

제1강 Layers of Heresy and the Contribution of a “Mediating Theology”

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Introduction

When preparing this presentation, my mind and heart resonated with what the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, a leading Christian thinker at the international and ecumenical level, said in his preface to one of his most well-known books, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*.

Moltmann recognized freely “the conditions and limitations of his own position, and the relativity of his own particular environment.”¹⁾ Speaking of himself in the third person, Moltmann remarks: “For him this means a critical dissolution of naïve, self-centered thinking. Of course he is a European, but European theology no longer has to be *Eurocentric*. Of course, he is a man, but theology no longer has to be *androcentric*. Of course he is living in the ‘first world,’ but the theology which he is developing does not have to reflect the ideas of the dominating nations.”²⁾ This is exactly how I feel when offering my reflections in this particular Asian location. My musings come from a European male theologian now based in the USA, ill-verses in and ignorant of Korean theology, and a stranger to Korean culture. Even the fact that I have lived and taught theology in Asia for many years and am fluent in one of the ancient languages of the East (Thai), in no way makes me an expert, rather an interested observer at best. It is only through several trips to Korea, daily interaction with number of Korean students at Fuller Theological Seminary, and a fruitful collaboration in several writings projects with some fine Korean theologians that I have gained first-hand experience in the theological and religious sentiment of this Asian land.

At the same time, acknowledging our own situatedness and particular location is no reason for apology.³⁾ Humble and confident mapping out of our particular locations may also help us better appreciate the richness of dialogue and different viewpoints. If anything is needed in this rapidly globalizing world, this sort of situating ourselves

1) Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row/London: SCM Press, 1981), xii.

2) Ibid., xii (emphases in the original).

3) “No theology is done in a vacuum. All theology, then, is contextual, meaning that we learn and interpret the texts (of the Bible and tradition) in a context. Being contextual, all theology is also limited by a particular location.” Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Trinity: Global Perspective* (Louisville, KY/Londo: Westminster John Knox, 2007), xvii

is essential to the growth of the Church of Christ in Asia and beyond. Again citing Moltmann, we can say:

truth is to be found in unhindered dialogue. Fellowship and freedom are the human components for knowledge of the truth, the truth of God. And the fellowship I mean here is the fellowship of mutual participation and unifying sympathy. ... This free community of men and women, without privilege and without discrimination, may be termed the earthly body of truth. ... [I]t is only in free dialogue that truth can be accepted for the only right and proper reason - namely, that it illuminates and convinces as truth. Truth brings assent, it brings about change without exerting compulsion. In dialogue the truth frees men and women from their own conceptions and their own ideas. ... Christian theology would wither and die if it did not continually stand in a dialogue like this, and if it were not bound up with a fellowship that seeks this dialogue, needs it and continually pursues it.⁴⁾

With those precepts and challenges in mind, let me introduce the plan and purpose for my essay. The programme puts it succinctly: my task was to reflect on the "Countermeasures for the heresies and Christianity's perspective concerning them." This is a tall order indeed - and therefore, I decided to attempt something more modest, namely to help all of us to have a better grasp of what makes heresy a heresy. In other words, I try my hand on the diagnostic aspect of the task, if I may. I leave it to other contributors to suggest concrete countermeasures and focus this discussion on mapping out some key perspectives on different types of heresies and to the question of what can be called heresy in the first place.

My plan is the following: First, I would like to present the idea of a "mediating theology" and its benefits for our topic. Second, I will try to draw lessons from the way orthodoxy has emerged and consolidated itself in Christian history, especially in the beginning centuries. Third, I will reflect on various meanings and "layers" of heresy. Fourth, I will try to apply my key findings and insights in a case study, namely, how to understand *theosis* as a Christian concept. Finally, I will conclude with some advice specifically to evangelical theology.

