



www.extravaganzi.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/First-Ever-Portrait-Of-The-Lord-Jesus-Christ-1.jpg

Read from Bottom of 122 to middle of first paragraph 123.

“Whatever the reason for it, the fact deserves careful consideration that, after the fall of so many gods in this [20th] century, this person, broken at the hands of his opponents and constantly betrayed through the ages by his adherents, is obviously still for innumerable people the most moving figure in the long history of mankind: unusual and incomprehensible in many respects.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 145.

Read p 125-126 all 4 inset a.s and b.s

“The special feature, the most fundamental characteristic of Christianity is that it considers this Jesus as ultimately decisive, definitive, *archetypal*, for man’s relations with God, with his fellow man, society: in the curtailed biblical formula, as ‘Jesus Christ.’”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 123.

Read p 126 Quote bottom

Christ of Piety

#2 Which Christ?

- We're dealing with four different versions of Christ.
 1. the Christ of Piety
 2. the Christ of Dogma
 3. the Christ of the Enthusiasts
 4. the Christ of Literature

- Literature of a wide variety of kinds from novels of Christ's life, to philosophical speculation that attempts either to universalize Christ on first principles, or harmonize with the secular philosophers.
- Trying to draw a portrait of Christ from personal experience, either spiritual or otherwise, will never arrive at the Christ of the first century.
- Artistic portraits, the many tens of thousands of them don't agree on one thing at all. How could that represent Jesus Christ we find in 1st century Israel, or at least if some aspect is correct, how will we know?
- The personal expression as an approximation of Christ will always be solipsistic.



<https://img-aws.ehowcdn.com/750x428p/photos.demandstudios.com/getty/article/74/199/86511071.jpg>

Christ of Piety

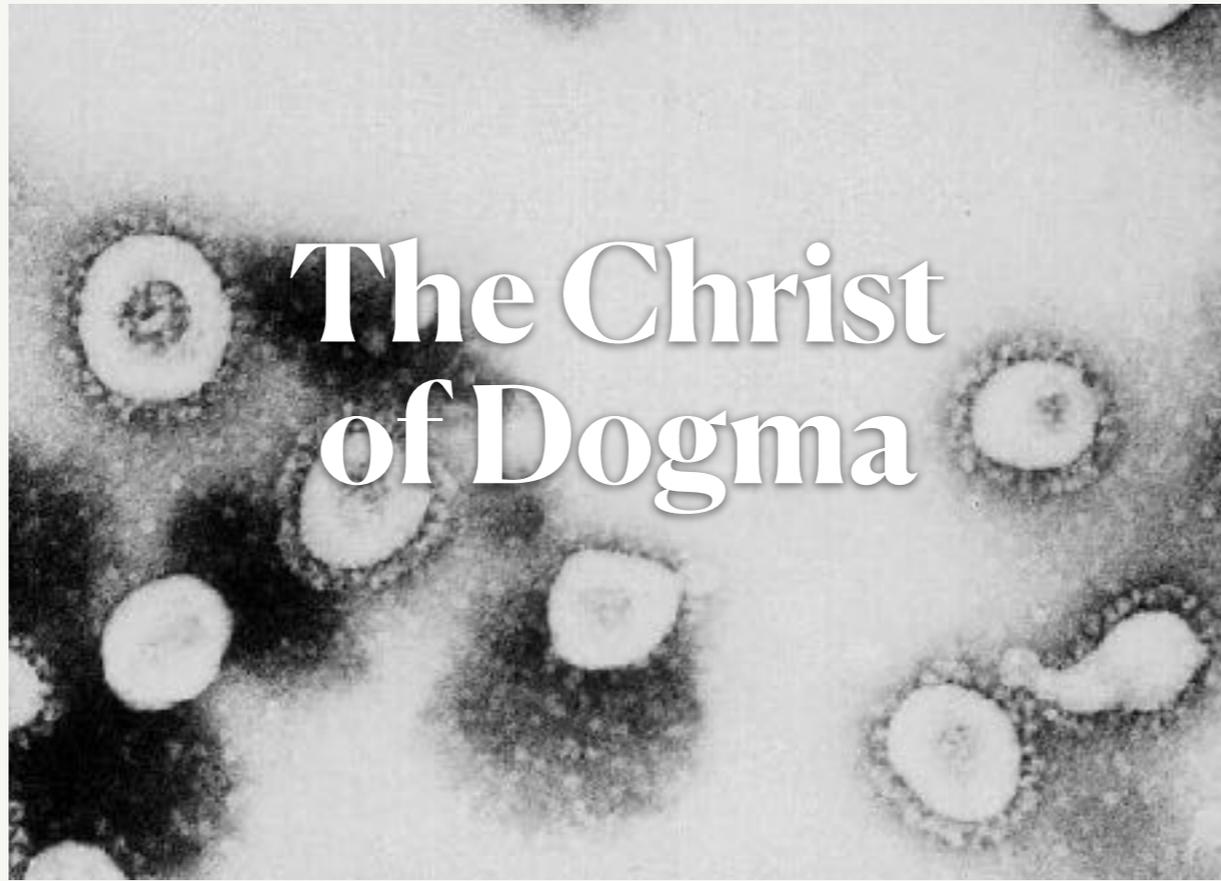
#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ that emerges from a culture of piety.
- It is found in literature, art, and tradition.
- Though its object is roughly Christ, it is filtered through human experience, speculation, and artistic expression, none of which can find an accurate portrayal.
- Its weakness is that it fails to access the textual grounds of faith, the Bible.

