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Raymond J. Jirran

A. *Introduction*

No element of Western life has so internalized the acceptance of authority as Christianity. The basis of this acceptance has been the conviction that Jesus was God, became man, and entered history. The framework of this thought has become a thesis which contemporary academicians find difficult to accept.

Philosophers do not all agree in the first place that there is a God and in the second place theologians do not all agree that Jesus was God. In this way, it happens that historians leave the central issue to churches and to the special faiths of individual students. Dr. Jirran is comfortable with that canon or rule. The course goal for this lesson is **to evaluate the impact of religion on civilization through a consideration of early Christianity**. On the fact of religion, at least, scholars do agree. Students should be careful to read the assignment.

Between 1992 and 1999, the professor learned to express the assertions in the above two paragraphs as the truth versus politics conundrum. The professor is comfortable identifying the crossover issue between church and state as that between truth and politics. The principle that truth is to determine politics applies to church and state, both. The difference is that in a well-ordered society, the church is more able to reserve judgment than is the state.

B. *From the Beginning to Constantine*

1. Background

After Alexander the Great conquered the Near East, Palestine was ruled at different times by the Ptolomies and the Seleucids (see lu' sids). In 168 B.C., a Seleucid king ordered the Jewish temple dedicated to the worship of Zeus. This eventually led to a revolt under Judas Maccabaeus where, by 142 B.C., the Seleucid king was forced to recognize Jewish independence. Later, when the Jews fell to fighting among themselves, Pompey, the Roman general, was invited to end the civil war by annexing Palestine in 63 B.C. But the Jews remained the one people the Romans were never able to pacify.

2. Jesus

The Roman Senate appointed Herod King of Judea from 37 to 4 B.C. This means that, when the Christian calendar was written by Dionysius Exiguus, a Sythian (a territory in what is now Romania)¹, in 550 A.D., an error was made in the calculation of the birth of Jesus. Shortly after the death of Herod, Judea became a minor Roman province ruled by governors called procurators. Under Pontius Pilate, procurator from 26 to 36 A.D., Jesus was crucified.

Scientists have been having fun with the Star of Bethlehem. Scholars used to suggest that Jesus was born in 4 B.C. Now scholars would suggest 3 B.C., at least some time between September 14, 3 B.C. and May 8, 2 B.C. At that time Venus, Jupiter, and Regulus were lined up in a rare configuration calling attention to astrologers.² I like the idea that the Magi saw a change in

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the Constellation Leo, which represented Judah in the night sky. That led the Magi first to Jerusalem, then to Bethlehem.³

Always uneasy under Roman rule, the Jews staged a violent revolution in 66 A.D. In retaliation, in 70 A.D., Jerusalem was destroyed and, with it, the Jewish state. Only in 1948 with the Republic of Israel was this unit reinstated.

Apparently there is a paradox in the teachings of Jesus concerning freedom, freedom, which is such a precious value in the U.S.A. Freedom is an idea foreign to the sayings and parables of Jesus. For Jesus, only God has a right to absolute freedom. This notwithstanding, the authentic sayings and parables of Jesus all pertained to human existence and in particular to the form of existence of free persons.⁴ An area of interest is the statement: "Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.'"⁵

Jesus had useful insights about freedom. Both he and John the Baptist offended their contemporaries because they lived as free men. Jesus understood the kingdom of God as the power revealed in free persons. The Our Father originated as a petition of Jesus and his eating and drinking companions for freedom.

3. Rome

Persecutions of Christians were rare in both time and space throughout the empire. Once started, the persecutions never lasted very long. Emperor Decius instigated the first widespread campaign against the Christians in 250, and the last was by Diocletian and his successors, 303-313, mentioned by Chambers in the seventh edition on page 158, column 1, paragraph 1, lines 1-3 and page 162, column 1, line 1.⁶ In 311, Emperor Galerius issued an Edict of Toleration that legalized Christianity in the East.

C. Conclusion

The course goal for Topic 13 is to evaluate the impact of religion on civilization through a consideration of early Christianity. The student is to use criteria of the people, places, and times involved and the degree of certitude warranted. The student is to do this by studying the Introduction, From the Beginning to Constantine, The Christian Difference, and this Conclusion. The student is reminded to read, study, and think.

Supplement

D. From the Beginning to Constantine

3. Rome (continued)

While the Jews were not destined to gain control over the Middle Ages, Christianity, the offshoot of Judaism, did. Under Roman rule, neither Jews nor Christians were in a position to either grant or

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deny freedom to others. The Roman Empire practiced freedom of religion and under it, Christianity was able to get a foothold. The difficulty was a state ceremony in which the king was recognized as a god. What was involved was the simple act of offering--burning some incense. It turned out that the Christians would rather themselves burn than so recognize the Emperor. The Roman Emperors in turn saw this as an affront to their dignity, not as a theological matter, but as a civil matter, which threatened the state. For this reason, persecutions of the Christians took place.⁷

Two years later, in 313, after the 311 Edict of Toleration, Constantine (prefer "teen" to "tine") issued the Edict of Milan, which legalized Christianity throughout the empire and put it on a par with all the pagan cults. By 395, the end of the reign of Emperor Theodosius, Christianity was the only official state religion. Some Protestants regard this legalization of the Catholic Church as a betrayal of the spiritual mission of Christianity. A church so closely aligned with the power of the state lost the ability to insist, as worded in the 1992 edition of this lecture, that it was truth, which was to determine politics, rather than politics, truth.

