Chapter 5

Death for Sins

One week in the life of Jesus Christ has received dramatically disproportionate attention in the Gospels. Luke, forever concerned with details of the life of Jesus, devotes one-fifth of his Gospel to the final week of Jesus' life. Mark and Matthew devoted about one-third of their Gospels to the events of that week, and John gave almost half of his Gospel to the events surrounding the death of Jesus. Logically speaking, Jesus' death should have marked the end of any interest in him. The crucifixion effectively ended for three days the movement that had surrounded him. But on the third day, as the reports of the resurrection spread, that movement took on an entirely different character.

In the light of his resurrection, what did Jesus' death mean? Why did God let him die, only to raise him from the dead? In retrospect, his death became a greater surprise and mystery than his resurrection. The resurrection made sense in hindsight, for it declared Jesus "with power to be the Son of God" (Rom. 1:4). Since he was divine, then of course one would expect him to rise. More problematic, however, was the death. Why did the Son of God have to die?

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The four Gospels describe the death of Jesus in terms of the fulfillment of Scripture, as has been discussed in chapter 3. But while a significant group within first-century Judaism had a major concern for prophecies that would be fulfilled with the coming of the Messiah, suffering did not figure in that expectation. In other words, the suffering and death of Jesus came as a surprise to his disciples and formed a major obstacle to faith. In affirming the authenticity of Jesus as a prophet of God, Islam has denied the historicity of the

crucifixion, insisting that Jesus ascended into heaven without experiencing death. The cross, a symbol for the suffering and death of Jesus, has posed a major scandal for Christianity.

The Gospels

The Gospels paint a picture of disciples who could not accept the idea of the suffering and death of Jesus, even when Jesus himself taught them about it. The Synoptic Gospels record three announcements from Jesus of his coming death:

Matt. 16:21–28	Mark 8:31–9:1	Luke 9:22–27
Matt. 17:22–23	Mark 9:30–32	Luke 9:43b–45
Matt. 20:17–19	Mark 10:32–34	Luke 18:31–33

These three predictions do not exhaust the teaching of Jesus on the subject. His teaching on the "sign of Jonah," for example, prefigures his death and resurrection (Matt. 12:39–40; Luke 11:29–30). The anointing at Bethany also announced the coming death (Matt. 26:10–13). In Luke's account of the teaching on the coming of the kingdom, Jesus indicated that first the Son of Man had to suffer (Luke 17:24–25). According to Mark, Jesus gave Peter, James, and John instruction about the prophetic basis for his pending suffering as they descended the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:12–13).

Throughout such accounts, the theme of the necessity for suffering and death forms a common tone. This necessity finds its basis in the oracles of God. This was Jesus' own teaching about the prophecies, though it conflicted with the prevailing theology and hermeneutic of the day. As has been argued earlier, this teaching has its origin in Jesus, who reiterated it after the resurrection (Luke 24:25–27, 45–49). The theological norms of the day would have precluded an unsophisticated group like the disciples from developing such a theology.

The Gospel of John begins with a prophetic announcement by John the Baptist that foreshadows the rest of the book:

> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:35–36)

The imagery of the sacrificial lamb figures prominently in John's account. Writing for a Gentile audience, he includes a discourse about the meaning of Jesus' death that the other Evangelists do not. While the Jewish audience would have been concerned to know how that death could be consistent with the plan of God for Israel, the pagan audience wanted to know what it could tell them about the nature of God. Jesus made it plain in John 10:11, 14–15, 17–18 that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Dying on behalf of another represents the greatest expression of love (15:13). John explains the coming and dying of Jesus as God's expression of love toward the world (3:16). The vicarious death of Christ on behalf of others fulfills the sacrifices of the Law of Moses as Jesus' ministry culminates in his death at the initiative of the high priest during Passover week (18:14).

For the most part, however, the Gospels do not explain why it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die. They were written as narratives, and while twentieth-century scholarship has focused inordinate attention on the idiosyncrasies and theological issues of the writers, the Evangelists rarely depart from a straightforward account of what happened. The Gospels make clear that Jesus represented himself to be on a par with God and that his execution came as a result of his purported blasphemous declaration before the Sanhedrin:

> Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"
>
> "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:61b–62; cf. Matt. 26:63–66; Luke 22:67–71; John 19:7; also John 5:18; 10:30–39)

Much has been written and preached through the years about how unjust Jesus' trial was. Some have charged that the Sanhedrin met at an extraordinary time under extraordinary circumstances, contrary to tradition. One must concede, however, that they had an extraordinary problem at a dangerous time, for the city of Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims for the observance of Passover. Though a group plotted Jesus' death, they did so for good cause: He represented himself to be divine. Even though false witnesses spoke at

the trial, the Sanhedrin was not moved by their testimony. Not until Jesus himself spoke did they condemn him. They had no choice under the circumstances. He offered them the alternatives of believing in him or rejecting him.

While Jesus spoke of the *necessity* of his death in fulfillment of Scripture in many places, he gave the *meaning* of his death to the disciples during his Last Supper with them. With the imagery of Passover as the background, he explained it in terms of the fulfillment of the promise of a new covenant: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20b; cf. Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24). This dramatic declaration coinciding with the feast of the Passover placed the death of Jesus in correspondence with the killing of the first Passover lambs in Egypt, when death passed over the Israelites and when Israel was set free from physical bondage and slavery. Jesus was to the new covenant what the Passover lamb was to the old covenant, though the new covenant had a different character, as Jeremiah had foretold:

"The time is coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.
"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time," declares the LORD.
"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying 'Know the LORD,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest," declares
the LORD.

> "For I will forgive their wickedness
> and will remember their sins no more."
> (Jer. 31:31–34)

At the Last Supper, Jesus explained his death as the fulfillment of the Passover and the ancient covenant. His death instituted the new covenant, which went beyond the institutional/ceremonial matters related to the legal demands of the law. The new covenant offered both forgiveness of sin and cleansing of sin. The first related to the legal/volitional aspect of sin, the latter related to the ontological aspect of sin as an aspect of human nature.

