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The Unity of Salvation: Divine Missions, the Church, and World Religions

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Abstract
The author addresses the doctrinal affirmations of the universality of God's salvific will and the necessity of the church for salvation. Jacques Dupuis and Gavin D'Costa propose distinct ways of reconciling them; comparing their proposals illustrates the challenge that contemporary Catholic theology faces in its current context of religious pluralism. The author appeals to Bernard Lonergan's work to suggest an alternative that both anticipates the presence of God outside the church and simultaneously affirms the necessity of the church for the salvation of all.

Keywords
church and instrumentality, divine missions, Gavin D'Costa, Jacques Dupuis, Lonergan and world religions, theology of religions

Vatican Council II changed the question about the salvation of people outside the church. If before the council the question still lingered regarding whether or not God saves people of other faiths, the council definitively affirmed that possibility and reinforced a different line of inquiry. Once we acknowledge that God offers grace sufficient for salvation to adherents of other religions and different worldviews, a question arises about their relationship to the church. Considering people whose cultural and religious contexts prohibit or exclude their acceptance of the gospel and entrance into the church, Pope John Paul II wrote in 1990, "For such people,

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salvation in Christ is accessible in virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the church, does not make them formally part of the church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation."[1] Salvation need not include formal membership in the church, but then its relationship to the church raises significant questions for theology.

How, for example, do we account for the instrumentality of the church in the salvation of all people, if salvation does not require a response to the gospel? How should we understand the status of other religions in relation to the salvation of their adherents? How do we explain the necessity of the church and the value of faith and baptism as "the ordinary means of salvation"?[2] The divine missions of the Son and Spirit accomplish the work of salvation for all human history, but in this economy the church has an indispensable role as well. Understanding the nature of that role sets a significant task for contemporary systematic theology.

The beginning of this article contextualizes these questions about the church by briefly clarifying the meaning of salvation in the Christian tradition. The next sections turn to recent theologies of religions and particularly the proposals of Jacques Dupuis and Gavin D'Costa. Each of these theologians proposes a distinct solution to the problem of ecclesial mediation in the salvation of adherents of other religions. The article's final parts use Bernard Lonergan's work to explain the importance of theological foundations for approaching these questions and then for offering an alternative resolution. The resolution distinguishes the necessity of the church in the economy on the one hand, and ecclesial instrumentality on the other. The structure of the economy of salvation contextualizes our understanding of the church as instrument. I argue that Lonergan's theological systematics offers the analogy for explaining the unity of salvation in the broad compass of the economy and the church's role within it.

Salvation, Gift of "Our Father"

Many rich images, analogies, and descriptions contribute to a complex notion of salvation in the Christian imagination. Stemming originally from *sozo* in Greek, which translates as "save" or "saved," the theological idea builds on the New Testament affirmation that "Jesus saves" and generally refers to the restoration and healing of the whole human family from all that injures and troubles it. As Hans Urs von Balthasar explained, salvation entails an ever-increasing "intimacy with God."[3] The idea of

1. Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (hereafter *RM*) no. 10, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals. All URLs cited herein were accessed February 27, 2014.
2. *RM* no. 55; *Lumen gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (hereafter *LG*) no. 14. All English translations of Vatican II documents are taken from the Vatican website, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm.
3. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 4, *The Action*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988) 361–405, at 373; see also Paul S. Fiddes, "Salvation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance (New York: Oxford University, 2007) 176–96.

salvation resonates strongly, if not seamlessly at times, with notions of redemption, expiation, liberation, and justification.[4] In most instances, it expresses or implies a series of characteristics, which I elaborate briefly in six numbered points below. These points or parameters shape our consideration of salvation throughout this article. The present section aims to anchor the notion of salvation in the tradition and then to set up the problem of mediation implied in its meaning.

First and foremost, then, (1) salvation begins with the divine initiative, given by the Father, won for us by Christ, and received through the Holy Spirit (Jn 10:28–29; Gal 4:6). The trinitarian structure of salvation indicates a deeply interpersonal reality. It belies the idea of a general, transcendent principle that would make itself equally accessible at all times and places. The Christian imagination begins with the apostolic experience of the Christ event and the gift of God's love (Rom 5:5), and that experience marks a profoundly historical and meaningful encounter of human persons and divine Persons (Jn 14:16–18; Eph 3:14–19). All points in the broad compass of human history connect to Jerusalem (Lk 24:46–47).

Salvation comes as sheer gift and grace, and this gift implies a dire need and severe limitation on our part. (2) So Jesus rescues us from sin and death, overcoming the principalities and powers of this world, and heals us of all that divides us (Gal 1:3–5; Eph 6:12). The notion of salvation draws attention to our fierce clinging to disordered relationships with God and neighbor. It recognizes the power of evil in this world as well as the crushing of that power under the weight of the cross.

(3) Our restoration to health and wholeness embraces the whole of who we are, and the personal dimension of salvation does not denote a private affair. Our salvation occurs in view of an ordered totality that by the absolute graciousness of divine intent encompasses the whole human family and all creation (Rom 8:22–24). (4) Salvation pertains neither to mere temporality on the one hand nor to a strictly eschatological dimension on the other. Rather, it includes both this life and the next. (5) Decisively won in this life, salvation requires the preaching of the good news and the sacramental life of the church; (6) it entails our free assent and cooperation in faith (Acts 16:30–31; Ti 2:11–14).

These characteristics in no way exhaust or fully control the meaning of salvation, but they help us avoid a variety of relatively frequent errors—for example, the tendency to think of salvation in individualistic terms or in anticipation of our heavenly destiny alone. As David Tracy writes, "Christianity is most itself when it is an Exodus religion," a religion of an enslaved people set free by their God.[5] The experience of liberation "from all that oppresses" and the new humanity that emerges in the mystery of Christ must continually trouble the complacency of a community that grows accustomed to widespread injustice and violence, that tends to focus on the individual, and

4. Balthasar, *Action* 240–43; see also Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007) 90–108; Denis Edwards, *What Are They Saying about Salvation?* (New York: Paulist, 1986) 6–13.

5. David Tracy, *On Naming the Present: God, Hermeneutics, and Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994) 67.

that petitions pardon for the "sins of the world" with what Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace." The New Testament envisions an exodus for all of creation in Christ.

Still, the mediation of this interpersonal reality, universal in the scope of its intent, implies a tension that does not admit of an easy resolution. If Christ died for us all and the Spirit incorporates us into his body through our faith in him, then what do we say about the fate of those who do not know him? Salvation entails the ordering of a new creation under the providence of a transcendent artisan. So then how should we make sense of the fact that some people never hear the gospel? Since Cyprian of Carthage used the phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, the church has over the ages returned to it for different reasons in different contexts.[6] But this axiom does not settle the matter and often generates controversy when asked to do so. The assumption that unbaptized infants and billions of the world's religious interminably lose God's friendship in the circumstance of fate rather than by personal culpability seems to baldly undermine the universality of God's salvific will.[7] Does the Spirit not blow where it wills (Jn 3:8)? Still, the axiom squarely sits within the doctrinal tradition.

