

CONTEMPORARY THEMES

Christology

THE UNIVERSALITY OF JESUS

CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD

- Can people before the birth of Christ be saved?
- After the resurrection of Jesus, can non-Christians be saved?
- After having heard the Gospel, can those who do not become Christian be saved?
- How does Christianity relate to other religions?
- What are Christians to think about the good things of other religions?
- Is Jesus only one way to God?
- What about the Church?

PERSPECTIVES

- Exclusivism
 - Only Christ
 - Only the Church
- Modified exclusivism
 - We can only be certain that Christ is the answer (DiNoia)
 - J. Augustine DiNoia, *The Diversity of Religions: A Christian Perspective* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992).
 - Christianity is best for humanity; without, people are miserable
- Inclusivism
 - Anonymous Christianity (Karl Rahner)
 - Missions of the Son and Spirit beyond Christianity (Jacques Dupuis)
 - Jacques Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991).
- Pluralism
 - There are different ways of salvation (John Hick)
 - John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980).
 - Other studies
 - Robert Neville, *Behind the Masks of God: An Essay Toward Comparative Theology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).
 - Raimon Panikkar, *Intra-Religious Dialogue*, revised edition (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist).
- Pluralism: Roman Catholic
 - For Christians to claim that all are saved in Christ is to denigrate other religious traditions (Paul Knitter)
 - Paul Knitter, *No Other Name: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward the World Religions* (SCM Press, 1985).

- Christian exclusive dogmas like the divinity and pre-existence of Jesus and the Trinity are concepts bound to a Greek, pre-modern culture and must be abandoned to remain faithful to the Gospel (Roger Haight)
 - Roger Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).

JESUS AND THE WORLD RELIGIONS

- Why do we have any interest in other religions?
- How can there be real dialogue across religions?
- Why is Christian evangelization particularly interested in interreligious dialogue?

SUMMARY

- Pluralism (John Hick)
- Christian pluralism (Paul Knitter, Roger Haight)
- Explicit inclusivity (Jacques Dupuis)
- Implicit inclusivity, explicit incompatibility (J.A. DiNoia)
- Exclusivity (strict Calvinists)

ROMAN CATHOLIC POSITION (SEE *DOMINUS IESUS*, 2000)

- God desires all to be saved
- The grace of Christ, through Christ's death and resurrection is poured out upon all humans
- This grace draws every human into the Church
- It becomes active and salvific as individuals respond in holiness
- People are more incorporated into the Church and thus are more secure in their salvation the more that their deeds and the object of their actions is explicitly and visibly the teaching a practice of the Roman Catholic Church.

ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS

- All truth is from Jesus and found in him.
- The fullest expression of what it means to be human is found in the Roman Catholic Church.
- If goodness is found in non-Christians, it is due to the grace of Christ.
- If non-Christian religions promote human goodness, this is because they have been in some way conformed to Christ by God's grace and in these ways are images of the Church.
- Roman Catholics are interested in people of other religions in the hope that they are led more closely to Jesus through an encounter in honesty, humility, and love.

CHRISTOLOGY FROM THE MARGINS

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Christ, the Liberator of the Poor: Juan Luis Segundo, Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Roberto Goizueta

- Christology has often been used to keep the poor in their place
- Christology must liberate the poor
- Suffering is not willed by God

- The power of Christ demands that we work to remove the suffering of the poor
- The Christian message is only understood when expressed by those engaged in the struggle against oppression

POST-COLONIAL CHRISTOLOGIES

Christ the marginalized: James Cone, Diana Hayes, post-Colonial theologies

- Christ has a unique meaning for those at the margins of society
- Those who are in positions of privilege cannot follow Christ without renouncing this privilege
- Christ is not white European/North American but has the face of all those who are least in society

FEMINIST THEOLOGY

The maleness of Christ and the fate of women: Elizabeth Johnson, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Mary Daly

- Can a male Christ save women? What is not assumed is not saved.
- The significance of masculinity in Jesus
- The problematic of male signification
- The problem of systems of oppression

MARY DALY (1928-2010)

- Women have the role of Mary in Jesus' redemption
- They are impossibly taught to be virgin and mother and condemned for being both
- To be saved, women must give up their identities
- Taking up the cross is noxious for women

ELISABETH SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA (B. 1938)

- Christian Scriptures and dogma were crafted in a patriarchal context
- They can give life, but then need to be reinterpreted to free them from their kyrio-centrism
- Jesus can be discovered to be a friend of women and a redeemed Scriptures can empower women

SOTERIOLOGY TODAY

CONCEIVING SALVATION IN TODAY'S TERMS

- Social Reconstruction
- Opening of Possibilities
- Expansion of life, not restriction
- Suffering as a means, not an end (a result of sin, not a necessity)
- Meaning of hell/divine punishment

JESUS AND THE CHURCH

- Jesus is present in the Church
- Where Jesus is present, the Church is present
- When people act for the good, they act within the Church
- There is no Christianity without the Church
- There is no goodness without the Church

HISTORY AND THE COMPLETION OF CHRIST'S WORK

- From cycle to progress: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism by Max Weber
- Hermeneutic eschatological principles (Paul Ricoeur)
- Living the not yet: political Christianity
- The end of the world
- The Christian eschatological vision
- Proleptic eschatology