

## **Christ without Chalcedon: what can the western church learn from Asian approaches to Jesus?**

Why bother with Asian perspectives? (a) because the church in Europe is now in decline and numerically becoming theologically more and more insignificant, (b) we might actually find some inspiration from non-western approaches to theology – eg. S. American liberation theology, (c) we need to get away from a parochial perception of the church to a more universal one.

‘The more the Christian West disintegrates culturally and geographically, the more the church will find its self-understanding in the context of the whole world’  
(Moltmann *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* 1992).

John McIntyre ends his book *The Shape of Christology* (1988) with the following words:

‘Though we develop metaphysical theories which reject Aristotelianism (by which he means the two-nature doctrine of Christ enshrined by the Council of Chalcedon) there comes a point in their development when we find ourselves – perhaps involuntarily – using logical grammatical structures initially so closely associated with it. This would account for the normative and prescriptive role which it, almost hauntingly, continues to play in other Christologies ... Whether we would expect to find the same influence which Chalcedon exerts on Western Christianity if we embarked upon a Japanese Christology, with a different metaphysic related to a different structure of concepts, syntax and logic, is quite another matter.’

McIntyre’s openness to the possibility of a different metaphysic and structure which might be found in non-western cultures and which does not carry the same baggage of Greek

philosophy as creedal statements is perhaps unusual in western theologians. Most studies of Christology published in the west (by which I mean primarily Europe and America) content themselves with the first part of this quotation – namely how modern Christology can think outside of the parameters of the Chalcedonian definition without being dominated by its logical structures. And it's probably still the case the institutions of most of our churches show no signs of going even that far. When we remember that the Nicene creed, which is central to the eucharistic liturgy of several churches, also derived its authority from the Council of Chalcedon, it is clear that Chalcedonian language, structures, and logic remain the canons of received orthodox thinking about the Person of Jesus Christ. But since this kind of language, and the philosophical concepts behind it, is all but incomprehensible to most people in pews, we surely have to find a better way to express what we believe about the One who stands at the centre of our faith.

In this paper I want to suggest that if we are think about how the Christology enshrined in the Chalcedon definition can be revised or renewed to make it less alien to the majority of Christians today – or indeed if we need to ditch it altogether – then we might find some guidance from those churches where Chalcedon has never enjoyed such a stranglehold, and the most fruitful geographical area for this has to be Asia. Historically neither the Syriac tradition of the earliest churches in what we now call the Middle East and in India, nor the Nestorian tradition of further Asia, accepted Chalcedon. As Asian Christians never tire of pointing out Jesus was an Asian, not a European (and as Harnack more bluntly put it, he Jesus wasn't a Christian either he was a Jew). The earliest Asian Christianity, the Jewish Christians, was very soon side-lined and subsequently demonised by the more powerful Greek speaking church. Its most important descendant, Syriac Christianity, though producing some outstanding theology and spirituality (eg. Ephraem), seldom gets much attention from western writers. Perhaps it's time to reverse the missionary movement

from the west and to start importing theological insights from the east. I shall take most of my examples from India, which has by far the longest history of the contextualisation of theology in the modern period, though Japan is not so far behind. Indeed, McIntyre wonders earlier in his book whether Barth might have modified his condemnatory stance regarding (other) religions if he, like Brunner, had done a stint in Japan, where his own influence was felt as early as the 1930s. In fact, in the last year of his life, Barth, in a letter published in the South East Asia Journal of Theology, did recognise both the need and the legitimacy of doing theology from an Asian perspective. Tillich, who briefly visited Japan late in his career, is reported to have remarked that he would now have to go back and re-write his *Systematic Theology*. What a pity the theological penny did not drop for these theological giants a few decades sooner – the story of 20<sup>th</sup> cent. Euro-American dogmatic theology might have then been much less insular! Of course, venturing into another culture is a tricky business, and probably not too many of us, even in this multi-cultural world, do so in any depth: but hopefully I shall try in this paper to keep at least one foot in more familiar western territory.

