Anonymous Christians

Anonymous Christian is the controversial notion introduced by the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner (1904–1984) that declares that people who have never heard the Christian Gospel might be saved through Christ. Non-Christians could have “in [their] basic orientation and fundamental decision,” Rahner wrote, “accepted the salvific grace of God; through Christ, although [they] may never have heard of the Christian revelation.”

The theologians W. D. Davies and Dale Allison wrote that proponents of the notion find scriptural support in Romans 2:14–16, as well as in Matthew 25:31–46,[33] but that simply nothing has to do with Jesus Christ. But I cannot do that. And so if I hold if everyone depends upon Jesus Christ for salvation, and if at the same time I hold that many live in the world who have not expressly recognized Jesus Christ, then there remains in my opinion nothing else but to take up this postulate of an anonymous Christianity.[5]

According to Rahner, a person could “intellectually profess disbelief but [be] existentially... committed to those values which for the Christian are concretised in God”[6]

Vatican II and Catholicism

Karl Rahner’s concept of Anonymous Christian was one of the most influential theological ideals to affect the Second Vatican Council[6]

In Lumen gentium, the council fathers stated: “Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do his will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.” They went on to write, in Gaudium et spes: “Since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in one case, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this pastoral mystery.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, Art 847: “Those who through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.”

However, Lumen gentium states that those who know “that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved”[7]

Pope Benedict XVI

Before becoming Pope Benedict XVI, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in this role, he issued, with the approval of Pope John Paul II, a document called Dominus Jesus. This document asserts the supremacy of the Catholic Church, while reiterating the Catholic Church’s acceptance of a modified form of “anonymous Christianity”.

"Nevertheless, God, who desires to call all peoples to himself in Christ and to communicate to them the fullness of his revelation and love, "does not fail to make himself present in many ways, not only to individuals, but also to entire peoples through their spiritual riches, of which their religions are the main and essential expression even when they contain "gaps, insufficiencies and errors ". Therefore, the sacred books of other religions, which in actual fact direct and nourish the existence of their followers, receive from the mystery of Christ the elements of goodness and grace which they contain. “ (I, 8)

"Theology today, in its reflection on the existence of other religious experiences and on their meaning in God’s salvific plan, is invited to explore if and in what way the historical figures and positive elements of these religions may fall within the divine plan of salvation. In this undertaking, theological research has a vast field of work under the guidance of the Church’s Magisterium. The Second Vatican Council, in fact, has stated that: “the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude, but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a participation in this one source.” “ (II, 14)[8]

"With respect to the way in which the salvific grace of God — which is always given by means of Christ in the Spirit and has a mysterious relationship to the Church — comes to individual non-Christians, the Second Vatican Council limited itself to the statement that God bestows it "in ways known to himself": “ (VI, 21)[9][Full citation needed]

Criticism

The notion of Anonymous Christian has been criticized.

After becoming Pope Benedict XVI, Ratzinger corrected his own position on the theory[10]

"Lately several attempts have been formulated in order to reconcile the universal necessity of the Christian faith with the opportunity to save oneself without it.

... the well-known thesis of the anonymous Christians of Karl Rahner... sustains that the basic, essential act at the basis of Christian existence, decisive for salvation, in the transcendental structure of our consciousness, consists in the opening to the entirely Other, toward unity with God. The Christian faith would in this view cause to rise to consciousness what is structural in man as such. So when a man accepts himself in his essential being, he fulfills the essence of being a Christian even if he does not know it. It is true that this theory is fascinating, but it reduces Christianity itself to a pure conscious presentation of what a human being is in himself and therefore overlooks the drama of change and renewal that is central to Christianity. Even less acceptable is the solution proposed by the pluralistic theories of religion, for which all religions, each in their own way, would be ways of salvation and in this sense, in their effects must be considered equivalent.

The critique of religion of the kind exercised in the Old Testament, in the New Testament and in the early Church is essentially more realistic, more concrete and true in its examination of the various religions. Such a simplistic reception is not proportional to the magnitude of the issue.”

