

Intro Music: [00:00:16](#) [inaudible].

Josh Mangelson: [00:00:17](#) Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Music: [00:00:30](#) [inaudible]

Carla: [00:00:31](#) Hello and welcome to the Project Zion podcast. I'm your host, Carla Long. And today you are listening to our Percolating on Faith series with Charmaine and Toni Chvala- Smith. And to be more specific, this is really a subset of our Percolating on Faith series called God Shots. And I don't think we've explained for quite some time where the word God shot even comes from, isn't it from the most perfect espresso shot that a barista could make.

Charmaine : [00:01:01](#) Yeah, that's, that's my understanding. And they don't, they don't happen all the time.

Tony: [00:01:07](#) It seemed like a, a proper title for a subset on systematic theology because theology is God talk. And so, so God Shots, God talk, that's what we're trying to do.

Carla: [00:01:19](#) That's perfect. I mean you, I mean, Tony, I know you came up with it. It was a perfect title and I S I still love it. So, as Tony said, we're doing a systematic theology. And we are, today we're talking about confessing Jesus Christ in context. But I want to say hello again to our guests. Tony and Charmaine, welcome. Thanks for coming back.

Charmaine : [00:01:39](#) Oh, thank you for letting us come back.

Tony: [00:01:42](#) Yes, indeed. Thank you, Carla.

Carla: [00:01:43](#) Well, we had a big discussion about whether or not we'd let you after the last one that we decided to give you another chance!

Carla: [00:01:52](#) And so last time we talked about the person in the work of Jesus Christ and today we're going to be talking about who Jesus Christ is in context, in different cultures and so on and so forth. So I'm really excited about learning more about this one. Do you want to give us like an overview of where we're going today?

Charmaine : [00:02:13](#) I think probably first of all, we'll be defining what it means to think of Jesus in different contexts. So we're going to be looking

at Christologies that come out of different cultural contexts and how that can be really a, a benefit to all of Christianity. And we'll be emphasizing as we get started, the idea that for probably most of our listeners if, if they have been influenced by Christianity in North America that they have been influenced by a very European, Western approach to, to theology and therefore to Christology. And that the reality is that we're so, so influenced by that way. We haven't even been able to see that the Jesus that we talk about in portray and believe in. It's been very shaped by that culture. And we're very fortunate to live in a time when other cultures are claiming Jesus and helping to distinguish between the cultural, Western, cultural background, helping us distinguish between that and how, how Jesus, how Christ can be alive and well and God's expression in the world, in other cultures. And it really is, is beneficial to everyone. So, so we'll be defining it talking about what Christologies in different contexts look like, and then looking at some very specific ones that are pretty, pretty well known and vibrant in the theological world today.

Tony:

[00:04:10](#)

So, so Carla, for those who are still following along with Migliore which is, which is kind of our, our, our baseline for this, the series his chapter nine, which is titled Confessing Jesus Christ in Context is, is kind of unique in little systematic theology is like this. So you mentioned the last chapter we covered chapter eight. The last topic we covered was who, who is Jesus Christ and what does he mean today? That's the standard, the standard topic of Christology, Christ's identity and meaning, but already does something pretty cool by adding chapter this next chapter after that, which is he says, now let's talk about who Christ is, how Christ is perceived in some very specific contexts of marginalization. And so how Christ is known, loved, believed in, followed in context of marginalization can often look quite different and can be very challenging to those who are coming out at Christianity from like whatever a dominant culture is. So that's kind of what he's doing here. You know, a lot along the way we, we kinda stopped referring to the Hanson textbook. Hanson doesn't have a specific chapter like this one, but Hanson's overall theology does take into consideration contextual issues. It's just the Migliore has the separate chapter on, on Christ and context. And so we think it's, it's, it's a really exciting and helpful chapter in this book. Yeah.

Charmaine :

[00:05:45](#)

And some of the places where he'll be taking that, that he takes the reader is to look at specific kinds of Christologies. Latin American liberation Christology, African-American Christology, a feminist, womanist, Miu Huri sta Christologies and, and each of those has its own take on how, how to translate Christ into their

settings. Also in, in a broader sense, Hispanic theologies in Asian-American theologies or Christologies in particular. So it's, he's really done a nice job of help us to, to begin to imagine the universality of Christ and, and how he can be translated into into very different cultures without making those cultures have to, to become Western or to become English speaking or to have a particular take on how Jesus fits with nation or with American thought or Western thought in general.

