



Portraits of Christ

Doug Olena • May 2 & 9, 2021 • Life Together at Evangel Temple

“Whatever the reason for it, the fact deserves careful consideration that, after the fall of so many gods in this [20th] century, this person, broken at the hands of his opponents and constantly betrayed through the ages by his adherents, is obviously still for innumerable people the most moving figure in the long history of mankind: unusual and incomprehensible in many respects.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 145.

“The special feature, the most fundamental characteristic of Christianity is that it considers this Jesus as ultimately decisive, definitive, *archetypal*, for man’s relations with God, with his fellow man, society: in the curtailed biblical formula, as ‘Jesus Christ.’”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 123.

Christ of Piety

#2 Which Christ?

- We're dealing with four different versions of Christ.
 1. the Christ of Piety
 2. the Christ of Dogma
 3. the Christ of the Enthusiasts
 4. the Christ of Literature

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a white lace-trimmed top, is shown in a state of prayer with her hands clasped together. She is surrounded by numerous lit white candles, which create a warm, glowing atmosphere. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be the interior of a church with wooden columns. The overall mood is solemn and reverent.

The Christ of Piety

Christ of Piety

#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ that emerges from a culture of piety.
- It is found in literature, art, and tradition.
- Though its object is roughly Christ, it is filtered through human experience, speculation, and artistic expression, none of which can find an accurate portrayal.
- Its weakness is that it fails to access the textual grounds of faith, the Bible.

“What must be made clear is that apparently we cannot so simply and naïvely assume that what lies behind the name of Christ is known from Christian piety, literature, art and tradition.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 129.

A black and white electron micrograph showing several cross-sections of cells. The cells are roughly circular and have a darker, granular interior. The background is a lighter, textured surface. The text "The Christ of Dogma" is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font with a slight drop shadow.

The Christ of Dogma

Christ of Dogma

#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ that emerges from the magisterium, the acclamations of the mother Church.
- The councils (Nicea, Chalcedon, etc.) produced an outline of a Christian religion, a complex but stable demarcation of rational Christian territory.
- Receiving this dogma as the correct foundation, gives us a top down theologically sophisticated Christ though not the biblical one.



The Christ of the Enthusiasts

Christ of the Enthusiasts

#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ offered as a “non-conformist’s appeal to the original, true Christ appropriated by the Churches.
- Christ of the Enthusiasts is thought to be the key to returning to nature, truth, authenticity, God’s value system, by displacing the pretense of religion with Christ himself, however:
 - Their Christ is often a child of culture, not one from the Gospels.

“And if the Christ of the devotional objects of a Christian piety and the God beyond this world of a Christological dogmatism have no support in the Gospels, then still less does the all-too-earthly idol of ecstasies and addicts.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 137.

A stack of several books is shown in the foreground, with the top book open. The background is a blurred library with bookshelves filled with books. The title 'The Christ of Literature' is overlaid in white serif font.

The Christ of Literature

“All these literary portrayals of Jesus, ... were by no means lacking in aesthetic quality or theological depth. Not least when they were written by authors outside or on the margin of the Church. But they were based on a naïve and word-for-word reading of the Gospels.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 139.

Christ of Literature

#2 Which Christ?

- This is the Christ left over after criticizing and rejecting the Church.
- These works of literature are the attempt to take issue with the “divinely exalted, unworldly, and thus irrelevant Christ of dogma, [bringing] liturgy and theology down to earth, ... making him humanly intelligible ‘from below,’ challenging, inviting, and thus at the same time giving expression to our own individual and social problems.” 140

“But in the view of the many Christ images not only of the councils, of the devout and the enthusiasts, of theologians and painters, and also of the writers, it is the theologian who must answer the question: which portrait of Christ is the true one?”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 144.



Passion was brought to life in c...
 The REAL FACE of Jesus Chr...
 The Real Face of J...
 Was Jesus' Father ...
 Heaven Is For Real...
 Bishop Vaughn De...
 Looking for the Re...
 Is this the REAL face of Jesus?...
 Do You Believe in a Religious Jesus or t...
 Is th...



