The Conference is based in a single theological idea, “God: Every day and Everywhere”, which will be explored in the works of four great theologians: Aristotle who can be regarded as the founder of scientific theology (his great theology treatise was later entitled *Metaphysics*), the definitive Latin Christian Church Father, Augustine, the most philosophically profound of the Late Medieval Mystical Guides, the Dominicans Meister Eckhart and John Tauler, and an Anglican theologian, poet, and novelist of the first half of the 20th century Charles Williams. “God: Every day and Everywhere” is not, as it must first appear, a blasphemous pantheism making the God who dwells in Inaccessible Light banal. The conception ruling the conference is that if you rise to the fundamental metaphysical idea, or anti-idea, of a theological system you will find there the structure of all reality and thus through it discern God every day and everywhere.

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Eli Diamond, “The trinitarian structure of Aristotle’s living God and its mortal imitations”

Dr Diamond is Associate Professor of Classics at Dalhousie University, one of the last students of James Doull and Robert Crouse, he occupies the Chair in Ancient Philosophy at Dalhousie once held by Professor Doull.

Eli writes: In this paper I explore an idea about the Aristotelian philosophy articulated by Dalhousie University classicist and philosopher James Doull, who writes this in his article on the “Christian Origins of Contemporary Institutions”:

"The concept of God to which Aristotle comes is an incipient knowledge of what will afterwards be called the Trinity in Christian theology."¹

What could it mean to say that Aristotle understands God to have a Trinitarian structure, being both completely one and also three distinct principles or persons? I shall explore what the relation is between God and the world is in Aristotle’s thinking to see what Doull’s claim means and whether it is true. After getting some sense of what the relation is between God and world in Aristotelian thought, I then want to think about the way this theology is the ground for Aristotle’s affirmation of the everyday: family life and practical or political life, but also the study of the nitty gritty detail of the natural world, all of which have a more dignified place than they seem to on the Platonic account. I want to explore how this affirmation of the everyday is connected to the concept of God and the relation between God and the world in Aristotelian thought.

This Aristotelian idea leads very directly to Augustine’s Trinitarian cosmos as Dr Hankey will present it in his address.

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Wayne Hankey, Augustine’s Trinitarian Cosmos

Dr Hankey is Professor of Classics at Dalhousie University. He studied under and taught with Professor Doull and was one of Professor Robert Crouse’s first students at Dalhousie. He has just retired from Professor Crouse’s Chair in Medieval Philosophy at Dalhousie.

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For Augustine the divine Trinity is the universal being, life, and power of all reality. As measure, number and weight God is the fundamental structure of every physical thing and so the Holy Spirit is weight: “[You] have disposed everything by ‘measure, number, and weight’”2—“My weight is my love”3. A body by its weight tends to move towards its proper place. The weight’s movement is not necessarily downwards, but to its appropriate position: fire tends to move upwards, a stone downwards. They are acted on by their respective weights; they seek their own place. Oil poured under water is drawn up to the surface on top of the water. Water poured on top of oil sinks below the oil. They are acted on by their respective densities, they seek their own place. Things which are not in their intended position are restless. Once they are in their ordered position, they are at rest. My weight is my love. Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me. By your gift we are set on fire and carried upwards: we grow red hot and ascend.”4

The Trinity is the life of an infant: “You, Lord my God, are the giver of life and body to a baby…endowed it with senses…co-ordinated the limbs. You have adorned it with a beautiful form, and, for the coherence and preservation of the whole, you have implanted all the instincts of a living being.”5 “I existed, I lived and thought and took care for my self-preservation”6: The Holy Spirit is the instinct in every living thing to preserve its own life.

The Trinity is that by which we love to our good and to our destruction. “I longed to love; … I sought an object for my love; I was in love with love”.7 Augustine finds it when ascending to God according to the directions he finds in Plotinus: “The person who knows the truth knows the immutable light, and he who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it. Eternal truth and true love and beloved eternity: you are my God.”8 It is the form of our minds, what makes us human and the image of God: “I am, I know and I will” “I wish that human disputants would reflect upon the triad within their own selves. The three aspects I mean are being, knowing, willing. For I am and I know and I will. Knowing and willing I am. I know that I am and I will. I will to be and to know.”9

I have prepared a selection of important trinitarian texts from the Confessions to help you find Augustine’s teaching on this in this deeply trinitarian book.

Evan King, The Ground: Time, Eternity and the Friends of God in Eckhart and Tauler
Evan is Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity at Cambridge University. He was a student of both Dr Diamond and Dr Hankey.

When attempting to describe what is most distinctive in the proliferation of popular spiritual literature in medieval Germany, it is difficult to improve on the label ‘mysticism of the ground (grunt/grund)’ (Bernard McGinn). The powerful use of this terminology in Eckhart, McGinn contends, can be seen in the many instances where Eckhart is deliberately ambiguous about whether he means the soul’s ground or God’s ground. This paper focuses on how this ‘anti-idea’ is used in Eckhart’s vernacular sermons and treatises.

