benefice was an area of land granted to the clergyman for life in return for spiritual services. In church law, the land was permanently linked to the performance of these spiritual duties to ensure the ongoing support of the office holder. Historically, once in possession of the benefice, the office holder had lifelong tenure unless he failed to provide the required minimum of spiritual services or committed a moral offence; but with the passing of the Pastoral Measure 1968 and subsequent legislation, this no longer applies and many ancient benefices have been joined together into a single new one.

Further reading: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incumbent_\(ecclesiastical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incumbent_(ecclesiastical))

Jesus

More is known about Jesus than about many ancient historical figures, which is quite remarkable given the obscurity of his upbringing and the shame of being executed as a common criminal. For the Gospel writers, Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who came not only to preach and impart healing but also to suffer and die for people's sins. From the earliest days Christians have believed that Jesus was fully God and fully human. Matthew's Gospel puts it like this: "All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us'." Mark's Gospel starts with this simple declaration: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ." (Mark 1.1). The name *Jesus* is actually the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament (one is Greek, one is Hebrew), which means "God saves". Next, the name *Christ* is not Jesus' surname! *Christ* is actually the same name as Messiah (one is derived from Greek and the other from Hebrew) meaning "the Anointed One". The belief that Jesus had been raised from the dead became the foundation of the early Christian Church and continues to this day.

Further reading: http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/jesus_1.shtml

Judgement

Romantic love is blind to everything except what is lovely and loveable whereas God's love sees things and people as they real are. The Bible teaches that at some unforeseen time in the future, God will ring down the final curtain on human history. God will sit in judgement on all of our days and all the judgements upon us; as well as all our judgements upon one another. 2,000 years ago some of the Jews believed that those who died would have to wait an eternity until the Last Judgement when the dead would be resurrected. The dead were expected to rise first in the cemetery on the Mount of Olives across from the city of Jerusalem. However, by conquering death on that first Easter Sunday, the Lord Jesus Christ has opened up a way for his followers to enter directly into eternal life. All one needs to do is to commit completely to Jesus and then keep on following his path.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

Justification

Being justified means being brought into right relation. Ever since our ancestors chose to go their own way, relationships in this world have been seriously messed up. People can't save

themselves; have you ever tried pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps?! In the end, God graciously decided to enter into the world and to put things right. The human condition can be compared with a page of text in random styles and sizes as well as having ragged edges. God came to "justify" which in printers' language, means to set the text so that all full lines are of equal length and flush both left and right. In this way the printed lines are put in the right relationship with the page and with each other. During the season of Easter the church celebrates that Jesus was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification (Romans 4: 25). Justification is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time declaring a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. A person needs to exercise faith in order to receive justification; however, many theologians look set to continue arguing over some of the finer points until Christ returns again in glory!
Further reading: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/justification-Christianity>

Kingdom

It is not a place, of course, but a condition. 2,000 years ago Jewish law meant that those who were lame, sick, blind and possessed by demons couldn't enter the Kingdom of God. By contrast, when Jesus Christ healed these people he was demonstrating the arrival of God's kingdom. Jesus had the authority to decide who could enter the Kingdom of God, for example, he healed a paralyzed man in Capernaum (Mark 2: 1-12) by forgiving his sin - an act that would have been considered a blasphemy by Jews. By forgiving sins Jesus was acting with an authority that the Jews believed only God possessed. Jesus went on to heal a Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter (Matthew 15: 21-28) thereby signaling that Gentiles too can enter the Kingdom of God. As NT Wright puts it: "Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about."

Further reading: NT Wright, (1999) *InterVarsity Press Conference*, audio recording, http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Jesus_Kingdom.mp3

Koinonia

The first usage of *koinonia* in the Greek New Testament is found in Acts 2: 42-47, where a striking description of the common life shared by the early Christian believers in Jerusalem is given: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the communion, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people."

Further reading: Peter Toon, "Koinonia: a model for unity"
<http://trushare.com/67DEC00/DE00TOON.htm>

Knights Templar

The Roman Catholic Church officially endorsed this powerful military religious order around 1129. They were originally formed to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land and were known as "the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon". Templar knights in their distinctive white mantles with a red cross were among the most skilled fighting units of the Crusades whilst others managed a large economic infrastructure throughout Christendom including estates in the Cotswolds. More recently their profile was raised in Dan Browne's popular novel "The Da Vinci Code". They fell from grace spectacularly after the loss of the

Holy Land and with Jacques de Molay's execution in 1314. In the ensuing centuries the Templars have exerted a unique influence over European history; orthodox historians see them as nothing more than soldier-monks whose arrogance was their ultimate undoing, while others see them as occultists of the first order.

