Anthropology, in the classical sense, seeks to answer who is man? This sense of anthropology is philosophical and theological in orientation rather than merely empirical/observational.

Conclusions about who man is, will shape economic, politics, the role of the state as well as more important matters such as how we treat others and understand our relationship with each other and God.

Two goals:
- Salient features of Christian anthropology
- Salient features of secularist anthropology

Christian anthropology affirms the Christian God Who is love, truth and Triune; secularist anthropology is essentially atheistic

Christians differ on different aspects of anthropology
- For example, all agree about sin but we disagree on the extent of sin and its effects on humanity; we all agree that the human person has a will, but we disagree with how that will functions

Six Key Anthropological Points

1. **Humans are embodied person**
   - From conception to natural death we are the same reality
   - We are a dynamic unity of spiritual and material (i.e., the soul); spiritual means intellect, reason and will
   - Contrast this with Descartes’ dualist view of the person who located our personhood in our mind and that our bodies are merely machines within which we live; if mind is the essence of personhood, then those without a fully developed consciousness are not full human; this can also lead to a contempt for human materiality
     - This is not compatible with either revelation OR everyday experience
   - Materialism denies any reality to anything that is not physical; genetics, biology and chemistry are the standards of human reality
     - But this to ignore fundamental aspects of human experience (e.g., reason which is non-material)
     - In the moral realm, this means that my actions are the function of biology and so neither moral or immoral; this leaves us only with force to adjudicate moral disagreements

2. **Human possess reason can know more than what is given to us by the positive sciences and know truth**
   - While no one denies reason as such, we disagree about the limits of reason; of what reason can—and can’t—know.
   - Christianity affirms that reason can help us know the truth not only of the material world but also the deeper meaning of things
   - We can know not only virtue but also those actions and habits that lead to moral and social decay
d. *Intellectus*, the ability of the human person to come to know the rationale of human action
   
   i. **Scientism**: the reduction of reason to the findings of the empirical sciences
   
   ii. **Emotivism**: “reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions” David Hume; reason’s role is not to determine how we ought to live but merely how to obtain what we feel like wanting
   
   iii. In both cases, human rights are left without a foundation

3. **Human beings have a will—we can choose**
   a. The freedom of the will has been a subject of discussion and debate among Christians from the beginning
   
   b. Augustine/Aquinas: we are predestined AND free; a paradox not a contradiction
      
      i. Predestination is grace says Aquinas, and grace operates to perfect nature, that is predestination perfects human freedom
   
   c. **Secular Determinism**: whether hard (K. Marx) or soft, everything we do is a function of heredity and environment
      
      i. While Christians will accept that heredity and environment condition human action, in the final analysis it is the will that chooses
      
      ii. Some secularist would affirm we have a will but as only a neutral power to choose between options (Wm Ockham; nominalism)
         
         1. But in this anthropology, the will is not influence by anything external to the will (nature, law and grace) and especially reason
         
         2. Autonomy becomes the central truth of the human and so the ends of human action are of no consequence
      
      iii. **Nominalism** says reason is the slave of the will but they make their argument based on reasons that the nominalist explicitly rejects
      
   d. For the Christian, human liberty is important not just because coercion is wrong but because apart from liberty we are not free to live the truth as know by reason and grace

4. **We are created, and so are creative, being**
   a. We can shape the world around us and within which we live
      
      i. While we can live within some goods, we can’t live or flourish within all goods at the same time or in the same way as others
      
      ii. Our creativity manifests both what is unique to each of us but also what is common
   
   b. This effects our relationship to the material world
      
      i. Dominion AND stewardship; we rule over the material world but in the service of manifesting the truth and beauty of the world (Genesis)
      
      ii. Dominion is not, therefore, absolute
         
         1. We can use animals, but within limits
      
      iii. Dominion is not a warrant for purposeless human use of creation and stewardship is not an excuse for passivity

5. **We are fallen and therefore fallible**
   a. We have separated ourselves from God and need Christ to redeem us
   
   b. But this also effects our understanding of ourselves
c. Sin expresses the reality that there is a radical disorder that runs through the center of the human person; I am in conflict not only with God but also myself

d. While human reason and will have been corrupted by sin, they are still usable if we do so according to the truth

e. This means that schemes for human perfectibility in this life will lead no where

f. Christian realism acknowledge human sinfulness and the limits of perfectibility as well as the need to aspire to holiness of life

g. Hunger, poverty, scarcity, in the secularist view, are the result not of sin but unjust or inefficient social structures that must be swept away (by violence if need be).

6. **We are both individual and social beings**

a. Vocation is a matter of talent, opportunity and will

b. We are each of us unique but we need others to live; as we grow older, our individuality and sociability can become more developed

c. For the secularist this dynamic tension is lost; either radical autonomy or collectivism

d. While this is a common insight, what Christianity brings to the discussion is the primacy of love

i. We have concrete responsibility in love to each other that go beyond what is minimally required by law

The question now becomes: **How are we, in light of this anthropology, are we to live?**

1. How much does our society reflect Christian anthropology rather than some other anthropological vision?

2. What would a society formed according to Christian anthropology look like?

3. What must we do practically to accomplish this?

4. How do we respect the freedom of those who disagree with our anthropology while insisting that as Christians we have a role to play and a voice in the public square?

**Q&A:**

**Social Structures:**

- In any discussion of structures, we must bear in mind that they are the result of human choices in response both to our own desire and circumstances. As such, we have the freedom to accept or reject them. How much do the structures reflect the truth of the human person?

- At the same time, we need to avoid the temptation of radical individualism that denies the social nature of the person.

By reason alone, how much can we know about the *telos* of the person?
• All human faculties and characteristic reflect the nature of God because we are created in the
  *imago dei*
• Reason can tell us a great deal about the purpose of human life, we must always check reason
  against revelation (Aquinas)