Jesus Painting ~ Heaven I...
 Keeping the Watch the REAL Face of Jesus
 The Real Presence of Christ
 Show me the real ...
 Jesus Christ: The R...
 Jesus christ on the cross in real - YouTube

The Real Christ



So Is This The Real Face Of Ch...
 The Real Meaning of Christmas - Kanisa Fellowsh...
 The Real Jesus | Answers In Genesis
 Jesus Drawing He...
 Blind Pass: Want T...
 No, Megyn Kelly, J...
 IS JESUS REAL? Dis...



Little Taller...
 via francigena - Jesu...
 Forensic Scientists...
 Relics Of The Cross...
 The True Jesus: Uncovering the Divinity of Christ in the ...
 Le Vral Visage De J...
 Jesus Christ Crucifixion Wallpapers | ...
 The Real Jesus of Nazareth: Smithsonian G...
 Who is T...



Jesus: U...
 Real Pictures of Jesus by Master Art...
 Real Face of Jesus from the Shroud of Turin - ne...
 Real Pictures of Jesus by Master Artists ...
 Could you listen to an angry black Jesus? | ...
 Pictures of Jesus - Which Jesus is the real Jesus?
 The real Jesus Chr...

Not a Myth

“His history can be dated.” 148

- “Not a supratemporal myth like those found in early civilizations
- “Not an Egyptian myth of everlasting life
- “Not a Mesopotamian myth of cosmic order
- “Not an Indian myth of the world as transformation
- “Not a Greek myth of the perfect man

Not a Myth

Uncertainties

- Where did he come from?
- When was he born?
- When did he die?
- A certain fuzziness in both our acquisition of the facts and their actuality is annoying but necessary. Is this another of God's misdirection to force us to read reality with more than a literalist's lens?

The Documents

More than a Biography 150

- The “four ‘canonical’ Gospels do not provide the course of Jesus’ life with its different stages and events.” 151
- “Despite all their common features, the different Gospels each acquired a very different profile of the one Jesus.” 152

The Documents

Testimonies 153

- The Gospels do not provide a “stenographic report” or a historical development of Jesus.
- The Gospels all write the “good news” through the instrument of the resurrection.

The Documents

Testimonies 153

- The Gospels are not:
 - disinterested, objective, documentary accounts
 - a neutral, scientific historiography
- The Gospels are:
 - meaning and influence of historical events alongside testimony
 - committed testimonies of faith meant to commit their readers
 - sermons

The Documents

Testimonies 154

- “The Gospels are meant not only to report, but to proclaim, to stir, to rouse faith.” 154
- “How do we distinguish between Jesus’ own words and deeds and interpretation, supplementation, paschal exaltation or glorification by the community or the evangelists?” 154

The Documents

Counterquestions about Jesus 158

- “The Jesus of history is not identical with the Christ image of traditional dogmatics.
- “Nor is he identical with the speculative idea of Christ fostered by German Idealism....
- “Neither is he identical with the ‘liberal’ portrayals of Jesus in the nineteenth century....
- “Nor again is he identical with the Jesus image of ‘consistent eschatology’ which saw in him simply a prophet of the imminent end of the world.”

“Because of the work of so many generations of exegetes and the results of the historical-critical method, we are able today to know better than perhaps any former generations of Christians—except the first—the true, original Jesus of history.””

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 160-161.

Questions

Justifiable faith 162

- Three questions, our responses:
 - Is Christian faith a matter of understanding?
 - this is the intellectualist misunderstanding of faith.
 - Is Christian faith an effort of will?
 - this is the voluntarist misunderstanding of faith.
 - Is Christian faith a matter of emotion?
 - an act of faith without any content of faith is an emotional misunderstanding of faith.

“The believer, like the lover, has no conclusive proofs to give him complete security. But the believer too, like the lover, can be completely certain of the Other by committing himself entirely to the other. And this certainty is stronger than all the security established by proofs. “

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 163.

Not Balance, Integration

What Attitude? 164-5

- Küng's encapsulation:
 - “Does the historical-critical Jesus research presuppose faith?”
 - No, even the unbeliever can carry out objective research on Jesus.”
 - “Does faith presuppose historical-critical research?”
 - No. There was faith even before Jesus research and today many believe without regard to the results of research.”
 - “A positive result emerges from the two answers.
 - Christian faith and historical research are not mutually exclusive....”