Further reading: Sean Martin "The Knights Templar: the history and myths of the legendary military order" (2009) Thunder's Mouth Press

Lectionary

One of the fundamental features of Jewish and Christian worship, since the very beginning, is the public reading of the scriptures. Why? Because until the nineteenth century, books were too expensive. The only exposure ordinary people had to God's Word was hearing it read aloud in public. Even though times have changed, many churches still obey 1 Timothy 4:13 and read the scriptures aloud in church. But how to go about doing it? Obviously, just starting at one end of the Bible and reading sequentially won't do. You might end up reading about the Crucifixion on Christmas Day! So someone has to think out a plan to make sure that passages are read at appropriate times, that the entire Bible gets read, and that nothing is neglected. The result is called a "lectionary," a word that means "schedule of readings." The lectionary is also a great preaching aid. Most modern lectionaries contain only the scripture citations, but ancient lectionaries contained the complete text of the readings. Ancient lectionaries are a major source of information for the scholars who reconstruct the original text of the New Testament. Today, most denominations that use a lectionary have agreed on the same one, which goes through the entire span of the Bible in three years, which are called Year A, B, and C just so we can tell them apart. The lectionary year begins on the First Sunday of Advent. For the gospel readings, Year A uses Matthew, Year B uses Mark, and Year C uses Luke. Readings from John fill in the gaps, particularly during Year B, because Mark's gospel is so short. The lectionary omits duplicate stories in the Old Testament, most of Leviticus and Chronicles, and all the genealogies. The purpose is not to cover every verse, but to cover the entire message. It's primarily a preacher's tool, so it covers the preachable texts.

Further reading: <http://www.kencollins.com/lectionary/about.htm>

Lectio Divina

This is a dynamic, life-orientated approach to reading the Scriptures, encouraged by and dating back to the early Church Fathers around AD 300. It is a way of praying with Scripture that calls one to study, ponder, listen and, finally, pray from God's word. Lectio Divina follows a four-step approach (first recorded by a monk, Guigo Cartujo, in 1173) based on:

- reading;
- meditation;
- prayer;
- contemplation.

It can be hard to find time to speak with God and to discern what's really important when you're busy with employment, family responsibilities and all the pressures of daily life. Lectio Divina invites you to savour and mull over Bible passages quietly, slowly and intently until you begin to respond to what God is saying. It helps individuals and groups build that vital bridge between encounters with God and everyday life with its joys, humdrum and challenges.

Further reading: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lectio-divina/>

Liturgy

Worship lies at the heart of the Christian life. It is in worship that we express our theology and define our identity. It is through encountering God within worship that we are formed (and transformed) as his people. One of the glories of the Church of England is its liturgical worship. Liturgy refers to the patterns, forms, words and actions through which public worship is conducted... but here's an alternative view: "An order of words designed for the congregation to fall back on when they can't concentrate in church. In regular use!" The liturgical year is divided into the following seasons:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- Ordinary Time (following the Presentation of Christ in the Temple)
- Lent
- Easter (which includes the Easter Vigil and the Easter Liturgy)
- Ordinary Time (following Pentecost)

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) dating back to 1662 is a permanent feature of the Church of England's worship and a key source for its doctrine. It is loved by many for the beauty of its language and is still widely used, especially in rural parish churches.

Further reading: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship.aspx>

Mass

At the most superficial level the Mass is simply a name used by Roman Catholics, Lutherans and high church Anglicans for what is more commonly called the Eucharist, Holy Communion and/or the Lord's Supper. The Revd Giles Fraser has provided a helpful context: "The Church of England is a peace treaty between Puritans and Catholics forged in response to the religious culture wars of the 16th and 17th centuries that drenched Europe in blood." The words of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer are an attempt to accommodate both Puritan and Catholic beliefs: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life: Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." Whichever name is used, the modern ceremony can be traced back to the Jewish Passover (Deut 16:6, Ex 13:1-5) and the annual 'Sedar Meal' is a celebration of the way that God released Jewish people from slavery in Egypt in about 1,200 BC. The four Gospels describe how Jesus Christ held a Last Supper with his disciples on the night before the Passover meal (Matt 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:15-20 and John 13:1-18:1). Jesus must have anticipated that the plot against Him would reach its climax before the actual Passover. Jesus instructed the disciples to: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor 11:24). The majority of Christians (Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Anglicans) understand the Last Supper as a new covenant between God and humanity whereby Jesus Christ sacrificed His life on the Cross and later rose again in victory. His once and for all atonement for human sins is celebrated in the 'Eucharist' which is Greek for 'thanksgiving'.