“What must be made clear is that apparently we cannot so simply and naïvely assume that what lies behind the name of Christ is known from Christian piety, literature, art and tradition.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 129.

Process this quotation.



Christ of Dogma

#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ that emerges from the magisterium, the acclamations of the mother Church.
- The councils (Nicea, Chalcedon, etc.) produced an outline of a Christian religion, a complex but stable demarcation of rational Christian territory.
- Receiving this dogma as the correct foundation, gives us a top down theologically sophisticated Christ though not the biblical one.

- The purpose of the authority of the Church is to settle disputes between opinions, but that will not get us to Christ.
- The Councils never develop a living Christ, either a portrait or an outline from first principles. The councils are valuable, and could even be called true after a fashion, but they are the refinements of a overly Greek philosophical imagination worried about absolutes and eradicating errors that had propagated from within the church itself. Our hunger for Jesus Christ is not satisfied by that because of the wide diversity of human and Christian culture. “The new Testament is infinitely richer” 131 when it comes to revealing Christ.
- “Even traditionally minded theologians must admit that not everything in the conciliar tradition is equally true, not everything can be simultaneously true.
- Küng asks whether we can have a less speculative and dogmatic top down Christology, and more of a bottom up concrete Jesus for the modern man.



The Christ of the Enthusiasts

Christ of the Enthusiasts

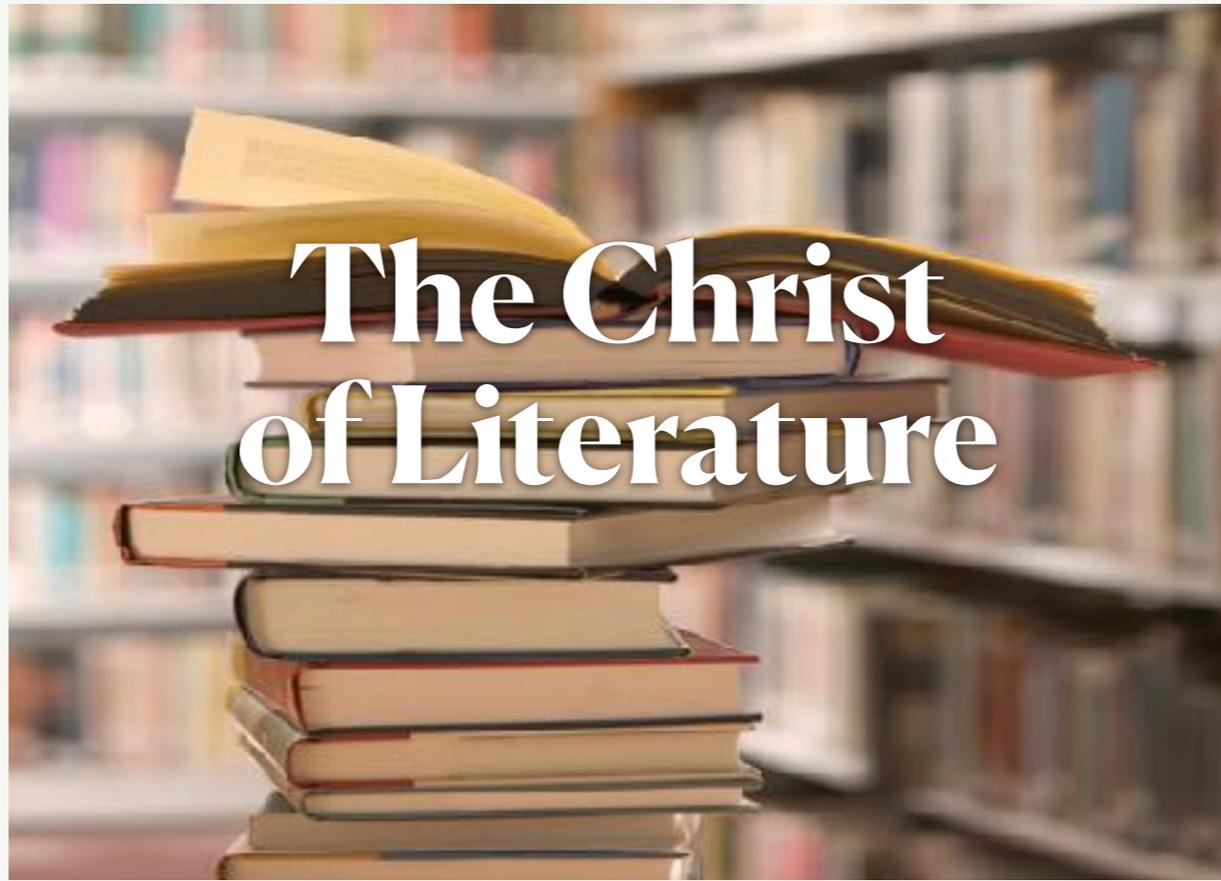
#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ offered as a “non-conformist’s appeal to the original, true Christ appropriated by the Churches.
- Christ of the Enthusiasts is thought to be the key to returning to nature, truth, authenticity, God’s value system, by displacing the pretense of religion with Christ himself, however:
