



into the Melting Pot

the question is more important than the answer

Sunday 19 January 2014 – **Imaging God**

The Names of God

Elohim	God
Adonai	Lord
YHWH (Yahweh/Jehovah)	The LORD - translates as 'I Is' or 'I Am'
Adonai YHWH	Sovereign LORD
Ruach	Breath / Wind / Spirit - the basis of 'being'

Anthropomorphism

Genesis 1:27 - 'God made man in his image' or should it be that 'man made God in his image'?

These images are informed by the cultural context of the times - a patriarchal society dominated by male stereotypes.

Where is God?

Up or out there (therefore separate and distant, and perhaps mostly absent)

Within (enveloping, all, everything)

If the latter, then the question 'does God exist?' becomes meaningless.

Contemporary Understandings

Creation

- energy
- nature
- connection

Existence

- being / living
- ground of being
- ultimate reality
- isness (without limitation)
- more

Additional ideas from the meeting

- love
- mystery / wonder
- other
- relationship
- human nature
- within
- perfection / truth / goodness

Questions raised

Do you need God if you have Jesus - a unique revelation of God?

What about Love and Grace?

Can you define God by what she is not - hate, anger, selfishness, . . . ?

Two Understandings of God

Images from the Bible (and elsewhere) can be grouped into two broad categories; whichever dominates then shape your understanding of God in such a way as to influence how you react to them, how you live your life, how you prioritise, . . .

Monarchical - images based on Father, King, Lawgiver, Judge - power and authority

Spirit - images based on Mother, Wisdom, Lover, Companion, Shepherd, Breath - being and relationship

Is your God primarily concerned with

- personal virtue
- Lawgiving and Judgement
- heaven and hell
- nothing - mostly indifferent
- compassion and distributive justice

Worship

Worship is not what happens on a Sunday morning, it is about life - all of it.

Righteousness - living rightly - and
(Distributive) justice - a fair share for all

One observation paraphrased: your Faith is what is inside you; Religion is what the church has done over the centuries and mostly gets in the way

Further Reading

Marcus Borg - The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith (Harper) - especially chapter 3.