Towards a "Mediating Theology"

In his important recent book titled *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, with a subtitle illustrative of its approach, *Twenty Centuries of Unity & Diversity*, Roger E. Olson, a leading evangelical systematic theologian, attempts to develop a "mediating theological perspective within the broad tradition of evangelical Protestant

4) Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, xiii (emphasis in the original).

Christianity." 5) Mediating theology for Olson is

one that attempts to bridge unnecessary and unfortunate gulfs between perspectives and interpretations within Christianity. Such an approach values unity as well as truth and assumes that at times it is necessary for equally committed Christians to agree to disagree about secondary matters and come together on common ground. One way in which this may be accomplished is by a rediscovery and new valuing of our common Christian heritage of belief - what will be here called the Great Tradition of Christian teaching. Other terms for the same stock of commonly held Christian beliefs include "consensual tradition" and "mere Christianity." 6)

While attempting to define the shared common core, mediating theology is also mindful of and acknowledges the importance of real diversity. This acknowledgment is but part of Christian maturation, the capacity to recognize "legitimate diversity and even disagreement within larger unity and agreement." 7) Mediating theology, consequently, can also be called "both-and" rather than "either-or" theology.⁸⁾ One of the lessons I learned when living in Thailand was that my own Western mindset is so much based on "either-or" logic that it is hard for me to hold on to two seemingly different notions at one and the same time. Yet there is much in Christian faith that betrays this dynamic: we are *both* sinners *and* saints, our God is *both* transcendent *and* immanent, and so on. A helpful way to develop this idea is the distinction often made in missiological literature concerning cultural boundaries. Identifying boundaries is best done in relation to the center. The "bounded set category" operates with either-or logic: maintaining certain beliefs, say, about baptism, either allows you in or excludes you from the community. The "centered-set category," in contrast, views Christian beliefs as more fluid and flexible and, rather than focusing on the exclusion of views and thus (at times artificial) boundary maintenance, relates the views to the center. Of course, even the latter approach draws boundaries but in a less rigid and less exclusive way. Often what could be excluded because of, for instance, different ways of formulating the issue (for example, whether the Lord's Supper is a sacrament or ordinance), must not necessarily be so excluded since more than one formulation may more or less legitimately express the core center belief. Thus, one can be "more" or "less" right about one's beliefs rather than either orthodox or heretic.

Now for some time the ecumenical movement and ecumenical theology have worked with two concepts that illustrate the centered-set category approach. One of these concepts is

5) Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity & Diversity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 11 (in the original the text is in italics).

6) Ibid.

7) Ibid., 12.

8) Ibid., 17.

the “unity-in-diversity” model: in the midst of a bewildering variety of Christian views, an attempt is made to find the common core and make room for different interpretations as long as they fall within the shared tradition. Another concept, successfully used, for example, in the recent Roman Catholic-Lutheran joint document on justification, is called the “convergence” method. While full agreement about all doctrinal beliefs is not the goal of mutual conversations, enough convergence is sought to be able to give a common witness. Within this shared convergence, room is made for differences arising out of each respective tradition. In the aforementioned document, it meant that while Catholics and Lutherans, for example, mutually affirm the importance of good works as the fruit of salvation, both parties were given a chance in the written text to highlight the ways they understand the role of good works.⁹⁾

There are of course places where an either-or attitude is needed - we need to choose whether we serve Baal or Yahweh - to take an Old Testament example - yet most often in the schisms among sincere Christians the debates relate to far less dramatic choices.¹⁰⁾ We should make sure that the exclusion of views (and by implication other persons who advocate those views) is not based on false or artificial reasons, as has often happened. Here the sound advice from Olson is worth keeping in mind: “*for Christianity beliefs matter but not all beliefs matter equally.*”¹¹⁾

The Emergence of Orthodoxy in Christian History

So far we have talked about orthodoxy and right beliefs (as well as their counterparts) as if everybody agreed on their meaning. That is of course not the case. To take a few simple examples: All Christians would take it for heresy to confess that Muhammad is the only true prophet sent by Yahweh. Yet not all Christians would take it as heresy that when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* with the intention of defining a binding dogma, his oracles are to be considered infallible; indeed, for one-half of all Christians (Roman Catholics) this is one of the doctrines to be held in order to maintain church membership. Similarly, while some Christians regard the doctrine of the initial evidence (that Spirit-baptism is to be followed by speaking in tongues as an “evidence”) as orthodoxy, many other Christians would regard it a very suspect view at least. These and

9) An interested reader may want to consult for details Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 99-108.