Though we need not review the history of this controversial teaching, we will benefit from noting a couple of conclusions about its development. Francis Sullivan argues that this doctrine has a precise meaning in different contexts, and that it affirms above all the necessity of the church for salvation rather than the material borders of human entrance into God's reign. He surveys the documents of Vatican II and notes a much more positive attitude toward the salvation of non-Christians than in previous centuries. If this difference does not signal a contradiction within the doctrinal tradition, then what exactly changed?

Sullivan says the way of judging other people changed, that is, judgment on this question of salvation considers a range of variables now (e.g., an understanding of the world beyond Christendom, a more empirical concept of culture, the significance of a psychic horizon for decision-making).[8] Such a holistic consideration in no way breaks with the judgment that salvation for all requires the church, but it permits the presumption of innocence rather than guilt for those outside the church. Belief in God's mercy and saving intent shifts the odds in favor of salvation without faith and baptism for

6. Sullivan notes that Cyprian did not use this phrase to address non-Christians, who at the time were the majority in the Roman Empire. Rather, he used it in the context of his warning to Christians in danger of excommunication or already separated by heresy or schism (Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* [New York: Paulist, 1992] 20).
7. For an excellent discussion of the question about unbaptized infants, see Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., "The Development of Doctrine about Infants Who Die Unbaptized," *Theological Studies* 72 (2011) 3–14; see also International Theological Commission, "The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die without Being Baptised," http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents.
8. Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., *The Church We Believe In: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* (New York: Paulist, 1988) 120. Vatican II recognized that salvation is possible for those who are inculpably outside the church, and there are various reasons why a person might be considered to be inculpably outside the church.

people who lead good lives. Though this development transforms attitudes within the church, it leaves the nature of the mediation of salvation for non-Christians an open question. Is the church instrumental in the salvation of those outside it? How are the elements of grace and holiness in other religions related to the church?

The issue of mediation poses a significant challenge for systematic theology and occupies the remainder of this article. Notably, it represents more than a theoretical problem. The issue strikes at the heart of Christian identity and life. The existential significance of this issue comes to light in reflecting on what it means to say the Lord's Prayer, which, Tertullian remarked, "is truly the summary of the whole gospel."[9] When we pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we anticipate the universal realization of the great joy, the fullness of new life for the whole created order. But we also make this prayer to "Our Father," and the tradition often does not include those outside the church in this address. Of course, God creates all things, and human persons in the divine image, but being created in the divine image does not suffice for knowledge of God as Father. On Jesus' prayer, Richard Bauckham observes, "Jesus did not mean that all people are children of God by virtue of their creation by God."[10] The fatherhood of God belongs to an experience of God's loving intimacy, an experience that requires obedience and drives mission. It implies a decision on our part.

In the *Enchiridion*, Augustine limited the saying of the Lord's Prayer to the privilege of the baptized, for they "have the right to say, *Our Father in heaven*, since they have already been reborn as children of a heavenly father by water and the Holy Spirit."[11] The "Our" includes only "believers in good standing with the community," and the saying of the prayer merits forgiveness of their daily (venial) sins.[12] But with the petitions Augustine also recognized a broader scope for the prayer. So we include those outside the faith and even those unknown to us when we pray "thy kingdom come," "thy will be done," "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," and "deliver us from evil." He remarked, "We ought to pray for these things for ourselves and for ours, for strangers and even for enemies."[13]

Augustine did not imagine the answering of these petitions outside the church, if the answering entails others' salvation, but the attitude toward the salvation of non-Christians has changed since the fifth century. The Lord's Prayer continues to hold sacramental meaning and suggests a deeper significance for interreligious dialogue. In his Message for World Mission Sunday in 1999, John Paul II reflected on the meaning of the "Our Father" in a way that held in tension the possibility of salvation outside the

9. Tertullian, *De oratione* 1; cited in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Washington: USCC, 1994) no. 2761.
10. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University, 2011) 67.
11. Augustine, *Enchiridion* 19.71; cited in Kevin Hart, "Religious Pluralism and the Lord's Prayer," *ABC Religion and Ethics*, June 26, 2012, http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/06/26/3533543.htm.
12. Hart, "Religious Pluralism."
13. Augustine, *Letter 130*; cited in Hart, "Religious Pluralism."

church and affirmation of saving knowledge of Jesus' Father. He wrote, "The Church is missionary in order to proclaim untiringly that God is Father, filled with love for all mankind"; and in reflection on entrance into the kingdom, John Paul quoted the Gospel, saying "not by crying 'Lord, Lord,' but by doing the will of the Father, his Father 'who is in heaven' (Mt 7:21)."[14]

Josephine Lombardi suggests that the petitions of the prayer define the Christian notion of salvation: "*Salvation is the fulfillment of the Lord's prayer in individuals, communities, and all of God's creations, in this lifetime and in the next*."[15] And in her reading of the prayer she also affirms God's salvific will outside the church.

> The way to salvation, then, begins with our response, for some through faith and baptism, and for all, through doing God's will, following the dictates of our conscience, and doing what is good in our traditions. . . . Understanding salvation as the fulfillment of the Lord's Prayer in this world and in the next addresses the temporal, spiritual, and universal needs of individuals and communities.[16]

Knowledge of the triune God indispensably accompanies and deepens Christian conversion and the experience of salvation (Jn 17:3). Not reducible to a concept or mere belief about something, the notion of salvation here embraces the whole created order as an interpersonal reality. Saying "Our Father" means entering reflectively into a saving relationship with God. If the offer of salvation reaches across human history, which Catholic doctrine affirms, still the reality of the gift and its trinitarian structure do not change; those who receive salvation within the context of their good choices independently of faith and baptism still receive the gift of the triune God.[17] So we return to the issue of mediation: How can we explain the universality of God's salvific will and the centrality of Christ and his church in the broad scope of human history? The next section discusses different attempts at answering this question.

The Mediation of Salvation and Theologies of Religions

At a theoretical level some people may wish to solve the problem of mediation by simply removing the medium. If the mediation of Christ and the church are stumbling blocks to an unreserved affirmation of different religious ways and their saving value for their adherents, then perhaps we should reconsider the necessity of Christ and the church for salvation. Solving the problem boils down to removing the problem: Christ is not the

14. John Paul II, *Message for World Mission Sunday 1999* nos. 2 and 4, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/missions/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_25051999_world -day-for-missions-1999_en.html.
15. Josephine Lombardi, *What Are They Saying about the Universal Salvific Will of God?* (New York: Paulist, 2008) 96, emphasis original.
16. Ibid. 97.
17. For doctrinal affirmations of the universality of God's salvific will, see *LG* nos. 14–17; *Ad gentes*, Decree On the Mission Activity of the Church no. 3; *Gaudium et spes* (hereafter *GS*), Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World nos. 10, 15, 22.

only mediator, the church is not necessary for salvation, and salvation corresponds to the Christian imagination only for Christians. The pluralist hypothesis is well known.[18]