“Enlightenment can avert religious fanaticism and intolerance. Only faith and knowledge combined—a faith that knows and a knowledge that believes—are capable today of understanding the true Christ in his breadth and depth.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 165.



**Christianity and
Judaism**

The image features two stylized human heads in profile, facing each other. The head on the left is blue and contains a white Star of David. The head on the right is red and contains a white cross. The background is a textured, light blue-grey. The text 'Christianity and Judaism' is centered over the heads in a white, bold, serif font.

“Only when it becomes clear what [Jesus] himself wanted, what hopes he brought for the people of his own time, can it also become clear what he himself has to say to the people of the present time, what hopes he can offer for mankind today and for a future world.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 166.

Blood and Tears

Christian Antisemitism and the Holocaust

- The history of Christian antisemitism of 2000 years is well documented.
 - Lois, comments?
- 168 “It was not the Reformation, but humanism ..., then pietism ... and particularly the tolerance of the Enlightenment (with its declaration of the rights of man in the United States and in the French Revolution) which prepared the way for a change and up to a point also brought it about.”
- 169 “It must be absolutely clearly stated that Nazi anti-Judaism was the work of godless, anti-Christian criminals. But it would not have been possible without the almost two thousand years’ pre-history of ‘Christian’ anti-Judaism, which prevented Christians from organizing a convinced and energetic resistance on a broad front.”

“After Auschwitz there can be no more excuses. Christendom cannot avoid a clear admission of its guilt”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 169.

Future Possibilities

Theological Discussion 170

- 170 “It is high time for Christendom not merely to preach ‘conversion’ to the Jews, but to be ‘converted’ itself:
 - “to the encounter that has scarcely begun and not merely humanitarian but *theological discussion* with Jews, which might be an aid not merely to a ‘mission’ or capitulation but to understanding, mutual assistance and collaboration.”
 - So I thought, since 1976 we have come some way toward that understanding with the emergence of scholars in our midst dedicated in some fashion to this study: Ray Gannon, Lois Olena, Wave Nunnally, Marc Turnage. (These are only the ones I know off the top of my head.)

A Jewish-Christian Theology

Vatican II 171

- “For the official Catholic Church the declaration of Vatican II on the Jews became ‘the discovery or rediscovery of Judaism and the Jews both in their intrinsic value and in their meaning for the Church’ (J. Oesterreicher).”
- 172 “There is a growing awareness of a common Jewish-Christian *basis* which is not merely humanitarian but *theological*. Jews too are asking today for ‘a Jewish theology of Christianity and a Christian theology of Judaism.’ (J. Petuchowski).”
- 172 Quoting Buber, Küng reminds us though that “more is involved here than ‘two ways of faith’.”