E. Introduction

Relationships between Christians and non-Christians are as difficult as many of the other closed areas already treated. "Closed area" is a term used by social scientists to indicate topics unsuited to polite conversation. Closed area topics, however, are permissible focuses for academic examination.

Religious issues tend to be soft-pedaled in textbooks so as not to give offense. The professor prefers to treat issues according to the needs of the students, rather than according to the requirements of political correctness. As a general pattern, in these closed areas better minds consider all of the relevant arguments and then reserve judgment insofar as is reasonable. The professor tries to ensure that the arguments are at least presented. Suggestions for offering the arguments with greater sensitivity for the feelings of the students are eagerly sought by the professor.

F. The Christian Difference

1. Suffering

Suffering was a source of strain in Western society. As the goal of Hellenic ethical philosophy had been human happiness through the acceptance of fate, the goal of the Christian life was happiness through human effort to fulfill an obligation to God. This made secular failure acceptable and enabled humans to face reality which Christian theology eventually presented in the language of Greek philosophy and Roman Law. Some have said that this acceptance of Greek and Roman modes of thought has again limited rather than expanded the horizons of the Christian potential. Others disagree.

Christianity was based not only on a theory but also on a personality where the whole organization of the personality of the believer took place with the adoption of a new ethical response. Theological rationalizations came after the acceptance of the personality of Jesus had already

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taken root. In the Twelfth Century, the figurative interpretation of the Bible, used during the patristic age, became engaged with the canons of reason. As the Bible was re-examined, "when the medieval scholar talked to a Rabbi he felt that he was telephoning to the Old Testament."⁸ Such theological rationalizations did not cause that acceptance of the personality of Jesus. In other words, acceptance came before theology.

There is a difference between the way Jews were treated and theoretical developments. As one scholar put it, "Baptizing Aristotle meant anathematizing Jews."⁹ Jews knew what Christians meant and Jews rejected the notion that Jesus was either God or the Messiah. The situation did not come to a head until the Twelfth-century Renaissance when Christians were reducing their creeds to political ramifications through the use of logic and Aristotle. Christians used Aristotle to assume that Jews were less than human for lacking the logic to recognize Jesus as the Christ. It took several hundred years, but about 1390 Christians began losing their tolerance of the Jewish presence and began expelling Jews from their territories.

This willingness to expel the Jews was also associated with stronger urban economies and a lessening need by Christians on Jewish credit. Scholarship will begin to pay more attention to the development of anti-Semitism and the greater humanism associated with both the Twelfth-Century Renaissance and the High Renaissance, two centuries later.¹⁰ The professor notes that anthropologists at the beginning of the Twentieth Century were both the chief advocates and adversaries of racism. The professor expects that just as tension between truth and politics resolved the early Twentieth Century tension, so that same tension resolved the tensions associated with anti-Semitism after many centuries of intellectual struggle.

For Christians some suffering was acceptable because worthy of eternal life, while other suffering was unacceptable because worthy of eternal damnation. The idea of hell based on ideas of death and justice can be traced a thousand years before Jesus. Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greco-Roman views contribute to the development of a concept of hell. Origin (158? -253?), mentioned in the seventh edition of Chambers on page 162, column 2, 9th last line, taught that after sufficient reparation, hell would end. St. Augustine (354-430), mentioned on the next page, taught the suffering would be eternal.¹¹

The Christian difference from prior concepts of hell was that a God of absolute justice administered hell. God knew both everything and who had died in expiation for human sins. The Christian God and Christian hell were both absolutely just. Belief in Jesus enabled one to avoid judgment. Lack of faith, therefore, became a real menace for all non-believers.¹²

The student should pay special note to Palestine, Asia, Cyprus, Syria, Crete, Macedonia, Numidia, Cyrenaica on "Map 5.1 The Roman Empire 14 C.E.--284" on page 119;¹³ the Wall of Hadrian, Dacia, Thrace, Cappadocia on "Map 5.2 The Roman Empire A.D. 14-284," on page 133,¹⁴ Tours, Corinth, Ephesus, Tarsus, Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem on "Map 5.5 The Spread of Christianity" on page 152; and Corinth, Ephesus, Tarsus, Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem on "Map 5.6 The Journeys of St. Paul" in the seventh edition of Chambers.¹⁵

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2. Structure

Christianity defended itself from politics with the mantle of truth. That truth was entrusted to a monepiscopacy, that is, one bishop per diocese. That truth was also entrusted to the formation of a Christian canon of scripture. Chambers refers to this canon in the seventh edition on page 160, column 1, paragraph 3, line 2. Finally, the truth was reduced to creeds as rules of faith. These three institutions: creeds, the Bible as we know it, and the episcopacy have carried the institutional Church to the present.¹⁶

3. The Historical Jesus

With all of the emphasis the professor places on truth, something must be offered about the historicity of Jesus. Did Jesus exist? Of course he did. Have some questioned the existence of an historical Jesus? Yes. The professor regards the question seriously, but not the existence of Jesus, either historically or in the souls, hearts, and minds of people.