The theologies of religions address this question of mediation in their unique ways. Exclusivism and inclusivism accept the intractability of the problem, but they disagree on the solution and end up increasing the tension: the former's insistence on faith and baptism must confront the charge of undermining the universality of God's salvific will, and the latter's recognition of salvation outside the church must account for the unity of Christ and his body. Somewhat alternatively, the postliberal opts out of the problem by restricting the question of salvation to the cultural-linguistic possibility of accepting or denying the gospel; that is, the reality of salvation through Christ becomes a meaningful question only in a Christian context. So the question about the salvation of non-Christians is postponed indefinitely in this life. "On this view," says George Lindbeck, "there is no damnation—just as there is no salvation—outside the church."[19]

The theologies of religions tend to decide this issue of mediation within a schema that determines the final relationship of Christianity to the religions. The doctrinal tradition, however, does not ask for this kind of determination. Though it rejects the idea of Christianity as a way of salvation among many ways, it does not endorse theories of fulfillment or anonymous Christianity. Nor does it deny all theories of exclusion. The doctrinal tradition does not make a positive judgment about the final relationship between Christianity and the religions. On the contrary, it affirms in truth what theology seeks to understand. On the issue of mediation, John Paul II writes, "It is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for salvation. Both these truths help us to understand the *one mystery of salvation*, so that we can come to know God's mercy and our own responsibility."[20]

The next section discusses the approaches of Jacques Dupuis and Gavin D'Costa in their attempts to explain the mediation of salvation to non-Christians. They develop their proposals against the background of contemporary debates within the theologies of religions, but as Roman Catholic theologians, they are committed to the Catholic tradition's understanding of salvation and the specific issue of mediation that arises within it.

Jacques Dupuis and "No Salvation outside the World"

Jacques Dupuis entered the Society of Jesus in 1941 at the age of 18.[21] He left his Belgian homeland seven years later for missionary work in Calcutta. He lived and

18. See, e.g., the various contributions to *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987).
19. George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1984) 59.
20. *RM* no. 9, emphasis original.
21. Jacques Dupuis, S.J., "My Pilgrimage in Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27 (2003) 168–71, at 168.

taught in India for 36 years before his superiors transferred him in 1984 to the theological faculty at the Gregorian University in Rome. His many years in India profoundly inspired his theology of religions, but more personally than that, these years transformed his self-understanding as a Christian:

> I had gone to India with the prejudices enshrined in our Western civilization and even in our Christian tradition. We thought we were the best, not to say the only ones, where civilization is concerned; we also had it engrained in us that Christianity was the only "true" religion and therefore the only one with an unquestionable right to exist. . . . In the course of time, I came to realize that such a position was untenable and that we would have to revise our premises altogether.[22]

Dupuis's experiences helped him grow beyond a Eurocentric view of the world. He arrived in India with classicist assumptions about Western culture and religion setting the standard for all people. Over time he surrendered those assumptions out of deep appreciation for the Indian reality and the presence of God he found there. On the revision of his premises, he continued:

> The religious traditions of the world did not represent primarily the search of people and peoples for God through their history but the search of God for them. The theology of religions, which was still taking its first steps, would have to make a complete turn from a Christian-centered perspective to one centered on the personal dealings of God with humankind throughout the history of salvation.[23]

Dupuis's work in the theology of religions attempts to explain what he discovered in Calcutta. His growth out of a classicist view of culture allowed him to recognize God's activity in other religions and ways of living. He arrived at two convictions early on: the truth of his faith in Jesus Christ as the universal Savior and "the positive meaning in God's plan of salvation of the other religious traditions and their saving value for their adherents."[24] His theological proposals aim at reconciling these two beliefs. "My entire theological work," he wrote, "has wrestled with the need to overcome the apparent either-or dilemma between these two affirmations and to show that, far from contradicting each other, they are complementary, if one succeeds in going beyond the appearances."[25]

On the issue of mediation, Dupuis unwaveringly affirmed the universality of salvation through Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and apex of God's self-revelation. He proposed a trinitarian Christology and emphasized the divine missions: since the beginning of creation, the divine Word and Spirit are at work in the world for the salvation of all in the mystery of Jesus Christ. The broad sweep of salvation history sets the

22. Ibid. 170.
23. Ibid. See also Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002) 166.
24. Dupuis, "My Pilgrimage in Mission" 170.
25. Ibid.

context for considering the question of religious pluralism. He argued that God's saving action "never prescinds from the Christ-event, in which it finds its highest historical density. Yet the action of the Word of God is not constrained by its historically becoming human in Jesus Christ; nor is the Spirit's work in history limited to its outpouring upon the world by the risen and exalted Christ."[26] On the basis of the immensity of God's love for all people in each time and place, Dupuis proposed a theology of religious pluralism.[27] In other words, he suggested that other religions are expressions of God's salvific activity in the world; they belong to salvation history in principle, not just in fact.[28]

For Dupuis, affirming the saving value of the religions in the unity of the divine plan does not diminish the centrality of Christ.[29] The saving value of the religions stems from the mystery of Christ, but Dupuis also wanted to affirm the uniqueness of their mediations.[30] He wanted to affirm the religions on their own terms, their content, not as crypto-Christian religiosity or merely natural strivings, but as expressions of divine gift and presence in the world. Nor did he think this a very startling conclusion. If God offers the gift of God's-self to all, then religious traditions must express the activity and presence of God within their unique histories. Dupuis asked rhetorically, "Can other religions contain and signify in some fashion God's presence to human beings in Jesus Christ? Does God become present to them in the very practice of their religions? The answer has to be 'yes.'"[31] Related always to the saving mystery of Christ, the religious traditions of the world represent for their adherents "a way and a means of salvation."[32]

No doubt Dupuis jettisoned the ancient axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. He argued that it obscures the meaning of the church's role in the economy of salvation and pointed to Vatican II and the pontificate of John Paul II for support.[33] On the necessity of the church for salvation, Dupuis argued that all people in the world and the religious traditions in particular are oriented to the church as their moral end and final cause. Not identical with the reign of God inaugurated through Christ, the church serves the growth of the reign; it signifies and announces the reign.[34] But other religions in their unique responses to the divine initiative also contribute to the growth of God's reign; their saving value for their adherents allows us to consider them as "substitutionary mediations."[35]

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26. Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997) 316; see also Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 160, 186.
27. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 164.
28. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology* 11.
29. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 181–82.
30. Ibid. 186, 189.
31. Ibid. 188.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid. 203–206.
34. Ibid. 213–17.
35. Ibid. 212.

For Dupuis, the church does not exercise a universal mediation of salvation; its instrumentality is not efficient for all people. He wrote, "While not being in any way members of the Church or subject to its mediation (in the theological sense), the 'others' are necessarily oriented toward it; its causality on their behalf is of the order not of efficiency but of finality."[36] Consequently, he thought it better to say, "No salvation outside the world" (*Extra mundum nulla salus*).[37]

Gavin D'Costa and the Renewal of Exclusivism

Gavin D'Costa describes his personal history as the context that shapes his theological inquiry. Born in Kenya to Indian parents and migrating to England in 1968, he identifies as a lay Roman Catholic for whom religious and cultural pluralism make up part of how he understands his personal story.[38] In the preface to his *Christianity and World Religions*, he says, "I write this book as it reflects the personal, social, and intellectual struggles that constitute me."[39] The realities of pluralism seem to shape his theological method by his attentiveness to the uniqueness of doctrine and its practical demands. D'Costa appreciates postmodern concerns for narrative-specific criteria in theology and draws heavily on the work of William Cavanaugh in his analysis of religion, which he defines as "cultural configurations of power and discipline."[40] He sees doctrine and social practice as tightly interrelated.