Further reading: "Anglican Eucharistic Theology"

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_eucharistic_theology

Minister

There are three basic views. Firstly, a minister is a Nice Guy who enjoys socialising, can preach a good sermon but doesn't insist on saying a prayer for every occasion. He's the sort

who makes other people feel comfortable by showing that he's got his feet on the ground like everybody else. He reassures the parishioners that religion is to be taken seriously but without going overboard. Then there's the view that a minister must have his head in the clouds with his mind on higher things. His morals are perfect and if anyone ever used bad language within earshot they would feel obliged to apologise. His sermons never tackle subjects like sex, politics, race or addictions. Religion is his speciality and he leaves the rest to people who know what they are talking about. Finally, there's the view that a minister is primarily a decorative figure in fine robes for Sunday services and special occasions. He has a reputation for trying to pass on somewhat distorted and biased opinions. By contrast, the first twelve disciples were characterised by continually missing the point, jockeying for position and when the chips were down saving their own skins. As St Paul put it later: "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong." (1 Corinthians 1: 27). When our Lord sent the twelve out into the world, his instructions were simple; he told them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal (Luke 9:2). To these things in the name of Christ is to be a minister. Ministers are not to be revered for who they are in themselves but rather for whom they represent.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking" (1973), Frederick Buechner, Collins Press

Monstrance

A form of worship practiced by Roman Catholics, Lutherans and high church Anglicans is known as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It starts with the congregation enjoying a long period of silent meditation in front of an ornate golden vessel (the monstrance) which has pride of place on the altar. The monstrance contains a large wafer, also known as the Blessed Sacrament, which is pressed between two pieces of clear glass. A catholic schoolgirl once described her experience: "Twenty minutes into the meditation I began to go in and out of consciousness. Each time, catching myself, I straightened my back and continued to gaze at the sunburst of ornate gold, the monstrance, in the centre of which was Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Sacrament, in the form of a round white wafer. Leaning back against the seat was an insult to the Creator who had given the children good, strong backs."

Further reading: "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Catholicism" (2000) O'Gorman and Faulkner, Pearson Press

Nave

The nave is the architectural term for the central section of a church building running from east to west. It's where the congregation gathers for worship that's normally led from the chancel (east end). In traditional Western churches the nave is rectangular and separated from the chancel by a step or rail. Often there are stone pillars that separate the nave from the adjoining aisles at each side. The term "nave" is derived from the Latin for "ship" and many church buildings have ceilings, which look like the inside of a upturned boat. It's a reminder that Jesus called Peter and several other disciples when they were still fishermen on the Sea of Galilee.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Neighbour

Christians worship often refers to the Ten Commandments especially the first: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength" as well as the second "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". One day when Jesus was teaching about

this a lawyer asked for a definition of "neighbour" and in reply Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. The lawyer may have been hoping for a way of watertight definition that would limit his responsibilities but instead the Jesus seemed to be saying that: "your neighbour is anyone who needs you." The Bible doesn't record the lawyer's reaction but even today many folk find the second commandment very hard to put into practice.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking" (1973), Frederick Buechner, Collins Press

Nestorianism

The Early Church soon found that the greatest jigsaw puzzle the world has ever known is the identity of Jesus Christ. Matthew's Gospel makes clear that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah who would deliver his people as was prophesied in the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament). However, Gospel writers gave Jesus several different titles ("Messiah", "Lord", "Son of God", "Son of Man" and occasionally "God") each of which tells us something special about him. However, one of the best know doctrinal arguments in the Early Church was between Nestorius who was a church leader in Constantinople (428 to 431) and Cyril of Alexandria (412 to 444). Nestorius took exception to the growing practice of referring to Mary as "the Mother of God". The Council at Ephesus resolved this argument in 431 by accusing Nestorius of teaching there were "two persons" (the man Jesus and the divine Son of God). Nestorianism was a threat to the doctrine of the atonement: if Jesus really was two persons, then which one died on the cross? If it was the "human person" then the atonement is not of divine quality and thereby insufficient to cleanse us of our sins. The church leaders eventually devised the Nicene Creed (325AD and 381AD), which described Jesus as being a unified person. Nestorianism was condemned as heretical.

Further reading: <http://www.theopedia.com/nestorianism>

Omnipotent, Omnipresence and Omniscience

These words are derived from the Latin "omni" meaning "all". God's omnipotence means being all-powerful and not limited by the natural laws of the universe. Omnipresence means being present everywhere at the same time but distinct from and not the same as being the universe itself (that would be "pantheism"). Omniscience means possessing infinite knowledge of the past, present, and future; nothing takes God by surprise!

Further reading: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God>

Oblation

Oblation is one of those ecclesiastical words derived from Latin and meaning a solemn offering or presentation to God. The word stands out in the Book of Common Prayer: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world..."

