

The Mission and Ministry  
of  
Jesus

# A THEOLOGY OF JESUS

Volume 1

# The Mission and Ministry of Jesus

*Donald Goergen, O. P.*

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To Mom and Dad



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## Preface

Someone may well ask: another book on Jesus? Whether it be the needs of our times, or the needs of the Church, or my own needs I do not know. Perhaps it only shows how enigmatic a person Jesus truly is. He is someone by whom we have been grasped but whom we are not able to grasp in a definitive way once and for all.

"Who do you say that I am?" (Mk 8:29) is one of the most pointed theological questions ever asked, and it remains with us still. This series of five volumes is my own tentative response after fifteen years of thinking about it. Nor can I make any pretense of the project being final. I am quite aware that every section of this book could be a book in itself. Indeed, most of the topics discussed have already been the subject of many specialized studies. But at some point integration and synthesis are in order. We need to pause and say: This is how far we've come. Where do we go from here?

I see this theology of Jesus not unlike the description given by a philosophy professor of mine of a circus clown he had seen as a child. The clown was standing on his head, juggling. My professor's response was that he had seen better clowns, better acrobats, and better jugglers - but he had never seen all of them done together. For there are far better biblical scholars than I; indeed, professionally, I am not an exegete at all. There are also better Church historians; once again, I am not professionally a historian. And, likewise, there are better philosophers.

Yet the time comes when we must move beyond the securities of our specializations and risk putting the picture together. As a theologian, with a constructive bent, this is what I have tried to do. In doing so, if my picture brings some closer to faith, or closer to Christ Jesus, or makes some of our preaching of Christ more effective and substantive, then I will see this project as having been more than worthwhile. It is written for students, but also for preachers who are called upon both to know Christ and to proclaim him.

The first two of the five volumes in this series pertain to the first christological task as outlined in the following reflection on methodology. The first two volumes are an interpretation of the earthly Jesus. This volume concerns his life and mission, the next his death and resurrection.

In a project such as this, one is deeply indebted to more people than one can name. I shall mention only a few. For their critical reading of part or all of the manuscript of volume one and their suggestions, Frank Benz, Raymond Martin, Boyd Mather, and particularly Jerome Murphy-O'Connor. For their assistance in editing the manuscript, Jon Alexander, Diana Culbertson, Stanley Drongowski, Michael Mascari, Michael Monshau, Patrick Norris, Richard Peddicord and Priscilla Wood. For their assistance with typing, Margaret Bunkers, Mary Fitzgerald, Ruth Mary Gendrich and Frances Plass. For their consistent encouragement and support, in addition to many of the above, and in addition to many others, Jim Barnett, Linda Hansen, Carmelita Murphy, Jerry Stookey, Pat Walter and Ann Willits.

With respect to inclusive language, I have found particularly helpful suggestions in *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing* by Casey Miller and Kate Swift (New York: Harper and Row, 1980); and in Gail Ramshaw Schmidt's "De Divinis Nominibus: The Gender of God," *Worship* 56 (1982), 117-31. Biblical quotations are ordinarily taken from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated, and sometimes adjusted in favor of inclusive language as justified by the Greek text.

# Introduction

## *A Reflection on Methodology*

Reflections on methodology properly belong both at the beginning and at the end of a theological task. One must be methodologically conscious from the beginning. Yet method alone cannot be one's only guiding concern, lest understanding be restricted by a too pre-determined approach. Theology is both art and science; it draws upon both precise technical concepts and creative intuitions. In so far as an awareness of method may be of help in the beginning, my method in doing this Christology comprises four steps or "moments": (1) Jesus research, (2) historical retrieval, (3) hermeneutical re-construction, and (4) socio-ethical evaluation. Christology comprises all four tasks, although the third may be considered Christology proper.

