

Monday, 16 March 2015

(More) On being a pluralist Christian - implications of Christian pluralism

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See also:

<http://charlonteaching.blogspot.co.uk/search?q=pluralism>

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I am a pluralist Christian; because I believe that we need pluralism to break the (often) tyranny, the false implications, of the absolute and crushing grip of monist monotheism.

Accepting, as I do, that neither monism nor pluralism is a complete and fully-coherent metaphysical description of ultimate reality - I assert that, despite its historical rarity, pluralism is better *for Christians* (although not for the other major monotheisms).

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None of this is to challenge the truth that there is, for Christians, One God. But One God does not, according to scripture and by common-sense, imply philosophical monism.

Monism is a philosophical theory that predates Christianity - and which states that everything ultimate reduces to one thing - in Christian terms that God is one entity that is/ contains everything else.

It has always been *extremely* difficult (I would say impossible) for

Christians satisfactorily to accommodate the primary and essential reality of Jesus Christ within monism in a manner which is comprehensible or meaningful.

The only widely acceptable answer has been to declare the whole thing a mystery, expressible only in self-contradictory/ paradoxical language (e. the mainstream dogmatic linguistic formulations regarding the Trinity). But in terms of philosophy or common-sense this is no answer at all, but an evasion positioned at the very heart of Christianity.

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The fundamental distinction is that pluralism is anything *more-than* monism; the fundamental distinction is between One and More-Than-One.

The precise numeration of how-many more-than-one is secondary, and *a subject for revelation rather than philosophy*.

In other words, we cannot know how many more than one by reason alone - such knowledge must be told us, must come to us, from divine sources.

General Christian revelation tells us that more-than-one includes primarily and minimally Jesus Christ; also, but in a different sense, the Holy Ghost; Mormon revelation adds our Mother in Heaven.

These are minimally and essentially necessary to complete the basic picture; but in fact they do not complete the picture; because

the picture includes all the Men and Angels who ever lived. All *personages* bring to reality something significant and permanent - albeit *not-essential* to its existence.

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For a pluralist Christian there is One God, meaning that our Heavenly Father is primary as creator and legitimate authority - but also God needed, and continues to need (and always will need), others to do his primary work.

Since we are not monists, there is no requirement to reduce a multiplicity to one. Indeed, more-than-one implies *irreducible and necessary qualities as the basis of difference between personages*.

Pluralism makes clear why the Good Shepherd cares about all his flock, each and every individual; because each is unique and by his or her nature unique. Take one away, and the universe is changed; and changed for the worse from the perspective of the Good Shepherd - who will forever grieve the loss.

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The greatest temptation is therefore to choose damnation as a sure way of hurting God - the power to do this is real and intoxicating for those not bound by Love.

The power to hurt God is real in a pluralist universe but it is nonetheless a snare; because while every act is permanent and irreversible, and by it the universe is changed; nonetheless overall progression has merely been delayed and not stopped.

Over eternity, and with spiritual growth of multiple personages, there are unbounded possibilities for Goods - there is not a single 'perfect' Good which can be marred, but an open-ended number of Goods all of which are capable of further enhancement and which can be achieved in uncountable ways.

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Note added: This is related to the necessity for divine revelation.

Revelation is required precisely because metaphysics (i.e. the structure and history of ultimate reality) is contingent. It *could have been different*, and *its future is undetermined* in detail (although not in direction) due to the multitude of choices by a multitude of relevant personages.

Therefore reality cannot be inferred by philosophy, from reason.

The primacy of revelation itself implies pluralism as the best metaphysics for Christians; because pluralism allows for contingency in a way ruled-out by monism.

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