Further reading: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary/oblation>

Ordination

It's the ceremony of bestowing a person with a position of religious authority. Ordination usually comes after a lengthy process of systematic examination, training, formation and approval. The ceremony acknowledges that God has called a person into professional ministry

and formally delegates certain the duties and responsibilities of clergy to that person. Ordination is generally for life.

Further reading: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/ordinal.aspx>

Parousia

The Nicene Creed contains this important doctrine: "And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end." The word "parousia" is a Greek word meaning "coming" or "arrival". The New Testament books of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians show that the Early Church believed the second coming was imminent. The season of Advent was never originally intended as the run up for Christmas but rather Advent was for reflection about how Jesus has fulfilled God's promises in the Old Testament whilst people got ready for his glorious return. Today the Church as a whole anticipates the second coming in judgement without speculating about the time or manner in which this will happen.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Prayer

Prayer is at the heart of every major religion and takes an infinite variety of forms. Sooner or later nearly everyone finds themselves praying, whether they think of it as praying or not, especially during times of joy or crisis. Timothy Keller has attempted a definition of prayer as "a personal, communicative response to the knowledge of God." He asserts that at some level everyone has a sense that they need someone who is on a higher plane and infinitely greater than they are. Jesus the Christ taught his followers the Lord's Prayer in which we call upon God as being our Father. In the same way that parents long to hear from their children so God desires a deeper relationship with family members like us. To pray requires a willingness to be real and honest with oneself and with God. To pray is to change.

Further reading: "Prayer: experiencing awe and intimacy with God", Timothy Keller, Hodder and Stoughton (2014)

Protestantism

Over the centuries the Christian faith has formed three major divisions. The Great Schism in 1054 marked a split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church then in the mid-16th century the Reformation led to the Protestant Church breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church. Henry 8th took advantage of this movement when forming the Church of England. Protestantism is characterised by having a form of governance independent of the Pope, upholding the Bible as the true word of God and the belief that every person can lead a Christian life by following the teachings of the Bible. Protestantism holds that a person cannot enter heaven just by being good but rather each person needs to receive God's grace. Since the Reformation, Protestantism has split into over 30,000 denominations.

Further reading: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/>

"Q" source

This intriguing idea is derived from the German language where "quelle" means "source". It is a hypothetical written collection of Jesus's sayings that are found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke but not in Mark. The idea that these two Gospels were derived from a

long-lost document called "Q" was first postulated in 1900. It is generally accepted that Q was written in Koine Greek; that most of its contents appear in Matthew, in Luke, or in both; and that Luke more often preserves the text's original order than Matthew. Some scholars have postulated that Q is actually a plurality of sources, some written and some oral. Others have attempted to determine the stages in which Q was composed. Earlier this year a popular journal carried this brief article: "Archaeologists Find Q - The earliest collection of the sayings of Jesus, written down in Hebrew by Jesus' disciple Matthew, has been found. These sayings, older than our gospels, now leave us with unprecedented questions: if they disagree with the gospels, which do we follow? Should we add this to the Bible?" The clue to this sensational discovery was in the date of publication - 1st April...!

Further reading: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Q_source

Quadrilateral

More correctly referred to as "the Lambeth Quadrilateral"; this is a statement that defines a theological basis for the Anglican denomination. It upholds the following four points:

- Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation;
- the Creeds (specifically the Apostles' and Nicene) as a sufficient statement of the Christian faith;
- the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; and
- the historic episcopate ie. the legitimacy of successive Bishops.

It provides a reference-point for ecumenical discussion with other Christian denominations. The Quadrilateral was devised in 1870 by an American who wanted to establish "a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing, made toward Home Reunion," that is, with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

Further reading: http://anglicansonline.org/basics/Chicago_Lambeth.html

Quinquennial Inspections

Most churches and chapels in Britain are inspected 'quinquennially', that is to say every five years to ensure that buildings are kept in good repair. These surveys have been adopted by many secular organisations responsible for historic buildings. A quinquennial inspection looks at all aspects of a building's fabric in order to identify new problems and to establish priorities for maintenance. The Church of England uses an architect or chartered building surveyor approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). This regular system of review is designed. The quinquennial report assists the Parochial Church Council (PCC) who have legal responsibility for maintenance and repair. The report is also submitted to the DAC, the Archdeacon and certain grant-making bodies.

