

Saving Salvation: Responding to the Responses

Paul Miller

I thank Steve Cochrane, Tom Hallas and Danny Lehman for their responses to my article. As Danny was the only one who fundamentally disagreed with me, the bulk of my response will be devoted to his article. I guess the squeaky wheel does get the oil!

Steve Cochrane

Steve and I differ even less than Tom. Steve, rather, takes my article points as assumed and simply builds on it to point out how the Eastern Church did their salvation-mission.

Tom Hallas

Tom basically agrees with my fundamental point that explicit faith in Christ was necessary for salvation, but wanted to tweak and broaden my notion of salvation. He saw my rather negative orientation – a focus on Christ’s death providing salvation through “a ‘propitiation, judgment settlement, sin-focused’ priority” – as insufficient. He insists on the importance of incorporating the more positive purposes of God, especially his end purpose of “adoption.” I can only say I agree completely. Salvation and redemption are such rich concepts that Bible commentators point out that the New Testament commonly uses four metaphors to describe them: 1. from the law courts – penalty/justification/forgiveness; 2. from the marketplace – ransom/redemption (of slaves); 3. from the temple – cleansing; 4. from the home – reconciliation/adoption. I would only insist (as I suspect Tom does), that the justice metaphor is a central one that cannot be jettisoned. Additionally, I note that Tom’s preferred metaphor of “adoption,” while it is positive in its purpose, is equally negative in its base assumption: that people outside of Christ *need* to be adopted, that they are orphaned and lost, separated from their Father.

Danny Lehman

It is only when coming to Danny’s article that I meet my first real disagreement. To be clear, I will list our agreements and disagreements.

We both agree that:

1. Eternal hell exists as a place of condemnation;
2. Christ is the only savior of the entire world;
3. A detailed understanding of the nature of the atonement is not necessary for salvation (see the thief on the cross);
4. Other religions do not save (or at least we agree on this formula (more below));

5. There will be those in heaven who in this life did not have a full revelation or the proclamation of the historical Christ as Savior.¹
6. That God is always just and merciful.

We disagree on whether:

1. Explicit faith in Christ—the promised Messiah—is necessary for salvation;
2. Whether inclusivism guts the Great Commission – both its content and motivation;
3. Whether inclusivism unavoidably means allowing that other religions mediate salvation;
4. Whether general revelation is sufficient for salvation;
5. Whether asserting all this can be described as “cautious.”

I shall deal briefly below with each point.

Explicit faith in Christ is necessary for salvation

I say explicit faith is necessary for salvation; Danny says it is not. Evangelicals have, until recently, always been clear that salvation was only available through the proclamation of Christ. They were “good news” people who “proclaimed ... this gospel of the kingdom ... throughout the whole world” (Mt. 24:14) on the basis that this proclamation was actually necessary for salvation. This necessary connection between salvation and the gospel proclaimed, they derived from Scriptures such as:

Jn. 3:16-18 “For God ... gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.... Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

Jn. 20:31 “... but these [signs] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ ... and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Mk. 16:15-16 “Go into all the world and preach the good news.... Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Eph. 2:8; 3:11,12 “For by grace you have been saved by faith ... in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access through our faith in him.”

Rom. 3:21-26 “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested ... through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe ... through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ... so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Acts 4:8, 12 “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said ... ‘And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’”

¹ After all, Jesus did say, “I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt. 8:11) These Old Testament figures all died well before Jesus came on earth, hence they never knew of the historical Jesus during their lives.

Danny, of course, does not disagree that there is a connection between gospel proclamation and salvation. He simply disagrees that this connection is necessary in all cases. He believes that salvation can come through God's general revelation, that following "the light one has" can be sufficient, even if one has never heard of Jesus. He believes a "wider hope" is possible by way of general revelation. Danny is no pluralist; he is an inclusivist.

Whether this guts the Great Commission – both its content and motivation

I think opening the door to this "wider hope" guts evangelicalism of its central message and mission. Danny disagrees. He cites, as an example, Don Richardson's 15 years of mission work amongst the Sawi along with his continued advocacy of missions today. But Richardson openly admits that both his mission work and his three famous mission books all occurred while he was an exclusivist!² He can scarcely serve, then, as a prime example of an inclusivist missionary. Moreover, his current advocacy of mission can easily be explained as the left-over habit of his previous worldview.