D'Costa's approach to the question about salvation for non-Christians focuses largely on clarifying the doctrinal assertions that must condition or shape a coherent theological response.[41] He argues that a theology of religions in the Roman Catholic tradition should affirm the mediation of Christ (*solus Christus*), the instrumentality of the Church (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*), and the necessity of faith in our response to the gospel (*fides ex auditu*).[42] Most significantly, his position rests on the belief that salvation requires an ontological, causal, and epistemological relationship with Christ.[43]

D'Costa did not always see explicit faith as requisite for salvation. His many years of experience in the theologies of religions and related fields have shifted his personal position from structural inclusivism to what he calls "universal access exclusivism."[44] He argues that inclusivist proposals divorce the ontological and epistemological relation to Christ by reducing the minimum requirements of salvation to implicit faith and good works. On inclusivism's portrayal of non-Christians who receive the grace of

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid. 216.
38. Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) ix–x.
39. Ibid. x.
40. Ibid. xii, 75, 52.
41. Ibid. 3–4, 23, 30.
42. Ibid. 23, 25–26, 30.
43. Ibid. 24.
44. Ibid. 44.

salvation, he says, "Ontologically, they have become related to the reality of God through grace, but epistemologically do not know God in the way God has revealed himself so that the lack of unity between the epistemological and ontological is deeply unsatisfactory, for the beatific vision requires both."[45] D'Costa emphasizes the beatific vision as definitive for the meaning of salvation.

So explicit faith (*fides ex auditu*) marks a critical and necessary condition for a theology of religions. If all people are oriented in their ultimate end to eternal beatitude in friendship with the triune God, then salvation must include knowledge of Christ. Revelation, he argues, offers the only means to salvation, and in Jesus we discover the summit and apex of God's self-disclosure. Our salvation thus requires explicit faith in Christ. The religious traditions of the world do not mediate the grace of salvation per se. Though they may play a special role or part in preparing people for the gospel (*preparatio evangelica*), they do not mediate salvation in any way that would parallel the church's mediation. "Explicit faith and baptism," D'Costa says, "are the normal means to salvation; there can be other means as a preparation to salvation, which will eventuate in final salvation."[46]

Such a position raises several questions. How does it agree with Vatican II's repeated affirmations of the universal salvific will of God? How does it account for aspects of the religions that "reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men"?[47] D'Costa recognizes that other religions can offer truth, goodness, and beauty to their adherents, but he also notes the church's emphasis on the "necessity of faith and baptism" for salvation.[48] Of course, he must account for the fate of those who live "inculpably outside the Church," but he proposes a way of answering these questions by using the doctrine of the descent into hell found in the Apostles' Creed.[49]

He begins with what he calls the "limbo of the just" (traditionally known as *limbus patrum*—limbo of the fathers) and argues that it provides the logical or conceptual space for explaining how non-Christians encounter Jesus their Savior before enjoying the beatific vision.[50] So the Buddhist who lives a good life merits by her choices a place with the just in the next life where she meets Christ.[51] The encounter with Christ

45. Ibid. 164; see also 19–25.
46. Ibid. 29. D'Costa restricts to the natural level the *preparatio* status of these means because "salvation entails a specific knowledge and full participation in the life of the triune God."
47. *Nostra aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions no. 2.
48. D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions* 178–79; 162–63.
49. Ibid. 164.
50. Ibid. 166. Traditionally, the speculative hypothesis of this limbo accounts for what happened to good people who died before Christ's resurrection. D'Costa analogically transposes this hypothesis to the contemporary question about the salvation of non-Christians.
51. Entrance into this limbo does not entail a new decision or a postmortem conversion. D'Costa explains, "There must be adequate continuity in the person's life for them to 'qualify' for being present in the limbo of the just" (*Christianity and World Religions* 173).

in limbo satisfies the *fides ex auditu* condition for salvation. The level of purgatory then deepens the transformative encounter with Christ for those who require further purification. The proposal here also preserves the unity of Christ and his body. D'Costa draws on several Church Fathers in suggesting that the apostles and all the faithful share in Christ's descent and preach the gospel to the just in limbo.[52] The Eucharist enacts the descent in the celebration of the Mass and joins all the members of the body to Christ the head in shepherding these deceased to eternal life.[53] Simply put, the church in its liturgy descends with Christ into hell.

D'Costa's proposal explains the necessity of the church for salvation in a way that takes the ancient axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* more at face value. He reads Vatican II as clearly insisting on the unity of Christ and his body and requiring explicit faith for salvation. By using the doctrine of the descent into hell, he adds "universal access" to his exclusivist position.

Foundations and Future Contingents

The discussions of Dupuis and D'Costa illustrate the creative tensions that face any effort at constructing a theology of religions in the Catholic tradition. If Dupuis wanted to account for the saving value and beauty of the religions in the unity of the divine plan, still D'Costa attempts to explain the necessity of the church as the "ordinary means of salvation." Both intentions are needed for contemporary Catholic theology. Both are affirmed in the doctrinal tradition: God accomplishes the salvation of non-Christians partly through elements of their own religious traditions, but in a way that does not threaten or diminish the unity of Christ and his body.[54]

The position I propose for consideration in the remainder of this article begins by setting aside frameworks or schemas that overly determine the relationship of Christianity to the religions. The religions are not reducible to a series of axioms or reified worldviews; they are the living traditions of communities of people and are as incomplete as the history they continue to create. Their final relationship depends on personal and communal responses to the divine initiative in the unique circumstances of their unfolding narratives.[55] In short, the meaning of the final relationship of

52. Ibid. 170.
53. Ibid. 180–86.
54. On the unity of Christ and the church, see the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (hereafter CDF), *Dominus Iesus* (hereafter *DI*), Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church no.16, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents.
55. I believe this perspective is consistent with *DI* no. 14, which, affirming the radical uniqueness and centrality of the Paschal Mystery in relation to the universal salvific will of God, states: "Bearing in mind this article of faith, theology today, in its reflection on the existence of other religious experiences and on their meaning in God's salvific plan, is invited to explore if and in what way the historical figures and positive elements of these religions may fall within the divine plan of salvation."