Further reading: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/>

Rapture

The word "Rapture" derives from Latin for "to seize" ("*rapere*", also the root for "*raptor*", a bird of prey). The Nicene Creed states that Jesus Christ "...ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end." St Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica warned them to always be prepared because Jesus Christ could return at any moment: "*For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the*

air; and so we will be with the Lord forever." (1 Thes 4: 16-18) The rapture anticipates that Christ will come to Earth and take all the true believers to heaven before the Second Coming. Some Christians believe in the rapture, but disagree about the timing. Some think the rapture will occur at the end of a period of tribulation and others believe it will occur in the middle. Christians can look forward to the unfolding of God's plan of salvation without having to know the exact sequence of events in advance.

Further reading: "Christ Will Come Again: Hope for the Second Coming of Jesus" by Stephen Travis, Clements Publishing (2004)

Repentance

Jesus went about preaching the good news to people in Galilee who were mostly poor, oppressed and without hope: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15) The long-awaited Messiah had arrived to break the power of sin and to initiate God's kingdom on Earth... but what exactly is repentance? When you wash dirty hands the results can be immediately seen but repentance happens inside with a cleansing that takes a while to be seen. It starts when a person recognizes and feels sorry for their sinful thoughts, words and/or actions. Confession should lead onto repentance (derived from the Latin word "*repenitere*") and the receiving of forgiveness. To repent is to come to your senses. It's not so much about looking back and saying "I'm sorry" as entering into a wholesome and more fulfilling way of life.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Resurrection

Today many people share the same belief as the Ancient Greeks that when a person dies their body may decompose be burned up but their soul will continue into immortality. These people make a gigantic assumption that they are entitled to end up in a good place along with all their family members. By contrast, Jesus Christ called for repentance from sin and He asserted: 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.' (John 11:25-26) When people die they are as dead as a doornail... but Christians have faith that three days after Jesus was crucified He did indeed rise from the dead; which gives hope that if we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and follow His teaching, then each of us can look forward to this new resurrection life. Resurrection is entirely unnatural; it is a supernatural gift from God. The physical body will be replaced by a new spiritual body, free from disabilities and never to become sick or die. This gives hope in our present suffering.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking" (1973), Frederick Buechner, Collins Press

Sin

We are all have a built-in urge to do bad things and to disobey God. The power of sin is centrifugal by pushing everything out towards the periphery. Bits and pieces go flying off until eventually only the core is left and even that breaks up. As Saint Paul puts it: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6: 23). Back in about 400 AD Saint Augustine of Hippo came up with the doctrine of "original sin" which means we all originate out of a sinful world so that everyone is tainted us right from birth. It may help to explain why there is so much wrong in a world that was created by a perfect God and why people need God's salvation. It is an important doctrine within the Roman Catholic Church. However, some 20th Century theologians don't think the doctrine of original sin is literally true, but they do think it

contains real truths about the human condition. Jesus came to save the world from sin, which is the root cause of so many forms of human misery such as hunger, poverty and disease.

Further reading: "A Basic Church Dictionary" Tony Meakin, Canterbury Press (1990)

Salvation

In our natural condition, we all fail to live up to our own standards let alone God's commandments. In a nutshell, the Bible teaches "...you, therefore, must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5: 48) but "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3: 23). Our thoughts, words and actions naturally to gravitate towards selfishness. We cannot save ourselves but thankfully: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God -not the result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2: 8-9). Jesus Christ came to set people free from sinfulness by His living, dying and rising again. When you love someone, they become the centre of your universe. It's the same when God frees us from outward religiosity and we enter into a loving relationship.

Further reading: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/>

Sacrament

It's a holy event. The classic definition is "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." Protestants have two official sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion whereas Roman Catholics also recognize Confirmation, Marriage, Penance, Ordination and anointing of the sick, especially when administered to the dying. At all these moments (and possibly more beside) "a person is likely to catch a glimpse of the almost unbearable preciousness and mystery of life."

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking" (1973), Frederick Buechner, Collins Press

Theology

Quite simply this is the study of God and his ways. The word is derived from the Greek "*theologia*"; meaning the science of God. Christian theology is the study of what the Church believes and practices. It is mostly based on the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the 27 books of the New Testament but also draws from Christian tradition and some modern scientific insights. Theology has several sub-disciplines; including Biblical studies (involving exegesis, rational analysis and argument); church history (including early doctrinal errors that still keep surfacing today); Christian doctrine (remembering we depend on God for any such revelations); philosophy of religion; ethics, liturgy and spirituality... to name but a few!

Further reading: McGrath, A.E. Christian Theology, Blackwell Publishing, Third Edition, 2001

Thirty-Nine Articles

The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are still used by many Christians as statements of their belief but in addition the Church of England's beliefs are also expressed in statements that were developed soon after Reformation. In 1536 Thomas Cramner first published Ten Articles. The 39 Articles went through at least five major revisions before being finalized in 1571 and then incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer in 1662. They are divided, in compliance with the command of Queen Elizabeth, into four sections: Articles 1-8, "The Catholic Faith"; Articles 9-18, "Personal Religion"; Articles 19-31, "Corporate Religion"; and Articles 32-39, "Miscellaneous." Clergy in the Church of England are required to affirm their

loyalty to the Articles and other historic formularies (the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons).

