

Classical Christology and Social Justice:

Why the Divinity of Christ Matters

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1. Faith and Social Existence: An Ecumenical Problematic

This inquiry proposes a retrieval of Chalcedon's (451 CE) classical Christology in response to a religious problematic of ecumenical breadth in the American context. In the United States a larger division between faith and everyday life surfaces in a chronic disjunction between sincere faith in people of good will on one hand and the societal implications of their faith especially in the dimension of social justice on the other. Preparation and dissemination of official social teachings by churches from the Catholic, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian Church USA, Eastern Orthodox, African Methodist Episcopal, American Baptist, to Evangelicals and some Pentecostals, have not overcome the disjunction, and a study indicates that in mainline Protestant churches apparently have exacerbated it.

What is social justice? "Social justice concerns...the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimensions of problems and their respective solutions."¹ It analyzes the "functioning of the major public institutions of the social, legal, economic, or political orders." It looks to "the structural requirements for a just society focused on the human rights and needs of each person."² Social justice

¹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, English translation by the Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004; Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2005) n. 201, pp. 89/90.

² Brian Hehir, "Social Justice," in Richard McBrien, general editor, *HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) 1203-4.

seeks to promote a societal condition in which all people, equal in dignity, enjoy proportionally equal access to participation in the social, economic, cultural, civil, and political life of society. Insofar as changes are needed to bring this access about, commitment to social justice ordinarily leads to advocacy for specific public policies, an always controversial matter. In Lonergan's framework social justice would seem closest to the good of order at the level of society, not of culture or of person. Robert Doran's work has elucidated the human good in society as involving the dialectic between practicality and intersubjective spontaneity.

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* summarizes the importance of social justice for Catholic faith, stating that, "A large part of the Church's social teaching is solicited and determined by important social questions, to which social justice is the proper answer."³ Racial justice logically falls under social justice but has to be broken out because otherwise the distinctive menace of White supremacy cannot be seen in regard not only to Americans of African, Asian, and Latin descent but in regard to native Americans. Embedded within Catholic social teaching [CST], racial and social justice have proved difficult to listen to and to accept as belonging to faith.⁴

Why is that? A study of parishioners commissioned by the US Bishops in 1998 reported that, "many Catholics do not understand that the social teaching of the Church is

³ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, English translation by the Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004; Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2005) n. 81, p. 36. Surprisingly, reference to *Justice in the World*, the 1981 international Synod of Bishops' statement on social justice belonging to the preaching of the gospel did not find its way into the *Compendium*.

⁴ See Bryan N. Massingale, "James Cone and Recent Catholic Episcopal Teaching on Racism," *Theological Studies* 61 (2000) 700-737. In the *Compendium* only 4 of 583 paragraphs treat racism.

an essential part of Catholic faith.”⁵ One reason adduced was a perception that social doctrine was peripheral to the core of faith expressed in Eucharistic liturgy and in the Creed. A starting-point for remedies was, “the need to see more clearly Catholic social teaching as authentic doctrine and integral to the mission of Catholic education.”⁶ The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* addressed that need with a papally authorized synthesis of CST that integrated social doctrine into the official doctrine of Catholic faith. That integration is hopeful in principle.

But in practice Jerome Baggett’s 2009 analysis of 300 interviews with members of 6 Catholic parishes in the San Francisco Bay area opens space for some doubt that a volume from the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice will turn the tide in favor of wider reception of CST.⁷ For one thing, in regard to CST Baggett found that “Catholics gain access to these idioms—concepts such as the ‘priority of labor over capital, human dignity, subsidiarity, the common good, a ‘preferential option for the poor’, distributive and social justice, stewardship of the earth’s resources, and ‘just war’ criteria—when they hear them used repeatedly.”⁸ Indeed, he discovered that, “Some use social justice language to describe how institutions perpetuate racial inequality and therefore envision institution-level remedies.”⁹ But this is relatively a small number. More generally, “public discourse is occurring in parishes. But it is often undermined by a tendency toward civic silencing, whereby the idioms of the church’s social justice tradition are

⁵ United States Catholic Conference, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, Reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1998) 3.

⁶ United States Catholic Conference, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, 3.

⁷ Jerome Baggett, *Sense of the Faithful: How American Catholics Live Their Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁸ Baggett, 186/7.

⁹ Baggett, 189.

expressed less interactively, less incisively, and less regularly.”¹⁰ Parishioners, that is, have not assimilated CST, at least partly because its language, its idiom, is not coin of the realm. Faith expressed in liturgy, prayer, and profession of the Creed does not seem to involve a societal dimension and so can be classified sociologically as ‘privatized’.

A condition not totally dissimilar can be found among many Americans in churches and movements stemming from the Reformation, despite Stanley Hauerwas’s alarm at social justice saturating Protestant consciences.¹¹ Instead of churches’ social teaching being a ‘best-kept secret’ as in Catholicism, according to Hauerwas social teachings have inundated Protestant clergy and laity, all but supplanting gospel and faith.¹² Hauerwas laments that, “If there is anything Christians agree about today it is that our faith is one that does justice... We are told that justice demands that we must reshape and restructure society so that the structural injustices are eradicated forever.”¹³ In Hauerwas’s perspective Christian commitment to the cause of social justice has induced rather than overcome Christians’ cultural captivity by the market and the state. So he urges that churches should return from a social agenda to concentrate on renewing an

¹⁰ Baggett, 187.

¹¹ For a helpful overview of Stanley Hauerwas’s contribution see R.R. Reno, “Stanley Hauerwas,” in Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh, editors, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) 302-16.

¹² See, for example, Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom: How the Church Is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991/1999).

¹³ Hauerwas, *After Christendom*, 45.

ecclesial identity prior to and complete without a social mission.¹⁴ Church witness to how Christ, gospel and faith transform social existence within the church will contribute more to the common good than seeking to intervene in or influence public matters.