The logic of Richardson's position simply does not support energetic missions. That is, Richardson is convinced that general revelation is sufficient for all for their salvation. He now realizes, he writes, that the stone-age Yali and the Dyak headhunters of Kalimantan – along with other peoples "in virtually every village in every age"³ – about whom he wrote in his books were "Job-like first-responders."⁴ That is, there were those who were *already saved* even before the gospel of the historical Christ came to them. Why come to them with the gospel, then, if they already have everything necessary for salvation?

Richardson says that the point of going to them with the gospel is to first "edify" (further illumine) them and then, secondly, to "enable[e] them to bring their harder-to-persuade pagan neighbors to faith."⁵ But Richardson, and Danny, are missing the bigger point – which is: WHY even go to these other pagan neighbors? First, having general revelation, they already have all they need for salvation. Secondly, why even assume that these other so-called "pagan neighbors" are not in fact *already saved*? Inclusivists have dismissed the very markers of salvation (confession of faith in Christ) which alone undergird such a conviction.⁶ If Richardson's so-called "first responders" were saved without confessing Christ, why not the other pagans around them also?

² Don Richardson, *Heaven Wins: Heaven, Hell and the Hope of Every Person* (Venture, CA: Regal, 2013), 66, 77

³ Richardson 2013:76

⁴ Richardson 2013:73, 77

⁵ Richardson 2013:77

⁶ Karl Rahner, the Roman Catholic theologian who was probably a less "cautious" inclusivist than either Richardson or Danny, pointed out that even a person's atheism was not necessarily a sign they were "unsaved" or "unbelieving." Even atheists, then, might still be "anonymous Christians," as Rahner famously titled them. (K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol 16, transl. D. Morland, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979), 202; K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol 6, transl. Karl-H and B. Kruger (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969), 397

In the past, Evangelicals went to a “lost world” because they were convinced it was, well, lost. The whole point of inclusivism is that it lightens this depressing picture; it says, “No, even without the gospel they are not necessarily lost.” This changes the factual picture, which naturally then changes the motivational picture. How can this not but demotivate mission, when mission’s whole point – relieving non-Christians’ lostness – no longer pertains? Even Christians do things for a reason! And when their reason is removed, naturally they will ask, “Why go then?”

Indeed, in light of the justice question that Danny has raised, one could equally ask, “If it is not absolutely necessary for Christian evangelists to go, how are they being just to their children to put them at risk by going?” We know from the history of frontier missions the price in human lives that was paid by missionary families. It is one thing for the parent to pay the price when they have made the choice to go. It is another thing altogether, from a justice viewpoint, for the children, who had no voice or say in the matter, to pay such a price. Justice weighs the scales, and when “necessity” is no longer in the balance, would not justice here almost demand that these missionary families *not* go!

Religions mediate salvation?

Danny’s position that “general revelation is sufficient for salvation” involves him unavoidably in a direction he does not want to go: non-Christian religions as mediating salvation. This openness to non-Christian religions⁷ is evident, once again, in Don Richardson, whom Danny claims as one of his inclusivist mentors. Richardson shamefacedly confesses himself a “former Exclusivist” who regrets that, “Exclusivist influence in that season of my life restrained me from identifying ... stone-age Yali tribesman ... Dyak headhunters in Kalimantan ... [the 6th century Greek seer] Epimenides ... correctly as Job-like first responders ... Job-like God-finder[s].”⁸ They found God, then, before Christianity came. But if these Dyaks and Yalis had already found salvation, then this means they found it through their religion. These Dyaks and Yalis were anything but secularists; and it was their religions that preserved the “redemptive analogies” that Richardson celebrated and credited with enabling them to be “Job-like God-finders.” Thus, Richardson clearly believes non-Christian religions mediate salvation.

Richardson never quite states this so baldly, but it is evident from what he says about the “by-products” of general revelation. That is, Richardson starts by stating his belief in general revelation as potentially salvific. Next, in *Heaven Wins*, he identifies the potentially-salvific redemptive analogies preserved in other religions as “by-products of God’s general revelation.”⁹ In other words, he believes that salvific general revelation can seep into the center of a religion. In essence, then, Richardson is taking the position that non-Christian religions can and do, at least sometimes, mediate salvation.