The Greek Fathers who were responsible for framing the statements of faith in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries of course cannot be blamed for being children of their time, and assuming the validity and universality of the philosophy which underpinned their thinking. Like most of those who aspire to do creative theology they did not question the correctness of what a later age might call their theological methodology. One might make the same judgement on most moderns: we usually just get on with doing theology, rather than tackling first the question of what is right way (or ways) to go about it (like the two 20<sup>th</sup> century examples: Barth's CD begins from the assumption of the orthodox validity of Trinity, Tillich – though he's a bit more up-front about it, from a fusion of essentialism and existentialism). I think there are at least two inter-related issues which are important in informing how we reach our theological

conclusions. The first is one of **perspective**: where exactly are we coming from, what are the social, cultural, educational factors and so on which shape the way we perceive things in general, and God and Christ in particular? Looked at in this way there is no reason why a Christian thinker brought up in a dominant Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim culture, which may have had a colonial history and might still have high levels of poverty, violence and corruption, should see Jesus in the same way as a European does, and certainly not in the same terms as a 5<sup>th</sup> century Greek speaker. As one of the pioneers of Indian theology put it, 'Indian thought can be just as much use to Christianity as Greek thought has been to Europe ... The European clothes of the Catholic religion should be laid aside as soon as possible' (Brahmabandhab Upadhyay). Of course it is true that in one sense we cannot escape the tradition and genealogy in which we find ourselves. (As Rosenzweig put it once, we all see reality through our own eyes, but it's foolish to think we can pluck out our eyes in order to see straight). On the other hand if we are prepared to be critical of the perspective which our own context largely determines for us, we might be able to see that that perspective is not universally valid, and we might more clearly perceive the values of those who see reality - and Jesus - differently. The related issue is that of **epistemology**, on what basis do we know what we think we know? Most Western thought (though not all) tends for example to operate on the basis of a clear distinction between the subject who does the knowing (me, you) and the object that it knows, in this context Jesus Christ. But such a sharp distinction is not found in a good deal of eastern thought, especially that influenced by Buddhism. Two of the leading Japanese theologians of the second half of the last century (Takizawa and Yagi) adopt into their theology the Buddhist notion that there is no such thing as individual autonomous subjectivity: the individual only becomes a being when he/she/it binds itself together with other (what Yagi calls Front Structure). For Seiichi Yagi there is no real subject-object dichotomy: this distinction only arises because we have to use language, whereas for him

human experience or intuition is actually *prior* to its expression in language. Katsumi Takizawa develops this paradox of identity (the self) and separation (the other) by what he calls ‘the absolutely contradictory self-identity’ or better the self-identity of the absolute contradiction (cp. Gal 2.20). The Indian theologian Vengal Chakkarai had earlier developed his Christology along a similar path. Taking his cue from the Hindu idea that individuality, the individual self, ie. personhood, is not something completely positive, but rather a limitation, he argues that Jesus is the ‘most ego-less person in history and the most universal of all’ – that is, Jesus is beyond and transcends individual personhood. This all might seem somewhat bizarre from a western understanding. However it enables these writers, among other things, to explore new ways of looking at the Godhead (Trinity) which avoid the dubious mathematics of Three being One and One being Three. If we are willing to set on one side both the perspective and the epistemology which pre-determine the way we look at theology in general and Christology in particular, we might just find something helpfully refreshing in those who have different perspectives. All this was a lengthy preamble, but I think important to see what is making Asian theologians tick! I’ll try to be now more concrete in suggesting some ways in which Asian Christology can both challenge the status quo and open up new possibilities (or resurrect older ones).

**Firstly**, I suggest that the Indian and wider Asian experience **challenges the implicit assumption that the church owns Jesus**. One of the most remarkable features of the spread of Christianity in India was the way in which the figure of Jesus was incorporated into Indian culture, both at an intellectual and popular level. In 1969 the South Indian theologian M.M. Thomas published his ground breaking book *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, in which he traced the way in which so many of the leaders of the Indian renaissance in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries understood the significance of Christ. Many of these were Hindus (or better reformist neo-Hindus), among