And yet he need not worry too much about Protestant conformity to an allegedly misguided message of social justice. The message has not been heard, or having been heard, has been ignored or resisted. Whichever the case, or a mix of the three, sociologist Brian Steensland found that from the 1960's on mainline Protestants in the pews have distrusted official social teachings from the clerical leadership of churches and from the National Council of Churches. His explanation for the negative reaction is that Protestant faithful heard leaders and ecumenists advocating for and teaching racial and social justice for minorities and the poor in the language of policy analysis rather than invoking explicit theological and moral justifications.¹⁵ The result was a back-lash from 1964 to 2000 against an ecumenical social agenda associated with the headquarters and church memberships in the National Council of Churches USA.¹⁶ There is no empirical data on

¹⁴ For an objection to interest in social justice by all religions, not only Christianity, see Shivesh C. Thakur, *Religion and Social Justice* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996). Thakur argues against religious concern for social justice because "religion's ultimate goal, namely the transcendental state of spiritual salvation or liberation... must regard earthly matters as 'ultimately inconsequential'," 44. See the Presbyterian Church USA's 1954 statement of theological principles for social action: "Religion is about life in its wholeness," Presbyterian Church USA, *Compilation of Social Policy*, Chapter One, "Theological Basis for Social Action... 1954 statement," ([http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll/socialpolicy/chapter00000.htm?fn=default.htm\\$f=templates\\$3.0](http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll/socialpolicy/chapter00000.htm?fn=default.htm$f=templates$3.0)).

¹⁵ Brian Steensland, "The Hydra and the Swords: Social Welfare and Mainline Advocacy, 1964-2000," in Robert Wuthnow and John C. Evans, editors, *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 213-236.

¹⁶ For an example of pre-1960's social teaching see the Presbyterian Church USA's 1954 statement of theological principles for social action: "Religion is about life in its wholeness," Presbyterian Church USA, *Compilation of Social Policy*, Chapter One,

Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches in America but it would be surprising if the situation were not the same there.

A sociological study by James D. Davidson and Ralph E. Pyle confirms the ecumenical breadth of a disconnect between faith and social justice. They discovered that in Catholic and Protestant congregations between 1965 and 1995, a period when the gap between rich and poor had been increasing, congregations allocated funds, staff time, and selected themes for preaching and hymns more in congruence with a ‘good fortune theology’ celebrating God’s goodness to the prosperous than a ‘social justice theology’ prophetically addressing the widening gap between rich and poor.¹⁷ That finding contravenes Hauerwas’s contention that a wave of social justice rolled across Protestant America. Or if it did, then unbeknownst to him, a simultaneous and ubiquitous movement rolled it back.

To give their due to Hauerwas and mainline American Protestants rejecting a social agenda, perhaps some advocates of Christian commitment to racial and social justice had conveyed what was received as an implicit secularization of the gospel that portrayed a temporal order of socio-politically institutionalized justice as the central objective in the mission of Christ. Some interpretations of the Jesus of history as a

“Theological Basis for Social Action...1954 statement,”
([http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll/socialpolicy/chapter00000.htm?fn=default.htm\\$f=templates\\$3.0](http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll/socialpolicy/chapter00000.htm?fn=default.htm$f=templates$3.0)).

¹⁷ James D. Davidson and Ralph E. Pyle, “Public Religion and Economic Inequality,” in William H. Swatos, Jr, and James K. Wellman, Jr, editors, *The Power of Religious Publics: Staking Claims in American Society* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 1999) 101-14. Their investigation of congregational responses to an increasing gap between rich and poor in the US 1965-95 used a spectrum between good fortune theology celebrating God’s material blessings on the righteous and social justice theology calling for more equitable distribution of resources. Few were at either the extreme but more were toward the ‘good fortune’ end.

prophet of social change have gone in that direction, and been criticized for it by other exegetes.¹⁸ Perhaps Hauerwas has articulated a broad-based recoil in American Protestantism against a surmised assumption that social justice is the *novum* of the mission of Christ, the be-all and end-all of Christianity. No social teaching from any church of the many that I have seen makes a claim that can be understood to state that. But reception cannot be controlled by texts.

At the same time many but not all Black churches have a tradition of rich social teaching and preaching that links faith with a deprivatized commitment to practice of racial and social justice.¹⁹ Still, collaboration with some Black Protestant laity and pastors in Milwaukee's central city suggests another kind of problem stemming from congregational independence in the free-church tradition. Side-by-side practice of worship and practice of commitment to racial and social justice may flourish. But within and among independent congregations there was not widespread consent to any specific articulation of a strong theological bond joining the two practices of discipleship so that for some congregants theological doubt hovered around commitments to practical activities for racial and social justice. On the other hand, though far less numerous than their Protestant counter-parts, Black Catholics in principle and practice have sustained a

¹⁸ See Ben Witherington III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*, Second Edition (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997) 64-92 in criticism of John Dominic Crossan and 137-160 in criticism of Gerd Theissen, Richard Horsley, and R. David Kaylor. Also see N.T. Wright, *The Contemporary Quest for Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002; an excerpt from *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 1996).

¹⁹ See Peter Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) and Andrew Billingsley, *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For an example of a charismatic leader see a special issue of the Presbyterian Church USA's periodical, *Hungry Hearts*, Vol. XIII (Fall 2003) devoted to "Howard Thurman: Shaping Spirituality from Love to Justice," accessible by way of 'Hungry Hearts', and 'browse back issues' at <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/spiritualformation/>.

strong public record in support of the social tradition and documentary heritage of CST on racial and social justice.²⁰ The deprivatized faith of Black Catholic clergy and laity exemplifies fidelity to what Andrew Greeley identified as the Catholic imagination underlying CST.²¹

The argument to follow will not presuppose that Christ's humanity is primarily *instrumentum justitiae temporalis* rather than *instrumentum salutis*. It will be that social justice is inherent in the normative social vision and practice carried in Christianity's effective, constitutive, and cognitive meanings. What is at stake is who Christ is as well as what he taught by word and deed as Scripture and tradition relay the Christ-event to succeeding generations in the church. Value-judgments about social justice flow from truths of faith, the theological-anthropological truth that human beings are created in the image of God, the ecclesiological truth that the church has an orientation beyond herself to the rest of humanity, and the Christological truth confessed at Chalcedon, that Jesus the Christ is the eternal Word of God in two distinct natures, human and divine. Explicit statement that the Word is a distinct, divine person came only with III Constantinople (680/1 CE).

2. Framing Reception of Chalcedon: Revision or Appropriation?

Presuming that God's grace is ever-offered and can be affirmed to be independent of human thought or agency, there is room for theology as the thinking of faith to assist

²⁰ See the articles in the issue dedicated to "Catholic Reception of Black Theology," *Theological Studies*, 61 (Dec. 2000), and Bryan Massingale, author for Catholic Charities USA, *Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good* (Washington D.C.: 2007).