Jesus indicated that his death served a vicarious function, for his blood was "poured out for many" (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24). Luke's language has an even more personal tone, for he speaks of the suffering of Jesus as blood "which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). Matthew includes the specific connection between the vicarious death and "the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28), while Luke includes this element as Jesus pronounces forgiveness from the cross itself as he dies (Luke 23:34). The pouring out of blood for sins draws on the symbolism of more than a thousand years of Jewish sacrificial practice. That practice proceeded from the fundamental disjunction between the holiness of God and the nature of humanity.

The problem of sin reflected in the sacrificial system went far beyond a view of sin as merely a legal problem. The mournful cry of Isaiah in his vision of coming into the presence of God reflects the human capacity to minimize the holiness of God until it is brought into the presence of God (Isa. 6:5). Not even Moses appreciated the impossibility of human coexistence with the holiness of God (Ex. 33:12–23). He was not allowed to behold God, for the radical disjunction between his nature and God's would result in his obliteration. In Isaiah's vision, cleansing of the pollution of sin came from the altar. In Zechariah's vision of the cleansing of Joshua the high priest, the ritualistic priestly robes appeared filthy, but God ordered them removed and replaced by clean garments. Zechariah then declared that the cleansing symbolized what God would do in the future through his servant, the Branch. The promise of the Lord was to "remove the sin of this land in a single day" (Zech. 3:9).

Israel received teaching about the unapproachability of God through the ceremonial laws governing sacrifice, the chief of which involved who could approach God to offer the sacrifice. Only the high priest, and he but once a year, was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place to sprinkle blood on the cover of the ark to make atonement for the sins of Israel. The curtain that barred entry to this place hung as a constant reminder of humanity. The Synoptic Gospels record without comment that when Jesus died, the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

John, who wrote for a Gentile audience, omitted the new interpretation Jesus gave to the Passover meal at the Last Supper. He also omitted reference to the torn curtain of the temple. What the Synoptic writers could mention without comment for a largely Jewish audience, John could not include without major elaboration on the ceremonial practices of Judaism. The Gentiles would not have understood the significance of the new covenant nor the Jewish understanding of sacrifice. While all the ancient world practiced sacrifice, the Jewish people stood virtually alone in their understanding of the moral dimension in relationship to God. John dealt with these issues in his Gospel, but he did so from the perspective of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as we will discuss in a later chapter.

General Apostolic Writings

In their writings for the churches, the apostles related the significance of the death of Jesus to various themes identified in the Gospels. Not surprisingly, the letters address the issues of local situations, applying elements of the gospel to life situations and cultural contexts. The legal issue of forgiveness in terms of justification, for example, was an issue for the Romans. Since they did not have the Jewish traditions as a teacher, Paul elaborated the implications of Jesus' death for them. The ontological issue of purification concerned those Jewish Christians addressed in the book of Hebrews who, in the context of the Jewish world, would soon see the destruction of the temple and the elimination of the religion of Moses and its required sacrifices. Hebrews elaborates the implications of Jesus' death for these people.

When one examines the New Testament letters, the apostolic writers present a variety of implications of Jesus' death, which resulted in good news for humanity.

Purification. The need for purification was not understood as a part of ritual sacrifices in most of the Hellenistic world, but it was central to the Law of Moses. Virtually all of the ancient cultures practiced sacrifice as offerings to the gods to gain their favor or appease their anger. These sacrifices functioned more as transactions between mortals and immortals rather than as acknowledgment of sinfulness before a holy God. Those who worshiped Yahweh, however, believed that humanity had an aspect to it that needed the purification of a refiner's fire in order to be able to exist in the presence of holiness (Mal. 3:1–4; 4:1–3).

Hebrews takes up the theme of purification or cleansing as a benefit of the new covenant, which God instituted through the death of Jesus (Heb. 12:24). By his death, Jesus fulfilled all of the requirements for sacrifice under the old covenant "once for all," and by satisfying the Law, he supplanted it with the new covenant (7:27; 9:23–28). The old covenant made people aware of their unholiness (Rom. 7:7–25), but the new covenant makes people holy "through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10), "because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (10:14). Unlike the annual sacrifices to atone for the sins of Israel, which covered the sin but did not affect the hearts of people, Jesus died "to make the people holy through his own blood" (13:12).

This emphasis on blood has seemed strange and even barbaric in the West from the time of the Enlightenment, but this modern perspective fails to appreciate that it was the acceptance of the blood sacrifice of Jesus in ancient and medieval times that rendered the idea of blood sacrifice barbaric. Jesus died on the weekend of the great sacrificial festival of Passover at a time when sacrifice was the central event of Israel (Heb. 9:22). For two thousand years the church has perpetuated the blood sacrifice in the central act of worship when the faithful reenact the Last Supper in obedience to his command to remember (cf. 1 Cor. 11:24–25). The sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in superiority to the inadequacy of the animal sacrifices would have sounded a note of good news, indeed, for the church of

Jerusalem, which continued to worship in the temple until it was destroyed and the sacrifices ended (Heb. 10:12). The West has tended to view sacrificial customs of other cultures rather patronizingly as superstitious nonsense, adding the blood of Jesus with the lot, while failing to appreciate that animal sacrifice was abolished in the declining Roman empire because of the blood of Christ.

Purification deals with an entirely different issue than forgiveness or justification. The latter treat the legal dimension of transgressing the law, while purification deals with an aspect of sin that arises even where there is no knowledge of the law. Whether guilt in the West or shame in the East, purification treats an inward aspect of the heart that remains even if the legal matters are satisfied. The necessity of purification can be seen in the lives of people crippled by an inward sense of unworthiness or dirtiness. The death of Christ occurred to address this issue:

> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Heb. 9:14)

By cleansing the conscience, Christ sets people free to live without regret.

Redemption. The idea of redemption connected with the death of Jesus occurs in at least ten New Testament books. At first, this broadly used concept seems strangely out of place in the Gentile world of Hellenistic culture where the churches would have read these letters. The terminology has its roots in the national beginnings of Israel, when God redeemed the people from slavery in Egypt. The idea of redemption from slavery and bondage, however, also spoke powerfully in a culture where the institution of slavery flourished.[1] By analogy, the apostles broadened the term to mean redemption from all forms of bondage, both physical and spiritual.

