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The Council of Chalcedon: Some contemporary christological issues

After reviewing and clarifying what the Council of Chalcedon actually said, Weinandy delineates three incarnational truths that flow from that Council. On the basis of those truths, he discusses and evaluates contemporary issues in christology.

The Peter Richard Kenrick lecture, delivered March 19, 2009, at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

I have been asked to address some contemporary christological issues in the light of the Council of Chalcedon. The Council of Chalcedon, in many ways, was the culmination of a long—a 451-year-long—christological journey within the early church. It stated positively what the church believed with regard to the divinity and humanity of Christ, and simultaneously refuted various errors. Before we examine some of the contemporary issues that arise from Chalcedon, it would be best to examine first what Chalcedon actually stated so that we have a clear and concise understanding of its teaching.

In agreement, therefore, with the holy fathers, we all unanimously teach that we should confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same (*hena kai ton auton*) Son, the same (*ton auton*) perfect in Godhead and the same (*ton auton*) perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same (*ton auton*) of a rational soul and body, consubstantial (*homoousion*) with the Father in Godhead, and the same (*ton auton*) consubstantial (*homoousion*) with us in

manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his Godhead, and in the last days, the same (*ton auton*) because of us and because of our salvation begotten from the Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos*, as regards his manhood; one and the same (*hena kai ton auton*) Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in two natures (*en duo phusesin*) without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved in and in harmony with one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis*—not parted or divided into two *prosopa*, but one and the same (*hena kai ton auton*) Son, only-begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ himself have taught us about him, and the creed of our fathers has handed down.

We must first note that the Council employed three times the phrase “one

and the same,” and five times used the phrase “the same.” Here the Council is emphatically confirming the apostolic tradition highlighted by two outstanding Alexandrian theologians, St. Athanasius and St. Cyril.¹ “The one and the same” and “the same” is none other than the one eternal, only-begotten Son or Word. There are not two “sons,” as Nestorius’ christology seemed to imply. There is only one subject or person; there is only one “who,” and that one “who” is the one Son or Word of God.

The second aspect that Chalcedon repeatedly professed is that this one and the same Son is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood. The same is consubstantial with the Father (contrary to the teaching of Arius, who denied the full and eternal divinity of the Son), and the same is consubstantial with us and so possessing a genuine human body and authentic human soul (contrary to all those who deny the full humanity of Christ—the Docetists, who denied the material body, and Apollinarius, who denied a human soul). Because the Son of God actually became man within the womb of Mary, she can rightly be called *Theotokos*—“Mother of God,” for the incarnate Son of God was actually born of her (contrary to Nestorius’ denial). Moreover, the Council highlights the fact that the Son of God is “made known in two natures” and not composed “out of” two natures—and in so doing refuted Eutyches’ monophysitism, which claimed that the divine and human natures were united so as to form one new composite nature, a claim that jeopardized the full integrity of the divinity and of the humanity.

Third, what the Council accomplished in making these distinctions was to establish the hypostatic, or what I

have come to call the Personal/Existential, understanding of the Incarnation. That understanding distinguishes the person or subject—the who—and the manner of the person’s or subject’s—the who’s—existing. It is one and the same “who”—the one and the same Son or Word—who ontologically exists both as God and as man.

In clarifying the nature of the incarnational union, the Council, fourth, clarified the nature of the incarnational “becoming.” Because the “becoming” unites the humanity to the person of the Son, the divine and human natures are not confused or changed; nor are they divided or separated. Why is this so? The reason the natures are not confused or changed is that the incarnational union—the “becoming”—is not the compositional or organic union of natures, which would give rise to a third kind of being, a hybrid, which would then be neither truly God nor truly man. Because the incarnational union is not a compositional union of natures, Chalcedon can say that “the difference of the natures is not removed because of the union.” Yet, Chalcedon can also insist that the natures are not separated or divided because they find their unity in the one person of the Son or Word, “the property of each nature being preserved in, and in harmony with, one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis*.” The incarnational act, the incarnational “becoming,” is the ontological uniting of the humanity to the person of the Son of God so that the Son comes to exist personally as man. This is a singular and unique understanding of the term “become,” expressing a singular and unique ontological union, for the Incarnation is a singular and unique event giving rise to a singular and unique being—Jesus—the Son of God incarnate.