Christianity to the religions is not in sight. It is a future contingent. It lies outside our grasp. On this point, Frederick Crowe explains:

> If God's "plan" is already in place for us, that is, in the "already" of our "now," then to that extent we are no longer free. And if God has a determinate "plan" in place for Christianity and the world religions, then we will let be what must be. But suppose God has no such plan, suppose that God loves a slow-learning people enough to allow them long ages to learn what they have to learn, suppose that the destiny of the world religions is contingent on what we all learn and do—say, on Christians being authentically Christian, Hindus being authentically Hindu, and so on. Then responsibility returns to us with a vengeance, and the answer to the question of the final relationship of Christianity and the world religions is that there is no answer—yet.[56]

Crowe's comments here allow us to prescind for a moment from the trinitarian and ecclesiological judgments of the doctrinal tradition. Saying that God's plan does not take place in the "already" of our "now" safeguards human freedom and underscores our secondary role as cooperators with divine providence.[57] How salvation unfolds in history depends on our personal and collective responses to the divine initiative in this concrete world order. The importance of Mary's *fiat* to our collective destiny underscores this point. The relationship between Christianity and the religions lies outside our grasp as a future contingent, but very much within our grasp rests our personal responsibility to grow in authenticity and promote the genuineness of our cultural and religious traditions.

Crowe's theological foundations allowed him to arrive at this perspective. He drew on Lonergan's notion of religious experience and explained how the grace of salvation transforms contexts, communities, and persons. Lonergan basically presupposed the universality of this grace, but for two rather different reasons.[58] On the one hand, as a Catholic theologian, he accepted the universality of God's salvific will as a matter of straightforward Roman Catholic doctrine.[59] On the other hand, he suggested that comparative studies in religion attest to the appropriation of this gift within the histories, manners, and styles of the different cultural and religious traditions. In other words, the patterns of history offer the basis for affirming the universal scope of grace.

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56. Frederick E. Crowe, "Lonergan's Universalist View of Religion," in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1989) 111–41, at 141.
57. Such a perspective undercuts the conceptualism of middle-knowledge arguments that leave the salvation of non-Christians to God's knowledge of their response to the gospel in another possible world.
58. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," in *A Second Collection*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1975) 149–63, at 155.
59. *LG* no. 16; *GS* no. 22. Consider also John Paul II's emphasis on the concreteness of the gift: "The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all" (*RM* no. 10).

Lonergan's theological foundations are vital to this second point. He defined grace at the foundational level in phenomenological rather than theological terms. So he spoke of religious experience as the "dynamic state of being in love unrestrictedly" rather than "sanctifying grace," but he also recognized a merely notional difference between these concepts.[60] Most importantly, the phenomenological category functions as a heuristic, a principle of discovery. It helps us in its interaction with data to discern the presence of grace in diverse contexts, cultures, and communities, but it does not decide symbolic or theological content. The heuristic status of the category requires emphasis.[61] The referent pertains to the structure of consciousness rather than to how people appropriate what they apprehend and communicate in a particular time and place. So this category prescinds from doctrines of grace and God, but it defines the normative elements of intentionality that would relate those doctrines to the interior life. A phenomenological category of religious experience does not neglect history or deny the particularity of cultural and religious expressions and claims to knowledge. On the contrary, this approach immerses us in historical contingencies; it recognizes the interpenetration of the patterns of creativity and healing in social life, and it enables us to interpret various religious expressions and to learn from them.

The heuristic notion of religious experience suggests that growth in grace occurs as a learning process in cooperation with others.[62] Not reducible to categorical content, religious experience refers to a range of conscious data on a process of growth, which may include a subtle or abrupt change-of-life direction. Such growth begins with unrestricted loving, a love greater than any we can manufacture, and it deepens our apprehension of value and commitment to virtue. Such growth has the ability to reverse the power of evil and create new beginnings in personal and social life. Crowe's suggestion that our actions largely condition the destiny of the world religions emphasizes collective responsibility for embracing this learning process. His comment quoted above does not imply a judgment of incommensurability, an a priori approval of ways to salvation, or an implicit assumption about a hierarchy of religions. Rather, he suggests that we need to keep learning, growing in authenticity (however difficult and precarious that path), and that we should start from where we stand and not prejudge the matter.

Of course, judgments are important for a theology of religions. Neither Crowe nor Lonergan diminish the necessity and value of judgment in theology, especially for dogma, but they begin with a clear understanding of how doctrines and their

60. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) 107.
61. James Fredericks associates Lonergan's thought with a "liberal notion of religious experience," which Fredericks criticizes. The heuristic status of Lonergan's category of religious experience precludes this association, however. See James Fredericks, "A Universal Religious Experience? Comparative Theology as an Alternative to a Theology of Religions," *Horizons* 22 (1995) 67–87, at 76.
62. For more on this process of growth, see Jeremy D. Wilkins, "Grace and Growth: Aquinas, Lonergan, and the Problematic of Habitual Grace," *Theological Studies* 72 (2011) 723–49.

systematic exposition presuppose theological foundations. Different foundations lead to different appropriations and interpretations of church teaching.

D'Costa appreciates postliberal emphases on difference and discontinuity among cultural-linguistic fields and recognizes the need for a rational dialectics that builds bridges by analogy.[63] His approach to the question of salvation for non-Christians begins by identifying the dogmatic content of the question. He then asserts the doctrinal premises or conditions that structure a theological response. His belief that dogma decides this question as an issue of exclusivity largely determines the shape of his proposal: the postmortem encounter with the gospel for non-Christians makes sense of ecclesial instrumentality on the one hand, and the universal salvific will of God on the other. Of course, the conviction about the dogmatic nature of the question and its decisively exclusive content is not itself dogma.

D'Costa's proposal depends on a string of suppositions: the meaning of salvation is the beatific vision, vision entails knowledge of Christ, and thus saving grace requires an encounter with the gospel. The nexus here makes revelation in Christ and salvation nearly identical. Is this identity necessary?[64] Consider how Aquinas distinguishes sanctifying grace (the grace that makes us pleasing to God), the theological virtues, and vision.[65] Sanctifying grace resides in the essence of the soul as an absolutely supernatural entitative habit; it is possessed *gratis*, as a free gift. Habitual grace does not occur without charity, and charity attains God *uti in se est* (as God is in God's self) in this life.[66] So if we recognize the possibility for people outside the church to love with the habit of charity, then we acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and their attainment of the divine nature.[67] Lonergan's heuristic notion of

63. D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions* 51–53.
64. For various reasons, some of which I state above, I do not think so. Gerald O'Collins, S.J., also contends, "Salvation and revelation can and should be distinguished, but should never be separated" (*Salvation for All: God's Other Peoples* [New York: Oxford University, 2008] vi).
65. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) 1–2, q. 110, a. 2; q. 113, a. 1.
66. *ST* 1–2, q. 67, a. 6. On the love for God of the blessed in heaven, Lonergan wrote, "This love in heaven is specifically the same love as in this life, according to St. Paul: 'Love never ceases' (1 Corinthians 13.8)" (*Early Latin Theology*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour [Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011] 69). If D'Costa would grant that adherents of other religions could by God's grace love with the gift of charity in this life, then his version of exclusivism would not differ greatly from many inclusivist proposals. Saying that salvation is not complete or final until we know God "face to face" applies to all human persons, not just those outside the church.
67. For Aquinas, the infused virtue of charity depends on an apprehension of God by faith (*ST* 2–2, q. 4, a. 7). Arguably, his understanding of faith still allows for the kind of development that Lonergan proposed (i.e., the reversal of the Scholastic adage: nothing is loved unless it is first known [see *Method* 122]), because grace operates first by reorienting the will, and this reorientation allows a person to hear and draw near to God (*ST* 1–2, q. 111, a. 2; *ST* 1–2, q. 112, a. 2).

