

Encountering Christ



RELIGION

- Religion as tradition of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a supernatural agency.
- wikipedia
- Re-ligare - to bind fast; to tie together; to re-link

Exoteric and Esoteric

Exoteric - the outer expression of a religion

- institution, liturgy, doctrine, architecture, symbols, songs

--↑--|--↑--*Spirituality*--↑--|--|--|--|--↑--|-----
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Esoteric - the inner dimension of a religion

- mystical experience, sense of belonging, inner freedom, healing

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JUDAISM

- Re-linking with God in terms of Covenant
- Human beings created by God as good, but alienated through sin.
- God takes the initiative to restore relationship
- Covenant a binding agreement that constitutes God and the Hebrews as family.
"I will be your God, you will be my people."
- A progression: Noah, Abraham, Moses, David; promise of Messiah.



Christianity

- ✦ A world religion - 2.1 billion members
- ✦ Split from Judaism around 2,000 years ago
- ✦ Based on belief that Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified, was risen from the dead
- ✦ Communities, teachings and practices of the followers of Jesus -- Christians.

The Good News

- Not the teaching of Jesus
- Not a philosophy of life
- Not a political ideology
- Not a method of asectical practice
- Not a new set of laws to follow
- But . . . "Christ Jesus, who is our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30)."
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A New Covenant

- ✦ Fulfillment of Jewish covenantal development.
- ✦ Jesus establishes a new relationship between humanity and God.
- ✦ This new relationship is claimed through faith, not through adherence to the Jewish Law.
- ✦ Initiation into the community of believers is through Baptism.
- ✦ Eucharist as the ritualized remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ.

Jesus' Presence to Us

- ☛ Individual, personal, relational
- ☛ In and "as" his mystical body, the Church.
- ☛ In and "through" Sacramental encounters.
- ☛ Cosmically, through creation.

Personal Relationship

- ✦ Jesus lives and is present to us.
- ✦ His memories from his life remain.
- ✦ Scripture as touchpoint.
- ✦ Dialogical prayer.



Community



- ✦ He is identified with the Christian community.
- ✦ Where two or more are gathered in His name
- ✦ Church as Christ's visible presence
- ✦ Church as center of His ongoing work on earth
- ✦ Christians as "cells" in the Body of Christ

Sacramental

- ✦ Sign that communicates grace
- ✦ Church as first Sacrament of Christ's presence
- ✦ Sacramentals - signs and symbols that facilitate connection
- ✦ Sacraments - touch-points with Christ's life; consecrates, heals, nourishes.



Cosmic Presence



- ✦ God creates through the Word
- ✦ All creation has connection with God through the Word.
- ✦ Jesus is the Incarnate Word and is present to all creation.
- ✦ Creation as "iconic"

Spirituality - the process of developing the life of the human spirit in its openness to ultimate meaning, truth, and goodness.

Christian Faith - openness to and entrusting belief in the providential care and guidance of God as revealed and mediated through the Person of Jesus Christ.

Christian Spirituality - spiritual development in the context of Christian faith.

- explicit reference to Jesus Christ
- intentional practices to cultivate relationship with Jesus through the modes of his presence to us
