

**Department of Philosophy**  
**TTP Readings and Prompts**

Alvin Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," *Faith and Philosophy* 1(3): 253-271 (1984).

- Plantinga was at the vanguard of the current upswing of Christian Philosophy in academic philosophy in the English speaking world. This article is a good representation of Plantinga's vision for Christian philosophy. Eleanor Stump says that Plantinga's "Advice to Christian Philosophers" "had the effect of getting contemporary Christian philosophers to recognize themselves as a part of a community with a worldview different from that found in the rest of Academia, and to take seriously in their work their commitment to that distinct worldview."

Eleanor Stump, "Orthodoxy and Heresy," *Faith and Philosophy* 16(2): 147-163 (1999).

- This paper builds on the advice of Plantinga's "Advice to Christian Philosophers". Here is Stump's abstract: "I argue that in the current climate of opinion, generated at least in part by Plantinga's advice, it would be worthwhile for contemporary Christian philosophers to consider that we also belong to a community of Christians that extends across centuries, and to ask what we are committed to by our participation in that larger community."

Lara Buchak, "Faith and Steadfastness in the Face of Counter-evidence", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 81(1): 113-133 (2017).

- Here is Buchak's abstract: "It is sometimes said that faith is recalcitrant in the face of new evidence, but it is puzzling how such recalcitrance could be rational or laudable. I explain this aspect of faith and why faith is not only rational, but in addition serves an important purpose in human life. Because faith requires maintaining a commitment to act on the claim one has faith in, even in the face of counter-evidence, faith allows us to carry out long-term, risky projects that we might otherwise abandon. Thus, faith allows us to maintain integrity over time."

Robert M. Adams, "The Virtue of Faith," *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. I, (1984), 3-15.

- Adam's essay is an attempt to grapple with the fact that Christianity praises faith as a virtue and yet (1) Belief and unbelief seem to be mainly involuntary states, and it is thought that the involuntary cannot be ethically praised or blamed. (2) If belief is to be praised at all, we are accustomed to think that its praiseworthiness depends on its rationality, but the virtuousness of faith for Christians seems to be based on its correctness and independent of the strength of the evidence for it.

John-Paul II, *Fides et Ratio; On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*, Introduction and Chapters II-IV. (36 pages)

- *Fides et Ratio* was the first encyclical since Pope Leo XIII's 1879 *Aeterni Patris* to address the relationship between faith and reason. The encyclical posits that faith and reason are not only compatible, but essential together. Faith without reason, he argues, leads to superstition. Reason without faith, he argues, leads to nihilism and relativism.

**Prompts:**

1. How might philosophy enrich one's Christian faith and how might one's Christian faith enrich philosophy? Defend your answers.
2. In dialogue with the School of the Humanities reading list, discuss how Christian faith shapes your academic vocation.