In ancient Israel, redemption was the process by which matters were restored to their right or original condition. In the Year of Jubilee, for example, a family had the right to redeem property that had passed out of the family's possession. The redeemer was the next of kin, who had the right of possession if he chose to redeem the property. He was expected to take action to rectify a distressful

situation. In the book of Ruth, Boaz desired to marry Ruth, but the redeemer who had the responsibility of buying back her in-laws' property and fathering a child by her was another kinsman. When that kinsman chose not to exercise his right/responsibility, Boaz came to Ruth's rescue as her redeemer (Ruth 3:1–4:21).

Jeremiah exercised the responsibility of a redeemer when he bought his family's land, which had fallen into enemy hands, even though he knew he would never see it (Jer. 32:6–9). In the midst of his desperation, Job called out for a redeemer to justify him and declare his innocence before all of his accusers (Job 19:23–29). Redemption involved setting matters straight for those who were powerless to take action themselves, and it required the action to be taken within the family by the next of kin. Thus, the terminology of redemption infers the relationship God intends for those who experience redemption.

Within the terminology of redemption, the apostolic writings describe a broad range of implications. When a redeemer took action, he succeeded in bringing the kind of justification before accusation that Job had cried for (Rom. 3:24). The act of redemption itself demonstrated the forgiveness of all estrangement and the declaration that those in need of redemption were counted as part of God's family—children and not slaves (Gal. 4:4–5; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). If redemption meant restoration to God, it also meant freedom from a variety of illegitimate masters to which people submit themselves. Just as Hosea redeemed his wife Gomer from slavery (Hos. 3:2) after she had prostituted herself, Jesus redeemed people from their experiences of bondage. He redeemed people from wickedness (Titus 2:14), from the empty way of life they followed (1 Peter 1:18), and from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13). Through his redeeming work, God "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Col. 1:13; cf. Gal. 1:3–4). Jesus not only rescues us from the domination, but also from the consequences of that domination (1 Thess. 1:10b).

The Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine literature all speak of Jesus' purchasing those for whom he died (1 Cor. 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3b–4). This purchasing is even referred to as ransom on two occasions (1 Tim. 2:5–6; Heb. 9:15). The modern church has largely ignored the significance of redemption because of the notion of a

purchase price. Since the Enlightenment, the two great rationalistic schools of theology in the West (liberalism and fundamentalism) have focused attention on the recipient of the purchase price, a matter totally ignored by Scripture. Logic dictates that the recipient of Jesus' blood as payment be either God or the devil. Fundamentalism is divided over which of these two received payment; liberalism rejects the doctrine outright as abhorrent.

The New Testament writers rely on the Old Testament concept of God's redemption rather than a more philosophical rationalistic view that would need to account for the recipient of a redemption price. The tradition of divine redemption was stated most clearly in the oracle of Isaiah:

> You were sold for nothing,
> and without money you will be redeemed. (Isa. 52:3)

God does not have to buy what already belongs to him. Neither the pharaoh of Egypt nor the king of Assyria had a legitimate claim on Israel. God redeemed Israel from Egypt, but he paid Pharaoh with ten plagues and the waters of the Red Sea. The terminology of divine redemption in the Old Testament usually begins with God's "selling" his people into the hands of their enemies because they had abandoned him. In no case, however, did God receive any payment (Judg. 2:14; 3:8; 4:2; 10:7). Abraham acted as the redeemer when he rescued Lot from the alliance of Kedorlaomer (Gen. 14:1–16). Redemption occurred because Abraham did what was necessary to restore Lot, not because he paid a price to Kedorlaomer. The four New Testament texts that describe redemption in terms of the purchase by Christ through the shedding of his blood stress the costliness to Christ of being a redeemer.

Substitution. In the New Testament, the apostolic writers shift the imagery of redemption from the question of who received a ransom to the question of how the redemption took effect. Christ accomplished redemption as well as purification by a substitution of himself for those in need of salvation. The affirmation that Christ died in place of the rest of humanity may be found throughout the apostolic writings (1 Thess. 5:9–10; Heb. 2:9; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:16). Islam has criticized Christianity at this point because such a substitution would release people from any moral obligation in their

behavior. In fact, Islam teaches that Christ did not die on the cross, but that he ascended into heaven without dying. The apostolic letters have an entirely different tone, however, than one that would decrease moral responsibility. Responsibility is actually created by virtue of the substitution.

The substitutionary death of Christ for sinners as described in the New Testament is not a one-sided substitution whereby Christ takes our death and we have no part to play. The substitution goes both ways. Christ takes our death only if we share his death. In turn, Christ gives us life only if we take his life. In this regard, the substitution operates like a double transposition. Faith in the saving death of Christ involves our entry into his death in order to die with him, while he enters into us to live through us. The idea is decidedly mystical rather than transactional in a legal sense.

While at least twenty passages in the Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine literature refer to this two-sided substitution, Paul's treatment of it in Romans is the most extensive. In chapter 6, he deals directly with the creation of moral responsibility based on the new relationship of being "alive to God in Christ Jesus":

> By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death. . . .
>
> If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. . . .
>
> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. (Rom. 6:2–7, 11–12)

This line of thought culminates in 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." In its context, this passage has a far richer meaning than a superficial one might imply. As 6:1–22 indicate, humanity does not stand exempt from death because of Christ's death. Rather, they are

offered death with Christ. By dying in him on the cross they receive life in Christ. The operative concern is the double substitution whereby people find themselves "in Christ."

In Galatians and Colossians, Paul expounds the same theme of the death of Christ, applying it to those who mystically join him in death and thereby end their own existence apart from him. By crucifixion with Christ, those who are in Christ are no longer under the power of the world (Gal. 3:20–21; 6:14). This freedom brings profound implications for holy living, for our lives now belong to Christ (Col. 2:11–12, 20; 3:3).