The first task of any christologist is Jesus research.<sup>1</sup> The primary concern of Christology is Jesus as the one remembered by the Church and proclaimed as the Christ. During the past two centuries, we have become increasingly aware of the contribution of scientific historiography and literary

<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that the norm or basis for Christology is the Jesus of modern historical-critical exegesis (cf. David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination, Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* [New York: Crossroad, 1981], 233-41; 242, n 5; 300, n 97; 334, n 15). I am more in agreement with Tracy than I am in disagreement with him. I will reserve a more detailed discussion of this question until volume two, in which I discuss the Jesus of historiography and the Jesus of faith. Although Tracy's point is valid, my disagreement is in his continuing to identify terminologically the Jesus of history with the Jesus of historiography.

criticism to the study of Jesus. Thus Jesus research has taken a new and vital turn. Jesus research is not so much Christology proper as it is a prolegomenon to Christology - a necessary even if only preliminary moment in constructing a Christology. Nor is Jesus research to be conceived only in positivistic terms, for it involves hermeneutics and methodological decisions of its own. Jesus research itself manifests varied interpretations of Jesus and relies upon varied approaches to Jesus.

Jesus research need not require Christian faith on the part of the researcher; nor does it require the bracketing of that faith. What is required is a coherent interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth and a considered reflection on the historiographical data pertinent to Jesus. Even though valuing objectivity, Jesus research is not purely objective knowledge. The Judaism, Catholicism, or Protestantism of researchers like

Tracy's point is valid if one accepts his clear definition of the historical Jesus as the actual Jesus who lived in so far as he is known or knowable today by way of empirical-historical methods; namely, the Jesus of historiography (Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 245, n 20). The Jesus who lies at the basis of Christology is the Jesus remembered by the Church (in this I am in agreement with Tracy), but the Jesus remembered by the Church may be the Jesus of history (if one does not reduce the Jesus of history to being the Jesus of historiography). One cannot predetermine the outcome of one's Jesus research. Nor is the relevance of the historiographical search for Jesus only that of keeping alive the dangerous and subversive memory of Jesus (Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 239; 334, n 15). The historiographical search makes a real contribution to our understanding of the Jesus of faith (see volume two) and can also be seen as a part of the contemporary Church's process of remembering Jesus (see Elizabeth Johnson, "The Theological Relevance of the Historical Jesus: A Debate and a Thesis," *The Thomist*[January, 1984], 1-43). Tracy identifies Schillebeeckx as claiming to ground Christology in the historical Jesus. Yet Schillebeeckx's own "experiment" is presented as an effort to retrieve the Jesus of the early Christian movement; namely, the remembered Jesus, or the Jesus of faith. Schillebeeckx writes, "The truth is that no reconstruction of historical data about Jesus can show that he is the Christ" (*Interim Report on the Books Jesus and Christ* [New York: Crossroad, 1982], 27), and, "I am not, however, saying in any way that the picture of Jesus as reconstructed by historians becomes the norm and criterion of Christian faith... It is not the historical picture of Jesus but the living Jesus of history who stands at the beginning and is the source, norm and criterion of the interpretative experience which the first Christians had of him" (*ibid.*, 33). One's interpretation of Jesus in faith cannot be divorced from the knowledge which comes from historiography, even though the Jesus of faith cannot be reduced to the Jesus of historiography. Jesus research remains a necessary prolegomenon to Christology even if it is not the norm or ground for Christology by itself alone.

Geza Vermes, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Joachim Jeremias are bound to contribute to their interpretative horizons.<sup>2</sup> Yet Jesus research and a coherent interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth remain necessary to doing Christology today.

Since the primary sources for a study of Jesus are biblical, the first task of Christology involves biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. I am professionally a systematic theologian and not an exegete, yet systematic theology cannot be separated from biblical research even if it is distinct from it. Christology can hardly avoid the Scriptures. This **first task** of Christology sets in relief Jesus in his historicity and in his humanity. Among Catholic authors, Edward Schillebeeckx stands out as one who has done extensive Jesus research before attempting further reflections on Christology as such.

The second task in constructing a Christology is historical retrieval. Before re-constructing Christology for our period of history, we must seek to understand the history of the interpretation of Jesus, the history of Christology itself. One searches Christian tradition,<sup>3</sup> as well as Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, to understand Jesus Christ more deeply, appropriately and adequately. One does Christology in the light of historical Christianity's understanding of Jesus Christ, no matter what one's evaluation, appropriation, or rejection of a particular historical expression of the Christian faith may be. David Tracy expresses it thus:

Tradition is inevitably present through the language we use: a recognition of that presence can also occasion a recognition that every tradition is both pluralistic and ambiguous (i.e., enriching, liberating, and distorting).

