

Abroad in the land is the nutty notion that God needs no defense, s/he can take care of him/herself. Everything invisible and valuable needs defense, including the Cape Cod aquifer (the body of fresh water underlying the whole of Cape Cod, above which is (1) my life and (2) my only real estate). God is the invisible reality lower than the aquifer (who, before Tillich, was above the seagulls).

On this subject, theodicy, see also #1757.

1. School-men/women have dessicated the God-issue by sucking it up into the brain, the least important organ for dealing with it. (The impetus for this thinksheet is my hearing, last night--30Oct83-- a famous media-nun who's a schoolmarm-type, intellectually sharp and spiritually soft-warm and emotionally pallid. "God be in my head" is the way she sounds, but I felt underneath (and so the evening was not wasted) that "God be in my heart" is the way she lives....We'd worked hard to get out 100 Christian troops to hear her on God, and what we got was almost entirely the intellectual (though she'd disclaimed lecturing on "the god of the philosophers"), with barely a touch on the emotional and the moral (despite Beirut and Granada this past week--total American military deaths approaching 300). Such defense of God is almost damning with faint praise, and it goes a long way--since it's not untypical--toward explaining why the nutty notion (above) is abroad in the land.

2. Contrast Woody Allen (the film "Love and Death"): "And if it turns out there is a God, I don't believe that he is evil. The worst that can be said is that he's an underachiever." And this from Camus: "We must be kind, for God is not." Such fast, powerful curves this world throws us theists! Yet last night no evidence of having heard directly from communities outside Roman Catholicism, even though that nun is the ecumenical officer for her diocese!

3. The God who expects the best makes the best of anything less, including the worst--the God who appeared among us announcing shalom, and was killed, and rose again, is among us, is coming. Epiphanies (god-appearances) in Homer are partisan: a god/goddess appears in order to put his/her thumb on the human scale. As we move from Gn. to Rev., this is decreasingly true. The Gospel God is, instead of for one nation, "a light to the nations" (2Is.); NT has God in Jesus come "for all." Note these tensions: particular/universal, invisible/visible, present/future, judging/redeeming, creating/restoring, sensitive to society/individual. Many theodic conundrums arise from question-raising within too small a context and within only one tension. Let's look at a few problematics:

(1) "Solidarity" means what? For nationalists (e.g., Gandhi and Walensa), it's nationals sticking together against internal and external opposition. For classists, it's our class against theirs (including the mythists of "the classless society" and "liberation theology"). For familists, it's our family/tribe as (virtually) one flesh through many generations (so God's justice, incomplete in one generation, is fulfilled as rewards/punishments in the family flesh continuing into the next generation(s)--J, D, Chron., Job's friends, Pss.37 & 49). For individualists, it's selfhood with autonomy--so God's justice must be fulfilled in the individual, in an afterlife if not in this life. (Instances of biblical wrestling with theodicy at the individual level: Job, Wisdom, Jer.31.29f, Eze.18; instances of shifting from the moral to some other sphere: Job, from moral wisdom to revelation--38-41, Hab.3, Ps.73; Sirach, from appearance to metaphysical-psychological reality; Eccl., from traditional sense-making to making room for absurdity and even divine injustice.)

(2) God's Creator-freedom to act "beyond good and evil."