This same theme also appears in 1 Peter. Christ bore our sins on the cross, to be sure. But he did so with the understanding that we should die to sin in the process. The double side of his death is that people should also "die to sins and live for righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). The cross and suffering of Christ represent a positive dimension of salvation whereby people participate with him (1 Peter 4:13). In this sense, suffering is not a problem to be explained but a dimension of identification with Christ. This constant awareness of one's participation in Christ's death stands at the center of why the early church constantly reenacted the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16). Apart from dying with Christ, no one can live with Christ (2 Cor. 4:10; 13:4; 2 Tim 2:11). The moral and ethical implications of this double substitution may be summarized as "those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:15).

While the implications for moral responsibility are heightened on the human side by virtue of the substitutionary death of Jesus, his death reveals the character of God in a way that no other revelatory event has ever done. It reveals the love of God for humanity (Rom. 5:6–8; 8:31–32; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; Gal. 2:20–21; 1 John 3:16; 4:10; cf. John 3:16). This concept of Jesus' death reflecting God's love has recently received strong criticism as a barbaric idea.[2] Such criticism illustrates the intrinsic relationship between the elements of the gospel that tend to collapse if viewed in isolation. For God to "kill Jesus" does indeed seem an act of barbarism, but this way of viewing the cross ignores another element of the gospel that stresses the relationship between the Father and Son, "to wit, that God was

in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19, KJV). Apart from incarnational Christology, the cross is truly folly.

Further implications. While purification, redemption, and substitution represent the most frequently cited implications of Jesus' death for sins, they by no means exhaust the categories of what that death means in the New Testament. According to various passages, the death of Jesus:

- represents the final and complete atoning sacrifice that frees people from the fear of approaching Almighty God (Rom. 3:25; 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 2:17; 7:27; 9:23–28; 1 John 2:2; 4:10);
- brings justification from the legal demands of the law and forgiveness for transgression (Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 5:9; Col. 2:13–14; 1 John 2:12);
- represents a triumph over the hostile spiritual powers rather than a defeat by them (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14–15; Rev. 12:11);
- brings about reconciliation between God and humanity as Jesus makes peace on the cross (Rom. 5:10–11; 2 Cor. 5:18–21; Eph. 2:13, 15–16; Col. 1:20);
- releases the life blood of Jesus as the source of eternal life (Heb. 5:8–9; 13:20; Rev. 13:8; 22:14);
- clearly identifies the willing, obedient servant as the only worthy Savior and Lord (Rev. 5:6, 9, 12);
- serves as an example for life to all who follow him in faith (1 Cor. 8:11; Heb. 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21; 4:1; 1 John 3:16; 4:11).

Conclusion. None of the apostolic writers espoused a theory of the atonement. Rather, they all shared a profound awareness of the multidimensional implications of the death of Jesus for sins. The different aspects of what that death meant would have spoken more powerfully in some situations than in others. The apostles addressed the meaning of Jesus' death appropriately to various audiences with different issues relating to life and eternity.

HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the context of the early church's concern to demonstrate that Jesus Christ stood as the culmination point of all Scripture and that he represented the coming of God into the world, the assertion that

Christ had died for sins operated almost as a self-evident truth requiring little elaboration. While his death for sins continued as a central affirmation of the church throughout its early period, the New Testament believers did not develop its evangelistic message or theological orientation around that element of the gospel.

The Patristic Period

In his classic work on the atonement, Gustaf Aulén argues that the significance of the death of Jesus for the early church cannot be separated from the significance of the Incarnation. Christ conquered sin, the devil, death, and all spiritual realities in rebellion against God by entering into this world as a man and entering the domain of wickedness through death.[3] The primary emphasis in the atonement for the first one thousand years of church history was on the victory of Christ. It did not focus on the "legal" problem of sin as transgression against God so much as the power of sin's hold on people. It accented the dramatic work of God in Christ to break the power of sin. In the Hellenistic world, people lived in dread of "the rulers . . . the authorities . . . the powers of this dark world and . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). Through his death, Jesus conquered all spiritual enemies, put them to shame, and thereby won the victory.[4]

Easter faith remained the central reality for the church during the centuries of intermittent persecution prior to Constantine's recognition of Christianity. Suffering and death were the necessary means of victory. The death could not lead to victory, however, apart from a true incarnation. Irenaeus argued,

> But what He did appear, that He also was: God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.[5]

God captured the one who had captured the human race and held them under his power, while he "loosed from the bonds of condemnation" those who had been captives.[6]

Origen sounded a similar theme in describing the significance of Jesus' death. He took upon himself human darkness in order that he might destroy that darkness, and with it death.[7] While the patristic

writers saw the death of Jesus as part of the integrated work of salvation that involved his coming into the world, his death, and his resurrection, that death had specific significance for the one who hoped to experience salvation. Salvation meant participation in the death of Jesus because

> each of those who have been crucified with Christ puts off from himself the principalities and the powers, and makes a show of them and triumphs over them in the cross; or rather, Christ does those things in them.[8]

Through being crucified with Christ, a believer died to the world and experienced freedom from spiritual bondage.[9]

Aulén's study is not concerned so much to trace the history of doctrine, however, as it is to identify those periods when a particular element of the gospel in its doctrinal expression dominated the point of view of the church. In that sense, the death of Christ was not the focus of attention in the theological controversies of the early church. If anything, it was the great cardinal fact of the Christian faith that everyone accepted. Christ's death for the salvation of sinners remained the obvious, if not self-explanatory, article of faith. But to find that death as a *central orienting feature* of the church, we must move to medieval Europe and the thought of Anselm of Canterbury.