²¹ See Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Greeley long has doubted and denied the efficacy of documentary communication of CST and argues for the primacy of a Catholic imagination transmitted by example, story, and liturgy that generated CST in the first place.

grace-led reception of social teachings and social justice. Theology's contribution to conversion to approval for racial and social justice involves more than invaluable, on-going New Testament exegeses and indispensable studies in social ethics. Unexpectedly perhaps, systematic theology in the area of Christology also has something to offer in the form of recourse to the question posed by Jesus during his public ministry, "who do you say that I am?" and to the answer as taught by the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) in conjunction with the Third Council of Constantinople (680/1 CE).

Delving into ideas of Christ at issue in discipleship's relation to society at large places the inquiry within public theology, an area that fulfills part of a large theological task outlined by Bernard Lonergan in chapter 14 of *Method in Theology*. Called communications, Lonergan's method for practical theology fulfills systematics and completes the mutual mediation between religion and a cultural matrix. Communications looks to more than how to pass on already attained systematic understandings to catechists, preachers, clergy, and missionaries. Communications also puts systematic theology in dialogue with other disciplines, with ecumenism, and with renewal of common meaning in church and society. Questions about church and society also may incite a reverse movement of inquiry back to systematics before coming home again to communications. Such, at least, is the structure of this inquiry: from a question in the life of the church to systematic Christology, and then back to engaging theology in the life of the church and through the church in the life of society.

The return to systematics will retrieve and develop, not revise or reformulate, Chalcedon's classical affirmation of Christ's two natures, human and divine, in the Son of God Whom III Constantinople made explicit was a divine person. **Also, ecumenical**

consensus on the divinity of Christ grounds the accessibility of this argument to most not all Protestant traditions, eg WCC criterion for membership; Baptist rejection of creeds and confessions nonetheless depends on content from the early ecumenical councils; Oriental Orthodox do not affirm Chalcedon but do not hold a Christological belief and theology opposed to it either.

However, many theologians think that Christology has been one-sidedly ‘from above’ ever since Chalcedon, though Eastern theologians have been more likely to notice that Western faith, piety, and theology have orbited around the humanity of Jesus.²² It may well be the case that an undercurrent in Western Christianity apart from doctrine and theology has been an unofficial, imaginative construal of Jesus that begins and ends with a doctrinal proposition that “Jesus is God.” Roger Haight thinks that this approach to Christ is “an imaginative framework that controls the reading of the gospel accounts of Jesus...a doctrinal imagination.”²³ And yet after more than two centuries of historical searches for the historical Jesus there is something to be said for the Eastern perception of a one-sided affirmation of the humanity of Jesus, and for Western currents of thought and spirituality more eager to be clear that “Jesus is a man” than that he is also divine. In fact, Richard Norris Jr. describes “a new type of Monophysitism—a tendency, in the face of its own strong sense of the incompatibility of divine and human agencies, to reduce Christ not to a God fitted out with the vestiges of humanity but to a human being adorned

²² See the remark that, “The fact remains that later Christology has often tended to absolutize Chalcedon, as though it constituted the absolute point of reference, thus overlooking the relational nature of the conciliar Christology in regard to that of the New Testament,” in Jacques Dupuis, *Who Do You Say That I Am?: Introduction to Christology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994) 105.

²³ Roger Haight, *The Future of Christology* (New York: Continuum Books, 2005) 20.

with the vestiges of divinity.”²⁴ Belgian theologian Jacques Dupuis (1923-2003) noticed the same tendency, calling it an “‘inverted monophysitism’—that supposes a certain absorption of the divine nature by the human, by which the divine nature is reduced to the measure of the human.”²⁵ In Christology if not in piety “‘inverted monophysitism’” seems to have had more influence than Haight’s “doctrinal imagination.”

In that case recovering and developing theological reflection on Christ’s divinity seeks to regain the mystery of the whole Christ-event in an era more given to preoccupation with hypotheses from the Third Quest for the Historical Jesus. Counteracting “inverted monophysitism” does not consist in adopting Cyril of Alexandria’s pre-Chalcedonian focus on the divinity of Christ without explicit affirmation of the two natures. Rather going beyond a new monophysitism begins with the principle that all Christology arises and remains within the structure of the whole, historical Christ-event including the incarnation, resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost, to which the New Testament bears written witness. In Christology today arguably it is the divinity of Christ that has fallen out of theological reflection on the whole Christ-event.

Recovery and development of reflection on Christ’s divinity do not lack footing in one area of contemporary New Testament research. Larry Hurtado, for example, has shown in *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* that early, Jewish, monotheistic, reverence for Jesus as somehow divine was an incipient movement ‘from

²⁴ Richard Norris, Jr., “Chalcedon Revisited: Historical and Theological Reflection,” in Bradley Nassif, editor, *New Perspectives on Historical Theology: Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996) 140-159 at 155.

²⁵ Jacques Dupuis, “Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ,” in Daniel Kendall, S.J. and Stephen Davis, editors, *The Convergence of Theology: A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O’Collins, S.J.*, (NY, Paulist Press, 2001) 320-342 at 333.

below' to 'above' in the Synoptics. And a pre-Johannine Paul already was moving back 'from above' to below.²⁶ A presupposition of permanent principle not discussed here is that in the New Testament, and in Christianity both the church's and individuals' faith in Christ and Christology have the structure of a circle continually revolving 'from below' in Christ's pre-resurrection humanity to 'above' in his incarnation and risen humanity united to his divinity, and back to his pre-resurrection humanity, all the while rolling forward under the impulse of new questions and insights in successive historical and cultural contexts.

At the same time Roger Haight's *Jesus the Symbol of God* casts doubt on the validity of any recourse to Chalcedon that retrieves its teaching for appropriation rather than revises it for reformulation. Haight prescribes the importance, and I agree, of Christology addressing "the humanly caused and systematically ingrained human suffering that so characterizes our world situation today."²⁷ He insists too that the postmodern situation changes the whole problematic in a theology of Christ by moving it to a new starting-point in the "historical appearance of the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth within the new horizon of historical consciousness. The supposition and point of departure are defined by the human being, Jesus, and the question concerns what it can

²⁶ Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003). See important discussions by Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies of the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008) and James D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2010).

²⁷ Roger Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, second edition, 2000) 25.

mean to say that Jesus is divine.”²⁸ Here my agreement is qualified by recognition that New Testament research has shown that this was already a key question raised and answered within the New Testament and in the early ecumenical councils and is not a uniquely postmodern query.