religious experience helps us discern this presence; it does not rule out the possibility by dogmatic or metaphysical necessity.[68]

The distinction between faith and vision has its basis in the structure of the human intellect: faith apprehends the truths of revelation, but in the diminished way that yet anticipates *quidditative* knowledge of God in the next life. So love is greater than faith, as the apostle says (1 Cor 13:13). Still, some insist on faith in Christ. Of course, the thrust of the subject in faith (*fides qua*) does not occur without the content of faith (*fides quae*); but the light of faith (*lumen fidei*) can inform acts with lesser objects than the truths of revelation.[69] So no metaphysical necessity weds faith exclusively to the gospel's proclamation. O'Collins suggests that a careful reading of Hebrews 11:1–12:27 allows us to look outside the church for a faith that genuinely responds to the presence and call of God in history.[70] On this score, Lonergan distinguishes faith and belief as principle and object: by the apprehension of transcendent value, which he also calls "knowledge born of religious love," we can discern God's self-disclosures as communicated in religious beliefs.[71] The differences here with D'Costa's proposal are primarily foundational rather than doctrinal or dogmatic.

D'Costa acknowledges that adherents of other religions can attain truth, goodness, and beauty within their traditions, but he restricts the grace of salvation to their response to the gospel. Such a restriction may allow him to explain the necessity of the church for salvation, but arguably it does not adequately account for other teachings—for example, the work of the Holy Spirit outside the church in this life and the corporate significance of grace. Aquinas argued that in our fallen state we require grace for the attainment of our connatural and supernatural ends. His argument undercuts the Pelagian objection to the necessity of grace for regular performance of the good. A proposal that recognizes any sustained attainment of truth, goodness, and holiness outside the church requires concomitant recognition of the *habitus* that makes us pleasing to God.[72] Lonergan's phenomenological approach helps us discern the

68. For a clear statement on the saving activity of the Holy Spirit in various cultures and traditions, see John Paul II's "The Spirit Is Present and Active in Every Time and Place" (*RM* no. 28–29); see also *GS* no. 22: "Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery in a manner known to God."
69. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate* q. 12, a. 12, ad 6m; see also q. 9, a. 1, ad 18m; *ST* 1 q. 12, a. 13, ad2m; Lonergan, *Early Latin Theology* 123.
70. O'Collins, *Salvation for All* 252–59.
71. Lonergan, *Method* 115–19.
72. On this point, Lonergan's distinction between the question of principle and the question of fact concerning natural knowledge of God is instructive. The church affirmed natural knowledge of God at Vatican I (*Dei Filius*), but Lonergan argued that its actual attainment in our postlapsarian state requires grace. His theological foundations allow him to distinguish religious, moral, and intellectual conversions as distinct phases of a single achievement in self-transcendence for the human person. See "Natural Knowledge of God," in *A Second Collection*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1975) 117–33, at 130, 133.

elements of grace and holiness in other religions and affirm the in-breaking of God's reign in this life.

Lonergan's foundations allow us to avoid completely identifying the grace of salvation with conceptual knowledge of Christ. His heuristic notion of religious experience does not of itself include knowledge of God or grace, and any suggestion of correspondence or transposition with these concepts requires a series of judgments that move us beyond foundations and into doctrines. Clarifying our foundations allows us to exercise methodical control over our judgments with doctrines as well as with our systematic understanding of the truths we affirm.

Dupuis's foundations led to his judgment against the efficient instrumentality of the church in the salvation of non-Christians.[73] He observed that religious experience shapes and informs the ritual, art, sacred texts, and sacraments of other religions. His argument rests on this anthropological foundation. Since people express their religious experience historically and socially, he concluded, their religions are the means of their salvation. He then unfolded the implication: if other religious traditions mediate salvation (however incompletely and imperfectly), if they genuinely reflect God's saving action in the lives of their adherents, then final rather than efficient causality must account for the mediation of the church.

Is this conclusion necessary? Dupuis distinguished his argument from fulfillment theories that recognize the salvation of the adherents of other religions and deny the saving value of their traditions. He dismissed this distinction as "theologically infeasible."[74] But does religious expression always entail a supernatural value or revelation?[75] Are genuine religious expressions also unique supernatural means of

73. The CDF identified this point in its notification on *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*: "it must be firmly believed that the Church is a sign and instrument of salvation for all people" (CDF, "Notification" no. 6), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents. For an incisive discussion of Dupuis's work and his critics, including D'Costa, see Gerald O'Collins, S.J., "Jacques Dupuis: The Ongoing Debate," *Theological Studies* 74 (2013) 632–54, esp. 640–48.

74. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 186–88, at 188. Dupuis sought to avoid "mistakenly drawing an undue separation between personal, subjective religious life and objective religious tradition—made up of words, rites, and sacraments—in which that life finds expression" (*Christianity and the Religions* 188). He emphasized that religious traditions possess "saving value" for their adherents. I do not disagree, but I also do not see the entailment of Dupuis's conclusion about the status of other religions as "substitutionary mediations." God is present in all things, but that truth does not *in principle* elevate other religions beyond the sacramentality of ordinary living. Nor does it rule out the instrumentality of the church.

75. Dupuis thought of the religions as uniquely mediating divine revelation. "The various religious traditions contain elements of divine revelation and moments of divine grace, even though these remain incomplete and open to a fuller self-gift and disclosure on the part of God" (Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 193).

salvation?[76] Jean Daniélou recognized that God has chosen people outside the covenant ("holy pagans") to play a special part in the divine plan.[77] Serving as an instrument of God's saving action need not entail a revelation analogous to what Judaism and Christianity contain and communicate. Of course, we also need not entirely exclude the possibility, either. The idea of sacramentality suggests that God uses created realities as instruments of grace, that we especially mediate God's love to one another. How do various religious practices differ from the rituals of ordinary living that mediate divine mercy? How do they differ from a loving parent, an authentic friend, or a patient teacher? Dupuis's argument seems to insist on a distinction, but the fact of religious experience does not entail a judgment; the question requires historical study and dialogue.

Robert Doran's proposal for a "world theology" or a "theology for a world church" explains a methodical approach to this question. He suggests that theology must mediate "from data to results" the meanings of a "worldwide community of men and women responding to what Christians know as the third divine Person . . . poured out in the hearts of all by the gift of the triune God to all."[78] The scope of theology expands with our recognition of the universal presence of the Holy Spirit. Such expansion mitigates the tendency toward a priori decisions about the religions and compels us to meet them on their own terms. Such expansion anticipates our growth in faith by the deepening of our understanding of the Christian mysteries in the broad compass of history. So a "world theology" must avoid the classicist assumption that our (ecclesial) culture sets the standard for the reign of God and embrace the possibility for something new to emerge in the life of the church.[79] The possibility of this emergence and growth depends all the more vitally on what the community of faith affirms: the centrality of the Incarnation in human history (*et propter nostram salutem*) and the church's instrumentality. The next section returns to the problem of mediation.