Anselm and the Medieval Church

Anselm (d. 1109) explained the meaning of the death of Christ in terms of the idea of penance, which had slowly emerged in the church from the time of Cyprian. By this understanding, transgression required some act of satisfaction to make up for a wrong committed. An adequate act of penance would satisfy the party that had been wronged. Anselm argued that the death of Christ satisfied God for the wrong done to him by the human race. Whereas the patristic view had stressed that God as Christ took the initiative to free humanity from sin, death, and darkness, Anselm pictured Christ as man offering himself to satisfy God.[10]

In his book *Cur Deus Homo?* Anselm explored a question designed to help believers give an answer to unbelievers:

> For what reason or by what necessity did God become man, and by His death, as we believe and acknowledge, restore life

> to the world, although he could have accomplished this by means of another person, whether angelic or human, or simply by an act of His will?[11]

In answering this question, Anselm gave the medieval church a handbook for evangelizing skeptics.

Whereas the patristic view dealt primarily with the biblical issue of redemption, Anselm dealt primarily with forgiveness. For Anselm, forgiveness comes as the result of satisfaction received by God to atone for humanity's offense. Since people have offended God, a person must make satisfaction. Since all people are sinful, none can be found meritorious enough to make satisfaction; therefore, God becomes a human being in Jesus Christ in order to satisfy his own standard of righteousness. Through the exceeding righteousness of Christ, his death sufficiently satisfies all the legal demands against anyone, no matter how dreadful a person considers his or her own sin to be.[12]

Furthermore, according to Anselm, though God demands satisfaction for his offended honor, he did not demand the death of Jesus to satisfy his honor. If he had, then his death would have had no merit since Jesus was only doing what God required. Merit comes only in making an offering to God beyond what God already has a right to possess or expect. In other words, the death of Jesus brings satisfaction, not because God required it, but precisely because God did not require it: "*He was offered because it was His own will.*"[13]

In his classic study of the atonement, Aulén criticizes Anselm's view because it "is closely related to the legalism characteristic of the medieval outlook."[14] He complains that the "dualistic outlook" of the patristic view has gone.[15] The emphasis on the Incarnation so prominent in the patristic view does not have the same tone in the Anselmic view, which focuses more on the problem of human sin than the hostile spiritual powers. In his complaint Aulén missed the point, as have those who have taken the side of Anselm against the patristic view for not taking sin seriously. The church fathers explained the significance of the death of Christ for the conversion of pagans in a heathen world populated by all manner of spirits and hostile powers. Anselm explained the significance of the death of Christ for the conversion of pagans in a Christianized world. He lived in the

Christendom that had been slowly growing for six hundred years, and the spiritual issues faced at his time were different from those of the Roman empire. In the ordered universe of feudal Europe, the legal dimension of sin met with common understanding.

Transubstantiation

The time in which Anselm wrote coincided with the development of the doctrine of transubstantiation, whereby the Western church came to believe that in the Eucharist, the bread and wine literally became the flesh and blood of Christ. The term and its philosophical formulation arose from the debates about the nature of the Eucharist in the eleventh century and developed during the twelfth century in the context of realist philosophy.[16] The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) finally declared transubstantiation to be the teaching of the church.[17] The Church of Rome revisited the doctrine from time to time, however, to nuance its meaning in times of major challenge; such as at the Council of Trent (1551) in the face of challenges to the doctrine by the Reformers.[18]

As sometimes happens in theological circles, theologians attempted to formulate the doctrine of transubstantiation long after the memory had faded of why the Western church began to think of the Eucharist in a way so different from the Eastern church.[19] While Augustine in North Africa (354–430) stood in the tradition of those who saw the Eucharist as symbolic, Gregory the Great (540–604) of Rome stressed the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, not in terms of what happened on Calvary, but in terms of what happened on the altar as a result of the priest's words.[20] This pope's understanding of the Eucharist would have been important if only for his efforts in refining the liturgy of the mass. Because he energetically involved the Church of Rome in the evangelization of Britain and Germany, however, his position took on added import.

Augustine of Canterbury began his mission to England from Rome in 596, while Columba, Kentigern, and Ninian undertook the mission to present-day Scotland from their native Ireland.[21] Augustine used the old pagan temples of the Celts for churches as his mission spread from Canterbury. In the late seventh century, the Celtic religion was still strong enough to make a serious effort to retake Britain, though it failed. On the continent, Charlemagne used armed

force to convert the Saxons of Germany; he then sent for Saxon missionaries from England to instruct them in the Christian faith. Alcuin (d. 804), the English advisor to Charlemagne in matters theological, followed Augustine's view that Christ is not sacrificed anew in the Eucharist, but he taught the true presence of Christ in the bread and wine.[22] In response to queries from the young Celtic churches founded during the Saxon conversion, Paschasius Radbert (c. 785–c. 860) taught that the body of Christ was present in the Eucharist as a result of the priest's words.[23] Ratramnus (d. 868), a younger monk in the monastery of Crobie where Paschasius resided, followed Augustine's view and challenged his elder. The debate they began, though never very public or polemical, continued for several centuries until settled by the Fourth Lateran Council.[24]

In other words, the emergence of the issue of transubstantiation cannot be understood apart from the evangelization of the Celtic peoples of Ireland, Britain, Germany, and Holland over a period of several centuries. This teaching did not arise as a result of theological speculation. Rather, it arose as the gospel encountered Celtic paganism, and it achieved formulation upon reflection in Celtic Christianity.

The Druid cult of the Celts involved extensive human sacrifice.[25] According to Julius Caesar, the Celts offered human sacrifices to appease the gods. People in danger traded the life of a victim for their own so that they might escape the danger. The Celts also believed that a victim could be offered as a sacrifice on behalf of the entire community to a god who wanted a life. The presence of pestilence or war indicated that a god wanted a life. The sacrifice might be a slave or captive, but it might also be a family member, preferably a firstborn child. The Romans suppressed human sacrifice in Gaul by A.D. 40, though it continued in Britain until A.D. 77.[26]

While the Celtic religion of Gaul continued in restricted form under Roman rule, it flourished in its pure form in unconquered Germany, Ireland, and Scotland. After the abandonment of Britain by the Romans, the Celtic Angles and Saxons brought their religion back to Britain as the Christian Britons retreated into Wales.[27] The adoption of Christianity came to some pagans (such as the Saxons) by force. To others like the Normans, it came as a matter of political concession. This mode of inclusion did not necessarily involve a

change of theology and faith, though it may have involved a modification of behavior.[28] The church assimilated Celts, but had a difficult time changing their theology, particularly in terms of the cult of trees. In Gaul, Germanus (d. 448) and Martin of Tours (d. 397) were known for destroying Celtic shrines centuries after the Roman assimilation of Gaul. Rather than destroy shrines, however, the missionary policy of Augustine involved using the Celtic temples as churches.