them Vivekananda (who developed the Ramakrishna movement), Radhakrishnan (later professor of philosophy at Oxford and then first President of India), and of course Gandhi. Gandhi's voluminous works contain many references to Jesus, mostly from the Synoptic Gospels, and as is well known he had a particular fondness for quoting the Sermon on the Mount ('The lives of all of us have, in some greater or lesser degree, been changed by his presence, his actions, and the words spoken by his divine voice', he wrote in 1941, 'and because the life of Jesus has the significance and transcendence to which I have alluded, I believe he belongs not solely to Christianity but to the whole world.') Gandhi was a convinced Hindu all his life, and even remained a defender of the caste system. None the less his acknowledgement of the impact of Jesus' life and teaching on his work is frequent. Others whom Thomas discusses are more difficult to place. Some inhabited a border land between Hinduism and Christianity like the mystic Kesav Chundra Singh, who emotional devotion to Jesus cannot be denied but who ended by regarding himself as a successor to Jesus and founded his own 'Church of the Third Dispensation.' Brahmandhab Upadyaya is even more difficult to place. He moved from reform Hinduism to Anglicanism to Catholicism, and wrote two of the most sublime hymns to come out of India, one an adoration of the Incarnation, the other of the Trinity. But he never severed his links with Hindu culture, and referred to himself as a 'Hindu Christian.' He was a doughty controversialist and political activist, and when he died it was his Hindu friends who took his body and cremated it. Others, like P.C. Mozoomdar, veered towards Unitarianism. For all these Jesus was a figure who could not be contained within the bounds of the missionary church, but one who broke free from the restrictions missionary ecclesiastical orthodoxy had placed upon him, and who thus could have a profound impact on Hindu Indian thought and society. Nor on a more popular level, can we perhaps entirely ignore the sincerity of professed Hindus who see Jesus as another *avatar*, ie. an incarnation of God (Killingley: 'Jesus as an object of veneration is now in the

hands of countless Hindus who do not accept him in traditional terms'). Most of these Indians had a very negative attitude towards the institutional churches organised on western lines. Some (like Chakkarai) saw the Christian faith as operating in and through secular society rather than as a separate entity (he favoured the ashram model). Others saw it differently. The Roman Catholic Raimundo Pannikar, in his *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* argued that Christ is to be found within the Hindu scriptures, and he has also discerned the doctrine of Trinity within Hinduism. Perhaps more convincing is the argument of the Japanese philosophical theologian Katsume Takizawa. Takizawa studied under Karl Barth in the 1930s, and was inspired by Barth's lectures on the virgin birth to develop an elaborate theory that the Christ principle is inherent in all people (Barth would no doubt have been perplexed by what his former student did with his dogmatics!) In Takizawa's understanding there is a 'Something' (which Barth had called 'the Name Jesus Christ') which exists in every person, whether he or she recognises it or not. This Takizawa calls 'Emmanuel 1.' But 'Emmanuel 1' has to be awakened in the consciousness before it can become active: this is 'Emmanuel 2' - put in traditional terms, conversion. This sounds a bit like John's 'light that lightens every man,' which in a sense it is. But it is also almost parallel to Zen Buddhism (which greatly influences Takizawa) in which the Buddha nature which resides in all of us has to be awakened by the sudden enlightenment of the individual (*satori*). Takizawa is here trying to marry two different religious traditions and argue that the presence of Christ is all pervasive, whether we recognise it or not. (There's a bit more to the story than this, especially Barth's rare excursion into Jodo-Shin Buddhism as a religion of grace in CD 2).

What is the relevance of all this? The creeds are *church* documents and in that sense inward looking. The western churches by and large also have a somewhat exclusive view of where Christ is present ie. only in the institution of the church - witness recently the obsession of the current grand plan of the

Anglican establishment in Cumbria of counting heads and 'growing' disciples. What is lacking here is an awareness of the universality of Jesus. Jesus cannot be confined to the boundaries of the churches, and to what passes as traditional orthodoxy. The figure of Jesus has the power not only to attract, but also to affect the lives of those who do not belong, or do not wish to belong, to the formal Christian community, and to be in measure transformative of human experience and society. We have seriously to question the monopoly of Jesus which the church lays claim to.

**Secondly, Asian approaches to Jesus generally shift the emphasis back on to his human life**, especially as found in the Synoptic Gospels. The creeds, as has often been pointed out, focus on the incarnation, death and resurrection. Jesus was born and he died – as though nothing much of importance happened in between. There were of course contextual reasons for this. But the result has been, for systematic theology in general, an extraordinary Christological gap, virtually the whole of his life on earth. The argument used to be (and Moltmann was repeating it a couple of decades ago) that we couldn't be at all sure of the so-called 'assured results' of historical criticism into the life of Jesus, so we had better not rely on them. Hence the preference for Paul – which is really quite strange, since Paul never encountered the incarnate Jesus, seems to have had an uneasy relationship with those who had, and though he seems to have known at least some of the some of the oral traditions, hardly used them for his high Christology, which is based presumably on his personal vision. (We can argue about the relative importance of Paul for Christology as contrasted with the somewhat different christologies of other NT writers, but another day!) By contrast Asian theologians, on the whole, would be uncomfortable with the radical scepticism about recovering the real life of Jesus which characterised 20<sup>th</sup> century Europeans. Schweitzer's devastating, and necessary, hatchet wielding on earlier lives of Jesus, and Bultmann's assertion that we can know nothing of the real historical Jesus