 - Their Christ is often a child of culture, not one from the Gospels.

- read paragraph at top of section. p 133.
- 133 This is the Christ of the apocalypse, the radical fringe. “These fanatical movements were often wildly revolutionary, aggressive, violent; often gentle, introverted, mystical.”
- Pentecostals are included in this bunch as well as naturally in the pietists.
- Radical pietism followed the Reformation in Britain and Europe, the Quakers, Anabaptists, even the Puritans, etc.
- The appeal is often to the most desperate in society, giving them an out to their “paralysis” 135 whatever that may consist of—a real salvation.
- Many revolutionaries have appealed to Christ, like Mohandas Gandhi.
- “Such religious trends are a sign that neither the bourgeois ideology of progress nor a superficially revolutionary criticism of society can satisfy these young people: not prosperity culture nor its counterculture, not the noise and bustle of civilization nor the drug-produced ecstasy, nor evolutionary or revolutionary humanisms.” 135
- People want contact with the divine.
- But this hunger has produced a wide variety of cultural objects that only peripherally contact Christ if at all. Many of the expressions like Jesus Christ Superstar, Siddhartha, Hair, Godspell, Passion of the Christ have an attraction to Christ, but with a subversive twist or defocused structure.
- Distortions of the Gospel, of Christ himself are shrugged off, recounting the trivialization of the story of Christ coming from the pietists.

“And if the Christ of the devotional objects of a Christian piety and the God beyond this world of a Christological dogmatism have no support in the Gospels, then still less does the all-too-earthly idol of ecstasies and addicts.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 137.



The Christ of Literature

“All these literary portrayals of Jesus, ... were by no means lacking in aesthetic quality or theological depth. Not least when they were written by authors outside or on the margin of the Church. But they were based on a naïve and word-for-word reading of the Gospels.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 139.

