Systematic Theology

Ecclesiology


Gaudium et Spes
Lumen Gentium
Unitatis redintegratio
Ad gentes divinitus

Systematic Theology

Theology of God


Systematic Theology

Eschatology and Theology of History


von Balthasar, Hans Urs *Dare We Hope “that all men be saved”?*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988


Systematic Theology

Christian Anthropology


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Systematic Theology

Christology


(reprinted by Christian Classics)


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Systematic Theology

Foundational


Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

April 4-11, 2005

Selecting one question from each of the three groups, please answer three of the following six essay questions. None of the three papers may exceed fifteen double-spaced typed pages. Please be sure that the pages are numbered. Three copies of each paper should be submitted by 9:00 AM on Monday, April 11.

Please keep an additional copy of the papers for your own records. Bring this copy with you, *with nothing at all written on it*, to the oral portion of the examination at 2 PM on Wednesday, April 20. The oral examination will be conducted in 125 Caldwell (dissertation room).

A

1. What factors most influenced the transition from Trinitarian concern to Christological concern between the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon?

2. What (if any) is the appropriate role of "anthropological" analysis in any assessment of the theological debates of the fourth and early fifth centuries? (You may be selective in your choice of "debates" and question [if you wish] "appropriateness.")

B

1. Compare the soteriologies of Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus homo* and of the * Pars tertia* of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*.

2. Discuss the role of philosophy in the christologies of Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure.

C

1. Write an essay comparing the positions of Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and Edward Schillebeeckx on the basis of faith in the resurrection of Jesus.

2. Write an essay comparing the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Wolfhart Pannenberg on the theological significance of Jesus' crucifixion.

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PhD Comprehensive Examination

Historical Theology

Day One: Medieval Theology

Please answer three of the following questions, choosing one from each pair. Please submit your responses within the four-hour time limit.

1.A. The twelfth century witnesses different conceptions and approaches regarding the pursuit of knowledge and theological inquiry. Describe and contrast any two such conceptions of and approaches toward medieval theology particularly accentuating their differing aims, sources, and enterprises.

1.B. Over the centuries theology came to be understood as a science. Describe how this came about and the significant states of its development.

2.A. Describe and compare the teachings of Bonaventure and Thomas on the relationship of the Trinity and creation.

2.B. Describe the centrality and influence of Christ upon Bonaventure’s theological anthropology.

3.A. Trace the development of the biblical image of the Mercy Seat in biblical and medieval thought.

3.B. Describe the Cistercian and Victorine traditions of contemplation and their influences on Bonaventure’s Itinerarium mentis in Deum.
Please answer three of the following questions, choosing one from each pair. Please submit your responses within the four-hour time limit.

1.A. Origen's *On First Principles* placed his articulation of biblical interpretation squarely into the fabric of theology. Describe his method and demonstrate through his Commentary on the Song of Songs how he employed it.

1.B. With Origen, the School of Alexandria reached its apogee. Describe the influence of and the paradoxical controversy surrounding Origen in the development of doctrine.

2.A. Describe the contours of Augustine's Trinitarian theology.

2.B. In a series of lectures which he later brought together in one volume, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, Joseph Ratzinger teased out his thought on the notion of person in theology. He had touched on this theme in some of his earlier works, e.g. Introduction to Christianity. Describe this dimension of his thought and, if possible, the influence of Augustine on it.

3.A. Controversial as he may have been before the II Vatican Council, Henri deLubac was certainly one of its primary theological giants. Using the concept of culture, show how his example impacted on theology at the mid-twentieth century.

3.B. Some might claim that a similar kind of controversy swirls in our own day around Louis Dupré as it did around Henri deLubac. Using the concept of culture, contrast or show the similarities in the writings of both men.
PhD Comprehensive Examination

Historical Theology

Day Three: Christology

Please answer three of the following questions, choosing one from each pair. Please submit your responses within the four-hour time limit.

1.A. Describe Apollinarius’ position on the constitution of Christ, relate it to his metaphysical presuppositions and soteriological concerns, and explain why, as A. Grillmeier has it, his position contains the germ of Arianism.

1.B. Describe Nestorius’ position on the constitution of Christ, relate it to his metaphysical presuppositions and soteriological concern, and explain why, as A. Grillmeier has it, his position reduces to a union in natura et secundum naturam.

2.A. Describe, compare, and contrast the christologies of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas.

2.B. Describe, compare, and contrast the soteriologies of Anselm of Canterbury and Thomas Aquinas.

3.A. Walter Kasper believes that the Council of Chalcedon opened up an entirely new way of viewing reality as a whole and he forges a personalist ontology to articulate this worldview. How does his personalist ontology come into play in his appropriation of Chalcedon’s confession of faith?