10) In my work in the theology of religions (the question of how Christian faith relates to other religions), I have of course noticed the downside of the “both-and” mentality as it relates to Asian mindsets. (Half-)Indian (from India) theologian Raimundo Panikkar and Korean-born Jung Young Lee, among others, advance a highly pluralistic interpretation of Christian faith appealing to the Asian mindset of *advait* (non-duality) and *yinyang* respectively. This is not of course what I am recommending. Those pluralistic interpretations are willing to leave the core and contours of Christian tradition as understood in the creeds and Protestant Reformation.

11) Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, 33 (italics in the original).

numerous other examples call for a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes orthodoxy. What is considered to be heresy is of course dependent on the definition(s) of orthodoxy.

Let us begin with a minimalist understanding: Orthodoxy is something Christians have to believe in order to be Christians. While circular in reasoning, I think, most Christians - and non-Christians - would affirm this definition. If pressed, contemporary Christians would appeal to the Bible and early creeds as the ultimate sources to determine the shared "deposit of faith" among all Christians. Beyond that we can hardly go since, for example, the Protestant Reformation is binding only for Protestants; similarly Vatican Council II only defines Roman Catholic dogma.

Before going into a more nuanced understanding of various layers of orthodoxy, let us remind ourselves of the long and winding road early Christian theology undertook before coming to what is now the shared and binding creedal tradition. The early creeds (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381,¹²) and Chalcedon 451, among others) are extremely significant for all Christians since the drafting of these canons took place simultaneous with the collection and ratification of the New Testament canon. During the time of the Council of Nicea in which many of the contours of the Trinitarian faith were first hammered out in a more or less fixed form, the New Testament canon was not yet finally approved.¹³ The way the church catholic (meaning the yet-undivided church of the earliest centuries) came to a fuller and sounder understanding was to react to perceived heresies. Most of them had to do with Christology and the Trinity, with corollaries for the doctrine of salvation and liturgy. Take for example the third-century heresy of Arianism which produced a statement of Christ's divinity considered to be inadequate. While Nicea was able to reject Arianism, the main tool against Arianism, the *homoousios* clause (namely that the Son is of the same "essence" or "substance" as the Father, thus implying the Son is full deity) remained contested among Christian churches along lines that later resulted in the emergence of the Christian East (Eastern Orthodoxy) and Christian West (Roman Catholicism, Protestantism).

It is also instructive to keep in mind the fact that from early on Christian orthodoxy began to negotiate diversity. In Christology this happened with the existence of two "schools" with two different approaches. Whereas theologians in Antioch of Syria emphasized the two natures of Christ and in turn produced a heresy which took the two

12) To be historically precise, what we call nowadays the Nicene Creed is the product of the Constantinopolitan Council, thus the term Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Of course, the Council of Nicea (325) gave the basic content to the creed sometimes known as the Nicene Creed.

13) In his classic study, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (orig. German ed., 1934) Walter Bauer argued that in earliest Christianity, orthodoxy and heresy did not stand in relation to one another as primary to secondary, but in many regions heresy (or what was regarded to be heresy by later ecclesiastical decisions) was the original manifestation of Christianity.

natures too far, Nestorianism - highly interesting in relation to Chinese Christianity - theologians in Alexandria of Egypt (who laid the foundation for Eastern Christianity) focused on the divine nature, resulting in the two one-nature (*monophysite*) heresies of Apollinarism and Eutychianism. While disagreements and occasional conflicts happened, both schools belong to orthodoxy rather than among the heretical views ruled out definitely by Chalcedon in 451.