Further reading: <http://www.theologian.org.uk/church/39articles.html#top>

Trinity

The word "Trinity" does not appear anywhere in the Bible but the Early Church deduced from these scriptures that there is only one true God who makes himself known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Take for example these verses from Matthew's Gospel, (3: 16-17): "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." In the words of the first of the 39 Articles: "There is but one living and true God, ever- lasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The Trinity is a controversial doctrine; many Christians admit they don't understand it, while many more Christians don't understand it but think they do.

Further reading: http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/trinity_1.shtml

Unction, extreme

Extreme unction is the old name for anointing of the sick. "Extreme" refers to the potentially fatal condition of the person requesting this ministry whilst "unction" means anointing with oil. The practice is derived from the New Testament and in particular the letter of St James, chapter five, verses 14 & 15 as follows: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." The Church of England rules (Canon B 37) require that the priest should use "pure olive oil consecrated by the bishop of the diocese or otherwise by the priest". The laying on of hands with anointing is usually accompanied with Holy Communion and this may be administered in public worship at a parish church, or in hospital or at home.

Further reading <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/pastoral/healing/layingonhandsathc.aspx>

Undercroft

This is the technical name for the church basement, cellar or crypt. It typically contains coffins, sarcophagi, or religious relics. The undercroft usually runs under the nave and chancel as well as the transept (if there is one). Before you ask... the nave is the main body of the church derived from "navis" the Latin word for ship. It's usually a rectangle and is where the congregation sits. The chancel is at the East end of the building. In a medieval church there was a rood screen between the nave and chancel. Larger churches could also have transepts running North and South of a central tower thus creating a crucifix church plan.

Further reading: Trevor Yorke, *English Churches Explained*, Countryside Books, 2010

Unity

Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for unity amongst Christians as recorded in John's Gospel, chapter 17, verses 20 -23 " I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who

will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." The Church started with just Jesus and 12 disciples but has grown over the centuries to an estimated 2.2 billion followers and 37,500 Christian denominations in the world! Christianity is by far the world's largest religion accounting for nearly a third (31 per cent) of all 6.9 billion people on Earth. Islam is second, with 1.6 billion adherents, or 23 per cent of the global population. The Anglican Communion has four instruments of unity: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates Meeting, the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an international Christian ecumenical observance kept annually between 18 January and 25 January

Further reading: <http://www.operationworld.org>

Vestments

These are the special clothes worn by people who are leading a service of Christian worship. If ministers were free to wear whatever they wanted then the congregation might be distracted by issues of fashion, overdressing or poor taste. The vestments worn today by Clergy and Readers are almost the same style as First Century ordinary street clothes. Vestments are a kind of uniform that helps others to recognise someone who is serving in their official role. The most common vestments include:

- Alb - plain white, ankle-length tunic with long sleeves,
- Cassock - plain black, ankle-length garment with long sleeves, but no hood
- Chasuble - an ornate circular garment with a hole in the center where the head pops through and when both arms are held straight out, it is semi-circular when seen from the front or behind.
- Robe - ankle-length gown with long sleeves including choir robes, clergy robes and academic gowns,
- Stole - a long, narrow rectangular strip of cloth that is worn around the neck that it hangs down to below the knees. During the Roman Empire government officials wore a stole as a badge of office. Only ordained clergy can wear a stole. A deacon may only wear a stole diagonally over the left shoulder and tied at the waist on the right side.
- Surplice - a white blouse-like garment with sleeves that's only ever worn over a cassock.

Bishop's and clergy of a more Anglo-Catholic tradition have a vast array of other vestments including: amice, cincture, cope, dalmatic, mitre and skullcap.

Further reading: <http://www.kencollins.com/glossary/vestments.htm>

Vicar

Vicars, rectors and curates are all priests who have all been through the same process of discernment and basic training before a Bishop licensed them to a particular ministry. Historically the Rector (sometimes known as "the incumbent") had a right to "the living" (ie. the money from the church land) and his job (before the mid-1990s, it always was a "him") was the spiritual oversight of the church and community. Sometimes, this meant that Rectors were quite wealthy, and some chose to employ others to do some of the work for them. These men would do the job of the Rector - effectively working "in place of" the Rector. The Rector was carrying out his work *vicariously* through these other men so they

became known as Vicars. The outcome of this practice was that some parishes were looked after by the Rector others by Vicars. The same job was done in each. Today, the same is true; there is no difference in ministry, "rank" or status. Additionally, many parishes today have a "Priest in Charge." Again, there is no difference in rank, training or capability. The only real difference is that a parish with a Priest in Charge is more likely to be the subject of "pastoral reorganisation."

