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Class: TH601 NA/NOS Systematic Theology II: Christ and the Church

QUESTIONS

1. What are the two recognized sacraments in the Protestant tradition?
2. According to Bird, what is the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament?
3. What are the three positions for baptism that Bird discussed in the text?
4. How does Bird describe the Eucharist?
5. Choose one of the various views on the Eucharist discussed by Bird and briefly explain it.

ANSWERS

1. The two recognized sacraments in the Protestant tradition are those Jesus instituted: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

2. According to Bird, an ordinance is a ritual ordained by Christ and repeated by the church that is chiefly symbolic in character. A sacrament, by contrast, is defined as a visible sign of an invisible grace.

3. The three positions are:
    - Paedobaptism—the baptism of infants.
    - Credobaptism—the baptism of persons upon a profession of faith.
    - Dual-practice baptism—both views of baptism (paedobaptism and credobaptism) are practiced.

4. Bird states that the Eucharist is the gospel meal for the gospelizing community. It is essentially remembering Jesus's death, reinscribing the story of Jesus's passion with paschal imagery, restating the promises of the new covenant, rehearsing the victory of Jesus over sin and death, and refocusing our attention toward the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

5. The Zwinglian view is associated with Ulrich Zwingli. Zwinglians see the Lord's Supper as remembering what Christ did on the cross. They believe the Lord's Supper is symbolic. The bread represents His body, and the wine His blood. There is no actual consumption of Christ's physical blood and body.

TERMS

Transubstantiation: a doctrine of the Roman Catholic church that states that by the consecration of the bread and wine, there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the entire substance of the wine into the substance of His blood.

Consubstantiation: Lutherans hold to a real presence of Christ in the elements. In that, the bread and wine of the Eucharist are spiritually Jesus's flesh and blood, yet the bread and wine are still only bread and wine.

Sacramentum: is the Latin equivalent to the Greek mysterion. In its Roman context, it meant the transfer of something from the secular world into a sacred realm.

SUMMARY

Bird discusses baptism, who should be baptized, how it should be done, and what baptism does for the recipient. He writes that he prefers the dual-baptism position and suggests that baptism by immersion or affusion should be retained. Bird also looks at the Lord's Supper—the different views, who can preside and partake of it, its benefits, and how often it should be taken. He concludes that the reformed position is the one that has the most explanatory power for understanding Jesus's presence in the Eucharist.