Later Christian theology became less flexible and more rigid about orthodoxy and heresy. For example, for the Western churches, Roman Catholic and Protestant, it took over a half-millennium to rescind their mutual condemnations. Yet one can hardly dispute the *Christian-ness* of both of these traditions vis-à-vis other religions and atheism! So, this calls for a more nuanced understanding of orthodoxy and heresy.

The Layers of Heresy

In the book of Acts (24:5) St. Paul was presented to the Roman governor Felix as the leader of the heresy (*haireseos*) of the Nazarenes.¹⁴⁾ Second Peter 2:1 uses the terms from which we get heresy in relation to dissenting Christian groups. This is in keeping with some other religions. For example in Islam, the two main bodies - *Sunnis* and *Shi'as* - view each other as heretical.

Above I mentioned that the definition of heresy is contingent on how we conceive of orthodoxy. The opposite is also the case. Let me suggest that there are several layers or contours of heresy - and consequently of orthodoxy. For the sake of argument, let me identify them as follows:

- ① "Hard-core" heresy
- ② Denominational or tradition-based heresy
- ③ Cultural heresy or "heresy of convenience"

"Hard-core" heresy, as opposed to what constitutes the core confession of Christian faith, is what we talked about in the previous section. With regard to Christology the core confession meant the "two natures" of Christ, divine and human, in a *hypostatic* (personal) union, in the one person of Jesus Christ. All views deviating from this were ruled out and considered heretical. Thomas Aquinas gave a classic definition of heresy (*Summa Theologica* II-II:11:1): "a species of infidelity in men who, having professed the faith of Christ, corrupt its dogmas." For Thomas, and most of the Christian tradition, hardcore heresy is not a matter of different tastes or even minor disagreements about theological opinions but rather a matter of intentional unbelief which leads to the corruption of beliefs crucial to Christian faith. Pertinacious, obstinate adhesion to a particular (erroneous) view is required to make heresy formal.

14) See also Acts 28:22 in which the Jews in Rome use the term *haireseo* of Christians.

Roman Catholic tradition reminds us that as long as one remains willing to submit to the Church's decision he or she is not yet an outsider to the Church and that there is thus hope for correcting the false view. One does not have to be Catholic to heed that principle.

I think it is very important for us to keep in mind this primary connotation of heresy since views are at times labeled heresy too lightly. Real heresy, whenever it appears, is a serious matter. It is like a disease that has the potential of killing the patient (the one who holds to the heretical view). In its original theological meaning, heresy has the real danger of pushing someone out of the sphere of Christian faith.

This is in keeping with the original meaning of the term *evangelical* (however it is understood in the contemporary context¹⁵). It comes of course from the Greek term for "gospel" (*euangelion*). Thus, in this widest sense of the word what is evangelical is "orthodox."¹⁶ Of course it still leaves open the hermeneutical question, in other words, to what extent Christians can agree on the interpretation of the Bible, the "source book" for the gospel. Here the creeds are indispensable since they are mutually agreed upon ways of expressing that shared faith even though they do not speak to all, or even most, of the issues Christians across the spectrum are believing.

The second layer of heresy is denominational or based on a certain tradition. Most Protestants, especially the more conservative ones, would most likely regard as heresy a view according to which devout Hindus, Buddhists, and adherents of other religions may be saved without ever hearing the gospel provided they follow the light given to them in their own religion and strive for moral goodness; they will be saved because of Christ although they never heard of his name. However, in order to be a contemporary Roman Catholic Christian you have to believe that doctrine; in the hierarchy of faith it belongs to those tenets to which the Catholic has to adhere. Catholics defend it as a *Christian* view since it attributes salvation to Christ. This is an example of a heresy and corresponding orthodox position tied to a particular Christian tradition.