Nevertheless, I shall ask whether this ‘mysticism of the ground’ in Eckhart and his successors is in fact a reflection of a more central concern with the interrelation of time and eternity, and with what must

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3 Confessions, XIII.ix.10, Chadwick, p. 278.
4 Confessions XIII viii. 10, Chadwick, 278.
5 Confessions, Ix.12, Chadwick, p. 10.
6 Confessions, Lxx.31, Chadwick, p. 22.
7 Confessions, III.i.1, Chadwick, p. 35.
8 Confessions, VII.x.16, Chadwick, p. 123.
9 Confessions XIII.xi.12, Chadwick, p. 279.
follow if one takes seriously the idea of eternal life, which Eckhart identifies with the sheer interior ‘boiling’ of the Trinity. ‘Ground’ becomes a way of relating the eternal and the temporal – rhetorically, philosophically and practically. Read in this light, Eckhart and other writers of his time can be seen in continuity with the theologies of Aristotle and Augustine as presented in the two preceding papers.

First, I shall focus on Eckhart’s notion of ‘ground’ in relation to time and eternity and in the eternal life of God the Trinity. I shall approach these themes by reading Eckhart through the pattern of the liturgical calendar. His Advent and Nativity sermons form a lovely example of his reflections on eternity within liturgical time – see, for instance, Sermon 24 (First Sunday in Advent, ‘Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ’, Romans 13:11-14).

Second, my talk will consider Eckhart’s famous Sermon 86 (‘Jesus entered a certain village’, Luke 10:38-42), in which Mary, sitting at the feet of Christ and receiving consolation there, is portrayed as inhabiting a stage on the way towards the greater maturity of Martha, whose ‘ground [is] very rich in experience’. She offers an exemplar of what it means to live and act in and from the ground; in Martha, Eckhart invites us consider the meaning of ‘redeeming the time’: ‘ascending continually to God […] by intellectual, living truth’. The metaphors of the ‘ground’ and the theology of ‘eternal life’, therefore, converge in this figure of Martha. In his sermon on the feast of a martyr – ‘the just lives in eternity’ (Sermon 39) – Eckhart says, ‘go into your own ground and work there, and the works you work there will all be living’.

Eckhart’s interpretation of the Martha-Mary typology enables his ‘vernacular mysticism’. Indeed, the legacy of the Eckhartian Martha can be glimpsed in a set of writings attributed to Rulman Merswin and to a mysterious Friend of God from Oberland which emanate from the Strassburg community of ‘the Green Isle’ from the later 14th century: these texts strive for ‘the realisation of Martha’.

Dear Martha and, together with her, all of God’s friends are near care but not in care. Here a work done in time is as valuable as any joining of self to God.

We shall provide a few excerpts from sermons to whet your appetite.

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Dr Douglas Hedley, Charles Williams’ Theoanthropos
Dr Douglas Hedley, Fellow of Clare College and Reader in Metaphysics and Hermeneutics at Cambridge University, well known to participants in the Atlantic Theological Conferences will speak on Charles Williams and his Theoanthropos, the God-Man, as fundamental principle. Dr Hankey writes: The most important of Williams’ books for this paper are a novel, The Place of the Lion, and The Descent of the Dove, a genuinely theological history of the Christian Church. Happily both of them are available in libraries, online book stores including those of societies devoted Charles Williams or the Inklings, and best of all we shall provide copies you can download or read online. Here is a link to The Place of the Lion http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0601441h.html We shall post pdf files of The Descent of the Dove and The Place of the Lion.

I shall not say more now about *The Place of the Lion*, except that, as Williams says about Augustine, despite its title, it defines the place of Anthropos. I wish you joy in reading it. I cannot call *The Descent of the Dove* an easy book; like *The Place of the Lion*, I have been reading it repeatedly for four decades without by any means exhausting what it has to teach. Here you find Williams’ fundamental idea of the theoanthropos, the God-man. Not God and man, but God-man as in the Deus-homo of the great Augustinian, Anselm. In its “Postscript” you will find his doctrine of the Co-inherence. The greatness of Williams is that he knows the terrible danger both to the world and to itself as religion that this unity, the evangel of Christianity, is. His remarks on Augustine in *The Descent of the Dove*, his very positive treatment of atheistic socialism and the new proletarian democracy, and his suggestions about the liberation for telling the truth that the end of Christendom brings (both of the latter at the end of the book) are crucial. Many know the supernatural novels but not so many on this continent remember that Williams belonged to the same kind of socialism to which Dorothy Sayers and Robert Crouse adhered, indeed it was he who got me reading Charles Williams. Crucially, the co-inherence is in corporeal matter as well as in the communion of spirits.

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**AND CONTACT JUSTIN WOLFF AT** [wolffjustin@gmail.com](mailto:wolffjustin@gmail.com)

**OR**

**THE ATLANTIC THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE WEBSITE** [http://www.stpeter.org/conf.htm](http://www.stpeter.org/conf.htm) **AND**

**CONTACT THE REV’D DR PETER HARRIS** [peter_pwharris@gmail.com](mailto:peter_pwharris@gmail.com) **OR** [office@stpeter.org](mailto:office@stpeter.org)

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