<sup>2</sup>See Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973); Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus, An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins (New York: Seabury, 1979); Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology, the Proclamation of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1971).

<sup>3</sup>The modern classic on the theology of tradition is Yves Congar's *Tradition and Traditions, An Historical and a Theological Essay*, trans. Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1967).

The fact that every tradition is ambiguous need not become the occasion to reject the reality of tradition as enriching. Rather the need is to find modes of interpretation that can retrieve the genuine meaning and truth of the tradition ("hermeneutics of retrieval") as well as modes of interpretation that can uncover the errors and distortions in the tradition ("hermeneutics of critique and suspicion").<sup>4</sup>

The re-appropriation of the meaning and truth within Christian tradition constitutes a second moment and second prolegomenon in constructing a Christology. The first task is primarily biblical, exegetical, and hermeneutical; the second task is primarily historical, namely, research into the history of Christian traditions. This historical research cannot be separated from hermeneutics either, for historical analysis is a hermeneutics of the christological tradition. To move from a biblical interpretation of Jesus to a contemporary re-interpretation of Jesus without a conscious dialogue with "the Jesus of Christian history" is to ignore the full implications of our modern historical consciousness, which necessitates an awareness not only of the historicity of Jesus but also of a history to Christology itself - Christology in search of its roots, the Jesus of Christian history as well as the Jesus of the New Testament. This second task of Christology sets in relief Jesus in his divinity and perduring significance. Aloys Grillmeier stands out as one among many who has done extensive historical research for the

<sup>4</sup>David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 146 n.80. Also see his *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 3-21, 49-52, 72-79, 237-40 for further reflections on hermeneutics, retrieval, and tradition. Tracy's discussion of "criteria of appropriateness" is particularly relevant to the task of historical retrieval; see *Blessed Rage*, 28-29, 72-79. Bernard Lonergan's reflections on method are also apropos here; *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), esp. 125-45 on the eight functional specialties, 153-73 on interpretation and hermeneutics, and 175-234 on history. Lonergan's first two functional specialties (research and interpretation) are both clearly involved in what I have called the first task of Christology - Jesus research. The first four functional specialties (research, interpretation, history and dialectic) are involved in the second task - historical retrieval.

sake of retrieving the meaning and truth in the Christian tradition. <sup>5</sup>

Our third task is a hermeneutical re-construction, or the construction of a Christology proper, an interpretation of the Christ-event in the light of contemporary consciousness. After encountering the historical and biblical Jesus as well as historical Christianity's continuing re-interpretations of Jesus, Christology seeks to construct an appropriate, coherent, and relatively adequate theology of Jesus Christ for our period of history, a theology which allows the Christ-event to be salvific for us, able to be experienced once again.<sup>6</sup> Christology must be both rooted (Jesus research and historical retrieval) and communicative (establishing a relationship to its world, our world). Christology proper, as a hermeneutical re-construction, seeks to bridge the gap between Christian history (Scripture and Tradition) and our contemporary, post-modern horizon.

Hermeneutics is involved in all of the first three christological tasks. Granted that there are different hermeneutical or interpretative principles involved depending upon whether one is talking about the hermeneutics of biblical statements, or the hermeneutics of conciliar, dogmatic, and historical statements, or the hermeneutics of constructing theology in the light of contemporary consciousness and experience. In all of these, however, hermeneutics involves an inquiry into how we understand historical materials and theological statements as well as an inquiry into their epistemological presuppositions.

Whereas exegesis and historical research are specific steps in the first two christological tasks, the results of these first

<sup>5</sup>Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. I, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden, second, revised edition (London: Mowbrays, 1975).