led systematic theologians beginning their Christology either with the doctrine of the Trinity (like Barth) and imaging Jesus primarily as a symbol (like Tillich), so creating yet another ugly ditch between ourselves and the Jesus of history. Moltmann (*The Way of Jesus Christ*, 1990) is unusual in that he does devote space to the neglected Christological gap between the birth and death of Jesus. But he too somewhat forcefully rejects what he pejoratively calls 'Jesuology' which he says, implies 'the centre of Christology is the human being of Jesus of Nazareth, not the exalted Christ.' Personally I can't see anything necessarily reprehensible in such an approach - nor do the majority of Asian Christians. (Systematic theology in general does not seem to have caught up with the fact that recent NT scholarship has produced a vast amount of pretty well 'assured results' about the world in which Jesus lived, which has in places impressively supported the picture we have in the Synoptics: especially important has been the work of Jewish scholars who are now reclaiming Jesus for Judaism. But probably systematic theology has seldom kept abreast of biblical research!) Granted that there are problems with the Gospel accounts of Jesus, and granted that their view of 'history/historical' is not the same as that of post-Enlightenment man or woman, this does not seem to me sufficient reason for side-lining them in constructing a valid Christology in the way the creeds and a good deal of modern theology does. As Dunn has pointed out, if we are dissatisfied with the Jesus of the Synoptic tradition 'we will simply have to lump it: there is no other truly historic or historical Jesus.'

I could take any number of examples of the emphasis placed on the Gospel material by Asian writers, but I will take just one or two. In 1938 the International Missionary Council held a conference in Madras, and on the agenda was Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World*, in which he advocated a Barthian negative position towards non-Christian religions. On the eve of the conference a group of South India Christians published a sharp rejection of Kraemer's

exclusivism in a symposium which they called *Rethinking Christianity in India*. The two best known contributors, Vengal Chakkarai and Pandipeddi Chenchiah, had for some time already been advocating that in India Christian theology had to work through the symbols and language of the dominant Hindu culture. Chakkarai had published six years earlier his *Jesus the Avatar*, in which he had innovatively developed the Hindu concept of incarnation in the interests of Christology. What is significant is that both of them explicitly began their explorations of the person of Christ with the Gospel narratives of his earth life, not from the exalted Christ of Paul. For them theology began with Christology, but Christology began with the incarnate life of Jesus.

However, these writers do not stop at the historical Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. They are just as interested in the Jesus who lives beyond the Gospels and on into the contemporary world. Chakkarai extends the meaning of incarnation beyond the earthly life of Jesus. It is much more wide ranging, of which the flesh and blood Jesus is only the beginning. Incarnation is a process of growth and development, spanning the earthly life which culminated in the cross, and going on to embrace the resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Spirit by which Jesus continues to impart himself to his followers – a sort of continuous incarnation. His Christology is inseparable from his conception of the Spirit, though it is not what is normally understood as Spirit-christology. Rather the Spirit is Jesus continuing to act in the disciples and in the world. St John would probably have approved.

This brings us to the third point I want to make about Asian views of Jesus, namely its emphasis on **experience**. Christology is primarily experience of Christ through the activity of the Spirit. Jesus is not just an historical figure (not even the Ascended Second Person of the Trinity). Rather it is precisely because Jesus was an historical person that he can now be a continuous presence through the Spirit. In Chakkarai's view the