Finally, because the Council conceived and articulated a proper understanding of the Incarnation, it properly clarified and so sanctioned the use of the expression the “communication of idioms.” Because the same Son of God actually exists as God and as man, both divine and human attributes can be predicated of this same Son. The divine Son of God can rightly be said to thirst, hunger, suffer, die, and rise, for the Son actually lived a genuine human life as man.

Three incarnational truths

In the light of the Council of Chalcedon, all subsequent christological questions, issues, and developments must protect and promote the following three incarnational truths, as will shortly become evident when we discuss the contemporary issues.

First, it is truly *the Son of God* who is man. This truth emphasizes that Jesus must be truly the divine Son of God. Second, it is truly *man* that the Son of God is. From an incarnational perspective, it is of no value to uphold the full divinity of the Son if that Son is not truly and fully human. Third, the Son of God truly *is* man. This truth accentuates the fact that the incarnational “becoming” must terminate in an incarnational “is.” The divine Son and the man Jesus cannot be separate beings. The Son of God actually came *to be* man and so actually *exists* as man. Moreover, it is precisely the communications of idioms that embodies and highlights all three of these incarnational truths. For example, to say that “God suffers and dies” demands that the Son be truly *God*, for if he were not truly God, it would not be God who suffers; and the Son must be truly *man*, for if he were not truly man, he would not be

able to suffer and die humanly; and the Son must truly *be* man, for only if the Son truly is man can he truly suffer and die as man.²

Having examined the decree of the Council of Chalcedon and delineated the three incarnational truths that flow from it, we can now turn to some contemporary christological issues, issues that the fathers of Chalcedon probably would never have imagined but, if they lived today, would find extremely fascinating and important. All these issues and the questions they raise, as the fathers of Chalcedon would insist, must be discussed and answered within the context of Chalcedon. “Thus,” Karl Rahner correctly stated, “we have not only the right but the duty to look to it [the Chalcedonian formula] as end *and* as beginning.”³ All discussions and arguments surrounding new christological issues and questions must begin with Chalcedon, and when they reach the truth of their conclusions, they will have helped deepen, intensify, and expand Chalcedon by humbly being in accord with it.

Christology from above and below

Contemporary authors frequently discuss what is perceived as two approaches to christology.⁴ One is referred to as christology “from above.” It emphasizes that the transcendent divine Son of God came down from heaven and became man. While this approach to the Incarnation ensures the full divinity of Jesus, it is sometimes criticized, usually without warrant, for undervaluing the humanity of Jesus and so his historical life and Jewish cultural milieu. The other christological approach is named christology “from below.” It emphasizes the humanity of Jesus and so his historical life and cultural conditioning. However,

some authors confuse two points when discussing this christological approach “from below,” one of which is true, and so is in conformity with the Council of Chalcedon, and the other of which is false, and so is not in conformity with that Council.

It is true that the only way that we can come to know who Jesus is as the divine Son of God and also the significance of what he humanly achieved is through his humanity, through what he historically said and did as a man. Epistemologically, christology must always, by necessity, be “from below,” that is, we can only come to know who Jesus is by listening to his human words and observing his historical actions. As the apostles themselves experienced, his humanity is the necessary sacramental reality or means through which the deeper truth that Jesus is the Son of God is revealed.

However, some contemporary theologians confuse our way of coming to know that Jesus is the Son of God with the way Jesus himself actually did become the Son of God. We come to know that Jesus is divine “from below,” from and through his humanity, but Jesus himself did not become divine “from below.” It is not through some form of human openness to the transcendent that the man Jesus, through his prayer, love, faithfulness, and obedience, was taken up into the divine and so became “God.” Such a christology would merely be a form of adoptionism and not the Son of God’s actually coming to exist as man.

