

Abstracts of Main Articles

Hwang Kyung Hoon: An ‘Enlightenment-centered’ Approach to Interreligious Dialogue: Centering on Cognitional Theories of Bernard Lonergan and Zen Master Chinul

Abstract: This study explores the possible dialogue between Catholic Philosopher Lonergan and Zen (Seon) Master Chinul in the light of enlightenment or conversion as ‘Christian enlightenment’. Keeping in mind that Zen Buddhism puts much stress on ‘direct cutting’ or ‘intuition’ rather than language or knowing, this comparative study examines Lonergan’s ‘transcendental epistemology’ in which he shows how humans could reach ‘conversion’ (*Metanoia*) or ‘Christian enlightenment’ with Chinul’s idea of Buddha-nature as ‘mystical or spiritual knowing’(靈智).

Such ‘enlightenment-centered’ comparison will suggest a ‘deeper dialogue’ on the level of fundamental human consciousness, such that this study could be a suggestion or even a challenge for both Eastern and Western religious traditions by expanding the horizon of interreligious dialogue for a new and deeper way of promoting such dialogue.

John Robinson: Soteriology and the Use of non-Christian Philosophy – an Experiment in Dialogical Theology

Abstract: This article seeks to examine the nature and role of the use of non-Christian philosophy in the formulation of Christian theology specifically in relation to soteriology. The role and limitations of Greco-Roman theology in the traditional formulations are examined along with their reception in today’s global Church. The question of the use of philosophy originating in other religious discourses and its legitimacy is considered and then a soteriological proposal based on the philosophy of Nāgārjuna is advanced as an example of the approach proposed.

Key words: Dialogical theology; soteriology; Nāgārjuna; Interreligious; Buddhist-Christian.

Richard Kimball: The People of The Book, *ahl al-kitāb*: A Modern Comparative Theological Exploration

Abstract: This article examines the use of the Qur’ānic term *ahl al-kitāb* by several contemporary Muslim and Christian scholars in the context of our increasingly interconnected and pluralist societies. The Arabic term *ahl al-kitāb* is frequently translated as *the People of the Book*. The People of the Book are the religious communities that the Qur’ān identifies as following divine revelation in the form of a book. Traditionally these communities are Jews, Christians, Sabians and to a lesser extent Zoroastrians. Sometimes the Qur’ān praises these communities and their sacred texts and other times they are criticised. Therefore, what the Qur’ān has to say about these communities and their texts is highly contextual, requiring nuanced understanding of any verse in question.

For Islamic scholars, the application of the Qur’ānic commentary tradition, known as *tafsīr* allows for an authoritative link to the past that anchors their contribution in modern discourse whether in the Middle

East, Asia, Africa, America, Europe or elsewhere. Variations from past interpretations of particular social issues, due to the needs of the common good, or participation as equal citizens in multi-faith and multi-cultural societies, often follows formal reflection on past scholarship, combined with the introduction of new contexts as variables in the decision-making process. This is the case, for instance, when Muhammad ibn Qasim, in the 8th century, extended the designation of People of the Book to Buddhism and Hinduism.

The article subsequently demonstrates the resilience of the parameters set within the traditional commentary for Muslim interlocutors. Therefore, this article posits, greater awareness by Christians of the application of the traditional commentary, can play an important role in the development of improved dialogue and social cooperation, whereby each may respect the other as fully Muslim and fully Christian.

Keywords: *ahl al-kitāb, asbāb an-nuzūl, bid'ah, fiṭra, hadīth, People of the Book, ra'y, ṣahābah, taḥsīr, tabi'un, taqlīd, shari'ah*

Jayeel Cornelio & Ia Marañon: A 'Righteous Intervention': Megachurch Christianity and Duterte's War on Drugs in the Philippines

Abstract: Megachurches, which are among the fastest growing religious organizations in the Philippines, have been apolitical towards Duterte's war on drugs. In contrast to some influential religious groups, that they have not released any statement is glaring. At the same time, megachurches have adopted interventions that aim at the rehabilitation of drug-dependent individuals and the moral renewal of police officers. What accounts for these actions? For megachurch pastors, the war on drugs is a 'righteous intervention' on the part of a God-ordained administration. At the same time, addressing the proliferation of illegal drugs is 'humanly impossible'. Thus, responding to substance abuse can only be a spiritual matter. The task of the church is to treat it as a spiritual condition to which the answer is conversion and moral recovery. The article ends with a critical reflection on how these theological views ultimately reflect the interests of the class these megachurches represent.