Christ of Literature

#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ left over after criticizing and rejecting the Church.
- These works of literature are the attempt to take issue with the “divinely exalted, unworldly, and thus irrelevant Christ of dogma, [bringing] liturgy and theology down to earth, ... making him humanly intelligible ‘from below,’ challenging, inviting, and thus at the same time giving expression to our own individual and social problems.” 140

- 138 “If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth.”
Dostoevsky
- 139 “They used the Gospel accounts as chronicles in need of embellishment and employed all the aids of history, psychology and aesthetics to produce a kind of fictional biography.”
- This is not to say the literary portrayals of Jesus are useless, but they are snippets used in stories to say something particular.
- 143 “It opens up new possibilities of confronting and reconciling our human experiences with the message of this Jesus Christ. It enables us ... to take an outsider’s view, to highlight the strangeness of what had once seemed familiar, to bring out the inexplicable in the commonplace.”

“But in the view of the many Christ images not only of the councils, of the devout and the enthusiasts, of theologians and painters, and also of the writers, it is the theologian who must answer the question: which portrait of Christ is the true one?”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 144.



Not a Myth

“His history can be dated.” 148

- “Not a supratemporal myth like those found in early civilizations
- “Not an Egyptian myth of everlasting life
- “Not a Mesopotamian myth of cosmic order
- “Not an Indian myth of the world as transformation
- “Not a Greek myth of the perfect man

- “It is a question of the history of this one man who was born in Palestine at the beginning of our era under the Roman Emperor Augustus, appeared in public under his successor Tiberius and was finally executed by the latter’s procurator, Pontius Pilate.” 148-9

Not a Myth

Uncertainties

- Where did he come from?
- When was he born?
- When did he die?
- A certain fuzziness in both our acquisition of the facts and their actuality is annoying but necessary. Is this another of God's misdirection to force us to read reality with more than a literalist's lens?

This clue to Christ's reality is a necessary step to acknowledging that history is not a linear step by step model that resolves to an exactitude that would satisfy an absolute. But it does help us locate Christ in the matrix of our material world.

- Using the scriptures and every witness of that era, we find that Jesus was probably born around 4 bc and died around 30 ad.
- This reveals the problem that historical time is highly dependent on those who settled for themselves the *when* of Christ's emergence on the earth, hence the setting of a zero point for our era. Their estimate must be wrong if we are to harmonize the events that we can certify.

The Documents

More than a Biography 150

- The “four ‘canonical’ Gospels do not provide the course of Jesus’ life with its different stages and events.” 151
- “Despite all their common features, the different Gospels each acquired a very different profile of the one Jesus.” 152

“The disciples at first passed on orally what he had said and done. At the same time, like any narrator, they themselves changed the emphasis, selected, clarified, interpreted, extended, in each case in the light of their own personal inclination and the needs of their hearers.” 151

The Documents

Testimonies 153

- The Gospels do not provide a “stenographic report” or a historical development of Jesus.
- The Gospels all write the “good news” through the instrument of the resurrection.

The Documents

Testimonies 153

- The Gospels are not:
 - disinterested, objective, documentary accounts
 - a neutral, scientific historiography
- The Gospels are:
 - meaning and influence of historical events alongside testimony
 - committed testimonies of faith meant to commit their readers
 - sermons

The Documents

Testimonies 154

- “The Gospels are meant not only to report, but to proclaim, to stir, to rouse faith.” 154
- “How do we distinguish between Jesus’ own words and deeds and interpretation, supplementation, paschal exaltation or glorification by the community or the evangelists?” 154

- “Of course no serious scholar assumes today, as people did at the beginning of Gospel criticism, that the disciples deliberately falsified the story of Jesus. They did not arbitrarily invent his deeds and words. They were simply convinced that they now knew better than in Jesus’ lifetime who he really was and what he really signified.” 154
- This is little different from what we have done with the dating of Christ’s emergence in human form. We have used information not available to our predecessors to harmonize a portrait of reality that is consistent with as many of the facts as we can acquire.
- “The truth lies between shallow credulity which is closely related to superstition and radical skepticism which is frequently linked with an uncritical belief in hypotheses.” 157

The Documents

Counterquestions about Jesus 158

- “The Jesus of history is not identical with the Christ image of traditional dogmatics.
- “Nor is he identical with the speculative idea of Christ fostered by German Idealism....
- “Neither is he identical with the ‘liberal’ portrayals of Jesus in the nineteenth century....
- “Nor again is he identical with the Jesus image of ‘consistent eschatology’ which saw in him simply a prophet of the imminent end of the world.”