With admirable hermeneutical attention to context Haight acknowledges that Chalcedon made sense within the classical framework of late antiquity. But he goes on to argue that, “the shift to a historical imagination and point of departure undercuts the plausibility of the Johannine framework which in turn dictated the metaphysics of the divine subject, persona, and hypostasis.”²⁹ With that position I strongly disagree, not least because he ignores the heuristic not metaphysical quality of Chalcedonian concepts, and because his reading of the Prologue to John’s Gospel is, I submit, simply mistaken in denying affirmation of the pre-existent Logos in favor of a metaphoric interpretation of the Logos as a personified divine attribute.³⁰ Chalcedon, he holds, simply confuses when

²⁸ Haight, 291.

²⁹ Haight, 292.

³⁰ To label Chalcedon’s categories, person and nature, ‘metaphysical’ is to attribute to them a precision and systematic denotation they did not possess. Metaphysical elucidation of Chalcedon was the work of Scholasticism not part of the council in 451 CE. See Richard Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). On the undefined, heuristic quality of the concepts see Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Origins of Christian Realism,” the Seventeenth Annual Robert Cardinal Bellarmine Lecture, St. Louis School of Divinity, September 27, 1972 in Bernard J. Tyrell, S.J. and William F.J. Ryan, S.J., editors, *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974). Similarly, Sarah Coakley praises Richard A. Norris, amid several criticisms, for insisting that ‘nature’ and ‘person’ in Chalcedon’s Definition of Faith were relatively undefined so that the document is somewhat open-ended, “What Does Chalcedon Solve and What Does It Not? Some Reflections on the Status and Meaning of the Chalcedonian ‘Definition’,” in Davis, Kendall, and O’Collins, editors, *The Incarnation*, 148. Coakley proposes that the Definition has an apophatic character, or what also might be called a mystogological tendency, that in Eastern Orthodoxy led to its incorporation into the divine liturgy. This is

what's needed first of all is re-instating an original meaning that had nothing to do with a divine person in order to reformulate Chalcedon's teaching away from the pre-existent Logos as a distinct divine person. In Haight's view Christology oriented toward social justice and minimizing avoidable human suffering simply has no path forward except to revise and reformulate Chalcedon.

Without denying the validity of respecting and taking up reformulation of Chalcedon's meaning, and without now discussing the merits or not of Haight's reconstruction of Chalcedon's original meaning and reformulation of it, an alternative priority accepted here flows in another current of Christology. That current includes, for example, Gerald O' Collins's *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, the Christological principle in Jacques Dupuis's theology of religious pluralism, Mark Noll's *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in Christian History*, contributors to *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God* edited by Stephen Davis, Gerald O'Collins, and Daniel Kendall, Kathryn Tanner's *Jesus, Humanity And Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*, Veli-Matt Karkäinen's *Christology: A Global Introduction*, commentary and notes in Richard Price and Michael Gaddis's new edition and translation of the *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, Thomas Torrance's *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*, and Oliver Crisp's *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*, and *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology*.³¹

true but does not remove a potential for kataphatic development of the sort that transpired until III Constantinople, and beyond.

³¹ Gerald O'Collins S.J. *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2009); Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in Christian History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997); Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997); Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*

These authors recognize the contextual, linguistic, conceptual differences between Chalcedon and ourselves as grounds for keeping Chalcedon open to reformulation yet they accord precedence to expounding its teaching. Why would they do that? O’Collins says carefully and I concur, “I have clearly credited the teaching of Chalcedon with at least a certain intelligibility and ongoing validity.”³² Declares Noll, and I agree, Chalcedon’s Definition of Faith “retains its momentous significance” because “the statement faithfully represents the reality about which it speaks.”³³

3. Appropriating Chalcedon

Now back to Chalcedon. A visit to contemporary Istanbul, tourists are advised, is best in September or October in order to avoid the broiling summer sun of July and August. Things were not so different on Thursday October 25, 451 CE when 370 bishops assembled at Chalcedon a bit north of present-day Istanbul on the eastern sea-coast of the Bosphorus to sign and acclaim a Definition of the Faith they had produced three days

(Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001, 2003); Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., Gerald O’Collins, S.J. editors, *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, pbk. 2004, originally 2002); Veli-Matti Kärkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Books, 2005; originally 2003); Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, editors and translators, with an introduction and notes by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volumes 1, 2, and 3* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007); Thomas Torrance, edited by Robert T. Walker, *The Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* (Downer’s Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008); Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (London: T & T Clark, 2009).

³² O’Collins, *Christology*, 245.

³³ Noll, *Turning Points*, 81.

earlier in session five.³⁴ The nucleus of that Definition (Latin: *definitio*; Greek: *horos*) confessed that,

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures without confusion [*asugkutos*], change [*atreptos*], division [*adiairetos*], or separation [*achoristos*] (the difference of the natures being in no way destroyed by the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved, and coming together into one person and one hypostasis [*hypostasis*]) not parted or divided into two persons but one and the same Son, Only-begotten, God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ....³⁵

In Part V of the General Introduction, Richard Price supports a modern interpretation of this Definition as a teaching shaped by Cyril of Alexandria, with moderating Antiochene affirmation of two natures after the Incarnation.³⁶ He rejects the interpretation that Chalcedon synthesized Antiochene and Alexandrian tendencies, or forged a compromise

³⁴ Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, editors and translators, with an introduction and notes by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volumes 1, 2, and 3* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007). See Table 3. Chronology of the Sessions of the Council of Chalcedon in General Introduction, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volume 1*, 183-205. The Fifth Session, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volume 2*. See Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volume 3*, Appendix II: Attendance and Ecumenicity, 193-203. Emperor Marcian's Fourth Edict had 520 bishops attending. Most likely 320 bishops attended, along with some priests serving as proxies for others, so the number of votes cast differed from the number in attendance..

³⁵ The Fifth Session, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volume 2*, Price and Gaddis, 183-205 at 204. For the Greek text, see Eduard Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum II, Gesta Actionum III-VII* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1933) 69-163 at 129. The English word 'definition' and Latin word '*definitio*' translate the Greek term *horos*. Sarah Coakley discusses *horos* in light of Greek usage, and selects the meaning of 'pattern' or 'grid' so that the Definition is a "transitional 'horizon' to which we constantly return, but with equally constant forays backwards and forwards," in "What Does Chalcedon Solve and What Does It Not? Some Reflections on the Status and Meaning of the Chalcedonian 'Definition'," in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., Gerald O'Collins, S.J. editors, *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, pbk. 2004, originally 2002) 143-163 at 161-2.