The Council of Chalcedon and the apostolic tradition it embodies demand that christology always be ontologically “from above”; the Incarnation is always the Son of God’s ontologically assuming a human nature and so coming to

exist as man. Moreover, since the Council professes that it is truly man that the Son of God is, epistemologically christology must always be “from below,” that is, we can only come to know Jesus to be the eternal Son of God incarnate through his historical and earthly humanity. By correctly recognizing the ontological nature of the Incarnation on the one level and the epistemological nature of our coming to know Jesus as the Son of God incarnate on the other, the full significance of both Jesus’ divinity and his humanity is properly balanced in accordance with the Council of Chalcedon.

The miracles of Jesus

You might be surprised that I have chosen the miracles of Jesus as our second example of a contemporary christological issue. I chose it not because some theologians deny that Jesus actually worked miracles, though some do, but because the manner in which Jesus actually worked his miracles is often misconceived, even by faithful Christians. This misunderstanding is due precisely to a deficient grasp of Chalcedonian christology. Allow me to give my rendition of a familiar gospel story with added bits and pieces.

Jesus went to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus for dinner. Martha served, as a starter (the English term), raw carrots and garlic dip (for Americans, a yet to be discovered fare). Jesus ate the carrots and garlic dip. Who was it who ate the carrots? It was the Son of God who ate the carrots. Did he eat the carrots as God or as man? He ate the carrots as man. God as God cannot eat carrots, for obvious reasons. But, since the Son of God now actually existed as man, he could eat carrots just like every

other human being. Moreover, he was very pleased that he had created them as God, since they were quite delicious to eat as man. Lazarus also ate the carrots, but unfortunately he ate a rotten carrot and died of food poisoning. Four days later Jesus returned and raised Lazarus from the dead. Who was it who raised Lazarus from the dead? It was the Son of God who raised Lazarus from the dead. Did he raise Lazarus from the dead *as God* or *as man*? Here is where a proper understanding of the Council of Chalcedon and of the communication of idioms comes into play.

The Son of God ate the carrots as man because the Son of God truly existed as man. Many of you, as have many of my past students, may want to say that the Son of God raised Lazarus from the dead *as God*. But to say this is to forget our three incarnational truths. It is true that "who it was" who performed the miracle was the Son of God. However, it was performed by the Son of God existing as man, and so it was *as man* that the Son of God performed the miracle. It was the Son of God as man who wept at the death of Lazarus, and it was the Son of God as man who cried out, with a human voice: "Lazarus come forth!" In raising Lazarus from the dead, the Son of God performed a divine action (or, maybe better, an action empowered by the Holy Spirit), but he did it in a human manner—he did it as a man. Miracles are what is traditionally termed "theandric" actions, that is, divine deeds done humanly. Everything that the Son of God did within his incarnate state was done as a man, whether it was eating carrots or raising someone from the dead. If we did not uphold this, we would have the Son of God doing some actions *as a man*, such as eating

carrots, and some actions as God *in a man*, such as working miracles. This authentic understanding of the Incarnation will not allow. All earthly actions (and post-resurrectional heavenly actions) performed by the Son of God must be done in a human manner, for that is the manner in which the Son now exists—as man.⁵

Let us now turn to the contemporary issue of Christ's suffering. Did he suffer as God or as man or as both?

The suffering of the incarnate Son

It is commonly held by the vast majority of contemporary Christian theologians that God, as God, suffers in solidarity with our suffering. God, echoing the noble words of President Bill Clinton, would say "I feel your pain." How can God be loving, they ask, if he does not suffer in union with the innocent and downtrodden? The paradigm for this, they claim, is Jesus himself. While the Christian tradition has consistently held that the Son of God suffered as man, he did not suffer as God, for God, as God, cannot suffer. Nevertheless, the present wisdom holds that it is precisely because the Son of God became man that he suffers not merely as man, but equally as God. In so doing, he illustrates that God, in his very divine nature, always lovingly suffers in solidarity with those who suffer.