<sup>6</sup>Note David Tracy's criteria of adequacy, appropriateness, and intelligibility; *Blessed Rage for Order*, 28-29, 64-87; *The Analogical Imagination*, 238. Appropriateness refers to one's hermeneutics of the tradition; intelligibility refers to the coherence of the tradition's present self-understanding; adequacy refers to the horizon of common human experience. See also Schubert M. Ogden, "What is Theology?" *Journal of Religion* 52 (1972), 22-40.

two tasks along with philosophical reflection<sup>7</sup> and critical reflection on one's own human experience are the primary resources in the task of re-construction. The systematic theologian, of course, cannot professionally be exegete, historian, and philosopher all at once; yet, to some degree, he or she must feel somewhat at home in those worlds to perform his or her systematic theological task of re-construction. A systematic theologian is concerned with the historical Christian past (consider David Tracy's criteria of appropriateness), with the inner coherence of his or her re-construction (Tracy's criteria of intelligibility), and with common human experience and the contemporary consciousness (Tracy's criteria of adequacy). Systematic theology seeks to be both intelligent (a philosophical, reflective, and critical moment) and relevant (a creative, imaginative, intuitive moment).<sup>8</sup> One is reminded of Alfred North Whitehead's description of speculative philosophy: "The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation."<sup>9</sup>

The first two tasks of Christology must be held in balance with the third, and yet all three tasks are distinguishable. There can be no radical break between biblical/ historical and constructive/ systematic theological efforts. Bernard Lonergan exemplifies such a balance when indicating two inter-connected moments or levels in the critical study of history: "In the first instance one is coming to understand one's sources. In the second instance one is using one's understood sources intelligently to come to understand the

<sup>7</sup>An illuminating article on this point is Fergus Kerr's "The Need for Philosophy in Theology Today," *New Blackfriars* (June, 1984), 248-60.

<sup>8</sup>The word *relevant* has its advantages and disadvantages. See Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 16, n 12; and 177.

<sup>9</sup>Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, corrected edition (New York: Macmillan Co., 1978), 5, also pp. 3-17; *The Function of Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958); and *Modes of Thought* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938).

object to which they are relevant."10 The first two tasks of Christology have primarily to do with Scripture and Tradition as sources. In the third task one is using those sources in the light of a contemporary horizon to construct an intelligent and relatively adequate Christology for our day. There is both a "given" moment (the first two tasks of Christology done in the light of biblical hermeneutics and the hermeneutics of the traditions) and a "constructive" moment (the third task done in the light of critical philosophy and the hermeneutics of experience). Lonergan, defining systematics, argues that "the aim of systematics is not to increase certitude but to promote understanding," and also that "the understanding to be reached is to be on the level of one's times."<sup>11</sup>

At the same time that the more historical moments (the first two tasks) and the constructive moment (task three) must be held together as interdependent, they can still be distinguished. It is as if we are looking at the Christ-event with two eyes, with one eye on the past - Jesus research and historical retrieval, and a second eye on the present which seeks to re-present this selfsame Jesus in the light of a contemporary conceptual and experiential framework - hermeneutical re-construction. This third task of Christology, re-construction, constitutes Christology properly speaking. The constructive theologian seeks an interpretation of Jesus Christ which is biblically and historically appropriate, philosophically and rationally coherent, as well as experientially and socially relevant. "Systematic theologians cannot simply repeat; they must critically interpret the tradition mediating the event."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 189.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 336 for the first part of the quotation, 350 for the second part; see 335-53 for his discussion of systematics.

<sup>12</sup>Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 405. For David Tracy's suggestions for a revisionist model of theology, see *Blessed Rage for Order*, 32-34, 43-63. Tracy's revisionist suggestions recognize the value of complementarity, of thinking in terms of both/ and. The first two models of theology which he explicates tend toward *either* tradition (orthodox theology) *or* modernity (liberal theology). The next two models affirm radically *either* God (neo-orthodoxy) *or* the world (radical

The third task of Christology attempts to relate two poles of Jesus' existence, his humanity and divinity; as well as the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection; along with an attempt to understand the pre-historical, historical, and post-historical or eschatological stages of his existence. Just as Schillebeeckx and Grillmeier among contemporary Catholic theologians exemplify the first two tasks of Christology, so Piet Schoonenberg has provided a masterful effort at re-construction.<sup>13</sup>

The fourth task in constructing a Christology is socio-ethical reflection. One must evaluate his or her reconstruction in the light of its socio-political and ethical implications. This is the moment of searching for the implications, of explicitly relating theology to praxis. It can be

secularism). Revisionism, rooted in correlation, is a critical reformulation of both sides of the polarity. For thinking in terms of both/ and, see Donald Goergen, *Me Power Of Love, Christian Spirituality and Theology* (Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1979), 268-80.