³⁶ See Richard Price's discussion of Chalcedon's Definition of Faith in "V. The Theology of Chalcedon," General Introduction, Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volume 1*, 56-75.

between them. I see no reason to disagree with Price. In *Jesus the Symbol of God* nonetheless, Haight at one point speaks of Chalcedon as a compromise and a synthesis of the two schools of thought. Yet eventually he concludes that, “the Alexandrian framework controls the whole vision.”³⁷ He sees the Alexandrian framework as problematic, however. It conceived the Logos as a subsistent person rather than as an attribute of Christ.

For Haight the Cyrillian problem stemmed from a patristic tradition of mistaken interpretations of the Prologue to John’s Gospel that misread poetic, metaphoric language about divine attributes as propositions about a distinct entity, the Logos. To counteract Chalcedon’s Cyrillian concept of the Logos as a divine person Haight undertakes retrieval of Antiochene affirmation of Christ’s two natures. Dupuis and this inquiry emphasize the two natures but in support of not in opposition to Cyrillian and Chalcedonian affirmation of the person of the Logos. True enough, attention to the two natures of Christ usually serves to keep the historical humanity of Jesus to the fore lest it be thought of as dissolved into, overwhelmed, or rendered negligible by his divinity. However, Chalcedon’s distinction of natures equally well directs attention to the divine nature of Christ. That is the path taken by Jacques Dupuis and I will follow in his footsteps then strike out in another direction.³⁸

³⁷ Haight, *Jesus*, 288.

³⁸ See “A Bibliography of the Writings of Jacques Dupuis, S.J.,” and Gerald O’Collins, S.J., “Jacques Dupuis: His Person and Work,” in Daniel Kendall and Gerald O’Collins, editors, *In Many and Diverse Ways: In Honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003) 231-269 and 18-29 respectively.

Dupuis highlights Christ's divine nature in a marvelous theology of religious pluralism.³⁹ In a series of writings from 1991 to 2001, Dupuis distinguished two aspects of the divine nature of Jesus, the Logos/Son of God incarnate.⁴⁰ The most familiar aspect is the *Logos ensarkos*, Jesus the Logos as enfleshed or incarnate, historically causative of and immanent in the visible economy of redemption and Christianity as its sacrament. The less familiar aspect of the divine nature of Jesus is the Logos as *asarkos* (unfleshed or non-incarnate). The eternal Logos pre-existent to the Incarnation was *asarkos*.⁴¹ After the Incarnation, *asarkos* simply refers to the fact that the hypostatically united human nature of Jesus cannot possibly 'contain', participate in, receive, or mediate the totality of Christ's divine nature. Dupuis states that, "The divine action of the Word is not

³⁹ Among others, Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, translated by R. R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991; originally *Jésus Christ à la rencontre des religions*, Paris: Desclée, 1989); *Who Do You Say That I Am?: Introduction to Christology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Book, 1994-2001; translated by Orbis Books, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002; originally *Il cristianesimo e le religioni: Dallo scontro all' incontro* [Brescia: Edizioni Queriniana, 2001]); *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Press, 1997-2002); "Trinitarian Christology as a Model for a Theology of Religious Pluralism," in T. Merrigan and J. Haers, editors, *The Myriad Christ: Pluralism and the Quest for Unity in Contemporary Christology* (Leuven, Belgium: University Press, 2000) 83-97; "Le Verbe de Dieu Jesus Christ et les religions du monde," in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 123/4 (2001) 529-546; "Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ," in Daniel Kendall, S.J. and Stephen Davis (eds.), *The Convergence of Theology: A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O'Collins, S.J.*, (NY, Paulist Press, 2001) 320-342.

⁴⁰ See especially Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, ch. 1 "The Cosmic Christ in the Early Fathers," ch.11, "Jesus Christ-One and Universal," and "Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ" in Kendall, et al. editors, *The Convergence of Theology*.

⁴¹ On difficulties in thinking of 'pre'- existence see Brian Leftow, "A Timeless God Incarnate," in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., and Gerald O'Collins, S.J. editors, *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 273-299.

‘circumscribed’ by, ‘exhausted’ by, or ‘reduced’ to its expression through human nature.”⁴² This is to say that the divine nature does not turn into a non-divine nature.

He expands on the transcendence of Christ’s divine to his human nature in noting that, “The action of the Word reaches beyond the limits imposed on the operative presence of the humanity of Jesus, even in its glorified state, just as the person of the Word exceeds the human nature of Christ, the hypostatic union notwithstanding.”⁴³ This recognition of difference and divine excess is not only allowable but compelled by the Definition of Chalcedon.⁴⁴ It has been orthodox theology of the Incarnation since Athanasius in the fourth century.⁴⁵

Though Dupuis nowhere discusses the Reformation, it is the case that Luther and early Lutheran theologians took exception to Jean Calvin’s assertion of the transcendence of Christ’s divine nature in the *Institutes of Christian Religion*.⁴⁶ Lutheran celebration of and communion in the Eucharist in multiple places and times seemed to require that Christ’s glorified bodiliness be omnipresent if Christ is really present in the Eucharist. Lutheran teaching on the *communicatio idiomatum* accordingly attributed, or in the term

⁴² Dupuis, “Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ,” 334.

⁴³ Dupuis, “Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ,” 338.

⁴⁴ Dupuis, “Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ,” 332.

⁴⁵ Besides Athanasius, see Origen, *Contra Celsum* II, 9; Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter to Nestorius* (12 Anathemas), 9; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Ex Libris de Incarnatione*, VII; Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio* III, 10, 30; *Letter 137*, to Volusianus; *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione*, I, 60 (31); John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, III, 7; Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum* III, d. 22, 3; Thomas Aquinas, *In Sententiarum*, II, 22, Q. I, a. 2; *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa, Q. 10, a. 1, ad 2.