What bothers me about the relationships between Christian churches is that they usually make no attempt to distinguish between heresy in the primary sense of the word (i.e., in the first sense which means going beyond and against the Christian faith per se) and differences of beliefs between Christian churches. One well-known example is the infamous mutual condemnation by Roman Catholics and Lutherans during the time of

15) As is well known, in Europe *evangelica* is virtually a synonym for *Protestant* in contrast to Roman Catholic (as in Evangelical-Lutheran Church), while in the English-speaking world it refers nowadays to that segment of conservative Protestantism which negotiates its way between Fundamentalism and Liberalism (or mainline Christian views).

16) This is the way the term *evangelica* is used, for example, by the noted American Lutheran theologian Ted Peters, *God – The World Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era* 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

the Reformation. While in hindsight it is uncontested that both Christian churches belonged within Christianity, these condemnations doubted the legitimacy of the other church to claim Christian identity at all.

I find helpful the distinction that Eastern Orthodox theology is making between heterodoxy and heresy. The former term denotes other Christian churches that do not belong to the Eastern Orthodox communion and hold doctrines different from those of Orthodox Christianity, while the latter refers to erroneous views considered to be heretical and thus non-Christian. Even when the Eastern Church itself has not followed this distinction faithfully and consistently, it sticks with the principle of mediating theology as explained above: heterodoxy makes room for real diversity in the understanding of Christian doctrine by honoring the diversity and yet making a distinction between what is Christian (orthodox) and what is not (heresy).

Along with denominations, we could also talk about theological traditions such as Evangelicalism in terms of what is and what is not heresy. Evangelicalism as a nondenominational theological movement, indeed, poses unique challenges since it cannot draw the boundaries based on common history or ecclesiastical markers. While all evangelicals hold on to the authority of Scripture, the uniqueness of Christ including atonement in Christ, and the importance of missions, to name the most obvious theological values, there are number of issues debated among sincere evangelicals. Only think of the sharp differences between Arminian and Calvinistic evangelicals about human will and God's election, about the role of women in ministry, or the doctrine and practice of water baptism. Many other topics could be added, such as how to understand the Lord's Supper or how to define Scriptural infallibility or inerrancy. Yet in the midst of these and other debates, Evangelicalism represents a theological tradition in its own right. Very instructive and helpful is the recent book titled *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology* by Gregory Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, both evangelical theologians.¹⁷⁾ The book takes the approach that we have called here mediating theology. It defines accurately the disagreements and different views concerning a number of topics mentioned above and then gives both pros and cons without necessarily trying to finally resolve the issues. Even where the writers take their stand, the implication is that the view represented by other evangelicals is as genuinely evangelical.

The third layer of heresy is what I call "cultural" heresy or "heresy of convenience." This may or may not be related to a particular Christian denomination or tradition. These are issues that often border on ethical and moral issues as much as

17) Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).

theological or doctrinal ones. The famous - or better: infamous - "worship wars" are a prime example of these heresies. Depending on one's - often one's generation's - music taste, certain types of music styles in worship are considered to be "satanic" or "heretical." In some other contexts, all theological talk about the role of women can be hampered by the culture's preconceived ideas of male-female roles. In other cases, what constitutes "heresy" may be a matter of proper attire, hairstyle, make up, or similar lifestyle issues. Debates about whether to use real wine or juice at the celebration of the Lord's Supper similarly has caused quite serious heretical charges. These *adiaphora* questions are subtle and deceiving since usually the debaters are neither conscious of nor willing to admit their true nature, namely, that they are primarily cultural and lifestyle issues rather than theological and doctrinal.

I would also include under the third category of heresy theogico-cultural heresies such as the doctrine of *theosis*, widely considered not only suspect but also heretical by most Protestants and especially conservative evangelicals: it is considered a nonbiblical concept, bordering on pantheism (blurring the distinction between God and humans), and so forth. The same can be said of any reference to Mary in non-Catholic circles since it is associated without any further consideration with the Mary-cult; or likewise talk about social justice in many politically conservative churches is taken as either "liberal" or "socialist." What all these "heresies" have in common is that different Christian traditions with their own cultures and "comfort zones" associate these and similar beliefs with something they think is heretical without making a distinction between "levels" of heresy.