⁷ This openness is limited but real. That is, Richardson would certainly not endorse large portions of non-Christian religions. However, to endorse the salvific ability of a religion, it is not necessary that one agree wholesale with that religion, only with certain crucial, potentially salvific elements.

⁸ Richardson 2013:66, 72-3,77, 79

⁹ Richardson 2013:73, 98

The fact that these saving truths are mediated through non-Christian religions clearly disturbs Richardson far less than it does other theologians. Indeed, it is central to his whole theory of the “redemptive analogies” carried by numerous “folk religions.”¹⁰ His untroubled acceptance of such mediation is the only reason he – unlike the other theologians from whom Danny distances himself¹¹ – does not indulge in verbal gymnastics concerning “religions as such”! Richardson accepts that (some) non-Christian religions contain the general revelation which saves, and this means he never has to split hairs over whether it is the “religion as such” which God is using, rather than something outside of that religion. But Richardson’s lack of being troubled is itself troubling. In some cases, a lack of a desire to split hairs is no sign of health; it simply means the patient has gone bald and has no hairs left to split!

General revelation sufficient for salvation?

Danny and I disagree on whether general revelation is sufficient for salvation. I do not know how Danny would react to the opening scriptures I cited, but Don Richardson dismisses Evangelicals’ reliance on them as merely “a few favorite texts.”¹² Both Danny and Richardson argue for salvation-through-general-revelation on two bases: justice (God would not be just if he did not act in this way)¹³ and the scriptural example of “noble” or “holy pagans” such as Melchizedek or Jethro – pagans that seemed to have been in a relationship with God even before the gospel came.¹⁴ Cornelius (Acts 10) is regarded as the classic example, with both Danny and Don Richardson referencing him. Richardson specifically rejects the “Exclusivists ... claim that Cornelius was not saved until he heard Peter preach the gospel,” arguing that Peter came to an “already-saved Cornelius.” Peter, he argues, came to Cornelius not for

¹⁰ “Folk religions” is the term Richardson uses to describe the semi-animist religions of the tribal cultures he has studied, religions that pre-date the “formal religions” such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. (See D. Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981), 101)

¹¹ Danny rejects the “neo-Universalism promoted by Protestant Liberals” and identifies with my frustration with theologians’ paradoxical claims “that religions-*as-such*-don’t-save-but-Christ-saves-through-other-religions.” The problem here is, that it is not the liberal pluralists who make these paradoxical claims (pluralists, by definition, are untroubled by other religions mediating salvation), but Evangelical inclusivists!

¹² Richardson 2013:94

¹³ Space does not allow me to engage each of Danny’s arguments, so I leave justice aside. If I were to deal with the justice issue I would engage it through the following themes, though in more detail. First, people hearing the gospel is not a question of God’s justice, but of his mercy. One cannot accuse God of injustice because not everyone has heard his offer of mercy. Mercy cannot be examined through the lens of justice. No-one “deserves” to hear the message of grace. Common-sense says this, as does Jesus parable of the vineyard laborers (Mt. 20:1-16). Second, if one is to use a human standard (which cannot really take in God’s holiness nor the sinfulness of sin) to assess the fairness of God’s actions, then I would say the quasi-universalists like Bell have an even stronger argument than inclusivists like Danny. That is, who with a human standard can think that hell is “fair”? Most, with our blinkered sight, cannot really perceive how a temporal life of some wrong-doing can merit an eternal judgment. This difficulty with man’s predicament far outweighs Danny’s problem with the solution to the predicament. Will inclusivists, having accepted a human standard by which to weigh the fairness of God’s dealings, eventually take the next step and give in to the universalists as well? It is along these lines that I would argue.