⁴⁶ E. David Willis remarks in *Calvin’s Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-Called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin’s Theology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966) that, “There are two passages in the *Institutes* which are commonly accepted as Calvin’s classical statements of the ‘extra Calvinisticum’. These are II, 13, 4 and IV, 17, 30 of the 1559 edition,” 26.

of Oliver Crisp, ‘transferred’ divine omnipresence to Christ’s risen and glorified human nature.⁴⁷ Lutheran theologians objected to Calvin’s affirmation of a surplus or excess in Christ’s divine nature over his human nature in the famous vocabulary of the ‘*extra Calvinisticum*’, the ‘Calvinist extra’.⁴⁸

In surveying the world’s religions from a Christian viewpoint Dupuis merely points out that the divine nature of Jesus exceeds the powers and capacities of Jesus’ human nature as greatly as the divine exceeds the human. After 1994 instead of an *ensarkos/asarkos* distinction in regard to Christ’s divine nature Dupuis spoke about the universality of the Logos and the particularity of Jesus. His focus was entirely on the universal enlightening influence of the Logos described in John 1: 9: “The true Light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.” The pre-existent divine Logos enlightened all people prior to the Incarnation.⁴⁹ Dupuis then adds that this universal

⁴⁷ Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 6-26.

⁴⁸ See Paul Helm, *Calvin at the Centre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 114-128. Helm points out that Calvin understood the transcendence of the divine nature to the human nature of Jesus to lead to rejection of the omnipresence of the human nature of Jesus. Calvin approved a scholastic distinction, “Although the whole Christ [*totus*] is everywhere, yet everything which is in him [*totum*, ie his human nature] is not everywhere,” *Institutes of Religion*, II, 13, 4, quoted in Helm, 116. Helm comments that, “If that distinction had been observed, then, Calvin thinks, it would have ruled out the doctrine of transubstantiation,” 116.

⁴⁹ Dupuis does not refer to Aquinas’s interpretation of John 1:9. But see St. Thomas Aquinas, edited by James A. Weisheipl, O.P. and Fabian R. Larcher, O.P., *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, Part I (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1980) Lecture 5, 69-76 at 71/2. Aquinas explains the enlightening as divine, as the Word, “light by his essence,” Who before the Incarnation “enlightens every man,” by the light of natural knowledge through participating in this true light which is the source of all the light of natural knowledge participated in by men.” Contrarily, Aquinas notes, the enlightening can be understood to mean the light of grace. Origen understood “enlightens” to mean the grace of faith admitting people to the world of Christ and Church. Chrysostom understands “enlightens” to be equivalent to wanting all to come to knowledge of the truth about God and be saved. Augustine explains the enlightening as the effect of the Word but only in

enlightening which is a saving influence did not cease because of the Incarnation and continues after the Incarnation but not through, not only through, the mediation of the human nature and activities of Jesus.

Dupuis did not edge away from the particularity and centrality of the fullness of light from the Logos in and through the whole Christ-event. Still, Chalcedon's affirmation of two distinct natures unchanged by their union means that the operations proper to each nature, more clearly taught by III Constantinople (680/1) against monothelitism, do not disappear because of the hypostatic union. But one of the powers proper to the Logos is enlightening all people. Therefore after the Incarnation too the eternal Logos continues to be universally influential and enlightening directly by his divine nature and not only through the human nature of Jesus active in his ministry, mission, teaching, death and resurrection and in the redemption visible and communicable in the churches and historical Christianity.

Dupuis concluded that the universally operative Logos enlightens and inspires founders and adherents of non-Christian religions at the same time as the same Logos as incarnate fulfills that enlightening and in divine love becomes present as redeemer within a humanity that was created through 'him' in the first place.⁵⁰ As divine Word incarnate Jesus the Christ is at once the particular, historical man who taught, suffered, died and

those who receive the light of saving knowledge from Christ in a dark and perverse world, 72-73.

⁵⁰ The Logos is not gendered and so not male in his divinity. Jesus' human nature is male. In Chalcedon's meaning of 'person', though not in a modern meaning, it would be accurate to say that Jesus is not a male person because Jesus is one divine person (not gendered) in two natures, divine and human (male-gendered). Jesus is a non-gendered divine person with a gendered human nature.

rose from the dead and the universal Logos immanent in and active upon the cosmos, within human history, and in the lives of non-Christians.

Ironically, those Catholic theologians whose misreadings of Dupuis stimulated the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to investigate Dupuis revived the old Lutheran criticism that teaching the transcendence of the divine nature over the human negated the unity of the two natures in the one divine person. Against both old Lutheran and contemporary Catholic suspicions the Council of Chalcedon, as both Dupuis and O'Collins fully realized, offers the best defense. In the Incarnation neither divine nor human natures changed, become confused with the other; while remaining distinct they yet were not separated.

In defending Dupuis against some theologians' misreadings, O'Collins pointed out that Dupuis's texts did not separate the universal Logos from the incarnate Logos. Instead, maintained O'Collins, "What Dupuis has consistently argued is that within the one person of Jesus Christ we must distinguish the operations of his (uncreated) divine nature and his (created) human nature. Here he lines up," O'Collins continued, "with St. Thomas Aquinas who championed the oneness of Christ's person but also had to recognize that Christ's divine nature infinitely transcends his human nature (*divina natura in infinitum humanam excedit*), *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 35,8."⁵¹ Dupuis was arguing that Chalcedonian affirmation of Jesus' divine nature means, O'Collins said, that "the Word's divine operations are not canceled or restricted by his assumption of a

⁵¹ Gerald O'Collins, "Jacques Dupuis: His Person and Work," 24. Quotation also from an electronic version of Gerald O'Collins's "The Dupuis Case," gratefully received in an email from Daniel Kendall, 10/13/10.

human existence that has now been glorified through the resurrection.”⁵² I will follow Dupuis’s distinction between the original, invisible, constant, and universal divine operation of the Logos as Creator and the particular though central and eschatologically universal Jesus of Nazareth.

4. The Logos: Ultimate Source of Social Justice

The distinction and affirmation of Jesus’ divine nature can be turned from the nature/grace question of God’s saving action in non-Christian religions to the origin of social justice in the Creator/creature relationship. Dupuis once mentioned “mediation in creation” by the Logos as an act that transcends the human nature of Jesus.⁵³ Yet he never explored the theological consequences of Logos as creating. Six steps into those consequences are the following. First, seven New Testament passages tell of the Logos’s (John 1: 1-4) and Christ’s divine agency in creating (1 Cor. 8:6, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 2:15, Col. 1:15-20, Heb. 1: 1-4, and Rev. 3:14). This became a standard, formal part of church tradition enshrined in creedal profession that, “Through him all things have come to be.”