- Tony: [00:07:09](#) So just to kind of move a little a little further into what Christ in context is like. I think a question that one can ask is, you know, if, if we believe in some fashion that Jesus Christ is God for us and God with us, the context question is who do we mean by us? Which us as do we mean? That's, that's really important and it's easily forgotten in theology. And to give you an example of why that's important, if you, if you look at medieval art and see depictions of Christ, you can ask yourself why, why is Christ depicted like a medieval person? You know? Or if you look at contemporary African art where Christ is depicted, why does Christ looked like an African? Or you look at the, the ever popular Selman head that, that, that picture of Jesus, that adorns many, many, many Protestant churches at some point can ask, why does, why does Jesus look like a white Swede?
- Carla: [00:08:16](#) With the most beautiful blonde highlights!
- Tony: [00:08:17](#) Oh my God, yes!
- Carla: [00:08:17](#) I love those highlights!
- Tony: [00:08:17](#) And that bronze athletic skin. I'm looking at that too for myself. I like that. But it's not, in other words, everybody from the start, even from the beginning of Christianity, Christ has, has had to be contextualized, which Migliore points out. And I think we've pointed it out in other podcasts, which is why there's four gospels and not one. Why there is a Matthew, take a Mark, take a Luke take, a John take, and then a Paul take and then so on and so forth. So you, you, you can't, you can't take Christ in without contextualizing him. But we easily forget that the dominant culture tends to think its portrayal of Christ is the right one. And is usually nervous when, when people who have been abused by the dominant culture try to start following a Christ that they see.
- Carla: [00:09:13](#) I do have to just jump in here just for a second. That medieval Christ, you know the one where there's like a 50 year old tiny man babysitting on Mary's lap always freaks me out. That is a

scary looking Jesus baby Jesus. Like he has like a receding hairline and like an old man face. I just, I can't even look at that.

- Tony: [00:09:33](#) It's kind of, it's kind of like the little baby in, in family man. Right,
- Tony: [00:09:38](#) Exactly. Yeah. Let's not tell our listeners and we think Jesus looks like Stewie shall we? Thank you. But I did want to say, you know, you two have probably already blown some people's minds here, you know, letting them or helping them to imagine that the way they see Jesus isn't the only way of seeing Jesus. And that's, that's a, that's a pretty big realization to come to. And that's a really important realization to come to because we get so easily stuck into this one idea of who Jesus is. I admit, I do to, you know, Jesus, it only does this. Jesus is all about justice and for the poor, that's not only who Jesus is. Jesus is much, much bigger than that. And so, I mean, I just think, I just want to bring our attention back to this is a big deal talking about Jesus and all of these different types of cultures and how the world views Jesus and different cultures view Jesus, not just our own,
- Charmaine : [00:10:36](#) Right. And yet it's really, really important because wherever it is that Christianity takes up residence, especially for a long time, there's a huge tendency, temptation to want to tie Jesus to the nation to tie our belief in Jesus into our loyalty to the nation. And it's sometimes very it's not super evident to us how we do that. But I think for, for many Americans, you, you know, you begin to see that you may, we may have tied who Jesus is, who God is to the good of the nation in ways that aren't are not fair to who Jesus is, which is that he was a radical person who actually challenge the structures and systems of his time, pointed to the inhumanity of people, to people pointed to the ways in which his own culture and therefore all cultures ostracize, make invisible whole sections of their population or demonized parts of their population.
- Charmaine : [00:11:56](#) That's what he did in his day. And that is still his primary role. If, if we are to let the stories of Jesus in the gospels be the groundwork for what we will say is consistent about who Jesus is. Jesus was never an American and so Jesus is loyalty is not to America and to its wealth and health and dominance in the world. Actually, the Jesus that we read about in the gospels is the one that says, you know, wait, what systems have you created that have distinguished between people because of, you know, how much money they have or how much power they have? And pointing to the fact that God's love is, especially for those who've been told that they have no worth. So yeah, it's, but there's that temptation in our cultures to do that, to

make Jesus our mascot. But yeah, if we let him be who he is he's actually the opposite of that.

Tony: [00:13:16](#) So in something that Migliore does, it's really helpful and I'll give my own take on it, but you can find it in chapter chapter nine there. When we're, when we're dealing with Christology, there's this, these two poles, you have to, you have to orbit around two poles and you have to keep them intention. On the one on the one pole is the universality of Christ. That is the, the, the good, the gospel, the good news, the message, the message of Jesus Christ is universally relevant. It's the message of God with us and for us, right? That's the universal virality side, but then there's the particularity side that is Christ incarnate, Christ present, Christ received and understood locally in a particular way and culture and time and place and by people who construe reality and their own unique particular way. And so you have to keep them intention.

Tony: [00:14:14](#) If you only go off on the universal side, then Christ becomes this abstraction not related to the realities of local human life. If you go off only on the particularity side, then Christ becomes like a tribal God. And you know that, that I think, you know, I just thinking of what Charmaine just was saying about the American Jesus, in some ways it's become a kind of a tribal God. The a mascot of, of the quote, American way of life and so you have to keep these things intention all the time in Christology in order for there to be a productive kind of interchange of ideas and practices back forth. So does that make sense?

Carla: [00:14:53](#) It does actually. But I wonder if, well, I, I don't know exactly how to do that, but I wonder if it also goes into my next question, which is how do we know that we have contextualized Jesus Christ in our Western culture that we have made Jesus in our own image? How do we know that we've done that? Keeping in mind, I think what you just said, Tony, about the universality and particularity of, of Jesus Christ.

