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Discussion Board Post



Question 1

The Christological and Trinitarian debates from Nicaea to Chalcedon have significant impacts on churches today. In agreement, these debates influence churches today in terms of understanding of the fact that there is only one God. The element of monotheism was widely deliberated, and it is still applied to churches today in the course of worship. Its applicability is also seen in terms of the continued belief that Christ is the son of God, and He was His representative on Earth. For instance, Walton's statement "of one substance or being" is illustrative of the view that the Christological and Trinitarian debates from Nicaea and Chalcedon are still applied to today's churches through the reflection of the presence of the relationship between God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which is still a popular belief.

Another point of agreement in terms of their impact on present churches is seen in the affirmation of the view that Jesus Christ was not a normal creature as human beings are. As much as He came as a human being, He had been given extra-ordinary powers by God, hence ensuring He effectively performed miracles to prove the power of God. The most significant thing to note is that there was a perfect working relationship that made it easier for God to reveal Himself through the extra-ordinary human being He brought to Earth. For instance, Walton states that Christ "was not a creature as we are creatures" to emphasize the view that He was extremely different from what we are today. This still has impacts on the contemporary church as individuals believe in miracles that were facilitated by Christ to show the power of God. The performance of such miracles and expectations among Christians in the current church are still the same.



Only one point of disagreement in terms of their impact on churches today is the significance of Jesus Christ during prayers. In line with the Chalcedon debates, there had been a general agreement that prayers should be directed to Christ, but this seems to be different in today's churches, where prayers are directed to God through Christ. Therefore, it has influenced modern churches in terms of changes in prayer systems. Noll agrees that during the Chalcedon, "prayers were directed to Christ rather than through Christ, with a loss of emphasis on the priesthood of Jesus." This is illustrative of the disagreeing ways of prayer using Christ. This simply means that modern churches view Christ differently compared to the assertions put forward in these debates. Since Christ is a representative of God, prayers have to go through Him.

Question 2

Christians today could learn various lessons from the Great Schism and the East-West Schism that signified the Church split. One of the points of conventional agreement is that Christians could learn to avoid overreaction to false doctrines. Most of them reacted immediately to the false doctrines that were coming up, hence following them without proper thought. This led to increased splits.

The second point of agreement in terms of what they could learn is the emphasis on the appropriate method of Bible exegesis to avoid points of difference in understanding the word of God. Contemporary Christians could learn that these schism and splits were caused by misunderstandings in the Bible interpretation.



In line with this view, Noll states that “we must evaluate and modify it on the basis of our Christian worldview, and help our students and the Christian community in general to do so also” to emphasize the significance of proper Biblical exegesis among Christians and thus avoid points of split.

Another relevant point of agreement in relation to the lessons that Christians could learn is the resistance to the trend towards ritualism in their worship. For instance, the emergence of the East-Western Schism, which brought about the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, could have emerged from ritualism rather than true belief in the word of God. For instance, Walton talks of “Christianity as a novelty” to imply that individuals should not be tricked into ritualism, but should do their best to remain on the right path in terms of their actions.

In line with what could be done to avoid schisms and splits, the key point of agreement is that Christians should be able to find a healthy model for discipleship in their Christian life. They should not be too extreme or too critical of the religious nature of other people as this is only attained through true belief in Christ. Walton talks of “American Cults” and insists that Christians should not be cheated into following such trends. They would be in the best position to prevent further splits in the church through an appropriate channel for deliberating on the word of God and building leaders out of it. There should be no room for indoctrination or adherence to religions that are misleading in nature. As a result, the contemporary church will be more united and focused on the attainment of the vision of God, which is peace in the Church.



Question 3

One of the most significant characteristics that marked the Reformation period and is still present in evangelical Christianity is Church involvement in political matters. The point of agreement here is that the Church, especially the papacy, is becoming more interested in political affairs because of the increasing economic strength. In tandem with this characteristic, pastors and even bishops are commenting on the political affairs of their countries. For instance, Lane talks of the “dilemma of the imperial politics of the Roman Empire interfering with the internal affairs of the Christian Church.” This is still experienced in contemporary evangelical Christianity.

Another vital characteristic is the emphasis on the elimination of superstitions and continued imitation of Christ as the moral teacher for all Christians. This is a point of agreement that is still practiced in today’s churches. Accordingly, today’s evangelical Christianity still works in tandem with the position where every individual is urged to follow Christ as the moral teacher. Talking about the Reformation, Walton points out that “It was a point of great emphasis on the significance of Jesus Christ.” This means that they should only revere Christ without worshipping other unnecessary objects.

One of the key elements of disagreement that is not fully present in all aspects of evangelical Christianity is the perception of the Holy Communion. During this time, Luther was against the Catholic Church’s belief in transubstantiation, whereas Zwingli saw it as a connection point between the body of Christ and



spirituality. However, this characteristic is not fully present in the contemporary faith. It only seems to be dominant among Catholics. Some still believe in the essence of the body of Christ while others believe that it must be executed not only through the sacrament but also through faith.

Another point of disagreement in terms of the characteristics that do not apply to the present evangelical Christianity is baptism. During the Reform Movement, there was an increasing reiteration that baptism should only be reserved for older individuals and not infants. However, this is not true about the present evangelical Christianity as infants are baptized. Noll defends infant baptism with the assertion that "It is reasonable in line with the Old Testament recognition of the place of children within the covenant." Therefore, contemporary churches have gone against the initial characteristic of not allowing infants to be presented before Christ through baptism.