My major disagreement with Tracy in *Blessed Rage for Order* is over whether the Christian systematic theologian need be in principle a believer (see 7; 18, n 35; 36, n 16; 57, n 3; 80). I maintain that the theologian qua theologian is in principle as well as in fact a believer. This is especially true of the systematic theologian, perhaps less so for the fundamental theologian, although in that case I would speak of a philosopher or historian of religion. In *Analogical Imagination* Tracy modifies or nuances his opinion significantly, yet still maintains that "in principle" the theologian need not be a believer (183 n 26; 398-99, n 7).

My major disagreement with *The Analogical Imagination* is with Tracy's understanding of systematic (or constructive) theology, specifically his suggestion that the public "church" is the primary public of systematics, with academy and society as secondary. Tracy's emphasis on the public character of theology and his delineation of the three publics is significant and helpful (3-46); so is his delineating of the three theological disciplines, fundamental, systematic, and practical theology. My disagreement is in his attempt to relate the three disciplines to the three publics (54-79). To me, it doesn't seem to work; it is forced. It seems to work better for fundamental theology than it does for systematic theology.

Tracy suggests that a theologian "will ordinarily be related to one primary public and secondarily to the other two" (52). This is perhaps true in fact, but not in principle, perhaps true for the theologian as a human and individual being, but not for the systematic theologian qua theologian. Systematic theology, and Christology as systematic or constructive theology, is concerned with all three publics; it must be professionally, confessionally, and socially responsible. It also articulates a *personal* faith (see p. 6) but not a private one.

<sup>13</sup>See especially Piet Schoonenberg, *The Christ*, trans. Della Couling (New York: Seabury Press, 1971).

argued that this task should come earlier in the process of theological re-construction, or by others that it is not an essential christological task at all. Yet socio-ethical reflection is necessary to Christology, and it need not necessarily precede the task of hermeneutical re-construction.

An evaluation of the hermeneutical re-construction in the light of its social and moral implications is as necessary to Christology as it is for theology in general, in order to prevent Christology from being ideology.<sup>14</sup> How does one know that one's Christology is truly *theology* and not simply *ideology*? Christology must be socially and morally responsible. Our choice is not between reflecting on the socio-ethical implications of Christology or not, but between a conscious explicitation of those implications or allowing the operative implications to remain unconscious or unarticulated. The consequences of a theology are part of the theology itself. Any Christology which makes claims to objectivity, or relies on biblical and/or historical sources, must still accept its social implications. No theology can be apolitical unless one consciously desires to make it socially irrelevant in the practical sphere - but even then it has its consequences. All theology supports some kind of praxis.<sup>15</sup>

David Tracy has made us aware of both the social character of a theologian and the public character of theology.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>See Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1979); Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976); Martin Seliger, *The Marxist Conception of Ideology: A Critical Essay* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

<sup>15</sup>Orthopraxis is a major theme in the recent writings of Schillebeeckx. Also see David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 237-58; *The Analogical Imagination*, 69-82, 390-98, for his early reflections on praxis and theology; as well as his forthcoming third volume in his trilogy which intends to deal with practical theology. Also, of course, the liberation theologians, e.g., *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, ed. Rosina Gibellini, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979); and Alfred T. Hennelly, *Theologies in Conflict, The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979). Also see the *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, vol. 30 (1975), 1-29 (Baum), 49-61 (O'Meara), 63-110 (Fiorenza); and vol. 32 (1977), 1-16 (Lonergan), 125-41 (Shea), and 142-77 (Fiorenza).

<sup>16</sup>Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, esp. 3-46.

Theology is and ought to be public discourse, conscious of three publics that form the social matrix of theology: academy, Church, and society. Indeed, theology must be professionally, confessionally, and socially responsible. The fourth christological task is primarily concerned with this social responsibility.

The social context of a contemporary theologian in the United States is a particular social, political, economic, and religious reality. These provide social facts from which one's social analysis begins in order to draw out the implications of one's Christology and thus in turn evaluate it. For example, no christologist in the United States can read the parable of the rich person and Lazarus (Lk 15:19-31) with any social and global awareness without realizing that the majority of people (God's people) in our world understandably and easily identify North Americans as the rich person. What are the implications of our Christology for this social reality - whether we see ourselves as individually responsible or not?