With this background, the Celtic understanding of the ritual of human sacrifice has particular meaning against the development of transubstantiation. Apparently the Celts ate part of their sacrificial victim as a sacrament and drank its blood in certain sacrificial rituals in order to derive the benefit of the victim's life strength.[29] The most important rituals were connected with the sacred oak tree, which represented the divine source of life. A human who represented the divine spirit of vegetation and growth was slain so that his life might benefit all things. These human sacrifices were hung or impaled on the tree.[30]

As the Celtic peoples were being evangelized, the death of Christ spoke powerfully to their religious understanding of human sacrifice. In the observance of the Eucharist the life of the divine Christ who hung on a tree became available to those who ate his flesh and drank his blood. In the observance of his death, the Celts experienced the fulfillment of their own religious ideal.[31] This theological thinking forever changed the Roman Church's understanding of the meaning of the mass.

The correlation between the religion of the Celts and the emergence of the doctrine of transubstantiation during their evangelization appears striking. By the time of the official formulation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, however, philosophical considerations had long since eclipsed the evangelistic dynamic that the Celts found moving. From different perspectives, Anselm and the mass gave Europeans two different ways of understanding the meaning of the death of Christ: the first intellectual and the second experiential.

Closely related to the mass, a mysticism developed in the later medieval period that focused attention on identification with the suffering of Christ on the cross.[32] Meditation on the Passion of Christ was encouraged by the stations of the cross in church buildings. Not all mysticism focused on the death of Christ, but the form repre-

sented by Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Sienna did. These approaches to immediate experience with Christ had a stronger gospel orientation than some of the more philosophical and esoteric schools of mysticism, such as that founded by John Eckhart (c. 1260–c. 1327). Devotion to the sufferings of Christ offered a way of identifying with Christ, dying with him, and experiencing life in him.

Protestant Attention

Though the Reformers rejected the theology of the mass over five hundred years after the fading of Celtic religion, the lawyers Luther and Calvin followed the basic line of Anselm's understanding of the atonement with a significant departure. The medieval system of penance provides the structure for understanding the view of Anselm, a native Italian whose theology reflects "the Roman genius for law."[33] The Reformers' view with its focus on *sola scriptura* had its basis in the Old Testament sacrificial system, whereby transgression of the holy law required punishment.[34] The sacrificial system provided for a substitute to bear the punishment. While both expressions of substitution have a legal dimension, that of Anselm relates more to the Court of Equity, in which God's honor is satisfied by compensation, while that of the Reformers relates more to the Criminal Court, where transgression requires the satisfaction of a just penalty. Whereas under Anselm Christ offered his merit for sin, under the Reformers God imposed the punishment for every sin on Christ.[35] Later Protestant critics of this view complained that "the satisfaction theory of the Reformation . . . which owed its existence to Anselm, was made the test of orthodoxy" until the late nineteenth century.[36]

A great deal of attention has been given to the alternative views of the meaning of the death of Christ. While the moral influence and example views have made for interesting theological reflection for those within the faith, they have not proved particularly compelling in eliciting faith in unbelievers. The views of Ritschl and Schleiermacher caused a stir in nineteenth-century academic circles, but in terms of a message of faith to which people responded, the debate in evangelical circles had greater merit. While the conversions that came with the Puritan movement of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, the pietistic movement of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Germany, and the Great Awakenings of eighteenth- and early

nineteenth-century England and America had a firm rooting in the penal substitutionary understanding of the death of Jesus, a shift came with mid-nineteenth-century American revivalism.

Charles Finney, perhaps the greatest of the nineteenth-century American revival preachers and a lawyer by training, spoke of Christ's death as satisfying "public justice."[37] This governmental view of the atonement was first advocated by Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), a lawyer who served in the States General of the United Netherlands and who was the father of international law. This view emerged in the context of the creation of the democratically based Dutch state and reemerged in the early days of American democracy. In this view, God does not punish sin for retribution, but for the upholding of moral government. Christ did not suffer as a substitute for sinners, but to demonstrate God's hatred of sin and to provide a deterrence from sin. His view of the death of Christ functioned like the death penalty, which in legal theory operates as a deterrent to murder.[38] Finney and his followers saw thousands of conversions on the American frontier where law and order were at a premium.[39] Finney's shift in describing the meaning of Jesus' death did not escape the notice of many congregational and Presbyterian clergy, who championed Calvin's understanding of penal substitution.

Dwight L. Moody, the methodological successor to Finney, lacked the theological precision of Finney or his Princeton-trained adversaries. While Finney preached like a lawyer pleading his case before a jury with logic and argument, Moody preached to the heart of his late Victorian audience by telling one sentimental story after another to make his point. He preached the reality of hell and the certainty of judgment, but when he spoke of the death of Jesus he spoke of love. Moody's emphasis on the love of God revealed through the cross resembles the moral influence view of Abelard (1072–1142). Moody also had a far-reaching evangelistic ministry that involved thousands of conversions and influenced the direction of evangelistic methods and messages in the United States.

Moody received his share of criticism as well from the defenders of Reformed orthodoxy. Princeton had been founded in 1812 by the Old School Presbyterians to preserve orthodox Reformed religion in the face of the Unitarianism that had taken hold at Harvard and Yale. Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge,

Benjamin Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen articulated "Princeton Theology" from 1812 until 1921, when the reorganization of Princeton resulted in the resignation of Machen to preserve orthodoxy at the newly established Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia.[40] Moody's expression of moral influence seemed tame to the Reformed camp, however, compared with the New Theology associated with Andover Seminary. An expression of nineteenth-century liberalism that found "new hope for human progress" in the scientific advances of the age, the New Theology under the banner of "progressive orthodoxy" shifted its concern from atonement to incarnation and offered "future probation" to those outside the fold of Christ.[41] The Andover controversy helped to place penal substitution once again at the center of evangelical theology. The evangelists who followed Moody returned to the Reformed doctrine and considered it one of "the fundamentals" of the faith.