The professor sees the problem in different perceptions of historical truth. First, there is an important sense that what is important is what we believe happened rather than what actually happened. All of us have to accept our parentage on faith. We, furthermore, realize that maternal parentage is much more certain than paternal parentage. We rarely, all of that notwithstanding, question whether our parents are really our parents. The nature of the Gospels is of similar ilk. The very word gospel means good news. When one is giving good news, one concentrates on the news value, rather than on the historical value of what is transmitted.

When the professor views global interest in history, the way we in the United States share that interest, he finds the United States unique. We regard what actually happened as important, distinct from what we believe to be important. We want to know what really happened, as distinct from what we are supposed to accept as having happened. We call that objectivity. While the authors of the Gospels were relating history, they were not relating that as historians, but as evangelists.

The professor does not want to leave the matter of the historical Jesus in this murky cloud of abstraction. The professor would like to share some scholarship about Jesus as Exorcist. Did Jesus really drive out devils or was the story just told as an expression of the conviction that Jesus made the power of God evident? Was it devils Jesus drove out, epilepsy which was healed, both? If scholars do not agree, and they do not, that Jesus drove out devils, then is the way open to deny that Jesus himself did not exist. The professor recognizes such an argument as academically reasonable, without at all finding that argument convincing.¹⁷ Mainstream scholars do not deny Jesus existed.¹⁸

In a related matter, 1 Thessalonians looks like the first writing the first Christians raised to the level of Biblical authenticity. St. Paul, the author of the letter, instructed the church at Thessalonica to read the letter when they gathered as an assembly. Christians still do that.¹⁹

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What was going on in those original Christian communities? The professor has a predilection or special interest in the Gospel According to Matthew. The original Matthean community or communities were quite Jewish, favoring the Law, much like St. Peter, rather than St. Paul. Matthew also found models of faith and service in those without social power. In other words, Matthew found models in truth rather than politics.²⁰

G. *Judaism*

Since the main non-Christian religious body in the U. S. is Jewish and since there are more Jews in the U. S. than in any other country in the world, a consideration of the Jewishness of Jesus is in order. The problem exists because those who try to get behind the sources either take Jesus out of Judaism or interpret him entirely within Judaism. No resolution seems satisfactory.²¹

There is agreement that Jesus, the Jew, was born, lived, and died in the land of Israel in the First Century. Jesus suits the Essene branch of the Pharisaic movement. On page 154 in the seventh²² edition of Chambers, Chambers points out that the relationship between the Essenes and Jesus and the Christians are much debated. What Chambers means is that the Essenes were conservative compared to the Pharisees.²³ In criticizing the Pharisees, Jesus seemed to suit the Essene mold.

So far, so good. The problem for the Christians is that it was the Pharisees who were willing to accept gentile converts, whereas the Essenes were not.²⁴ Chambers excludes Jesus from the Essene experience by calling the relationship obscure and by referring to the Essenes on the eve of, but not during, the career of Jesus.

The criticisms Jesus made did not apply to the Essenes, but did to the Pharisees. Hillel was the contemporary of Jesus after whom Jewish campus organizations are named. The Essenes were discovered as the protectors of the now famous Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls are older than any other surviving biblical manuscripts by almost a thousand years. The professor keeps up with the Sacred Scripture material at http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal_Notes/Personal_Notes.htm. The Sanhedrin, the Zealots, and the violent temple priests who were the prime movers in getting Jesus killed did not belong to the Hillel movement.²⁵

The most complicating fact was that life differed between Galilee and Jerusalem and even between northern and southern Galilee. These discoveries are becoming unearthed by present-day archaeologists. What this means for understanding the Gospel causes the reflection that the more is known, the less is known.

Christians have generally come to accept the idea of the complicated process of tradition. The life of Jesus passed through the early communities to the Gospels over a long period. Christians tend to pick out the Christian dimension; Jews the Jewish dimension, and between the two, no clear convincing portrait of Jesus emerges. Much work remains to be done.

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Did Jesus stand for the status quo or for revolution? Had he supported the status quo, then why were he and his followers executed? There does seem to be an underlying bias in applying the tools of sociology to the Jesus movement. That bias would have Jesus support things as they are, or, the status quo.²⁶

The sociologists make an interesting distinction between "ordinary Galilean Jewish peasants" and "urban Hellenized Jews." Jesus can be treated as supporting a revolt of the peasants against centralized urban authority. These kinds of distinctions are at the forefront of contemporary research and are mentioned here more to point out a direction which research is taking, rather than to describe what actually was happening.²⁷

There is an interpretation of the sayings of Jesus that has meant much to Dr. Jirran. Jesus was watching the people go into the temple, as they dropped money into the equivalent of a collection basket. Jesus pointed out a poor widow who put in the "widow's mite," like a dollar in the money of today. Jesus commented that that widow had put in more than the rest, because that was all she had to live on.²⁸

Preachers generally use that saying as an incentive for people to give, rather than as a lament over a misplaced offering. Jesus seems far more human and the saying makes much more sense to Dr. Jirran, at least, when the saying is treated as a lament. What a shame it is that the poor widow contributed all that she had to the building of the temple, when she needed that dollar to live on. The Protestant Reformation was about just that--collecting money to build St. Peter's Basilica.