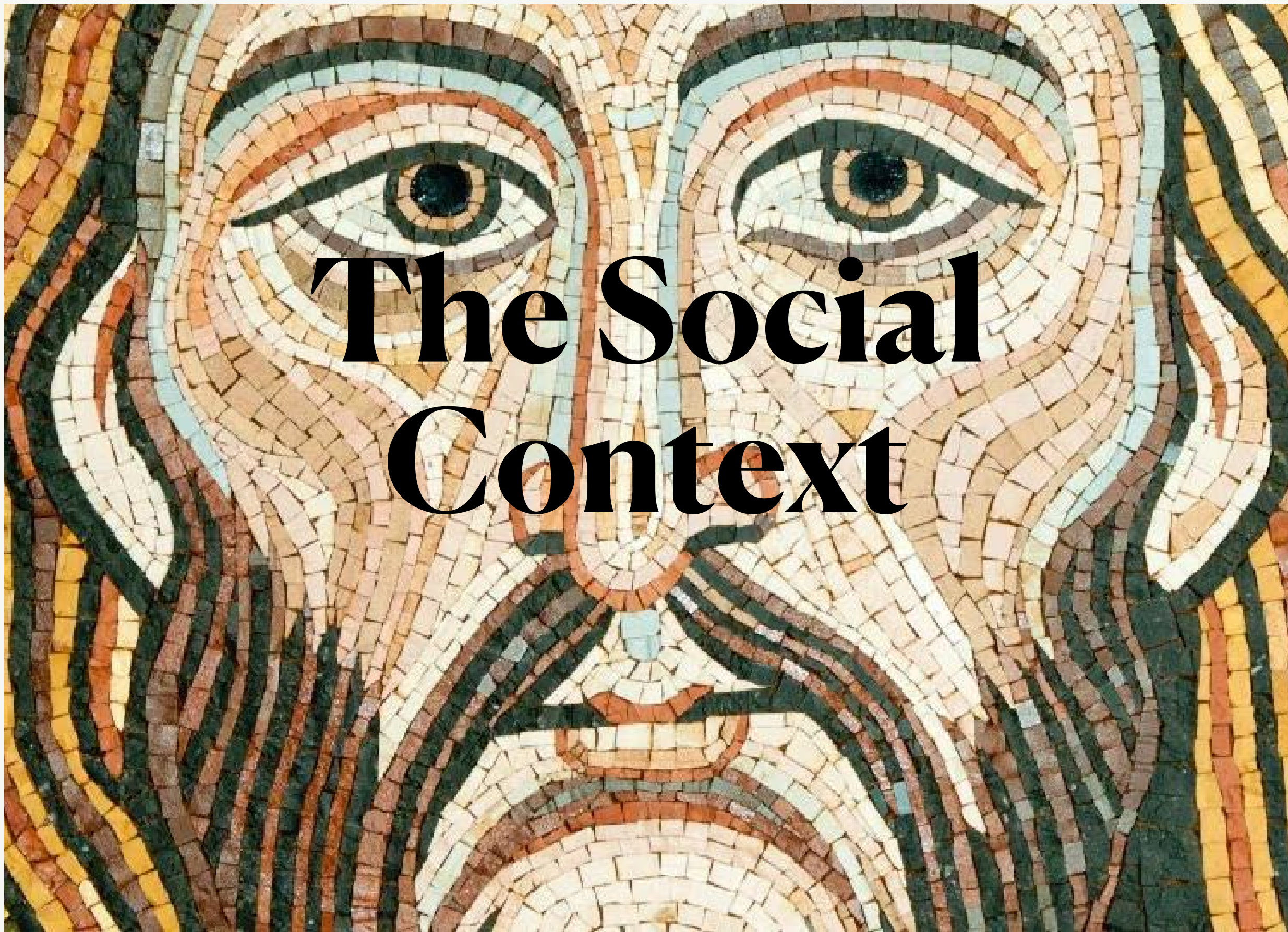
Discussing Jesus

“The dispute seems hopeless.” 172

- 172 “The very person who seems to unite Jews and Christians [Jesus] also separates them abysmally.”
- But, “there are undoubtedly numerous Jews who would at least accept the ‘Jesus of culture’ even though they reject the ‘Jesus of religion’.”
- However it may be stated that the Jesus of religion is of increasing interest to Jews of a variety of kinds.
- 174 It may just be that “in the end, the final decision for or against Jesus will yet look rather different from what the long Jewish-Christian dispute might have led us to expect.”

“Christianity consists in the activation of the memory of Jesus Christ in theory and practice.”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 174.



The Social Context

<https://madmikesamerica.com>

“Jesus— What does he want? Who is he? Does he belong to the establishment or is he a revolutionary? Is he a guardian of law and order or a champion of radical change? Does he stand for a purely inward-looking spirituality or does he advocate thoroughgoing worldliness?”

Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p 176.

Küng's Outline for this Chapter

Is Jesus . . .

1. Establishment?

- The religio-political system
- Neither priest nor theologian
- Not with the rulers
- Radical change

2. Revolution?

- The revolutionary movement
- Hope of a liberator
- Not a social revolutionary
- Non-violent revolution

3. Emigration?

- Apolitical radicalism
- Monasticism
- Not a religious

a. No isolation from the world.

b. No bipartisan of reality

c. No legal fanaticism

d. No asceticism

e. No hierarchical order

f. No monastic rule

- Not the elite, but for all

4. Compromise?

• The devout

• Moral compromise

• Not a pious legalist

• Against self-righteousness

• Provocative on all sides

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