The rift in evangelical Protestantism widened in the twentieth century as adversarial groups emerged around those who stood firmly for the fundamentals and those who held modern ideas. In the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, penal substitution joined the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, and the return of Christ as the five fundamentals. While the other four were seen as crucial tenets of orthodoxy, penal substitution assumed the central position as the core of the gospel message. To a great extent evangelism became an explanation of how the penal substitutionary view of the atonement worked.

As a new stream of evangelicalism emerged after World War II, the two most popular plans for training American Christians to witness focused their attention on the penal substitutionary death of Christ. That is, both the "Four Spiritual Laws" tract developed by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ and the Evangelism Explosion model presentation developed by D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church represent a commitment to the Reformation understanding of penal substitution. Billy Graham articulated the position of most evangelicals of the mid to third quarter of the twentieth century when he said that he could not take seriously a view of the atonement that neglects substitution because "then men could assume that God overlooked, winked at, or was indifferent to sin."[42]

THE DEATH OF JESUS AS GOOD NEWS

The death of Jesus on the cross remains the great historical fact surrounding Jesus.[43] So great is the significance of this event, though, that its occurrence is disputed by Islam, which affirms that Jesus ascended to heaven like Mohammed without dying. While the entire gospel has saving significance, the death of Christ forms the basis on which salvation occurs. The benefits and implications extend from the cross, yet they do so only because of the integral relationship between the death of Jesus and the other elements of the gospel.

Sigmund Freud's system of psychological analysis centers largely on the experience of guilt. By projecting his own experience of guilt on the universe, he viewed guilt as a universal driving force. He largely dealt with guilt through denial of the experience of neurotic guilt, which has no basis in fact. Yet not all people or cultures feel guilt in the same way as those who live in the West. The conscience has great capacity to deal with guilt in an unhealthy way. One dimension of the death of Christ relates to the satisfaction of matters for which one might feel guilty, but this dimension of the death of Jesus does not exhaust its meaning.

Redemption

As William Abraham has argued, evangelism has a certain logic because the gospel itself has a cohesive internal logic.[44] Apart from the relationship of Christ to creation, the concept of redemption does not make much sense. It makes great sense, however, for the Christ who acted for God in the creation of the cosmos. The idea of redemption assumes the corruption of creation. Ecologically, this corruption is seen in the environmental crisis. Anthropologically, it is seen in the crisis of all human endeavor—social, psychological, economic, spiritual, and physical. Theologically, this corruption results from the separation between God and creation. Without affirming the presence of God, philosophers as diverse as Hegel and Marx have commented on the origins of this experience of corruption, which they have accounted for in terms of separation from either nature or meaningful work. Large segments of the population experience the corruption of separation from something that they also describe as feeling "lost."

The gospel not only describes this situation, but also offers the solution for it in terms of redemption. The death of Christ reveals the costliness to God of redeeming his creation and restoring it to its proper relationship to him. While the Incarnation expresses the identification of God with humanity, only the death of Christ fully expresses what it meant for God to restore people from the curse of corruption that extends ultimately to the grave. Christ entered completely into the corruption for the love of the restored relationship to God. He died in order to bring humanity back from death to life with God. For people who live isolated and ruined lives and who can only look forward cynically to death, the redemption of Jesus Christ offers good news that people can find where they belong and experience life and eternity in a joyful way.

Relationship

The death of Christ expresses the depth of relationship that God desires to have with humanity. In ancient Israel, the redeemer was the next of kin who took it upon himself to set matters straight for the one who could not act on his or her own behalf. The redeemer bought back the family farm, restoring matters to the way they used to be. The redeemer married the relative's widow to ensure she was taken care of and had children to look after her in her old age. The redeemer endured self-sacrifice to make things right for those who were helpless to deal with circumstances on their own. In the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, he acted as a redeemer for those he counted as next of kin. Only this relational dimension of the voluntary death of Christ gives coherent meaning to why Christ endured the cross. For the relationally starved of earth who feel used, abused, and manipulated, the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf is good news that God cares in a profound and personal way for those who can do nothing for him in return.

Love

The cross of Christ represents the ultimate expression of God's love, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19, KJV). Yet, it also represents the restoration of love in the cosmos. For love of humanity, Christ came to die. For love of God, Jesus laid down his life. The mystery of the Incarnation brought

love to perfection on the cross, where the most selfless act of dying demonstrated God's love. For those who have lived with only sham imitations of love, the cross of Christ offers good news that God has already loved us and wants to love us more.

Substitution

The Redeemer died as a substitute for those he came to rescue. Such a substitution operates on virtually every level of moral development. Kohlberg has argued that people go through stages of moral development just as they go through stages of cognitive development.[45] While his study is flawed and probably only speaks about the experience of upper middle class white males in the United States, it does suggest the identification of attitudes toward morality. While this hypothesis remains unproven, my experience in different cultural settings suggests that entire cultures may operate on different levels of morality. When I was a prison chaplain, I observed that the general population of the inmates regarded something as wrong if they were punished for it. They were there to "pay their debt to society." Once the debt was paid, all was well. To be a snitch was the ultimate sin, because someone would kill you for it.

The rehabilitation process, however, operated on a moral basis of reward: Something was good if one was rewarded for it. Before I entered the ministry, I was heavily involved in politics. Professional politicians who have been accused of immorality have a different way of looking at moral decisions. Something is right if it works, brings benefits, or has a reward. It also corresponds to the morality of the corporate structure: "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."

Growing up in the South I learned that many people follow a moral structure based on what the neighbors would think. Something is right if everyone or a significant person approves; something is wrong if it is disapproved. One sees this same peer pressure operating in youth culture with its enforcement of sanctions on those youth who do not conform. I have seen people in Southern culture fall into moral collapse without any bearings when the neighbors no longer care about such things as extramarital affairs. Japanese culture historically operates like old Southern

culture, though the penalty for violation of the community expectation is shame.