¹⁴ Usually mentioned are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Daniel (of Eze. 14:14), Melchizedek, Lot, Abimelech, Jethro, Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, the Queen of Sheba, the Magi from the East, and Cornelius.

salvation but so that he could be further “elucidated by the gospel and fully anointed by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵ Richardson realizes his interpretation will not stand in the face of the apostle Peter’s own description of what took place – “He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon.... He will bring you a message through which you and all your household *will be saved.*’” (Acts 11:13-14) (emphasis added). Richardson solves this by simply dismissing Peter’s understanding with the summary assessment, “Peter misquoted the angel.”¹⁶

I find this to be an extraordinarily dangerous way to bring Scripture into line with one’s thinking – simply to say the biblical author was in error. Richardson surprisingly adopts the approach of so many biblical critics who, when looking at parallel gospel accounts of Christ, argue the differences are “contradictions” rather than “complementary additions.” The willingness to adopt such an approach is especially worrisome given that Richardson is not overturning just one verse (Acts 11:14), but the weight of the vast majority of Acts verses regarding the Gentile “God-fearers” (Gentiles who had joined themselves to the Jews), each one which assumes they are in need of salvation. (See Acts 2:11, 38-40, 47; 13:26, 40-41, 47).¹⁷

¹⁵ Richardson 2013:85-87

¹⁶ Richardson 2013:86

¹⁷ If Richardson interprets the Cornelius-incident directly against the wider sense of the book of Acts, my impression is that Danny does the same with Romans 10. That is, he contends that Paul is not asserting the necessity of special revelation for salvation in 10:13-15 where he links believing to hearing, then hearing to preaching, and then preaching to sending. Danny basis his argument on the fact that Paul answers his rhetorical question concerning whether Israel has in fact heard (v. 18) by citing Psalm 19:4 (“Their voice has gone out into all the earth”), a psalm referring to general revelation. Thus he concludes that Paul believes the Jews heard the gospel through general revelation. If that is true for the Jews, Danny reasons, then it could well be true for others as well. Ergo, special revelation is not always necessary.

Danny’s reading of Romans 10 strikes me as dubious because Paul would then be contradicting two themes central to his entire letter: first, proclamation’s crucial role and, second, the Jews, as receptors of special revelation, being God’s special covenantal people. First, on proclamation: Paul book-ends his entire letter beginning and end with the importance of proclamation – it is central to who he is and to his calling. Romans 1:1-19 repeatedly celebrates the importance of preaching the gospel. The world is turned upside down not just by what Jesus did between 30-33 A.D., but by that being proclaimed and spread abroad in the subsequent years. After all, what is the use of “Good News” if no-one hears it? Paul also ends his epistle on the same note – preaching as a glorious necessity. He argues that, having “fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ” where he is, he now needs the Roman church’s support to move out to the regions beyond, to Spain, so that there too he can “proclaim[] the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God....” (15:16-19, 28-29) The “so that” shows Paul’s thinking. The result – Gentiles becoming an acceptable offering – does not simply happen on its own; it depends on the prior condition. The gospel must first be proclaimed. That’s special revelation, and that is what Paul believed in.

The second central theme Danny’s interpretation overlooks, is the Jews as those who have received God’s special revelation. Paul has already earlier answered the question of what advantage there is in being a Jew with the answer: “they have been entrusted with the very words of God.” (Rom. 3:1-2) The Jews have not been left with general revelation. Therefore it really does not make any sense for Paul to answer his rhetorical question, concerning whether the Jews have heard God’s news, with an answer from general revelation. Paul cites Psalm 19 not to say, “General revelation is the answer.” Rather he cites it simply to say, “Of course, the Jews have heard! Our God is all about communication. Just see his commitment to it in from Psalm 19. General revelation shows God speaks.” But citing Psalm 19 is only

Holy pagans

Beyond Cornelius, the question remains: What are we to make of the other so-called “holy pagans” of Scripture – the Melchizedeks, Jobs, Jethros etc. – who existed outside of God’s covenant people? The difficulty here is that they create as many questions as they answer, two questions being uppermost – “whether” they were saved and, if so, “how”? The first question, then, is where they stood with God – whether they were actually saved and reconciled to God in an ultimate sense. The simple fact that God communicated with them does not mean, in the New Testament sense, they were saved. God communicated with both Cain (Gen. 4:6) and Balaam (Num. 22:12f.) but it is clear neither were in good standing with God. Moreover, God being in some sense “pleased” with these “holy pagans” does not necessarily indicate their final salvation. After all, Jesus was clearly pleased in one sense with the God-fearing life of the rich young ruler – and loved him for it (v. 21) – but it was still insufficient to inherit eternal life (Mk. 10:17-27). Solomon, too, pleased God in asking for wisdom instead of riches or success (I Ki. 3:10-11), but this does not mean we know his salvation status, especially in light of his later idolatry (I Ki. 11:4-9). The Bible is silent here; and it is silent on the ultimate status of most if not all of its “holy pagans.”