life of the incarnate one is indeed transformed, but it is the same incarnate life, which has been 'universalised' by his Spirit. Incarnation is a process, which is not only in the earthly life of Jesus, but through to the resurrection and the *parousia*, by which meant the immanent Christ active in the world process. But perhaps the best example of this approach is in the life and writings of the one who been called (by Boyd) the most famous Indian Christian who ever lived, Sundar Singh. His story reads like those of the Celtic saints, and he certainly had his sceptical detractors (many from within the mission churches). But someone who could impress people like von Huelgel, Nathan Soderblom, Anders Nygren, and Friedrich Heiler must have possessed an unusual spiritual presence. The earliest critical account of his life and thought was, surprisingly, written by B.S. Streeter (better known for his theory of the origin of the Gospels) and since Streeter was a trained psychologist as well as a prominent theologian of his time, his judgements must be taken seriously (*The Sadhu: a study in mysticism and practical religion* B.S. Streeter and A.J. Appasamy, 1921). It is difficult to call Sundar Singh a theologian, his voluminous writings today would probably be called 'devotional', and he himself was not enthusiastic about 'theology' as such ('I will never send anyone to the theologians, for too often they have lost the sense of spiritual reality' - though in fairness he probably had in mind the more destructive biblical criticism of the time). Central to Sundar Singh's Christology (though he would probably not have called it that) is the notion of the real experience of Christ through Christ-union (Streeter coined the phrase 'Christ-mysticism' to describe him). The Christian 'religion' (his term) is internal, and knowledge is spiritual and intuitive. It is clear that Jesus, the object of this knowledge, is indeed the Jesus of the Gospels (and Sundar Singh was no fundamentalist). However faith is not based on external evidence. 'To know Jesus,' he writes, 'does not require book knowledge, but you have to give your heart... I did not believe in Jesus because I read about him in the Gospels, but because I saw and experienced Him and know Him in my daily experience.'

Sundar Singh was clearly something of a spiritual athlete whose awareness of Christ went way beyond that of most of us. To emphasise religious experience in this way might sound too much like the ecstasy of the mystics, or perhaps of the emotionalism of a certain type of enthusiastic evangelicalism. To see it in this way would be a mistake. I think one of our problems in understanding this kind of emphasis on religious experience may be the paucity of the English language (and Greek), which has a limited vocabulary for the experience of devotion. Sanskrit (the language of the Hindu religious writings) has a much wider variety of terminology which gives a much deeper meaning, and Chakkarai in particular loads his writing with sanskritic terminology – *Samadhi*, deep contemplation of God; *antaryamin*, the indwelling of God, *pratyaksha* – spiritual insight, immediate perception, and especially *bhakti*, devotion for God as incarnation. This last term is especially important, representing a radical christianisation of the type of Hinduism most widespread in India, and was key to Sundar Singh’s understanding of Christ.

Doctrinal theology has always been more than a little uncomfortable with the language of experience. Indeed most standard texts on systematic theology scarcely, if at all, mention experience as one of the sources of theology. Perhaps this is because it is notoriously difficult to pin down in precise theological terminology. Maybe also because once one admits religious experience onto the theological agenda the possibility of a ‘system’ of dogma becomes problematic. Admittedly this emphasis has not been entirely absent from the western tradition. From Montanism through to Schleiermacher and beyond it has never been entirely absent – though usually treated with suspicion (but see the quotes from MacIntosh and Melanchthon). Recent NT scholarship has been more welcoming to the role of experience. Dunn, eg. has reminded us (why did we ever forget it?) that the essence of the Gospels is that they reflect a very real kind of faith experience, devotion, to Jesus on the part of the disciples that reaches back to even before the

resurrection (*A New Perspective on Jesus* 2005). Larry Hurtado, in his work on early Christianity has, I believe, made the idea of 'Christ-devotion' academically respectable (*One God, One Lord: early Christian devotion and ancient Jewish monotheism* 1998; *How did Jesus become a God? Historical questions about the earliest devotion to Jesus* 2005). He argues that intense devotion to Jesus was probably the main characteristic of the earliest Christians, and that the high claims for Jesus in the NT writings are a logical corollary of this devotion. Faith experience, Christ devotion, gave rise to faith formulations, not vice versa. The conception of what later came to be termed the divine nature of Christ - of one substance with the Father - initially grew out of confrontation with the human figure of Jesus. Does too much Christology begin at the wrong end - in heaven instead of on earth?

This would be a kind of doxological approach to Christology, devotion and worship crystallising into faith statements. In this case Christology (and all theology) is essentially the verbalisation of experience, rather than rationalisation from 'objective' sources. What we have in the NT (later theology's objective sources) becomes the record of the Christ-devotion, the experience of Jesus, of the earliest disciples.

Doing Christology will always in a sense be, in M.M. Thomas' telling phrase, 'risking Christ for Christ's sake.' And that for at least two reasons. Firstly, If God is ultimately unknowable (as surely we all accept), and if Jesus in some way shares in that Godhead, then christology becomes a problematic task, in that there will always remain something about it which cannot be adequately expressed in human speech ( cp. D.M. Baillie: 'God cannot be comprehended in any human words or categories of our finite human speech. God can only be known in direct personal relationship, or 'I-Thou' intercourse in which he addresses us and we respond to him' *God was in Christ* 1948: Yagi contends that 'awakening' is prior to human speech and the language can even create 'invisible walls' to appreciating awakening - cp. Bergson, that language is static, and cannot do

full justice to dynamic reality, only non-logical intuition can do that).