The Divine Missions and Ecclesial Mediation

The necessity of the church for salvation expresses the importance of human cooperation with the divine initiative and the corporate significance of grace. God does not

76. Dupuis was not uncritical here. He proposed *agape* as the criterion by which to discern elements of revelation and grace in the sacred texts and practices of other religions; see *Christianity and the Religions* 192.

77. Jean Daniélou, *Holy Pagans of the Old Testament*, trans. Felix Faber (London: Longmans, Green, 1957); see also O'Collins, *Salvation for All* 199–206.

78. Robert M. Doran, "Essays in Systematic Theology 36: Functional Specialties for a World Theology," in *Essays in Systematic Theology: An E-Book* (2010) 14, http://www.lonerganresource.com/book.php?1.

79. Though there is an "intimate connection" among Christ, the church, and the kingdom of God, "the kingdom of God—even if considered in its historical phase—is not identified with the Church in her visible and social reality" (*DI* no. 19). The church is called to renewal and ongoing conversion: "The church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal" (*LG* no. 8).

save us without us, as Augustine said, and the sacramental life of the church gives sensible expression to our collective response to the gift of God's love in Christ Jesus.[80] So the necessity of the church has a foundation in who we are and in how our humanity conditions our relationship with the triune God. Cyprian warned schismatics of their dire fate because he understood the splitting of the church as a sin against charity. Our salvation entails cooperation with the unifying love of Christ, for charity reconciles all people with God and one another. Entrance into the church through baptism signals our collaboration in this new creation that God establishes through Christ and his Spirit. Saying "no salvation outside the church" for Cyprian meant that we neither achieve our salvation on our own nor participate in it by fracturing our communion in Christ. The church is a sign: love unites.

Sullivan's historical analysis demonstrates the importance of changes in culture for how we understand the necessity of the church for salvation. The discovery of the New World, for example, led to a shift in perspective within the church; it occasioned the trust that God's mercy had known the indigenous peoples of the Americas long before. Such a shift indicates a cultural change or expansion of a horizon, not a change of doctrine. Similar expansions continue today in our context of religious pluralism, and theology must keep pace. The shift from a classicist to an empirical concept of culture challenges a community of faith that recognizes the universal presence of the Holy Spirit and affirms the necessity of the church for salvation.

If non-Christians do not formally belong, or even intend to belong, to the church, how do they and their salvation relate to it? The answer must preserve the unity of salvation as well as the importance of human cooperation. These elements are key to explaining the dynamics of grace and the necessity of the church. On the theoretical level, our answer must accomplish what Philip the Cancellor's use of the analogy of nature achieved for the theology of grace in the thirteenth century; that is, it must provide an explanatory (rather than descriptive) account of how grace completes and perfects nature, but now the focus shifts from the individual person to the ordered totality of graced relations in the broad sweep of human history. The question about salvation here pertains primarily to a new order of being and relationship, what Lonergan identified as "the proximate end" of the divine missions. If the communication of the divine good itself in the beatific vision marks the ultimate end of the divine missions, still the proximate end refers to the restoration and elevation of the whole created order.[81] The interpersonal reality of salvation encompasses all creation and unfolds gradually through the history of human affairs. The analogy of the human good of order provides the explanatory key; it allows us to explain the heuristic structure of salvation as an absolutely supernatural order.[82]

80. "He who created you without you will not justify you without you" (Augustine, *Sermon* 169.11.13; cited in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour [Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007] 485).

81. Lonergan, *Triune God* 495.

82. Lonergan explained: "The order is supernatural because the love in which we are caught up is the divine love that is really proper to the divine persons" (*Triune God* 483 n. 48).

Lonergan discussed this analogy in the final chapter of his systematic treatise on the Trinity: "Five elements come together to constitute the human good of order: (1) a certain number of persons, (2) cognitive and appetitive habits, (3) many coordinated operations among many persons, (4) a succession and series of particular goods, and (5) interpersonal relationships."[83] These elements heuristically account for the constituents of a variety of human orders—for example: the family, economy, polity, technology, science, culture, and religion. Each order brings together the elements of human collaboration for securing the ongoing realization of a series of particular goods.

The process of human collaboration in any order entails the choosing of the order itself, and this choice brings about and strengthens interpersonal relationships. In other words, choosing the good for someone expresses love for them, but choosing the good of order entails love for all who benefit from the order. So the order leads to interpersonal relations.[84] But interpersonal relations also claim priority in the realization of the order; for example, in a loving family, the members want to communicate particular goods to one another; they gladly cooperate and want to overcome their personal limitations and defects in view of developing the habits necessary for making their cooperation more stable and effective; "and so, supposing the union of love, all the other things follow that make for the good of order, as is most plainly seen in marriage."[85]

Lonergan used this analogy in his explanation of the economy of salvation. He underscored the corporate significance of what the divine missions accomplish in the ordered totality of salvation history. He applied each element of the analogy to this absolutely supernatural order, which includes: (1) many persons—"since Christ died for all"; (2) cognitive and appetitive habits—"since the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit flow from sanctifying grace"; (3) many coordinated operations—"since Christians live a new life and love one another"; (4) successions and series of particular goods—"since new life in Christ constantly produces benefits" (e.g., preaching the gospel, sacrifice, ordained ministry, sacraments); and personal relationships—"since Christians love one another as Christ has loved them."[86]

The heuristic structure of this supernatural order offers an explanatory perspective on the unity of salvation. It identifies the constitutive elements of collaboration in a human–divine interpersonal situation. The missions of the Son and Spirit aim less at

83. Ibid. 493.

84. The human good of order can suffer from a variety of defects. The economy, for example, can systematically disadvantage and deprive large portions of the population. The element of interpersonal relations makes this injustice more than a systemic problem or deficiency; it becomes a matter of moral failure and sin.

85. Lonergan, *Triune God* 495.

86. Ibid. 495–97. See also Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Redemption: A Supplement to De Verbo Incarnato*, trans. Michael G. Shields (unpublished), chap. 6 a. 43. For excellent commentary on this text, see John Volk, "Lonergan on the Historical Causality of Christ: An Interpretation of 'The Redemption: A Supplement to *De Verbo Incarnato*'" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2011).

accomplishing work and more at establishing and strengthening interpersonal relationships, because the end of the missions requires human cooperation.[87] Lonergan noted that elements constituting the good of order are the same elements that constitute personal presence. He defined the "state of grace" as an interpersonal situation or context established among divine and human persons. The dynamics of grace are not individualistic. The supernatural order of the body of Christ signals collective entrance into a saving relationship with the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. The body embraces people in their togetherness, not in isolation.