Further reading: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicar>

Vocation

Those who feel God may be calling them into the ordained ministry are said to be exploring a vocation. Everyone who has been baptised is called to love and serve God. This can be expressed in lots of different ways and being a Christian is far more important than becoming an ordained minister! The Church needs a wide variety of ministries in order to serve people in diverse communities, educational establishments, workplaces, hospitals etc. God calls the young and old; the wealthy and the poor. The Church's ministers come from all walks of life, social classes, ethnic backgrounds and educational abilities. The kind of work God calls a person into is usually what they need to do (enjoyable and not depressing) and what the world most needs to be done (profitable for society). Frederick Buechner puts it like this: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

Witnesses

A witness is usually considered to be someone who sees an event take place; often a crime or an accident, who then provides factual evidence in a law court. These are the last recorded words of Jesus Christ before being taken up into Heaven: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts of the Apostles 8: 1). Jesus intended the Gospel to spread in ever widening circles starting with the devout Jews in Jerusalem; spreading to the mixed races in Samaria, and finally, being offered to the Gentiles in the most remote places on Earth. Christians who have received God's saving power are called to be ambassadors. Effective witnesses need to have integrity of character and be filled with the Holy Spirit who first came on the disciples at Pentecost. As we faithfully study and memorise certain Bible passages, we become better equipped at sharing Christ with others.

Further reading: "NIV Life Application Bible", Kingsway (2012)

Wittenburg

In 1517 at the small town of Wittenburg in Germany an Augustinian priest called Martin Luther initiated the Reformation by nailing a list of 95 complaints against the Roman Catholic Church. In 1510 he'd been sent on a mission to Rome and returned feeling indignant at the corruption and worldliness at the centre of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1520 Martin Luther began questioning the authority of the Pope and was excommunicated but he publicly burned the document in the public square. Soon afterwards, Luther was summoned to appear before the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms, where he remained defiant. The Emperor punished him by declaring him to be an outlaw and a heretic;

however, some German princes protected Luther and by his death in 1546, the course of Western civilization had been significantly altered.

Further reading: "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Roman Catholicism", Alpha (2000)

Worship

Quite simply this is the offering of praise and devotion to God. Praise normally happens when Christians gather on Sundays to hear the Bible, listen to sermons, sing hymns and songs as well as giving testimony of the great things God has done in answer to prayers. Devotion needs to find practical expression during the rest of the week in two main ways. You can do things for God that he needs to have done, such as: caring for widows, orphans, those who are poor and vulnerable. The other way of expressing devotion is by doing things that you would like to do for God, such as telling him what's on your heart and mind, giving things up for him and generally making a fool of yourself in the way that lovers do.

Further reading: "Wishful Thinking", Frederick Buechner, Collins (1973)

"X"

"X" is the 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet; a writing system in Greece about 1000 BC. It is the direct or indirect ancestor of all modern European alphabets. "X" is used to represent the "ch" sound - as in Scottish "loch". It's at the start of the Greek word "Christos"; meaning "anointed." The Early Church scratched the "Chi Rho" on the walls of the catacombs in Rome during periods of intense persecution. Chi Rho is formed by superimposing the first two (capital) letters chi and rho (XP) - of Christos in such a way that the vertical stroke of the rho intersects the center of the chi.

Further reading: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Greek-alphabet>

Xerxes 1

Xerxes 1 was a King in Persia (modern day Iran) when it dominated the Middle Eastern region. He took over from Darius 1 in 486 BC and became the fourth "king of kings" of the Achaemenid Empire. Xerxes had a summer palace in Susa. He was known for his drinking, lavish banquets, harsh temper, and sexual appetite. Queen Esther, in the Old Testament book that bears her name, mentions a foiled plot against his life and secular history records that later in 465 BC he was assassinated by Artabanus, the commander of the royal bodyguard. Xerxes 1 was also called Xerxes the Great and scholars believe he features in the Hebrew Bible as King Ahasuerus. His wife was Queen Esther was a Jewish woman who thwarted a plan for genocide of her people. In 465 BC Artaxerxes 1 succeeded Xerxes 1.

Further reading: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Xerxes-in-the-Bible.html>

Xmas

This is an abbreviation for Christmas, which is a holy day marking the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. Most Christians celebrate on 25th December although Christmas Day for Orthodox Christians falls on 7th January. There is a widespread belief that the word *Xmas* originates from a secular attempt to take "Christ" out of "Christmas" but its use dates back at least 1,000 years. "Before Xmas, there was XPmas", according to Inge Milfull, assistant editor of etymology at Oxford English Dictionaries; which links back the "Chi Rho" symbol.