Secondly, if these “holy pagans” were saved, we do not know how that might have come about. So, in the case of Melchizedek – called “a priest of God Most High” (Gen. 14:18) – and Abel “who walked with God 300 years” (Gen. 5:22), the Scripture is silent as to the means God used. Jonathan Edwards reasoned that perhaps Melchizedek “could have been saved through the traces of original revelation that still remained among his people.”¹⁸ Edwards, that is, suggested not general revelation (the witness of nature and our consciences) but “special revelation” contained in the early books of Genesis. Walter Kaiser, the “exclusivist” Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell, argues in a similar vein for the means of Abraham’s salvation.

Kaiser points out that Abraham was considered “justified/reckoned righteous” in the Old Testament (Gen. 15:6) even before Jesus came. He also notes, however, that this was not on the basis of some generalized “faith in the light he had available” through general revelation. It was not vaguely trusting God as far as one understood him; rather it was trusting in something far more gospel-oriented. That is, according to Galatians 3:18, “The Scripture ... announced the gospel in advance to Abraham.” That’s

the first part of his answer to his rhetorical question. Having answered with an, “Of course,” he then goes on in Romans 10:21, specifically “concerning Israel,” to cite Isaiah 65:2. These verses of judgment in Israel are making the point that the *real issue* is not whether the Jews have *heard*, but whether they have *obeyed*. Isaiah is used by Paul to say, “Of course they have heard! God has continually (‘all day long’) sent his messengers and prophets – special revelation.” This interpretation not only fits the Old Testament verses cited but the actual facts of Paul’s own day. That is, Jesus himself had already focused the entirety of his three years ministry in Israel. Then, the apostles continued this Israel-based ministry, eventually pushing out beyond Israel, but even then going to the Jewish synagogues first (Acts 17:2). Only after being rejected there did they go to the Gentiles (Acts 18:4-6). The Jews had heard the gospel, that is Paul’s point.

¹⁸ Jonathan Edwards, “History of Redemption,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. H. Stout (New Haven, Conn.: Yale U. Press, 1989), 9:179, as cited by T. Tiessen, *Who Can be Saved?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 171

special revelation. Where did Abraham hear this gospel? He heard it, in minimalist form, in Genesis 15:4 where God tells him, “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” This promise picks up on the earlier messianic promise of Genesis 3:15 that Eve’s “offspring/seed” would come to crush Satan. The details are minimal, but the outlines of the gospel promise are clear enough.

Kaiser concludes, then, that Abraham and other Old Testament believers were not simply exercising “some sort of general ‘faith’ in an undefined God,” but rather:

The promise ... has truly Christ for its object.... Is Abraham’s faith different from the justifying faith of the New Testament believer? We answer ... emphatically, No.... [W]e argue here that the principle object of faith for the Old Testament believer was none other than that Man of Promise, the Messiah, who was to come ... our Lord Jesus.¹⁹

Hebrews 11 heroes of faith

Danny also argues that Hebrews 11 supports the view that general revelation, apart from faith in Christ, saves. But surely Hebrews 11 leaves us with the same two questions left by “holy pagans”: Were they saved and, if so, how? These are not answered here for the very simple reason that this was not the point of Hebrews 11. The writer is not even addressing the subject of the salvation of those who have never heard special revelation. He is addressing a far simpler lifestyle topic (of both man and God) – simply that God has always, throughout the ages, honored faith.