I cannot possibly address here all of the complex issues and erroneous presuppositions and conclusions that are involved in this seemingly simple and, to many, all too obvious conclusion that God suffers.⁶ Nonetheless, we must first remember that God is not a member of this created order, and thus he is not a being who undergoes, as do human beings, a multiplicity of emotional

changes, depending upon the present state of affairs. Moreover, the evil that occurs within the created order, which causes us to suffer, cannot reverberate back into the uncreated divine order, and so God does not suffer in any literal sense. Nonetheless, God is perfectly and unchangeably loving—he is love perfectly in act—and so he embodies perfectly and unchangeably all facets of love—kindness, compassion, justice, mercy, correction, forgiveness, etc. His perfect and unchanging love responds to all situations appropriately. Moreover, we experience these various facets of God's perfect and unchanging love differently, depending on our present state of affairs. If we have sinned, we experience God's perfect, unchanging love as a call to repentance. If we repent, we experience God's perfect, unchanging love as mercy and forgiveness. Thus, God is not aloof and indifferent. To those who innocently suffer for the sake of justice, his love is experienced as compassion and the fostering of courage. With this in mind, we must now return to Jesus and our three incarnational truths confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon.

Those who champion a suffering God want Jesus to suffer not only as man but also as God. Only if he suffers as God, they claim, does God really experience and so know our human suffering. The Father of love did send his Son into the world to suffer and die so that we might be saved. Nonetheless, what is redemptive is not that the Son of God suffered as God, but that he truly suffered as man—in a manner exactly as our own. If the Son of God suffered as God, it would mean, contrary to the Council of Chalcedon, that there was a confusion and mixing and so a changing of natures. Moreover, if the Son of God suf-

fered as God, he would not have experienced human suffering in an authentically human fashion, but he would have experienced human suffering in a divine fashion, which would not be the authentic experience of human suffering. Chalcedon does demand that it truly be the person of the divine Son of God who suffered, and it equally demands that he personally have suffered as man, for it is the human suffering of the Son of God that is redemptive. What is redemptive is that the Son of God, as man, took upon himself our sin and death, and in so doing, he, equally as man, lovingly offered his holy and innocent human life (not his divine life) to the Father as a sacrifice for our sin. Again, in keeping with our three incarnational truths, it is not what the Son of God experienced or does as God that is redemptive, but, rather, it is what the Son of God experiences and did as man that is redemptive. Those who advocate a suffering God completely miss the point of the Incarnation and so completely undermine its redemptive significance.⁷

Did Jesus know he was God?

The early church confirmed, in keeping with the truth that he is genuinely human, that Jesus possessed a human will and intellect (the Second and Third Councils of Constantinople, A.D. 553 and 680–81). However, in the 19th and 20th centuries, with the rise of historical consciousness and psychology, a new question arose: Was Jesus conscious, and so knew that he was God?

The first thing we need to do is to frame the question properly. The question is not Did Jesus know he was God? as if Jesus, the man, were a different person or subject (a different “who”) from that of the Son. The proper question is

Was the Son of God conscious of himself and did he therefore know that he was God *in a human manner*, that is, through his human consciousness and mind? Again, in keeping with our three incarnational truths affirmed by the Council of Chalcedon, “who it was” who was humanly self-conscious was the Son of God, and the *manner* in which he was self-conscious was as man. The answer to our question must now obviously be “yes.” If the Son of God incarnate was not humanly conscious and so did not humanly know that he was the Son of God, he could not have revealed to us that he was the Son of God, for he would have been ignorant of his own identity. For Jesus to be ignorant of his own identity would itself be absurd. There is obviously something psychologically amiss when a person does not know who he or she is.

How, then, did the Son of God become humanly conscious and so humanly come to know that he was indeed God’s Son? Traditionally, many theologians, including the great scholastics St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, taught that Jesus, from his conception, possessed the beatific vision and so, from his conception, knew he was the Son of God. However, I do not find this in keeping with the Son of God’s living an authentic human life, one like our own. Moreover, the beatific vision, traditionally, is understood to be the immediate vision of God possessed by the blessed in heaven—precisely by those who are not God. However, Jesus is God, and so, whatever “vision” he may have possessed, it cannot have been a “vision of God” whereby he saw God as a being over against and other than himself.