Further reading: Emma Griffiths, "Why get cross about Xmas?" 22nd December 2004, BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4097755.stm>

Yahweh

In about 850BC the Book of Exodus chapter 3 describes how God commissioned Moses at the burning bush and revealed his name to Moses (Exodus 3:14) The ancient Hebrews referred to God as "Yahweh" literally: "I am who I am" which is not so much a name but more of a description. Yahweh may be connected with the verb "to be" that is "He Who Creates" (Brings Into Being). It was printed as "YHWH". This revelation enabled Moses to understand the God of the Hebrews as the sovereign Lord over nature and the nations of the world. In the Old Testament period, God was untouchable and his name was too sacred to be spoken. From about 350BC the Hebrew people substituted the name "Adonai".

Further reading: Moses <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Moses-Hebrew-prophet>

Year's mind

In this context "mind" refers to the act of remembrance or commemoration. It is the custom of prayerfully remembering a loved one on the first anniversary of their death or funeral and possibly every year thereafter. Prayers may be offered during a worship service as part of the intercessions. The Roman Catholic Church sometimes holds a "requiem mass". This name originates from Latin for the psalm at the start of the Eucharist: "Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine"; which means "Give them eternal rest, O Lord". It may be helpful to read Psalm 103: 13-18.

Further reading: Year's mind <http://www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-yea1.htm>

Yeshua

Jesus Christ, or more accurately "Jesus the Christ", was born into a Hebrew-speaking people in the land of Israel. The name of Jesus in Hebrew is "Yeshua" (or "Joshua") meaning "salvation" or "The Lord saves." An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream saying of Mary, his fiancée: "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1: 21) Biblical names commonly reveal the character, attributes, or destiny of a person as can be seen from these examples: Exodus 15:2; Psalm 98:2 and Isaiah 49:6. Jesus existed from the beginning and His Hebrew name is found in prophecies throughout the Old Testament. The name "Jesus" derives from the Latin "Iesus", which comes from an Anglicized form of the Greek name "Yesous".

Further reading: Yeshua <http://yeshua.org/who/what-does-yeshua-mean/>

Zephaniah

Zephaniah is the ninth of twelve Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. He served as a prophet from 640 - 621BC just as Josiah became king of Judah. Zephaniah was a contemporary of Jeremiah (627 - 586BC). Both prophets were addressing the Judah, the Southern Kingdom, and its capital city - Jerusalem. Zephaniah's message was aiming to shake the people of Judah out of their complacency and urge them to return to God. His message warned of coming judgement before blessing. King Josiah responded well by introducing various reforms. The book of Zephaniah (chapter 3, verse 17) contains a beautiful description of God's desired relationship with his chosen people: "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

Further reading: The International Bible Society:

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-zephaniah/>

Zionism

The word "Zion" is first mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:7 referring to an important hilltop in the city of Jerusalem. No sooner had the Jewish nation got started than it was persecuted and forced into exile. First they were exiled as slaves in Egypt (from 1523 to 1313BC); then to Babylon/Persia (from 423 to 348BC) following the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem; next came assimilation under the Greeks (from 371BC to 140AD) and finally after destruction of the second temple and various wars (69AD to 135AD) the Roman Emperor Hadrian banned the Jews from living in Jerusalem. Their dispersion from their ancestral homeland and subsequent settlement in other parts of the globe is known as the Jewish diaspora. In 1890 the term "Zionism" was first coined by Nathan Birnbaum meaning: "the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel". In 1948 the State of Israel was established and Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the nation. The return of the Jews from the diaspora to the Land of Israel is known as "Aliyah".

Further reading: Jewish Virtual Library

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/a-definition-of-zionism>

Zurich Agreement

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) the German monk and priest is generally recognised as the instigator of the Reformation in Europe by breaking with Rome over indulgencies. The Reformation was soon underway in Switzerland thanks to Ulrich Zwingli (1484 - 1531) based in the city of Zurich and John Calvin (1509 - 1564) based in Geneva. Zwingli's successor was Heinrich Bullinger and in 1549 he made a pact with John Calvin in order to promote unity within the Protestant movement. The pact contained 26 articles, affirmed that Christ was present spiritually in Holy Communion otherwise known as the Lord's Supper, via the Holy Spirit and the lifting of our souls to heaven. As such this was a rejection of the Roman Catholic belief in Transubstantiation.

Further reading: "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology", Walter A Ewell, Baker Academic, (2001) p193