Mediating Theology in Practice

In order to make my discussion more focused and hopefully more easily applicable to a particular situation, let me offer a case study which also relates to Korean situation. Before that let me briefly take stock of the previous discussion and its main insights. I will summarize them in three broad strokes:

First, I have argued for the necessity of a mediating theology which on the one hand attempts to discern the common core indispensable to the Christian understanding of central beliefs about Trinity, Christology, salvation, and similar major topics, and on the other hand, tries to define the acceptable diversity of views within Christian orthodoxy. This task means a continuous rereading of biblical and creedal traditions in light of traditional and current issues of faith.

This is best done, second, by thinking in terms of a "centered-set category" which does not begin with the exclusion of differing views but rather first relates them to the center. Christology is a prime example here. The center of Christian confession for

all Christian churches is the Chalcedonian understanding of Jesus Christ as God-man (hypostatic union), a unique incarnation of God in a particular human person "for us and our salvation." The extreme two-nature Nestorianism, on the one hand, and the extreme one-nature monophysitism, on the other hand, set the boundaries. The views that try to relate to the main agenda of the center can be deemed Christian whether they are more in the "Alexandrian" one-nature approach or in the "Antiochian" two-nature view. This is how we differentiate between orthodoxy and heresy.

Here we come to my third main insight: I have attempted to make a distinction between various layers of heresy arguing that the original meaning of heresy is a boundary line between what can be considered to be a *Christian* belief and what is not, i.e., *non-Christian*. In general, the two other notions of heresy, whether denominational or cultural (including theological-cultural) should not be labeled heresy but rather heterodoxy. Thus, normally they should be included under *Christian* confession with the understanding that the Christian church may have differing, yet neither contradictory nor exclusive, interpretations of doctrines.

With this in mind, let me take as a case study the above-mentioned Eastern Orthodox notion of salvation called *theosis* or divinization. Until recently Protestants considered *theosis* to be an erroneous, at times even heretical, view of salvation since it was believed to be based on a synergistic idea of salvation with too much emphasis on human will and human initiative and thus diametrically opposed to the justification by faith view. Only with the rediscovery of *theosis* in Protestant theology - both in Luther's and Calvin's soteriologies (even when the term itself was not widely employed) and elsewhere (Anglicanism, Methodism, and so forth)¹⁸ - were Protestant theologians willing to reconsider their preconceived ideas of the doctrine. While debates continued, a number of Lutheran and other Protestant theologians became convinced that *theosis* is not only a legitimate Christian concept of salvation, but also that it claims a long historical pedigree and thus is a legitimate way of understanding salvation. Some of the fears, such as that of pantheism, were shown to be based on misunderstanding, similarly to the charges of Pelagianism (that one could by his or her own powers fulfill the demands of the will of God). This does not mean that many Protestants would likely adopt *theosis* as their soteriological belief; justification by faith is the treasured formulation. Yet there is room for *theosis* as a biblical, ancient, and contemporary interpretation of salvation as well as there is space for both Protestant and Roman Catholic notions of justification. All Christian churches agree on salvation as God's work, calling for human response. All churches agree that it is Christ who is the savior. By that confession all religious views based

18) See further, Kärkkäinen, *One with God*.

on human capacity to save oneself are excluded, as is attributing salvation to any other name than Christ. There are boundaries between orthodoxy (Christian understanding of salvation) and heresy (non-Christian views) as well as room for heterodoxy (differing interpretations of the same core belief).