The law and order approach to morality operates in a number of cultures or subcultures, though it looks different. Islam and historic Judaism have an understanding of right and wrong, as does Confucianism. Whether based on law or tradition, people understand the boundaries because they are the law or the tradition. This approach can be seen in the legal profession with not only its laws but also its traditions. One of my law professors taught us that "the truth is nothing more than testimony which is believed." No subculture is more legalistic than young teenagers who declare, "If you did it for them, you have to do it for me."

The moral approach of the counterculture of the 1960s has entered the mainstream of Western life in Europe and the United States. Grossly stated it is this, "If it feels good, do it." In other forms it appears as "I would never knowingly hurt anyone." It is a morality that rejects rules and authority but looks for some universal principle or guide to give direction in its chaotic drift, which has led to destructive interpersonal decisions.

The death of Christ in his substitution speaks to each of these approaches to morality. At the punishment level of morality, Christ takes our punishment. At the reward level of morality, Christ offers us his life. At the peer pressure level of morality, Christ upholds the expectations of public morality. At the legal level of morality, Christ satisfies the demands of righteousness. At the universal principle level of morality, Christ serves as the example of sacrifice. At a higher level yet, the death of Christ demonstrates the righteousness of God that stands above human understanding of morality to do the appropriate thing in spite of the consequences. While all of these dimensions of the substitution of Christ for humanity are true, they do not completely express the significance of what one experiences at the personal level. It was not in conformity to a theory of the atonement that Christ died. Rather, he died for *me*. The substitution has a personal and intimate character.[46] In bringing about redemption, Christ substituted himself for us in a mystic relationship whereby we trade places. Those who feel the guilt of sin and the helplessness of their own ability to alter the conditions find good news that Christ has traded places with us.

New Beginning

By the substitution of Christ, people are offered a new beginning. By coming into the world, God identified with humanity, but by accepting the substitution of Christ, people identify with God. The old life dies with Christ on the cross. People who feel trapped by their past obtain the freedom in Christ to move on. The death of Christ takes sin and its consequences to the grave as the believer dies with him. For persons imprisoned by their past, that death offers good news that they can start over in life.

Purification

American society has largely lost the concept of purity except as it relates to ecology. What we have done to the environment, however, we have also done to ourselves. People experience pollution and defilement the same way that streams and the air experience it. When something corrupt that does not belong to a stream is added, the stream dies. It may continue to flow, but its purity has been defiled. People experience the same sort of pollution and defilement, both physically and spiritually. It manifests itself in a wide variety of ways from behavior to thought patterns. People can experience defilement at the hands of another, like the victim of rape who feels dirty, polluted, and violated. Unlike the stream, people also have the capacity for polluting themselves. In either case, Jesus Christ offers the good news that cleansing comes through his shed blood.

NOTES

1. See Leon Morris, *The Atonement* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 106–10.

2. The Re-Imaging Conference in Minneapolis focused criticism on this element in the gospel.

3. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 4–15. For a more recent study of the history of the doctrine of the atonement, see H. D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

4. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 43.

5. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.18.7.
6. Ibid., 3.23.1.
7. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 2.21.
8. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 12.25.
9. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 10.20.
10. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 82–83.
11. Anselm, *Why God Became Man and the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, trans. Joseph M. Collenon (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, 1969), 64.
12. Ibid., 139–41.
13. Ibid., 152; see also 136, 156, 158.
14. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 92.
15. Ibid., 89.
16. Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 24.
17. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 1:531.
18. Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass*, trans. Julian Fernandes, ed. Mary Ellen Evans (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976), 85.
19. Ibid., 44–54.
20. Ibid., 56, 58.
21. Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1:344, 346.
22. Jungmann, *The Mass*, 67.
23. Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 14–15.
24. Ibid., 15–16; cf. Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1:360–61.
25. Miranda Green, *The Gods of the Celts* (Gloucester, Mass.: Alan Sutton, 1986), 26–32. This book does not attempt to trace all of the cultural encounters of the gospel and other religious views, but the occurrence of human sacrifice plays a prominent role in the history of religion. See René Girard, *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986). Human sacrifices figured prominently in both Aztec and Inca religions.
26. J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts* (Folcroft Library Edition, 1977; reprint of Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), 233–37.
27. Ibid., 315.
28. Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1:351–52.
29. MacCulloch, *Religion of the Ancient Celts*, 239–40.
30. Ibid., 198–200.
31. See also Jürgen Moltmann's discussion of the cross and pagan sacrifice in *The Crucified God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 41–44.

32. Milton L. Rudnick, *Speaking the Gospel Through the Ages* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1984), 54–57.

33. George Cadwalader Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), 104.

34. James Petigru Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Pompano Beach, Fla.: North Pompano Baptist Church; reprint of 1887 edition), 317.

35. Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement*, 223.

36. Ibid., 256.

37. Lewis A. Drummond, *Charles Grandison Finney and the Birth of Modern Evangelism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), 226; Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney 1792–1875* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 385–87.

38. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 790–91.

39. See Ross Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1964).

40. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, Harry S. Stout, eds., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1990), 941–42.

41. Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 44–45; Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, 298–309.

42. Billy Graham, *World Aflame* (New York: Pocket Books, 1966), 102.

43. For a recent recapitulation of the place of the cross as the central focus of evangelism, see Lewis A. Drummond, *The Word of the Cross*, (Nashville: Broadman, 1992).

44. William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

45. See Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

46. The personal experience of need for a substitute figures prominently in cultures around the world. I am indebted to Cher Moua, a Baptist pastor in St. Paul, Minnesota, for describing his conversion and explaining how Christ met the demands of his tribal religion's sacrificial system. I am also indebted to Michael Eldridge for describing the native American Sun Dance, which calls for participants to pierce their flesh as an appeal for pity and help from the Creator. The cross has figured prominently in the conversion of native Americans, who see the suffering of Christ as their substitute.