But secondly, as Rowan Williams has suggested in the context of the Jewish-Christian debate, the 'finality of Christ' is an ongoing challenge to all our assumptions. Asian theologians (like western ones) privilege their own experience of Christ from their own cultural and linguistic contexts. Like all christologies, these can never be final, for the Jesus of history challenges us continually to rethink and reassess our own experiences and conceptions of him.

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'... our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance (homoousios) with the father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood ...one and the same Christ, the Son, the Only begotten, recognised in two natures , without confusion, without change, without division, without separation (en duo phusesin, asungchutos, atreptos, adiairetos, achoristos); the distinction of the natures being in no way annulled by the union .....' (*The 'Definition' of Chalcedon*, 451).

'When we speak of an Eastern Christ we speak of the incarnation of unbounded love and grace; and when speak of a Western Christ we speak of the incarnation of theology, formalism, ethical and physical force' (P.C. Mozoomdar *The Oriental Christ*, 1883).

'We cannot draw a line in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> centuries and hold that faith has reached its conclusion and can grow no further' (Pandipeddi Chenchiah 1866-1955).

'The lives of all of us have, in some greater or lesser degree, been changed by his presence, his actions and the words spoken by his divine voice ... and because the life of Jesus has had the significance and transcendence to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the whole world.' (Mahatma Gandhi *The Modern Review* 1941).

'I regret that the followers of Jesus of Jesus, in general, should have paid greater attention to enquiries after his nature than to the observances of his commandments.' (Ram Mohan Roy in correspondence with the Serampore missionary Marshman, c. 1820).

'Indian thought can be made just as useful to Christianity as Greek thought has been to Europe ... The European clothes of the catholic religion should be laid aside as soon as possible. It must assume the Hindu garment which will make it acceptable to the people of India.' (Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (Bhavnani Charan Banerji) 1861-1907).

'We Indians do not want a doctrine, not even a religious doctrine: we have had more than enough of that kind of thing. We need the living Christ.' (Sadhu Sundar Singh, 1889-1929).

'All thinking should take account of the chief element in Christian experience, that is, the living power of the Spirit of Jesus.' (Vengal Chakkarai, 1880-1958).

'... common faith is what you get when you perform autopsy over dead churches... (faith) gives freedom to study the significance of Jesus untrammelled by dogma and doctrine... Jesus fought a relentless battle against the absolutisation of doctrines and dogmas.' (Pandipeddi Chenchiah, 1886-1955).

'This "Something" (Emmanuel 1), which despite being in absolute contradiction to the individual person, in distinguishing itself from the individual is absolutely one with him (Emmanuel2).' (Katsume Takizawa, 1909-1989).

'No existing being is composed simply and exclusively of the constituent parts that belong to it alone ... it ceases to live when it is taken out of relationship.' (Seiichi Yagi, b. 1932).

'The more the Christian West disintegrates culturally and geographically, the more the church will find its self-understanding in the context of the whole world.' (J. Moltmann *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 1992).

'Dogmas are a knowledge of feeling, and in no way an immediate knowledge about operations of the universe.' (Schleiermacher *On Religion: speeches to its cultured despisers*, 1799).

'The task of Christology is prescribed ab initio by the specifically Christian experience.' (H.R. MacIntosh *The Person of Christ*, 1913).

'After all, to be a Christian means not to have adopted certain dogmas, but to have placed ones life under the domination of another life, the life of Christ, and thereafter to live ones life only as an expression of the power derived from it.' (Franz Rosenzweig *The Star of Redemption*, 1919).

'To acknowledge Christ is to acknowledge his benefits, not, as sometimes stated, to behold his natures or modes of incarnation.' (Melanchthon *Loci Communes*, 1521).

Sanskrit terms:

*Avatar*: the appearance of deity in successive incarnations

*Bhakti*: devotion

*Antaryamin*: the indwelling of God

*Pratyaksha*: spiritual insight, immediate perception

*Samadhi*: deep contemplation of God

*Satori* (Zen Buddhist): awakening, enlightenment

John Parratt (Oct. 2013)