Dr. Jirran likes the litotes (lit' a teez) that Saint Paul is his favorite Saint because Saint Paul said that women should keep their heads covered and their mouths shut. Dr. Jirran will also point out that the Wisdom books of the Bible admonish women to keep their feet in the house. Litotes is an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of the contrary (as in "not a bad singer"). What Dr. Jirran actually means is that women should not keep their heads covered, their mouths shut, and their feet in the house. All of which get to the point that some scholars think women within the Pauline Churches had fewer rights than did women in the non-Christian communities. To the contrary, Rodney Stark, Professor of Sociology at the University of Washington, maintains that Christian communities granted women higher status than the Greco-Roman world as a whole. Evidently, Stark reasons that this is so because Greco-Romans practiced abortion and infanticide, which resulted in the death of many women and girls²⁹.

Reviewers in The Catholic Historical Review and the Catholic Biblical Quarterly evaluated Stark far differently. In The Catholic Historical Review, Stephen Benko concludes, "No doubt some people will be offended by his detached approach to the Early Church as merely one of many alternatives and to religious communities as subject to the law of supply and demand. But this is what makes his book new and worth reading..."³⁰ In The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Bruce Malina bemoans, "perhaps a 'real' anthropologist will step forward to show biblical exegetes and historians how it is done!"

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There is a church politics-truth problem here. Tissa Balasuriya is a Roman Catholic scholar-priest now in good standing with the church from the Center for Society and Religion in Sri Lanka. Father Balasuriya maintains that the dogmatic definitions of the Church from the 325 Council of Nicaea onwards to the present have been a source of division within the Church itself. Father Balasuriya writes, "For three centuries, Christianity bore witness to this universal message of love and concern for all, without having a need for Greco-Latin categories for defining its belief."³¹

Balasuriya observes that the Greco-Latin categories linked the Church to the dominant imperial power of Rome, which, in turn, eventually, was allied to the greatest violations of human lives and human dignity that history has known. The professor does not know how Balasuriya deals with the fact that as a colonial Balasuriya himself has accepted the Church, as have the Black masses in the Americas. Balasuriya observes that dogmatic theology explicitly or implicitly legitimated intolerance and violence in the service of truth, that is politics determining truth.³²

After the case was over, one of O.J. Simpson's lawyers explained that the problem with the case was that the police had framed a guilty man. That is in the nature of how the professor regards the relationship between the Latin-Greco categories found in the Papal Encyclical "Faith and Reason" (*Fides et Ratio*) by Pope John II. The professor is a Thomist, as is Pope John II. The problem for Balasuriya rests with the Pope's dictum, "in engaging the great cultures for the first time, the Church cannot abandon what she has gained from her inculturation [*sic*] in the world of Greco-Latin thought. To reject this heritage would be to deny the providential plan of God who guides the Church down the paths of time and history . . ." ³³

H. Privacy

What is the history of the right to privacy? Subjects like intimate and personal relations, childhood, and the family have traditionally been hidden from public view. Scholarly interests are now bringing these matters under academic scrutiny.³⁴

Under the Roman Empire, the line between private and public life was often blurred by the Roman practice of publicly enhancing certain private values and prestige. There was a gradual shift from the city to the church as a public community. Christians expected to regulate all aspects of private life, including matters as intimate as the perception of the body itself.³⁵

Particular friendships formed a problem for Christians, who were supposed to love everyone. The pagan sense of friendship lacked any eschatological element whereby all friendships would be subsumed into friendship with God in the afterlife. This change in the concept of friendship for Western civilization occurred during the Fourth Century, the time of the Council of Nicaea, Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose, mentioned in the readings.³⁶ The professor sees particular friendships as political acts, especially during the Greco-Roman period. When the truth came out that all humans were to be loved, regardless of their sinful status, then earlier notions of friendship changed.

As time went on, both kinship and feudal relations bound people together into the Middle Ages. Issues turned on such matters as the body, the individual, and identity. The way people were

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housed reflected the issues. Scholars are beginning to look for a relationship between architecture and privacy.³⁷

I. *Canonicity*³⁸

In 367 the letter of the African, Athanasius of Alexandria, played a great role in determining which of the books would be the twenty-seven that have come to be regarded as the New Testament. Was that canon a collection of authoritative books or an authoritative collection of books? Regardless of the answer to that question, the historian can provide a context in which the development of what would be accepted occurred.

Even before the year 100, the Gnostics³⁹ attempted to appropriate to themselves the historical Jesus. St. Ignatius of Antioch (who was not a Gnostic), in the Second Century reaffirmed the reality of the historical Jesus. Such reaffirmation took place within a context of determining which books merited credence.

