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“Christ and Culture” (5-3-1)

Questions

1. **How could one describe the meaning of Christ and culture?** “Christ and culture” recognizes that, in addition to the foundations of ethics, Christians must develop ethical commitments to the society and culture in which they live.
2. **With respect to “Christ and Culture,” how should Niebuhr’s typology be used?** Niebuhr’s typology should be used as a heuristic device, a method to clarify the contributions of various thinkers and movements.
3. **How does Hollinger believe that humans can best fulfill what God intended?** Hollinger believes that humans can best fulfill what God intended through a dependence on God and interdependence with other human beings. He adds that Genesis 2:18 is an indication of one’s need for others as much as it is an affirmation of marriage.
4. **What were Tertullian’s theological foundations for rejecting culture?** Tertullian believed God had created a good world, but many parts of that world, namely society, needed to be questioned and rejected. Tertullian’s theological foundations for rejecting culture were rooted in the lordship of Christ and the prohibition of idolatry.
5. **What made Tolstoy’s version of Christianity unorthodox?** Tolstoy’s version of Christianity was unorthodox because it rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, miracles, the sacraments, and the immortality of the soul.

Vocabulary

- **Tertullian:** an early church theologian (155-220 A.D.) from North Africa.
- **Catherine of Siena:** a Dominican nun who lived during the outbreak of the plague. Amid this devastation, she wrote passionately of human love rooted in divine love.
- **Via negativa:** the elimination of temporal distractions, which was at the heart of the mystic experience.

Summary

In this chapter on “Christ and Culture,” Hollinger inspects the different methods the church has followed, as provided by H. Richard Niebuhr, in its interaction with society. While conceding that each perspective has its strengths and limitations, Hollinger explains that the answer to the Christ and Culture question directly affects how believers make decisions and function within the world. Moreover, he maintains that believers will neither reach perfection nor escape the “moral ambiguities and complexities” of living in a good yet fallen world. Nonetheless, he concludes, all believers are called to a life of holiness and faithfulness.