3.B. Briefly elucidate Karl Rahner’s transcendentality christology and discuss Hans Urs von Balthasar’s critique of Rahner.
Please choose three of the following questions and submit your responses within the three hour time limit:


2. St. Irenaeus of Lyons’s famous dictum—“The glory of God is the human person fully alive; the life of a human being is the vision of God”—may well be the bedrock of Christian spiritual growth. It certainly provides a challenge to anyone undertaking to study Christian anthropology. In light of your knowledge of the developments in Christian anthropology between the time of Irenaeus and Francis of Assisi, i.e., the patristic and medieval eras, show how Irenaeus’s wonderful insight may well have been overlooked, weakened, or ignored.

3. A recent online course description described Christian Anthropology in these terms: The examination of the Christian vision of the human person, the key issues in developing an understanding of the human person which integrates the full richness of the person’s ecclesial, sacramental, physical and transcendental dimensions. How has contemporary scholarship contributed to a deepened understanding of the important field of theology.

4. “Late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new..” Augustine exclaims in Book X of The Confessions. In a most beautifully poetic way, he then proceeds to describe how his senses were transformed by the God he discovered within. Some commentators have suggested that Augustine may well have been influenced by Origen in this; others maintain that the senses always challenged Augustine.

5. Bernard of Clairvaux developed a theology of the spiritual senses especially in his Sermons on the Song of Songs. Building on the patristic and medieval foundations of Origen, Augustine, and Bernard, the thirteenth century mystical theologian, Bonaventure poetically describes Francis’s discovery of divine beauty and incorporates it into his understanding of the saint’s austerity. Describe briefly Bonaventure’s theology of the “spiritual senses” and how Bonaventure incorporates it into his Franciscan understanding.

6. The recent success of James Martin’s My Life with the Saints (Chicago, Loyola Press, 2006) suggests that the art of hagiography is as appealing as ever. From your study of Christian spirituality, describe the role that spiritual biography has played especially in transforming society.
Ph.D Comprehensive Examination

Day One: Patristic Theology
July XX, 2007

In the time allotted (four hours), answer one question from each of the three areas. Be sure to support your answers with reference to the relevant primary and secondary sources from your reading list.

I. Ecclesiology

1. Describe the development of the idea of the Church from the second to the fifth centuries. Be sure to discuss the change in the theological context of ecclesiology after the conversion of Constantine.

2. Describe the development and usefulness of the idea of apostolic succession in the evolution of church offices from the second to the fourth centuries. How is this idea related to other doctrinal controversies?

II. Gnosticism and Christianity in the first three centuries

✓ 1. How do Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Clement of Alexandria each develop a different response to the groups that modern scholars now characterize as "gnostic"? What theological issues does each author highlight in his response, and how do these responses complement and/or conflict with each other?

2. Why is "Gnosticism" so hard for modern scholars to define? Be sure to include reference to the relevant patristic sources in your answer.

III. Nicene and post-Nicene theology

✓ 1. It is traditionally said that the "answer" to the Arian controversy was formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325. Using your knowledge of the development of Nicene theology after Nicaea, argue first for, and then against, this statement.

2. Describe the importance of technical theological terms, especially "homoousios," at the Council of Nicaea and in the subsequent theology of Athanasius.
Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination
Day Two: Medieval and Modern Theology
July XX, 2007

In the time allotted (four hours), answer three of the following questions, choosing at least one from each group.

Medieval

1. What is distinctive about Maximus the Confessor’s theology of the hypostatic union?


3. Compare and contrast St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure on the reason for the Incarnation.

Modern

4. Compare and contrast the positions of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth on the role of human experience in theology.

5. Compare and contrast the teachings of the First and Second Vatican Councils on the nature and content of divine revelation.

6. Discuss Francis Sullivan’s account of the evolution of the teaching of the Catholic Church on the possibility of salvation for the unbaptized.
Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Day Three: Theological Anthropology
July XX, 2007

In the time allotted (four hours), answer three of the following questions, choosing one from each pair.

Patristic

1. Scholars often divide Augustine's work into an "early" (pre-Pelagianism) stage and a "late" (Pelagianism & after) stage. To what extent can Augustine's teaching on grace and free will be so divided?

2. Suppose that you have been asked to teach an intensive five session course on Augustine's anthropology. What readings from Augustine would you assign for each session of the course and in what order would you have students read them? Justify your answer. If you wish, you may include comparative readings from other patristic sources, but you must justify their inclusion as well.

Medieval.

3. Explain the theology of merit in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas

4. Compare and Contrast Aquinas and Calvin on the effects of original sin.

Modern

5. Discuss the relationship of (human) nature and grace in the thought of Karl Rahner or Piet Fransen

6. Discuss the teaching of the Council of Trent on justification, with particular attention to Trent’s conception of faith, its understanding of merit, and its view of the relationship of faith and works.