In doing so, he leaves unexamined the difference between saving faith and miracle-working faith. But we know already that these two are quite different, as is clear from Jesus’ warning about those who say “Lord, Lord” to him and “perform many miracles” in his name (Mt. 7:21-23). Now, a number of the characters in Hebrews 11 clearly demonstrated miracle-working faith, while their faith-for-salvation is far more questionable. For example, Samson is noted as an exemplar of faith (v. 32), despite his highly questionable life history (Judg. 13-16); similarly, the faith of the Jewish generation who “passed through the Red Sea,” (Heb. 29) is set out as an example, despite God judging them sufficiently “wicked” to be barred from entering the Holy Land (Num. 14:26-30). The writer of Hebrews, however, happily lists them as faith-examples because salvation was not his point. He wanted to show that faith in God accomplished things: “conquered kingdoms, administered justice, ... shut the mouths of lions” etc. (v. 33). Whether they were saved or not was not the writer’s point. Indeed, his point – that God heeds our every act of faith, so continue on in it – was almost stronger if the Old Testament figures such as Sampson were not saved! That is, the argument would then

¹⁹ Walter Kaiser, Jr., ‘Holy Pagans: Reality of Myth?’ in D. Okholm, T. Phillips, eds., *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995, 1996), 124-141, 127, 141. At one point, Danny actually says something very similar to Kaiser. When speaking of the Old Testament saints of Hebrews 11 he says not that they were saved by some general revelation but that, “They were justified by their faith as they looked forward to the cross.” Depending on his meaning, I might be able to agree with this, but only because he is referencing special revelation! One does not know of Christ’s cross through general revelation.

be, “If God heeded the acts of faith of those who were not ultimately faithful, how much more will he reward your faith.”

The book of Hebrews is equally silent on the second question that plagues us with both Old Testament heroes and “noble pagans”: If any of these were saved, *how* and by *what means* were they saved? Were they saved through, as Jonathan Edwards suggests, the shadowy gospel promise that came through the special revelation of Genesis 3? Did post-Abrahamic Jews communicate the Abrahamic promise (to Jethro, for instance), special revelation thus being the means? Or, were these Old Testament figures saved through Christ who “went and preached to the spirits who were in prison” (1 Pet. 3:19)? We simply do not know, because Hebrews 11 is silent here. It is not addressing the salvation question.

Cautious?

Danny describes himself as a “cautious inclusivist.” Cautious inclusivism is usually marked by three characteristic: First, it “stops short of stating that the religions themselves as such are vehicles of salvation”;²⁰ second, it holds that salvation outside of Christian special revelation is not a “probability” but only a “possibility”; and third, it asserts that not “many” but only “some” will be saved in this way.²¹

But “cautious inclusivism” is not nearly cautious enough, stumbling in three areas. First, despite its good intentions, it eventually affirms “religions themselves as such are vehicles of salvation.” This is evident both in Don Richardson’s works (see above) and in the self-contradictory “religion as such” reasoning of inclusivists (see my opening article). Second, while the above limitations of “possibly versus probably” and “some versus many” sound cautious, they open a crack which cannot be shut. That is, there is no principled, logical or scriptural reason for such limitations once one has overturned the only real brake that Scripture provides – the very exclusivist verses inclusivists reject. Only nostalgic memories for the Evangelicalism of one’s youth currently hold this limitation in place; but the next generation have no such nostalgia – and the limitations would soon be discarded. Once the door has been opened to general revelation, what reason could there be that only “some,” and then only “possibly,” should benefit from this? Third, it is incautious in rejecting Scriptures which are clear (the exclusivist ones above) for the sake of speculation on a subject that is not clear, and about which the Bible is silent. Danny himself admits, “The Bible does not say clearly what happens to the people who have never heard the gospel.” To reject what we know for something we do not know is not cautious. Caution is to reject speculation. Caution is simply to admit, “I do not know the answer, but I trust the God of all justice and all mercy to do right.”

²⁰ C. Pinnock, ‘An Inclusivist View’, in D. Okholm, T. Phillips, eds., *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995, 1996), 95-123, 99

²¹ The last two points come from an email exchange I had with Fuller Seminary’s Professor Kärkkäinen, July 01, 2014.

Lastly, there is something counter-productive, even self-contradictory, in an inclusivism which purports to be cautious. That is, if the whole point of inclusivism is to engender optimism in the face of a gloomy exclusivism, then surely this caution – this limiting salvation to “some” who may “possibly” be saved – this defeats the entire purpose. Here is no grand optimism; here is only tepid maybe’s for a few. We are right back to where we started, only now we have lost the clear notes of the gospel along the way. The bargain is not worth the price.