Later, Marcion of Sinope, indexed on pages 159 and 160 in the seventh edition of Chambers,⁴⁰ tried to sever the Christian connection with Judaism. Marcion only accepted a limited number of the books of the canon. Montanism claimed to supplement the New Testament with personal revelation. The canon served to temper such revelation. Finally, church persecutions, especially under Diocletian, forced the Church leaders to decide upon which Scriptures were essential. This determination was required because the Emperor insisted that whatever scripture was essential had to be destroyed. Christian cooperation happened so that no one would be persecuted for defending anything that was regarded as non-essential.

Damasus I was the pope from 366 to 384, during much of this. The Christianization of Rome was accomplished by the Romanization of Christianity. Damasus first made St. Jerome his secretary and then commissioned Jerome to translate the Bible. This translation is known as the Vulgate, Latin for vulgar or unsophisticated. The original Koine Greek was, in the same sense vulgar or unsophisticated. Through time and circumstances, however, the Greek became very esoteric, even as it is now. Jerome's was rather like the *Good News Bible* of today. Whatever politics may have influenced Jerome as he translated the Bible, were the politics of the papacy.⁴¹

When Hans Kung (1928-)⁴² believed that the unity of the church must be understood not institutionally, but theologically, Kung was placing his faith in the truth determining papal politics. Kung meant that Church unity presupposed a multiplicity of churches. The emergence of a single bishop of Rome did not occur until the mid-Second Century, though one bishop did have special responsibility for relations with other Churches all along.⁴³

The popes themselves worked to constitute their continuity with apostolic origins. Part of this enterprise was the construction of the crypt of the popes begun about 230 in the Catacombs of Saint Callisto, situated off the Appian Way, just outside the city walls. Over a thousand years later, in the late Sixteenth Century, Cesare Nebbia portrayed the Council of Nicaea with Pope Sylvester

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presiding, flanked by cardinals. In reality, Sylvester did not attend the council and cardinals had not yet been invented.⁴⁴

While Sylvester was not at Nicaea, more importantly, Constantine left Rome, thereby eventually leaving the Pope in charge. From then until 1870 the papacy was invested with dual secular and religious roles as both territorial prince and universal pastor.⁴⁵

Damasus used his territory to gather and rebury the remains of the early Christian martyrs in Rome. We know that the gladiatorial games continued well after Constantine because Damasus had two gladiators as bodyguards.⁴⁶

Through all of this, there arose segments of the church promoting the apocryphal gospels, acts, and apocalypses which claimed to elaborate the New Testament. Certain books from the period of the Apostolic Fathers appeared frequently on the fringe of the canon, for example the Epistle of Barnabas. The Council of Chalcedon, in 451, treated above and on page 195, 229, and in the note on 257, in the fifth edition of Chambers, finally settled the matter.⁴⁷ But did it? In 1989, Scholars of Atlanta published William D. Stroker, Extracanonical Sayings of Jesus as SBL Resources for Biblical Study 18.⁴⁸

The Reformation Protestants again questioned the Catholic Epistles. On the Gospels and the letters of Paul, there has always been general agreement. The professor had been asked frequently during the year before this section was added to the lecture, in August 1990, whether and what he knew about the non-canonical writings. The perspicacity of his students continues to amaze him, because the research required to answer those questions was increasing even as the queries were being made. Scholars are only now in the process of developing good answers.

J. Agrippa

Agrippa I presided over those forces which stripped Judaism of political power, leaving Judaism to cling to moral power, that is the power of truths. Because this reliance on truth over politics is so important for the thesis of the professor regarding truth and politics in Western civilization, the rule of Agrippa I will be developed below. Agrippa I will be placed in the context of Roman history and then in the context of Jewish history.

Herod the Great, mentioned on page 124, column 2, paragraph 2, line 4-5 was the grandfather of Agrippa I. Herod is the Herod of the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels. This is also the Herod mentioned on page 154 in the seventh edition of Chambers. When Herod took power in 37 B.C., Herod ended the rule of the Maccabees, who had ruled since 168 B.C. The Maccabees had wrested control from the Seleucid Empire earlier established after the death of Alexander the Great. Hanukkah celebrates the recapture of Jerusalem by the Maccabees. Hanukkah has been previously developed in Topic 06—Palestine.⁴⁹

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Agrippa I's father was the Marcus Agrippa mentioned on page 124, column 2, paragraph 2, line 4-5 in the seventh edition of Chambers. Agrippa I is the Agrippa of the 25th and 26th Chapters of the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible. Agrippa was important for the development of early Christianity.⁵⁰

Herod murdered Marcus Agrippa. The *Tenth Collegiate Dictionary* indicates Marcus Agrippa died in 12 B.C., but the book reviewer in 7 B.C. The widow of Marcus Agrippa then went to Rome with Agrippa I. Once in Rome, the mother of Claudius and grandmother of Caligula took Agrippa I under her care. This association hurt Agrippa when Josephus wrote his history.⁵¹