The structure helps us make sense of the universal presence of the Holy Spirit and the necessity of the church for salvation. Salvation embraces all creation. It makes the unity of the supernatural order coextensive with the unity of the universe.[88] The Holy Spirit brings about the cognitive and appetitive habits that ground the many coordinated operations of a life transformed in unrestricted loving. Such activity of the Spirit occurs in various cultures and religions and its redemptive effects gradually develop (albeit precariously and dialectically) over time, initiating and strengthening new personal relations, but without Christ and his marriage to the church this pattern of healing and redemption in history lacks its integrating intelligibility. The many particular goods that flow from this new life for Christians are integral for the order as a whole. The liturgy of the Eucharist has a special place in this order because in it Christ sacrifices, merits, and intercedes for all people. The church's indispensability to this order helps us make sense of the necessity of the church in the unity of salvation, but as an integrating element it does not act as an efficient cause. The necessity of the church on this account belongs to the intelligibility of this gradually-developing supernatural order that has Christ as its principal member (Col 1:18).[89] The very meaning of the economy of salvation requires the church.

This explanatory perspective sets the context for interpreting the church's instrumentality. The liturgy takes priority here as well. Sullivan suggests that as a priestly people the church offers prayers and penance for the salvation of the world.[90] There are indications that Lonergan's thought agrees with this proposal; for example, he writes, "Insofar as our human choices are connected with the antecedent gifts of grace, both habitual and actual, we can cooperate by imploring the Father by prayer and penance to bestow abundant graces to strengthen and increase the Body of Christ."[91] The

87. Lonergan, *Triune God* 485.
88. On the unity of the universe, see Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (1957; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992) 533–34. The actual unity of the universe is the immanent intelligibility of the order, which Lonergan identified with a "generalized emergent probability." Aquinas recognized the order of the universe as "the highest good existing in things" and as participating in "the divine goodness more perfectly" and representing it "better than any single creature whatever" (*ST* 1, q. 15, a.2; q. 47, a.1); see also Lonergan, *Redemption*, chap. 6, a. 44.
89. Lonergan explained the supernatural solution to the problem of evil in human history as a harmonious continuation with the actual order of this universe; see *Insight* 720.
90. Sullivan, *Church We Believe In* 126–28; *Salvation Outside the Church?* 157–60.
91. Lonergan, *Early Latin Theology* 371.

instrumental causality of the church represents an instance of the general theory of application, which explains how God acts through secondary causes (*Deus omnia applicat*, God applies all things). God uses the church at worship as an instrument in mediating salvation to the world, and as O'Collins notes, "it is precisely the (efficient) causality of love that is at work."[92] He enriches Sullivan's proposal by emphasizing the church's love for others: "The church at worship prays for the salvation and well-being of all people, because she regards them with love."[93]

Efficient causality, however, does not exhaust the meaning of the redemption as means. The interdependence of all the parts of the body of Christ in the supernatural order of salvation implies that what God brings about in Christ also occurs in his body. Such occurrence happens not as the effect of extrinsic causality (efficient or exemplary), but according to the mutual coherence and interdependence of the body with Christ the head.[94] Here the objectivity of the redemption as means takes on a decidedly subjective track, for Christ merited, sacrificed, and interceded out of love for all people. He died for us and not for himself. The love of Christ unites us to him as head of the body and all its members (2 Cor 5:14–15).[95] Not negating the extrinsic causality of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, the redemption of all people also occurs in virtue of the unity of the supernatural order, the body of Christ.

The activity of the Holy Spirit brings about participation in this absolutely supernatural order in diverse contexts and circumstances. Non-Christians are neither formally nor anonymously part of the church, but they participate in the supernatural order of salvation, the constitution of which requires the church. Since the Holy Spirit initiates this order in all communities, times, and places, no a priori necessity precludes the possibility that religions mediate salvific grace to their adherents. Such mediation does not negate the instrumentality of the church; in many ways we can predicate efficient causality of the divine missions and secondary causes. Still, the significance and meaning of the religions within the broad compass of the divine plan for human history remains a future contingent. Salvation has its permanent expression in the sacramental life of the church, for there our interpersonal relations with the triune God become visible, but the church's growth in its understanding of the mysteries of salvation compels the faithful to discern the unified movement of God's salvific action within the diversity and richness of the religions and their unique histories. The ongoing expansion of the supernatural order of salvation allows Christians to say "Our Father" with confidence that all people and communities are brought by the Spirit of Christ into the unity of one body.[96]

92. O'Collins, "Jacques Dupuis" 642–43.
93. Ibid. 643.
94. Lonergan, *Redemption* chap. 6, a. 41.
95. See also Balthasar, *Action* 389–90.
96. *LG* no. 17 lends support here with its acknowledgment of Christ as head for all people: "In this way the Church both prays and labors in order that the entire world may become the People of God, the Body of the Lord and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and that in Christ, the Head of all, all honor and glory may be rendered to the Creator and Father of the Universe." See also Anthony J. Kelly, C.Ss.R., "'The Body of Christ: Amen!' The Expanding Incarnation," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010) 792–816.

Conclusion

The interpersonal reality of the supernatural order of salvation does not supplant or violate the structure of the human good.[97] Grace always restores and perfects nature; that truth applies to individual persons as well as to the various orders of human cooperation in society and culture.[98] Lonergan recognized the interpenetration of creative and healing vectors in history. The self-transcendence of human persons in their natural orientation to truth, goodness, and beauty generates progress in social, cultural, and religious life; and the healing effects of religious experience penetrate these achievements. Such healing offsets the widespread decline that originates with the manifold forms of bias. Lonergan's foundations emphasize the communal significance of grace within the ordered totality of concrete human living. The heuristic status of these foundations orients us to history in its broad, unfolding scope and in Christian community to mutually life-giving relationships with all people in the task of building up the body of Christ.

On the necessity of the church for salvation, John Paul II observes: "In order to operate, saving grace requires an adhesion, a cooperation, a 'yes' to God's self-gift, and such adhesion is, at least implicitly, oriented toward Christ and the church. Hence, it is also possible to say *sine ecclesia nulla salus*—'without the church there is no salvation.'"[99] The heuristic structure of the supernatural order allows us to explain the distinction and inseparability of the church and the reign of God on earth.[100] It allows us to explain how the immanent intelligibility of the reign requires the church and thus relates the salvation of all to the sacramental life of the eucharistic community. It allows us to explain the unity of salvation as an order that also constitutes a state of grace, an interpersonal situation of divine and human persons. Such an order or state allows us to recognize the Holy Spirit's life-giving presence outside faith and baptism and yet affirm that "without the church there is no salvation."[101]

97. Neil Ormerod explains how Lonergan's scale of values complicates the analogy of nature and enhances its explanatory value. See "The Grace–Nature Distinction and the Future of Systematic Theology," forthcoming in *Theological Studies*.
98. Doran's use of the scale of values in his recent proposals for a theology of social grace, especially in the context of religious pluralism and dialogue, are remarkably fruitful in this area; they set the horizon for interreligious collaboration and discernment; see his *Essays in Systematic Theology* nos. 34, 35, 37.
99. John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 1, 1995, p 4; cited in Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 205.
100. Christiaan Mostert, "The Kingdom Anticipated: The Church and Eschatology," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 13 (2011) 25–37, argues for a renewed sense of the church as an eschatological reality. Lonergan's use of the analogy of the good of order makes possible an explanatory account of the church's relation to the kingdom of God.
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