Conservative Protestant Christians generally believe that the notion of Anonymous Christian explicitly contradicts the teachings of Peter, Paul the Apostle, and other apostles. For example, Acts 4:12, “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” This group of Christians believes in Christian exclusivism—the view that biblical Christianity is true, and that other religious systems are false.[15] Some-Catholic groups, such as the Society of St. Pius X, have long battled against the rise of liberalism, modernism, and attitudes of inclusiveness in the Catholic Church, particularly since the Second Vatican Council.[16][N 17] Anonymous Christianity, the society writes, “is a very grave doctrinal error because it declares personal justification as being already realized for every man without any participation of his will or free choice and, so, without any need of his conversion, faith, baptism or works. Redemption is guaranteed to all, as if sanctifying grace were ontologically present in each man just because he is man.”[17]

Liberal Christians condemn the notion because, as Hans Küng put it, “it would be impossible to find anywhere in the world a sincere Jew, Muslim or atheist who would not regard the assertion that he is an ‘anonymous Christian’ as presumptuous.”[18] John Hick states that this notion is paternalistic because it is “honorary status granted unilaterally to people who have not expressed any desire for it.”[19] Hick further rejects the notion because the majority of people are born into non-Christian families. Anonymous Christianity, per this group, denigrates the beliefs of others by supposing that they are really Christians without realizing it.[20]

See also

• Baptism of desire
• Virtuous pagan
• Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus § Protestant interpretation of the dogma

Notes
Karl Rahner was one of the greatest minds in the Roman Catholic Church. Everyone is just *shocked* that Pope Francis has said that non-Christians and Christians may end up in the same place in the grand scheme of things. I heard the news and yawned and said “Oh, Karl Rahner is in the news…”

explanations of addiction, and the significance of modern addiction theory. Translation and definition “Anonymous Christians”, Dictionary English-English online. Anonymous Christians. Example sentences with “Anonymous Christianity. Lessons learned include the validity of both traditional Twelve Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Christ-centered programs such as Celebrate Recovery, the coherence of sin and disease Anonymous Anonymous. Notify me when the book’s added. Impression. Field research of pastors in the Florida Keys found that they are unsure if addiction is a disease or a sin, and whether the Twelve Steps are based on Anonymous Christians. We are reminded of Karl Rahner’s so-called “anonymous Christian”.[2]

References

Citations

1. ^ Davies and Allison wrote.

Rather did he hold the position stated in the Apocalypse of Sedrach: ‘there are nations which have no law, yet fulfill the law; they are not baptized, but my divine Spirit enters them and they are converted to my baptism, and I receive them with my righteous ones in the bosom of Abraham. [There were robbers who taught that righteous heathen would be saved. t. Sanh. 13.2; b. Sanh. 105a. Recall also Paul’s thoughts in Rom 2.14-16. Gentiles who do the law written on their hearts may have good consciences on the last day.]"

The context, however, does not explicitly teach two judgements; and we are not persuaded that ‘the least’ are to be identified with Christians (see below). Further, we have little doubt before Matthew, the scene concerned all humanity. At the same time, 25.31-46 may very well imply that Matthew thought salvation possible for those outside the church. We are reminded of Karl Rahner’s so-called “anonymous Christian”.[2]

Bibliography


Further reading


Anonymous Christians. Notify me when the book’s added. Impression. Field research of pastors in the Florida Keys found that they are unsure if addiction is a disease or a sin, and whether the Twelve Steps are based on Christianity. Lessons learned include the validity of both traditional Twelve Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Christ-centered programs such as Celebrate Recovery, the coherence of sin and disease explanations of addiction, and the significance of modern addiction theory. Translation and definition “Anonymous Christians”, Dictionary English-English online. Anonymous Christians. Example sentences with “Anonymous Christians”, translation memory. WikiMira. Anonymous Christian donors and overseas churches are also a noteworthy source of funding. OpenSubtitles2018 v3. We’re doing this anonymously. Christians, remember?