After Tiberius, mentioned on pages 132 and 139 in the seventh edition of Chambers, died, Caligula placed Agrippa I in charge of areas leading to his enthronement as King of Judea in 41 Agrippa I died in 43. Before now, Jewish historians have considered Agrippa I as insignificant.⁵²

Recent scholarship argues that Agrippa I was significant for participating in the centralization of Roman control throughout the empire. Agrippa I served to hold off Roman wrath and to give Jews hope for better things to come. After Agrippa I died, that hope led the Jews to rebel and Rome to destroy the temple in Jerusalem.⁵³

J. Conclusion

This supplement has added material on the Christian difference, Judaism, privacy, and canonicity, all of which are designed to improve the ability of the student to evaluate the impact of religion on civilization through a consideration of early Christianity.

From the Beginning to Constantine is about getting at the truth of Jesus through the maze of religious political repercussions depending on the answers; The Christian Difference and Privacy are both about getting at the truth of how the church supported human rights in the midst of political stress; finally, Canonicity is about the religious politics involved in settling what Christianity would no longer debate about being true. Through all of this, the church and Christians have maintained that it is truth that should determine religious politics and not the other way around. This principle opened society to the universities that, in turn, opened whole new vistas of truth to Western civilization.

Comments on the Seventh Edition of Chambers, pages 0145-0167

In the opinion of the professor, Chambers is the most scholarly textbook on the market. Chambers well represents mainstream thinking in the history profession. The professor, however, disagrees in many significant ways with mainstream thinking. These disagreements are set forth in the following comments.

Page Column
Paragraph
Line

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0154 1 2 5

“... in eleven caves ...”

The professor notes, without reconciling, a difference between eleven caves in Chambers and eight major discovery sites by other scholars.⁵⁴

0155 1 1 3

“... not public gestures ...”

The professor, as a Roman Catholic, would add a qualifier, not merely public gestures. The professor thinks that there is a very public, non-private dimension to Christianity. Protestantism stresses the private nature of Christianity, with which this Catholic, at least would agree, all the while insisting on a much broader scope for the nature of Christianity.

Scholars find various ways to express this. The professor chooses one at hand. “... to be salvific the righteousness of his (Jesus’s) hearers must be more than an ostentatious, avaricious, supercilious self-righteousness; it must be a better righteousness.”⁵⁵ The professor takes such statements to mean that righteousness must be public and private, neither one to the exclusion of the other. For early Christians and Christians of every age, martyrdom was quite a public act, not simply anything entirely private.

0156 1 3 4-6

“... a ritual practice in memory of him, using bread and wine to symbolize the gift of his body and the sacrifice of his blood.”

Chambers does not index transubstantiation until pages 314, 344, 421-422, and 442 in the seventh edition. As a Catholic, the professor would not argue that the final Passover meal for Jesus involved memory and symbolization, but the professor would argue for more, that what is symbolized is a mystical reenactment of that Passover and death of Jesus.

0156 2 2 5-6

“... Christians’ authoritative Scriptures.”

The professor refers to these Scriptures as canonical and as defined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and mentioned in the seventh edition of Chambers on pages 162 and the note on 182.

0156 2 3 6

“... Book of Romans ...”

The professor would refer to this as St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans.

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0156 2 3 3rd last "... personal faith ..."

Here Chambers seems to contradict himself because ethnic identity, bloodlines, and observation of the Mosaic law are all public acts. The professor thinks more than personal faith is involved in Christianity.

0157 1 1 2nd and last line "... promise of what the future would bring."

This sense of future causes the professor trouble. To think that we are headed for the happy hunting ground in the great beyond fits too closely with the charge of Karl Marx that Christianity is but the opiate of the masses. The professor thinks that a sense of realized eschatology is involved here, whereby the future is now through grace. The professor thinks that people experience God here on earth in a real sense, without having to wait for passing through the mythical Pearly Gates.

0157 2 1 8 "... public patriotism ..."

The professor regards unwillingness to participate in patriotism publicly as involving a public gesture and more than personal faith, both of which have already been called to attention.

0158 1 1 1-3 "Then, in the period 303-313, came the Great Persecution under Diocletian ..."

In B. From the Beginning to Constantine 3. Rome the first persecution is mentioned as of 250.

0158 2 2 3 "Septimius Severus"

Septimius Severus was mentioned in Section I. Racism in Topic 10, The Roman Republic.

0159 2 2 3-5th last "... changed the Church from a brave alternative society sharply critical of 'this world' into a friend of worldly power . . ."

In other words, this is where truth tends to lose out to politics in Church history.

0163 1 2 5-6 "... that bishops should have the right to chastise rulers."

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But, truth hangs on in its right to dictate politics, rather than the other way around.

0164 2 2 2nd and last "... we are all predestined either to heaven or hell."

Chambers is correct and the professor has no quarrel. Students, however, appreciate a further comment. Predestination involves the perfections of God. God has to know the future, otherwise God cannot be God. Just because God knows who will be saved, does not eliminate the reality of free will. What we have here is something of a mystery. What is no mystery is that to be good, for example by knowing this material, one must make an effort and struggle to focus.