- 158 “An examination must be carried out saying by saying, narrative by narrative: all things considered, a difficult and delicate business. It presupposes a considerable skill and ... an objectivity as free as possible from (denominational, historical, personal) bias.”
- 159 “In order to be defensible, faith no more needs a guaranteed infallible knowledge at its disposal than love does. Like all human knowledge, the knowledge of faith is also fragmentary. Only when faith remains aware of this does it remain free from arrogance, intolerance and false zeal.”
- The last criterion here is closely associated with Pentecostalism and its emphasis on the last days, at least in its beginnings.

“Because of the work of so many generations of exegetes and the results of the historical-critical method, we are able today to know better than perhaps any former generations of Christians—except the first—the true, original Jesus of history.””

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 160-161.

- 161 “The ground of faith is not theology, but God himself.”
- “Purely ‘historical faith’ ... is not saving faith. The results of scholarship are not truths of salvation merely because they are historically certain. But on the other hand ‘unhistorical faith’ is not necessarily a sign of strong faith: sometimes it is the sign of feeble thought.”
- Here is where our Summer session is framed.

Questions

Justifiable faith 162

- Three questions, our responses:
 - Is Christian faith a matter of understanding?
 - this is the intellectualist misunderstanding of faith.
 - Is Christian faith an effort of will?
 - this is the voluntarist misunderstanding of faith.
 - Is Christian faith a matter of emotion?
 - an act of faith without any content of faith is an emotional misunderstanding of faith.

The Christian believes:

not in the Bible, but in him whom it attests;

not in tradition, but in him whom it transmits;

not in the Church, but in him whom the Church proclaims; 163

It is God himself as he spoke through believers through Jesus Christ.

The biblical texts, the statements of the Fathers and ecclesiastical authorities, are meant ... to be no more and no less than an expression of this faith.

“The believer, like the lover, has no conclusive proofs to give him complete security. But the believer too, like the lover, can be completely certain of the Other by committing himself entirely to the other. And this certainty is stronger than all the security established by proofs. “

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 163.

Not Balance, Integration

What Attitude? 164-5

- Küng's encapsulation:
 - “Does the historical-critical Jesus research presuppose faith?”
 - No, even the unbeliever can carry out objective research on Jesus.”
 - “Does faith presuppose historical-critical research?”
 - No. There was faith even before Jesus research and today many believe without regard to the results of research.”
 - “A positive result emerges from the two answers.”
 - Christian faith and historical research are not mutually exclusive....”

1. This has less to do with whatever the researcher's predisposition towards Jesus is: negative, positive, or indifferent, but “an open-mindedness in principle toward everything that comes to us from this frequently disturbing figure.”
2. Believing without evidence must be “described as naïve in the light of the present state of consciousness. Naïveté in matters of faith is not evil but at least dangerous. Naïve faith can miss the true Jesus and lead us with the best intentions to false conclusions in theory and practice. **Naïve faith can lead the individual or a community to become blind, authoritarian, self-righteous, superstitious.**”
3. “History entirely free of presuppositions is *a priori* impossible.”

“Enlightenment can avert religious fanaticism and intolerance. Only faith and knowledge combined—a faith that knows and a knowledge that believes—are capable today of understanding the true Christ in his breadth and depth.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 165.



Christianity and Judaism

“Only when it becomes clear what [Jesus] himself wanted, what hopes he brought for the people of his own time, can it also become clear what he himself has to say to the people of the present time, what hopes he can offer for mankind today and for a future world.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 166.