I would argue that the Son of God be-

came humanly conscious of who he was and so knew that he was the Son of God in a manner that is in keeping with the way that normal human beings become self-aware. I have been told that children normally come to perceive themselves as distinct persons at around the age of four. They begin to use the word “I” in a meaningful manner. It would be around this age, in conjunction with Mary and Joseph’s teaching him to pray, that Jesus began to perceive in a human manner, through the Holy Spirit dwelling within him, his divine sonship. Later, as he prayed the psalms and read and studied the scriptures—as he grew in wisdom, age, and grace—his awareness that he was the Son of God would have become more clearly perceived and defined, so that by the age of 12 he would have clearly known as man that he, as the Son, must be about his Father’s business. This may best be illustrated by a statue I once saw in France.

In an ancient monastery that now belongs to a charismatic community, I saw a statue, carved from a huge old tree trunk, of Joseph sitting with the child Jesus (about seven or eight years old) on his lap. Joseph, with his expansive muscular arms around Jesus, held open before them a scroll of the psalms. Joseph and Jesus, with mouths wide open—very wide in fact—were together singing the psalms. It is in this kind of setting, praying with his earthly father, that the Son of God became humanly conscious of his heavenly Father and so became conscious that he was the Father’s Son. It was in coming to know the Father, through the light of the Holy Spirit dwelling within him, that the Son of God became humanly conscious and so humanly knew himself to be the

divine Son of the Father.

I have argued elsewhere that the earthly Jesus, as the incarnate Son of God, possessed, through the Holy Spirit, a human filial vision of the Father, that is, a vision such that he became conscious of his own divine sonship and so came to know his own self-identity as the Father's eternal Son. This, I would argue, is in accord with the Council of Chalcedon. The *one* who is conscious of himself (and so knows himself) is the divine *Son*; and the *manner* in which he is conscious of himself (and so knows himself to be the divine Son) is *as man*.

It seems to me that this process is also in keeping with our own Christian experience. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united to Jesus, the Son, and so are transformed into his divine likeness; and thus, in union with Jesus, through the Spirit, we come to experience the paternal love of the Father, and so come to know that we are his adopted children in Christ his Son. We perceive our true identities, who we really are, as sons and daughters only as we come to experience and know, like Jesus and in union with him, our heavenly Father. The love of the Father is poured into our hearts and minds through the Holy Spirit, and so with Jesus the Son, we too can cry out, in the same love of the Holy Spirit, "Abba, Father!"⁸

Is Jesus a human person?

In the light of the Council of Chalcedon, we can now progress to the next question: whether or not Jesus is a human person. Traditionally, in keeping with our three incarnational truths, the one person of the divine Son is said to exist as man. This is the meaning of the term "hypostatic union," that is, the hu-

man nature is united to the person/hypostasis of the Son so that the person of the Son actually exists as man. However, some contemporary theologians argue that if Jesus is a divine person and not a human person, then he is missing something essential to being authentically human, and therefore he is not fully human. They argue that Jesus must be a human person, but in so doing, they unavoidably deny that Jesus is the divine Son of God.⁹ This whole issue is entirely misconceived.

First, while it is absolutely crucial that Jesus' full and authentic humanity be maintained, this must be done precisely to ensure that this is what the Son of God is—an authentic man. To uphold the full humanity at the expense of the divinity is to jettison the most important reason for upholding his humanity, that is, to ensure that the Son of God actually is a man.

Second, the term "person" is not some sort of "thing" that must be added to a human being in order for that being to be complete. The term "person" denotes that a particular being is a "who" rather than a "what" and possesses a singular identity. In all cases but one, human beings possess a specific human identity, a specific human "who." When asked: "Who are you?" We answer by giving our name, which identifies us as a particular and unique human being or person. Now, the difference between Jesus and us is that, while he possesses everything that pertains to being authentically human—a body, intellect, will, self-consciousness, etc.—he does not possess a human identity, but, rather, he possesses a *divine* identity as the Son of God. The identity of this particular and unique human being, Jesus, is that of the Son of God. Thus, to say

that Jesus is a divine person or subject (a divine “who”) and not a human person or subject (a human “who”) is not to deprive him of a full humanity but, rather, articulates the very mystery of the Incarnation, that is, that the person of the Son of God has come to exist as man, and therefore the identity of this man (who he is) is the Son of God. It appears to me this is what Jesus was getting at when he asked his apostles, “Who do you say that I am?” He wanted them to acknowledge his divine identity, his divine personhood, who he really is. Peter got it right when he answered, “You are the Christ; the Son of the living God.”