0166 "Recommended Reading"

The professor compared the "Index of Commentators and Modern Authors" of the Biblical scholar Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.⁵⁶ with the Recommended Reading and found no cross-references. While Fitzmyer's section "Principal Abbreviations" includes CBQ for *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, there is no reference for *The Catholic Historical Review*. The point is that historians and biblical scholars are barely on speaking terms. The professor regards such lack of communication as appalling.

Endnotes

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius_Exiguus 081224.

² Dave Schleck, Newport News, *Virginia Daily Press*, Friday, December 22, 1995, page D 6, columns 1-3. Schleck cites John Mosley, supervisor of the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles who wrote *The Christmas Star* in 1988. Schleck also called attention to the support of David Maness, director of astronomy at Virginia Living Museum in Newport News for the findings of Mosley.

³ <http://dangerousintersection.org/2008/12/03/jesus-and-the-wise-men-of-osirus/> 081224.

⁴ Susan Marie Praeder, review of James Breech, *The Silence of Jesus: The Authentic Voice of the Historical Man*, in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, before December 16, 1984.

⁵ John 8:31-32.

⁶ Seventh edition of Chambers, page 158, column 1, paragraph 1, lines 1-3; also 162, 1, 2, 1.

⁷ See the catacomb fresco of Adam and Eve on page 192 in the fifth edition of Chambers, omitted in the sixth and seventh editions.

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⁸Beryl Smalley, Hebrew Scholarship among Christians in XIIIth Century England as Illustrated by Some Hebrew-Latin Psalters, *Lectiones in Veteri Testamento et in rebus judaicis*, vol. 6 (London, 1939), 1 as cited in "AHR Forum: Mission to the Jews and Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Polemical Literature of the High Middle Ages," by David Berger; "Scholarship and Intolerance in the Medieval Academy: The Study and Evaluation of Judaism in European Christendom" by Jeremy Cohen; "Comment," by Gavin Langmuir, The American Historical Review, Vol. 92, No. 3 (June 1986), p. 596.

⁹ Andrew Colin Gow, review of Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* in The American Historical Review, Vol. 101, No. 5 (December 1996), page 1532.

¹⁰ Andrew Colin Gow, review of Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* in The American Historical Review, Vol. 101, No. 5 (December 1996), page 1532.

¹¹ Robert G. Clouse, review of Alan E. Bernstein, "The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds," in The American Historical Review, Vol. 100, No. 4 (October 1995), page 1239.

¹² Robert G. Clouse, review of Alan E. Bernstein, "The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds," in The American Historical Review, Vol. 100, No. 4 (October 1995), page 1239.

¹³ "Map 5.1 The Roman Empire 14 B.C.--A.D. 284" on page 160 in the fifth edition; 119 in the sixth, and 133 in the seventh edition.

¹⁴ The Roman Empire A.D. 14-284 is found on page 163 in the fifth edition, page 119 in the sixth, and 133 in the seventh.

¹⁵"Map 5.5 The Spread of Christianity" on page 188 in the fifth edition of Chambers; 135 in the sixth, and 152 in the seventh. Jerome, Cypriot, Augustine, Tertullian on "Map 5.4 The Most Important Writers who Used the Latin Language 300 B.C.--A.D. 600" was found on page 175 in the fifth edition, though omitted from the sixth and seventh editions.

¹⁶ Wayne A. Meeks, review of Peter Iver Kaufman, *Church, Book, and Bishop: Conflict and Authority in Early Latin Christianity* in The American Historical Review, Vol. 102, No. 4 (October 1997), page 1137.

¹⁷ Gregory E. Sterling, "Jesus as Exorcist: An Analysis of Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43a," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July 1993), pages 467-493.

¹⁸ John R. Donahue, review of John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. Vol. 2, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 4 (October 1996), pages 758-760.

¹⁹ Regina A. Boisclair, review of Raymond F. Collins, *The Birth of the New Testament: The Origin and Development of the First Christian Generation* in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 57, No. 2 (April 1995), pages 387-389.

²⁰ Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., review of David L. Balch (ed.), *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches* in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 4 (October 1993), pages 833-835.

²¹These comments rely heavily upon Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., "The Jewishness of Jesus: Facing Some Problems," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 1987), pp. 1-13.

²² Page 138 in the sixth edition, 154, the seventh.

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²³On page 186 in the fifth edition of Chambers, Chambers points out that the relationship between the Essenes and Jesus and the Christians are obscure. What Chambers means is that the Essenes were conservative compared to the Pharisees.

²⁴"The Teacher of Righteousness to whom Chambers refers, fits the description of Hillel (30 B.C.-18 A.D.). College campus organizations are named for Hillel." appeared in the August 14, 1990 rendition of this lecture. It was taken out in the May 28, 1992 edition because Dr. Jirran did not find the reference in either the fifth or sixth edition of Chambers. The first student able to show Dr. Jirran that reference would have been awarded thirty extra-credit points. ??

²⁵ Pamphlet "Scrolls from the Dead Sea" obtained by the professor when he attended the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition at the Library of Congress, June 12, 1993.