Because of lack of theological sensitivity and critical reflection, some conservative Western doctrinal "gatekeepers" have labeled any reference to *theosis* a heretical view for the said reasons and especially because of its association with Mormon teaching. In my ecumenical work at the World Council of Churches, Faith and Order (both in the USA and in my homeland, Finland), as well as in the theological encounter between Fuller and Living Stream Ministries (LSM), I have had an opportunity to revisit many of those suspicions and put them in a proper perspective. As a result of the conversations between Fuller and LSM, we concluded that *theosis* is a legitimate and honored Christian soteriological concept and that therefore it should not be any reason for suspicion towards that Christian movement even when granted that the very same concept is also being used by heretical groups such as some New Age movements.

Mediating Theology for Evangelicals

What concerns me about the desire of many evangelicals and fundamentalists to maintain orthodoxy is the merciless, at times aggressive way of doing their business. Not only does it lead too easily to a doctrinal "witch hunt" and a reactionary style of presenting one's theological views, but also to ever-widening schisms and divisions as well as to no small amount of personal and communal hurts. The price paid for this kind of orthodoxy is high, and one wonders if the law of love should not also play into the way orthodoxy is being affirmed and heresy resisted. Of old, the term *irenic* - from the Greek word for peace (or "of peaceable spirit") - has been used to refer to an attitude which on the one hand attempts to understand the other party's views and motifs and, on the other hand, set forth one's understanding of beliefs in a charitable spirit. An irenic spirit does not of course mean relativism or a lack of standards but rather knowing in love.¹⁹⁾

In the name of Christian love and mercy it should also be acknowledged that an assessment that something smacks of heresy may be due to ignorance of the true creed, erroneous judgment, or less than perfect apprehension and comprehension of the doctrine. Again, echoing the Roman Catholic view according to which *hard-core* heresy is in the final analysis a matter of willful turning away from the church's teaching, patience and longsuffering should characterize those trusted with leadership and teaching positions as they attempt to discern the mind of Christ. In many cases, heresy

19) For helpful remarks, see further Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, 14.

-hunting would be better replaced by sound teaching and instruction that would give Christians an(other) opportunity to know more about the orthodox views. In 1908, G. K. Chesterton penned his famous book *Orthodoxy*,²⁰⁾ which was meant to be a companion to his earlier work *Heretics* and to state the positive side in addition to the negative. Many critics had complained of the former work that it merely criticized views without offering any alternative. Chesterton responded that his book on orthodoxy was an attempt to answer that challenge.

The term “ortho-dox” means literally “right worship.” It tells us of the importance of spirituality and prayer to the right way of speaking and thinking of God. At its purest and most elevated form, theology is part of and participates in doxology, returning glory to God. It is what the great late Roman Catholic theologian of beauty, Hans Urs von Balthasar called “kneeling theology,” theology done in the Spirit and in the midst of prayer. While confident, it is at the same time a humble and gentle theology, theology in the service of worshipping God.

Indeed, our whole being is immersed in the ocean of the Father’s love. . . . For the relation between God and creature is now seen to depend on the marvel of God’s incomprehensible love, and shows him, in setting up this relation, as the Lover absolutely. Then the creature itself is seen as a sustained utterance of prayer; and man only needs to know, in some degree, what he really is, to break spontaneously into prayer.²¹⁾

Kneeling theology which pursues the knowledge of God for the sake of loving God and loving the neighbor becomes ultimately an ortho-praxis, the right deeds, righteous lifestyle. If evangelicals desire to make a difference in culture, let alone in the Korean culture, lifestyle and the quality of one’s everyday Christian walk becomes an indispensable part of orthodoxy and Christian testimony. Without orthopraxis, orthodoxy not only becomes a dead letter but a counter-testimony to the gospel, something like a heresy. No wonder one of the Eastern Fathers, St. Maximos the Confessor, reminded us of the spiritual truth that “Theology without action [praxis] is the theology of demons.”

20) Now in the public domain and available, e.g., from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library at www.ccel.org.

21) Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Praye*, trans. A.V. Littledale (New York: Sheed & Ward 1961), 35-36.