

PHILOSOPHY OR THEOLOGY—WHICH?

Paul Kurts

St. Augustine's philosophical, doctrinal, and theological interpretations in the 5th century left their imprint on Western Christian theological thinking to such degree that the Church in the West focuses its teaching on the Cross and Atonement. While the Cross and Atonement are true, they fail to express the original purpose of why God created man in the first place.

The position of this teaching is that man is 'separated' from God and lost, and that Jesus came to earth to take the sins of man upon himself and save man and thereby get man into God's good graces. Further, that man is sinful, that God is angry with man because of his sins, and that Jesus' torturous death appeases this 'angry' God and is bound by this spiritual contract to therefore save this individual.

Thrown into the mix are the complicating elements of 'predestination', 'election', 'double predestination', Calvinism, Armenianism, and numerous other "isms" to further confuse.

The mix is further complicated by any number of "Plans of God" based on everything from prophetic interpretations, millennialism, dispensationalism, and spiritual "visions" various preachers have "seen".

Is it any wonder that Western theological understanding is so convoluted?

Basically all these teachings get back to the concept of 'rewards' for being good and saved, and 'punishment' for being bad and unsaved--the doctrine of Heaven and Hell as taught by ST. AUGUSTINE in the 5th century A.D.

Augustine had a background in Platonic Philosophy and adopted many, if not most, of Plato's philosophical teachings on religion and the afterlife, including Plato's 'invention' of Hell. Hence the churches teaching today that heaven is the place for good people and hell is the place for bad people.

The basic teachings of the Protestant churches of today are very consistent with those of the Catholic Church since they were part of the Catholic Church until the Reformation in the 1600's. And those teachings come in great measure from Plato and St. Augustine.

Could it be that there is a fundamental error in the premise of Western Christian theological teachings? Could it be that God is NOT angry with man? That God actually loves humanity. That God created man to be with Him forever. That God adopted mankind into His life, redeemed man, forgave man, and saved man from the foundation of the world? (Ephesians 1:3-14; Revelation 13:8). Could it be

that in the plan of God the original purpose of Christ coming into the world as Immanuel, God with us, was to create the UNION necessary to connect mankind into the Triune God's life? And could it be that Jesus' coming into the world really did provide the forgiveness for ALL sins of ALL people for ALL time and raise humanity to the Father's right side and seat mankind with Jesus there? (I John 2:2; Ephesians 2:6). And, that IN Christ ALL are made ALIVE (I Cor.15:22).

Jesus proclaimed the greatest truth anyone could know when He said in John 14:20 (Also in John 17:20-26) that " you would sooner or later know that I am in the Father and you are in me and I am in you." RELATIONSHIP!

The INCLUSION of all of mankind in the fore ordained plan of God is the truth of scripture that Augustinian Theology has over looked and or denied in the Christian Church for over 1500 years.

For you and me the question is, what theology do we want to embrace? Do we want to embrace Greek philosophy or the Truth that is in Jesus? (Ephesians 4:21).

Numerous men in the ministry of God HAVE understood the True TRINITARIAN Theology over the ages. Men like Irenaus, Athanatius, and more recently, Karl Barth, Thomas Torrance, J.B. Torrance, John McKenna, Colin Gunton, Trevor Hart, Gary Deddo, Michael Jenkins, Baxter Kruger, and many, many others. This Neo-Reformation is beginning to sweep over the world. It is the Truth and it can not be kept from spreading over the Christian world. It is just a matter of time.