The second step is realization that the creating agency of the Logos did not, could not, cease and desist at the Incarnation. Indeed and to the contrary, Paul proclaimed that, “There is one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things come and through whom we exist,” (1 Corinthians 8:6) and Hebrews 1: 3 exclaimed about Jesus “sustaining the universe by his powerful command.”⁵⁴ These statements attribute creating to Jesus, it is

⁵² O’Collins, “Jacques Dupuis,” 26.

⁵³ Dupuis, “Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ,” 334.

⁵⁴ O’Collins observes that Pauline and deuteropauline letters attributed creation to Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10, 15, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:1-3a) before John’s gospel circulated in final form, in “Jesus as Lord and Teacher,”

true. How could that be, since Jesus is a visible human being? John's Gospel provided the answer, the self-evidently human Jesus not only acted with divine authority and rose in divine power but is the divine Logos who became flesh.

That the Incarnation did not interrupt or halt the creating agency of the Logos is the gist of a brief reflection by Athanasius in *On the Incarnation*. Speaking of Jesus as the Logos incarnate Athanasius declared,

For He was not, as might be imagined, circumscribed in the body, nor, while present in the body, was He absent elsewhere; nor, while He moved the body, was the universe left void of His working and Providence...., He was, without inconsistency, quickening the universe as well, and was in every process of nature, and was outside the whole, He was none the less manifest from the working of the universe as well.⁵⁵

The divine creating agency of the Logos, Athanasius says, did not cease at the Incarnation.

Third, creating is **the** divine operation of the Logos least conceivable as an act and attribute of Jesus' human nature. The divine Logos's mediating of the act of creation from the Father and with the Spirit cannot be transferred to, mediated by, participated in, or enacted by the human nature of Jesus. Jesus the Logos acted in and through his full, free humanity when he performed miracles of healing, when he changed water to wine at Cana, when he walked on the water or calmed the sea, when he forgave and remitted sins with divine authority, when he initiated the Lord's Supper with an unheard of change in

John C. Cavadini and Laura Holt, editors, *Who Do You Say That I Am? Confessing the Mystery of Christ* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004) 51-61 at 56.

⁵⁵ Athanasius, translated by Archibald Robertson, *On the Incarnation* in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, editors, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 4 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1892.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2802.htm>. Accessed at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2802.htm>.

the sacred meal of the Pasch, when he breathed the Holy Spirit upon his disciples after the resurrection (John 20: 22-23). These are referred to as Jesus' theandric acts.

Theandric acts can be conceived, as Aquinas did, in terms of a divine principal cause acting with and through a human instrumental cause in a combined causality producing an effect beyond the capacity of the human instrumental cause by itself. Jesus' human subjectivity, freedom, imagination, speaking, etc are human realities able to be drawn into service of the divine operation of the Logos and bring about effects beyond the capacity of his humanity and due to divine power. However, creating by the Logos cannot be a theandric activity in which the human nature of Jesus serves as instrumental cause for his divine nature and person as principal cause.⁵⁶ Part of Jesus' human nature being human is being 'created'. Being created means existing in constitutive difference from the creating source; creatures are not the Creator since they have come to be, and the Creator has brought them to be. Jesus' individual humanity shares the limits of all created reality. The created cannot create itself much less anything else. Jesus' human nature was created through and exists in dependence on his creating act as Logos.

Of course, both 'human nature' and 'divine nature' are heuristic concepts rather than comprehensive, closed definitions in Chalcedon. This means that whatever belongs to human nature, and we may not have understood what that is in completeness, is inherent in Christ's human nature. Likewise, whatever pertains to God, divinity, and the

⁵⁶ Aquinas denies that any creature can act principally or instrumentally in creating. See Thomas Aquinas, Latin text, English translation, Introduction, Notes, Appendices & Glossary by Thomas Gilby, O.P. *Summa Theologiae, Volume 8, Creation, Variety and Evil* (Ia.44-49) (Great Britain: Eyres & Spottiswoode Limited, 1967) Q. 45, a. 5: "...since creation is not from any pre-existing material to be rendered or prepared by an instrumental cause's action...for creative action to be attributed to any creature is impossible, either by its own proper power or instrumentally as a minister."

Logos, and we have not come to the end of grasping what that is, belongs to the divine nature of Christ. The divine nature of the Logos is the Logos acting. We do receive as true, nonetheless, that according to the Prologue to the Gospel of John the Logos brings that which has come to be into being. Therefore, creating cannot be separated from Christ's divine nature.

When Chalcedon affirmed the "distinctive character of each nature being preserved," it professed that the Logos did not lose anything proper to divinity by assuming a human nature. The divine kenosis described in Philippians 2: 6-11 refers to withholding manifestation of divinity, sovereignty, and power. Kenosis withheld a manifestation of divine effects, in the humanity of Jesus first of all, but was not loss of divinity. If creating had been 'left behind', then the divine nature of the Logos would have changed because of the hypostatic union, just what Chalcedon rejected in affirming that each of the two natures remains unchanged, *atreptos*.

Reflection on the act of creating by the Logos leads to recognizing that the Logos's agency in creating is the divine act that is the ultimate principle of social justice. That is, and as the fourth step, Christ as incarnate Logos (*ensarkos*) acting universally (*asarkos*) in the power of his divine nature mediating the act of creation is the ultimate and universal principle of social justice for Christians and non-Christians alike. All societies and all religions, not only Christianity, have seeds of social justice sown in their people by the Logos. As Creator, the Logos always and everywhere is that on Whom all creation depends, and that from Whom human nature is constituted in self-presence, that is, in the natural light of human reason receives apart from the mission of Jesus. The universally and continually active Creator Logos who is Jesus the Christ cannot be other

than, and nothing else can be, the immanent divine source of order in the cosmos and history. This pertains to human existence in its social dimension as well.

Fifth, why so? Continuance in creating by Christ, the Logos-become-flesh, is an ordering principle because creation is not chaos, or rather, in contemporary understanding chaos has the potential for emergent order in accord with what Lonergan designates 'emergent probability'.⁵⁷ The omnipresent, immanent activity of the Logos as Creator revealed in John's Gospel implies that the Logos is also the source of order in creation, in whatever way order can be understood. Christ as creating Logos (*asarkos*) is the ultimate source of existence and order in all creation in its every dimension, including human socio-historical existence that also flows so obviously from very concrete, historically accessible human beings. The Logos creates everything that comes to be, including human beings who in their self-transcending acts of intentional consciousness directed toward the good of order are the proximate source of social justice. Creaturely dependence on the Logos extends to the human capacity to generate meaning, and so reaches to conscience and concern for the common good, for the well-being of all members of a society. That is the human inception of social justice. That is, in creating humanity the Logos is the source also of the proximate ordering principle in a society.