The human “I” of Jesus

Traditionally, theologians who have followed the doctrine of Chalcedon have argued that there is only one “T” in Christ, and that is the divine “T” of the Son of God. The obvious reason for this is to confirm, in accordance with Chalcedon, the singular divine identity or personhood of Jesus as the Son of the Father. Bernard Lonergan holds that inasmuch as the same subject is aware of himself through both the divine consciousness and the human consciousness, “there is, absolutely speaking, only one ‘I’ in Christ just as there is only one person.” In a qualified manner, however, Lonergan argues that one can also speak of a human “I.” Since Christ possesses two natures and so two consciousnesses, divine and human, he possesses, as a human psychological subject, an “I” as human, “which experiences itself with the limitations of the assumed nature.”¹⁰ More recently, Jean Galot has emphasized that, while there is one divine “T” of the Son, that divine “T” is manifested to others in a human, self-conscious manner. Thus, when Je-

sus said “I,” that was a divine “T” speaking and acting in a human manner.¹¹ While I too, in keeping with the Council of Chalcedon, wish to profess and maintain the divine identity of Jesus as the Son of God, I also want to argue, in keeping with Chalcedon, that it is nonetheless more correct, within his incarnate state, simply to speak of the human “T” of the divine Son.¹²

Within the Incarnation, the person/subject—the “who”—is the Son of God. Nonetheless, the Son of God humanly experiences and humanly acts within the parameters of a human self-conscious “I.” There is a human “T” of a divine person/subject—a divine “who”—the Son of God. Let us, for example, again examine Jesus’ question “Who do you say that I am?” Jesus is asking his apostles to identify “who” he is. The answer to this question, as Peter stated, is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus’ divine identity was here confirmed. However, while Jesus was eliciting from his apostles the affirmation of his divine identity as the Son of God, his divine “who,” the manner in which he asked the question was as a man, and so was within the parameters of his own human self-consciousness. Thus the “T” in “Who do you say I am?” is a human “I.” The Son of God as man, within the confines of a human “I,” is requesting that the divine identity of his human “T” be affirmed—that the one who is humanly saying “T” be identified as the Son of God.

I believe this understanding of the Incarnation, that is, that the divine Son of God possesses a human “I,” upholds and even intensifies Chalcedonian christology. It accentuates that *who* it is who is man—the person or subject—is none other than the divine Son of God; and it

simultaneously heightens the fact that he actually became fully human even to the extent of speaking and acting within the parameters of a human self-conscious "I."

Chalcedon and religious pluralism

Recently there has been a great deal of theological discussion concerning global religious pluralism, specifically Christianity's claim that Jesus is the singular and universal savior. Some theologians, often with great ambiguity, argue that Jesus is merely one of any number of religious founders and that these other religions are of "salvific" value in their own right, apart from him. Such a position is contrary both to the proclamation of the New Testament and to the christological tradition as canonized by the Council of Chalcedon.¹³

No other founder of a religion (for example, Buddha or Mohammed) claimed to be God, and followers of these founders do not make such claims of them. However, Christianity believes that Jesus revealed that he was the eternal Son of God, and the conciliar tradition, especially at the Councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, solemnly defined that Jesus was the Son of God, one in being (*homoousion*) with the Father. It is the fact that Jesus is not simply a prophet or a holy man but the Son of God incarnate that gives him a status that is singular in nature among all other founders of world religions. Jesus is not simply "better" than the other founders of religions by way of degree—revealing more truth or living a holier life—but, rather, he differs in kind from other founders of religion, for he is the definitive, unique instance of the Son of God existing as man.

Moreover, as the Son of God incar-

nate, Jesus accomplished what no other founder of a religion is able to do. First, he is able, as the Word of the Father, to reveal the fullness of divine truth. Second, through his sacrificial death, Jesus reconciled us to the Father, and through his resurrection he conquered death and obtained for us eternal life. Third, as the glorious Lord and Savior, Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit upon the church at Pentecost. Fourth, only by being united to his risen humanity through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are we transformed into children of the Father and so come to share in the very divine life of the Trinity. Jesus is, therefore, the universal and definitive savior of the whole of humankind, and his salvific work is predicated upon the Chalcedonian faith that he is uniquely the Son of God incarnate.