Blood and Tears

Christian Antisemitism and the Holocaust

- The history of Christian antisemitism of 2000 years is well documented.
 - Lois, comments?
- 168 “It was not the Reformation, but humanism ..., then pietism ... and particularly the tolerance of the Enlightenment (with its declaration of the rights of man in the United States and in the French Revolution) which prepared the way for a change and up to a point also brought it about.”
- 169 “It must be absolutely clearly stated that Nazi anti-Judaism was the work of godless, anti-Christian criminals. But it would not have been possible without the almost two thousand years’ pre-history of ‘Christian’ anti-Judaism, which prevented Christians from organizing a convinced and energetic resistance on a broad front.”

“After Auschwitz there can be no more excuses. Christendom cannot avoid a clear admission of its guilt”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 169.

Future Possibilities

Theological Discussion 170

- 170 “It is high time for Christendom not merely to preach ‘conversion’ to the Jews, but to be ‘converted’ itself:
 - “to the encounter that has scarcely begun and not merely humanitarian but *theological discussion* with Jews, which might be an aid not merely to a ‘mission’ or capitulation but to understanding, mutual assistance and collaboration.”
 - So I thought, since 1976 we have come some way toward that understanding with the emergence of scholars in our midst dedicated in some fashion to this study: Ray Gannon, Lois Olena, Wave Nunnally, Marc Turnage. (These are only the ones I know off the top of my head.)

1. <https://wavenunnally.com/>
2. Lois Olena’s <https://newantisemitism.org/>
3. <https://www.marcturnage.com/>
4. Ray Gannon <https://bit.ly/2RWIW3A>

A Jewish-Christian Theology

Vatican II 171

- “For the official Catholic Church the declaration of Vatican II on the Jews became ‘the discovery or rediscovery of Judaism and the Jews both in their intrinsic value and in their meaning for the Church’ (J. Oesterreicher).”
- 172 “There is a growing awareness of a common Jewish-Christian *basis* which is not merely humanitarian but *theological*. Jews too are asking today for ‘a Jewish theology of Christianity and a Christian theology of Judaism.’ (J. Petuchowski).”
- 172 Quoting Buber, Küng reminds us though that “more is involved here than ‘two ways of faith’.”

Discussing Jesus

“The dispute seems hopeless.” 172

- 172 “The very person who seems to unite Jews and Christians [Jesus] also separates them abysmally.”
- But, “there are undoubtedly numerous Jews who would at least accept the ‘Jesus of culture’ even though they reject the ‘Jesus of religion’.”
- However it may be stated that the Jesus of religion is of increasing interest to Jews of a variety of kinds.
- 174 It may just be that “in the end, the final decision for or against Jesus will yet look rather different from what the long Jewish-Christian dispute might have led us to expect.”

**“Christianity consists in the
activation of the memory of Jesus
Christ in theory and practice.”**

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 174.

Read bottom of 174 “But, to determine the content of the Christian program, we must know what sort of memory we have of him. ‘We must learn again to spell out the question: who is Jesus? Everything else is a distraction. We must measure ourselves against Jesus, not measure him against our churches, dogmas and devout church members . . . Their value depends entirely on the extent to which they point away from themselves and call us to follow Jesus as Lord.’”



The Social Context

<https://madmikesamerica.com>

“Jesus— What does he want? Who is he? Does he belong to the establishment or is he a revolutionary? Is he a guardian of law and order or a champion of radical change? Does he stand for a purely inward-looking spirituality or does he advocate thoroughgoing worldliness?”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 176.

Küng's Outline for this Chapter

Is Jesus . . .

1. Establishment?

- The religio-political system
- Neither priest nor theologian
- Not with the rulers
- Radical change

2. Revolution?

- The revolutionary movement
- Hope of a liberator
- Not a social revolutionary
- Non-violent revolution

3. Emigration?

- Apolitical radicalism
- Monasticism
- Not a religious

a. No isolation from the world.

b. No bipartisan of reality

c. No legal fanaticism

d. No asceticism

e. No hierarchical order

f. No monastic rule

- Not the elite, but for all

4. Compromise?

- The devout

- Moral compromise

- Not a pious legalist

- Against self-righteousness

- Provocative on all sides

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