The relationship between Christology and social analysis involves mutual critique and something of a hermeneutical circle. Social awareness may cause us to revise our Christology, and vice-versa. Every social fact has the potential of raising questions. For example, American religious pluralism asks us how our Christology interprets non-Christian religious experience. What are the implications of our Christology for other religious traditions? I repeat that there is a dialectical movement between the first three tasks and this fourth task, which suggests that Christology is an ongoing process, never a definitive and closed system, but rather always in search of a more adequate way of expressing itself. This is partly why it is not essential that this fourth task come first, as long as it is taken seriously. The fourth task not only evaluates the prior re-construction but also provides the horizon for further re-construction.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>I am aware of criticism of my position coming from two different perspectives. There are those who deny that theology and social analysis belong together. With these I am in complete disagreement. Others give the social analysis a position of

Christology itself benefits from a pluralism of approaches. An explicitly feminist or liberation Christology may insist that the task of social analysis come earlier in the christological process, that Christology be done in the light of a prior social analysis. There is no denying that the christologist or theologian as a human and social being has social and political views. It is in this sense that one is involved in a hermeneutical circle. One's socio-ethical values are with one from the beginning. The question is when in the christological process to reflect explicitly on the social dimension of Christology. One can do theology from the perspective of an explicit socio-political stance, in which case this fourth task would come earlier, probably first in the process; but one can also do Christology as focused first on Scripture, tradition, re-construction, and then clarify what one has done thus far in the light of a social analysis -leaving one's earlier work open for revision. In other words, what is demanded is not that a particular theologian opt for a particular social stance from the beginning, but that a particular theologian be held socially and morally accountable for his or her theology. A theologian is required to reflect socially as well as biblically, historically, and philosophically.

priority in theology. Here I simply argue that social analysis need not necessarily come first among the tasks a theologian is called upon to perform, that there is a dialectic that does give the social analysis a central and essential role, and that a plurality of approaches is to the benefit of Christology rather than a disservice. I am sympathetic to the caution of Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis, Linking Faith and Justice*, revised edition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983, in collaboration with the Center for Concern, Washington, D.C.), 93, "To be frank, the theological reflection we need is difficult to find in North America. Or perhaps it is more correct to say that theologians who are reflecting in this way are not yet numerous or prominent. Most theologians who are concerned with social justice practice theological methods that do not begin with social analysis." Two helpful and succinct essays on social analysis by a South African theologian are those by Albert Nolan, in *Justice and Truth Shall Meet*, Conference Proceedings (Oak Park, Illinois: Parable Conference for Dominican Life and Mission, 1984), 38-44, 62-73. Also important to the continuing reflection on the task of theology is Vincent Cosmao, *Changing the World, an Agenda for the Churches*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), esp. the concluding thesis, 107-9, "The role of theology is to render an account of the praxis of the faith."

Third world christologists like Leonardo Boff, Albert Nolan, and Jon Sobrino exemplify this social responsibility and task. The difference between my approach and that of an explicitly liberation Christology is over where one situates this task of explicit social conscientisation vis-a-vis our world. To do social reflection first has the disadvantage of limiting one's theology to those who have already undergone a particular social conversion rather than bringing one to a social consciousness on the basis of an interpretation of the Gospel and the Christian tradition. Both approaches are valid, and the two contrasting approaches can provide a mutual and desirable critique of each other. They can complement each other.

Not all the implications of a particular Christology are socio-ethical; some are explicitly religious in other ways. Christology must articulate these soteriological, anthropological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, and eschatological implications as well. My major point is that there are four moments in the christological process, four tasks: Jesus research, historical retrieval, hermeneutical reconstruction, and explicating the implications. In this particular series, volumes one and two are concerned with the first christological task, volume three with the second, volume four with the third, and volume five with the fourth. Christology is systematic theology done by a believer; who seeks to articulate a personal faith through public discourse; who seeks to be professionally, confessionally, and socially responsible; who does not ground the theology of Jesus on the Jesus of historiography alone; and who attempts a hermeneutical re-construction of who Jesus Christ is for us today.