Chalcedon: the ever new beginning

It should be obvious from all of the above that contemporary christology is alive with many issues and questions.¹⁴ This should not be surprising, since it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, who constantly leads Christians of every age to a deeper knowledge, and so love, of Jesus—who he is and what he has done for us. Because the Council of Chalcedon is the ever new beginning of christology, the truth it proclaimed will never be changed. Nonetheless, its truth will be ever deepened and clarified. I hope that our discussion has led to some clarity, though many questions may be left unanswered. However, it must be remembered that theology is about the clarification of divine mysteries, the discerning of what the mysteries are; it is not about making the divine mysteries comprehensible and so

thoroughly known.¹⁵ Such a project is impossible, and those who attempt it become heretical. Again, my only hope is that the mystery of the Incarnation

has now become a little clearer in the light of contemporary concerns and, as a result, has renewed and fostered a greater knowledge and love of Jesus.

1. See my article "Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation" in T. G. Weinandy and D. Keating, eds., *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (Edinburgh: T&T/Continuum, 2003) 23–54 and T. G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction* (London: Ashgate, 2007) 81–101.
 2. For a more complete discussion of the Council of Chalcedon, see, T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Change? The Word's Becoming in the Incarnation* (Petersham: St. Bede's Publication, 1985) 63–66.
 3. K. Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology," *Theological Investigations* 1 (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961) 150.
 4. See, for example, K. Rahner, "Two Basic Types of Christology," *Theological Investigations* 13 (New York: Seabury Press, 1979) 213–23 and W. Thompson, *The Jesus Debate* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 45–78.
 5. For a fuller discussion of this issue, see T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000) 199–206.
 6. For a thorough study of divine impassibility and all of the issues related to it see, T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* For a shorter summary of my arguments, see T. G. Weinandy, "Does God Suffer?" *First Things* n. 117 (November 2001) 35–41.
 7. This is more fully treated in T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* pp. 172–213.
 8. For a more detailed treatment of my position and the debate surrounding it, see "Jesus' Filial Vision of the Father," *Pro Ecclesia* 13/2 (2004) 189–201 and "The Beatific Vision and the Incarnate Son: Furthering the Discussion," *The Thomist* 70/4 (2006) 605–15. Also see T. J. White, "The Voluntary Action of the Earthly Christ and the Necessity of the Beatific Vision," *The Thomist* 69/4 (2005) 497–534 and "Dyotheletism and the Instrumental Human Consciousness of Jesus," *Pro Ecclesia* 17/4 (2008) 396–422.
 9. For example, see J. Macquarrie, *Christology Revisited* (London: SCM, 1998) 43–60.
 10. B. Lonergan, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ* (Toronto: Lonergan Research Institute, 2001) 225.
 11. See J. Galot, *La Conscience de Jésus* (Paris: Duculot-Lethiellieux, 1971) and *Who is Christ?* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981) 319–43.
 12. I have addressed this issue on a number of occasions: *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh: An Essay on the Humanity of Christ* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993) 12–13; *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 120–2; "The Human 'I' of Jesus," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 62/4 (1996/97) 259–68; and *Does God Suffer?* pp. 209–11. In the last two citations, I discuss the differences between my position and that of Galot.
 13. See, for example, J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997); R. Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999); and P. C. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Dialogue* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004).
- The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has responded to the writings of the first two authors. See, Notification on the Book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* by Father Jacques Dupuis, S.J. (24 January 2001) and Notification on the Book *Jesus: Symbol of God*

by Father Roger Haight, S.J. (13 December 2004). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Doctrine has responded to the third author. See, Clarifications Required by the book *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* by Reverend Peter C. Phan (10 December 2007).

14. Many, but not all, of the topics treated here

have also been discussed in my *Jesus the Christ* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2003).

15. For a fuller discussion of this point, see T. G. Weinandy, "Doing Christian Systematic Theology: Faith, Problems, and Mysteries," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 5/1(2002) 120–38 and *Does God Suffer?* 27–39.