²⁶Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., review of Richard A. Horsley, Sociology and the Jesus Movement in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 2 (April 1991), pages 329-331.

²⁷Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., review of Richard A. Horsley, Sociology and the Jesus Movement in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 2 (April 1991), pages 329-331.

²⁸ Addison G. Wright, S.S., "The Widow's Mites: Praise or Lament? --A Matter of Context," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 44, (1982), pages 256-265 as cited in Elisabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Poor Widow in Mark and Her Poor Rich Readers," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 4 (October 1991), page 593, footnote 29.

²⁹ Bruce J. Malina, review of Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997), pages 593-595; Stephen Benko, review of Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 77, No. 4 (October 1997), pages 739-741.

³⁰George Wesley Buchanan, review of Margaret Y. MacDonald, The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 1990), page 565. Peter Monaghan, "The History of Early Christianity Undergoes Sociological Examination: A scholar offers new explanations for the growth of the religion," The Chronicle of Higher Education, July 12, 1996, page A 10, column 3.

³¹ Tissa Balasuriya, Center for Society and Religion, Sri Lanka, "On the Papal Encyclical 'Faith and Reason' To the Editors," Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, Vol. 49 No. 2 (Summer 1999), page 294.

³² Tissa Balasuriya, Center for Society and Religion, Sri Lanka, "On the Papal Encyclical 'Faith and Reason' To the Editors," Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, Vol. 49 No. 2 (Summer 1999), pages 294-296.

³³ Pope John II, "Faith and Reason" (*Fides et Ratio*) as cited by Tissa Balasuriya, Center for Society and Religion, Sri Lanka, "On the Papal Encyclical 'Faith and Reason' To the Editors," in Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, Vol. 49 No. 2 (Summer 1999), page 294.

³⁴ Kenneth Snipes, review of Philippe Aries and Georges Duby, General Editors. Volume 1: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium. Edited by Paul Veyne. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 75, No. 3 (July 1989), pages 469-470.

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³⁵ Kenneth Snipes, review of Philippe Aries and Georges Duby, General Editors. Volume 1: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium. Edited by Paul Veyne. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 75, No. 3 (July 1989), pages 469-470.

³⁶ Gerald Bonner, review of Caroline White, Friendship in Christ: A Fourth-Century Change of Perspective in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 80, No. 1 (January 1994), pages 97-101.

³⁷ Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B., review of A History of Private Life. Philippe Aries and Georges Duby, General Editors. Volume II: Revelations of the Medieval World. Edited by Georges Duby. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 75, No. 3 (July 1989), pages 474-475.

³⁸ Relies on Howard Clark Kee, review of Bruce M. Metzger, The Canon of the new Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance in The American Historical Review, Vol. 95, No. 1 (February 1990), page 127.

³⁹ Gnostics are indexed for page 192 in the fifth edition of Chambers; but not indexed at all in the sixth edition.

⁴⁰ Marcion of Sinope, indexed on page 192 in the fifth edition of Chambers; indexed on page 142 in the sixth edition of Chambers.

⁴¹ Simon Ditchfield, review of Eamon Duffy, Saints & Sinners: and Paul Johnson, edited by Michael Walsh, A History of the Popes The Papacy in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 85, No. 2 (April 1999), page 257.

⁴² http://www.google.com/search?q=Hans+Kung&sourceid=navclient-ff&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1B3GGGL_enUS260US261081224.

⁴³ Simon Ditchfield, dual review of (1) Eamon Duffy, Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes and (2) Paul Johnson, edited by Michael Walsh, The Papacy in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 85, No. 2 (April 1999), pages 256-257.

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⁴⁵ Simon Ditchfield, dual review of (1) Eamon Duffy, Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes and (2) Paul Johnson, edited by Michael Walsh, The Papacy in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 85, No. 2 (April 1999), pages 257.

⁴⁶ Bruce J. Malina, review of Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997), page 595.

⁴⁷ The Council of Chalcedon is Indexed for Chalcedon, Council of on page 195, 229, and in the note on 257, in the fifth edition of Chambers; on page 162 and a note on page 182.

⁴⁸ M. Eugene Borning, review of William D. Stroker, Extracanonical Sayings of Jesus in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 1 (January 1992), pages 174-175.

⁴⁹ Pamphlet "Scrolls from the Dead Sea" obtained by the professor when he attended the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition at the Library of Congress June 12, 1993.

⁵⁰ Carl R. Kazmierski, review of Daniel R. Schwartz, Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July 1992), pages 587-588. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., The Anchor Bible: Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1993), page 29 follows the same train of thought.

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⁵³ Carl R. Kazmierski, review of Daniel R. Schwartz, Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea, in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July 1992), pages 587-588.

⁵⁴ Casimir Bernas, O.C.S.O., review of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study, revised Edition, in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July 1992), page 560.

⁵⁵ Neil J. McEleney, C.S.P., "The Principles of the Sermon on the Mount," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 4 (October 1979), page 567.

⁵⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J., The Anchor Bible: Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1993), pages 765-793.

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