The concept of order probably has to be reclaimed from guilt by association with the concept of control and Lonergan does just this in chapter 2 of *Method* on the human good. He explains that in groups there is cooperation through institutions (family, mores, society, education, state, law, economy, technology, church) with people's roles and tasks

⁵⁷ The meaning of order in the physical universe will not be discussed here but has been a theme in dialogue between science and religion.

for the sake of the good of order. Order, by contrast to an externally imposed unity, direction, and purpose we might say is a structured, intrinsic unity in multiple operations by an individual or a group. In an individual physical health and spontaneity is order. In a community, regular and successful cooperation for common objectives to the benefit of all and each is the good of order.

The good of order in a society cannot be achieved by anti-institutional anarchy, by a single institution or person controlling all social authority, or by carefully designed institutions or policies that nevertheless don't result in beneficial effects. To the contrary, achieving the good of order depends on and instantiates, arguably and among other things, realizing a substantial degree of social justice. Social justice is crucial because the good of order involves the effective functioning of a society's major institutions-state, economy, family, education, religion- for the benefit of the society's members. Effective functioning cannot occur apart from active contributions from, active participation by, a society's members.

Contributions take place in myriad concrete activities in, for example, earning a living, exercising informed citizenship, living out positive family interactions, attaining an acceptable level of education, and some creation or enjoyment of culture and recreation. Social justice deals with institutional impediments blocking access to making those contributions. Otherwise only some members of a society actively participate in the major institutions which in turn benefit some, excluding others. Exclusion is marginalization. Social justice seeks to identify and overcome marginalization. Marginalization is a malfunction in one or more major institutions of a society.

Lonergan developed principles for but did not apply his dialectical analysis directly and in detail to malfunctioning institutions, and in that sense he did not take up the problem of social justice. Robert Doran, however, has refined and applied Lonergan's dialectics in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. It may be that Doran's signal gift to social justice is his relating equitable sharing in vital values upwards through community to culture and downwards from divine grace through culture and community to vital values. And yet, Doran's analysis can be made more precise and closer to praxis. Doran's dialectics become more precise when the scope of influence from cultural and social values upon distribution of vital values is more clearly seen to be not simply promoting just distribution of vital goods as distributive justice but extends to active contributions by members of a society and to social justice that secures their access to making those contributions. Then too Doran's analysis would gain practical purchase if picked up by sociologists and political scientists. I would love to see some sociologists, for example, take Doran's dialectics as a basis for framing empirically testable hypotheses for qualitative and quantitative research on cultural and not only on economic and political values at issue, whether positively or negatively, in a particular type of marginalization, that of young Black men from employment for example.

Sixth, when human beings in any culture or religion act toward the common good in social justice an inconspicuous divine/human cooperation occurs rather than a Promethean assertion of human intent to remake society. In labors for a socially just society whose basic institutions serve the common good, the creating Logos and created human beings work together asymmetrically. The asymmetry comes from the dependent, participated existence on the human side of the cooperation.

Still, order in the realm of free individual and socially organized human activity is a matter of personal and common meaning, truth, and value. When practical attraction to justice emerges in people of any culture and language and begins to enter into individual and corporate decisions that originate and sustain mores, laws, institutions, and habits formed by justice, then justice has gained a foothold in the shaping of social existence. To that extent justice then becomes an ordering principle in human society in tension with injustice. As an ordering principle social justice as a public standard, as a societal objective, and as a personal virtue that apprehends, inquires, deliberates, decides, and acts toward the common good, has an inner affinity with the creating Logos. Seeking realization of just order and the common good by overcoming marginalization in any society aligns people with the creating, ordering Logos. Human agency on behalf of the common good serves the purpose of the creating Logos even when that human agency has not been placed under the full effect of saving grace mediated by Jesus, the gospel, and Christianity and received in faith. Christianity's distinctive belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the divine, creating Logos does not lead into a walled enclave opposed to other religions but becomes an unshakeable Christian principle of support for interreligious dialogue and cooperation on behalf of racial and social justice.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, faith in Christ, a gift beyond social justice, opens the believer to accepting all that Christ's divine nature accomplishes beyond (*asarkos*) no less than in and through Jesus (*ensarkos*). But creating and ordering creation lies beyond the visible borders of what Christ's humanity mediates in the economy of redemption. Social justice, accordingly, is both native to Christianity insofar as Christ's words and deeds carry its

meaning, and something for Christians to discover, appreciate, encourage, and cooperate with in plural modalities original to other religions and cultures. Religions other than Christianity also locate conscience and social justice in the divine/human relationship.⁵⁸ Christians agree with many Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and other religious people, no less than with people at a distance from any religion, that slave labor, racism, heedless destruction of the environment, absence of universal health care where resources are available, lack of gender equity, and destitution in the midst of affluence offend human dignity and are types of social injustice.

The challenge social justice presents to Christian faith is Christological as well as ethical. The Christological challenge is to let faith in Christ be stirred to expand its scope from the visible economy of redemption centered in Jesus to affirmative cooperation with the universal action of the Logos to be sought in dialogue with adherents of other religions, or none. Christian faith, that is, does not stop at the limits of Christ's humanity and of Christianity but casts its obedient gaze to everything coming from his divine nature too, including creating and ordering within human history under the influence of self-transcendence in intentional consciousness.

The Christological premise for indifference or resistance to social justice is either a tacit 'Nestorian' separation between the divine and human natures of Jesus, as if not joined in the person of the Word/Logos, or a view, perhaps an extreme kenoticism, of Christ's divine nature as having changed in the Incarnation by losing or alienating the

⁵⁸ For select texts from various religions, with articles and excerpts that all bear on connections between religions and social justice, see Roger S. Gottlieb, *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace & Ecological Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

divine power to create. Contrarily, to accept Chalcedon is to accept the inseparability of faith in Jesus from discipleship involving commitment to the social justice the Creator Logos continually labors to bring about. Further, Chalcedonian dogma is the Christological ground for an impulse and mandate arising within faith for seeking dialogue and cooperation with any who also promote social justice that institutionalizes human self-transcendence, a self-transcendence Christians believe is due to the Creator Logos through who all has come to be that has come to be.