Charmaine : [00:15:21](#) Yes. Good questions. I guess a great question and I think there's a lot of ways we do that. Sometimes it's when we put into Jesus' mouth the particular teachings of our, our denomination or the, the teachings that would make us fit in well in our society. So sometimes and, and though I think it would be true to say that the, the Jesus testified to in new Testament books and in the testimonies of the people in the first century would be that there was kindness in Jesus. But if we translate that into being nice so that you don't ruffle any feathers and you don't make any waves within the cultural structure, then then we are hijacking who Jesus is to re and to reaffirm our cultural systems

rather than letting Jesus be Jesus who wasn't, wasn't about just making sure that the cultural structures kept churning along and churning over people. So does that make sense where it's like about being nice? So that we don't disturb the systems around us. So we don't question the cultural structures that may be abusive to people, but to be nice so that you're, so that would be one, one place.

- Tony: [00:17:04](#) Yeah. And I would, I would say if, if you're, Jesus' image doesn't make you nervous at all, it's probably a domesticated culturally, culturally domesticated Jesus. You've got, because clearly in the gospels, Jesus makes, certainly in the synoptic gospels, Jesus makes people nervous all the time. Even his own disciples. are like, what? What did you just say?
- Charmaine: [00:17:27](#) Yeah. If, if, if we're talking about a Jesus who isn't challenging racism and, and systemized poverty in our time, then then we probably have a culturally trapped Jesus, Jesus,
- Tony: [00:17:50](#) A Jesus who does not keep calling people to the radical reign of God on earth which is which constantly wants to up end things as they are, that would be a domesticated. Yeah. As Charimaine said, he's a culturally trapped Jesus. And that's why the church must ever, ever be reforming itself to make sure we're not just caving into cultural images.
- Charmaine: [00:18:18](#) I'm trying to think of specific things cause it's a really good question Carla. And then I'm thinking about within the last year or two where people used scripture to basically say that all governments are placed there by God. And so we have to honor the government. And there are laws with no mentioned that what if the laws are unjust, what if the laws are oppressive or abusive? So that's another place where people want to put into Jesus' mouth. That's the way the things that would support and uphold the systems of the powerful.
- Tony: [00:19:11](#) Hmm. Yeah. I and you know a Jesus who is not constantly pushing on us to make space for those on the edges. Those on the margins, those who have been oppressed, dominated dehumanized that would not be consistent with the Jesus of the gospels actually would not be consistent with the Jesus Christ of the best of the Christian tradition.
- Carla: [00:19:40](#) Well thank goodness that Jesus makes me a little nervous. So I mean, I'm sure that I'm a little bit guilty of, of making Jesus into Carla. Poor Jesus. But thank goodness Jesus still makes me pretty nervous. I, I have a question that has to do with what we've been talking about and I think it, I, I think it, yeah, I think

it's its own standalone question. You let me know if you don't like it. So how dangerous is it for us as a dominant culture to think that we have the only right view of Jesus?

Charmaine:

[00:20:21](#)

Ah, that's a question that is its own answer. Because if we think we have the only right Jesus, then if we've already neutered Jesus if we've already made him incapable of speaking us, and challenging us and, and helping us to hear it, that he is speaking to those on the underside of every culture. If we think that Jesus is only talking to those who are middle class or are comfortable within the system that they're a part of then we, we forget who it was that Jesus was talking to, who, who Jesus wanted to make God real for. and so we miss out on that aspect of God. So that's a danger. But of course the other danger is telling others who Jesus must be for them and that trims down Jesus to this tidy, comfortable presence in our midst. So those are dangers as well. But the other piece of it would be, Hmm. I mean, you know, what, what was part of the Christology in Nazi Germany? You know, I, there's, there's a really strong argument for, for why we, why taming Christ to a particular culture is dangerous. Because people, you know, in Germany could say, well, you know, it's the Jews who crucified Jesus. It's the Jews who are responsible. And therefore, if we are going to be followers of Jesus and uphold Jesus, then we have to be against the Jews just as the author of the gospel of John was.

Tony:

[00:22:38](#)

Yeah. And I'm going to just follow up on the Charmaine's analogy from church life and Nazi Germany. I can't remember the the, I'll call him a Nazi theologian. Cause the Nazis did have, have theologians who were trying to, you know not Nazify the Christian message to, to, to keep churches in line with Nazi ideology. But there's one particular theologian who, who argued publicly, you know, what human beings in all times in places need is leadership, right? And Jesus, Jesus is the one we look to for art, for spiritual leadership and in the political realm, Hitler's, the one we look to for political leadership. And by the way, the German word for, for leadership is Führung and, and so trying to, so that's an example of the great danger of domesticating Jesus. You can turn Jesus into a supporter of, of an absolutely monstrous ideology.

Tony:

[00:23:39](#)

And that happens in the U S w with, with racism and arianism and so on. Eh, white nationalism and so on that they're there. Jesus as a white Jesus who wants to support this particular kind of, of idolatry. And so it's really dangerous. And I think one, one antidote to it is number one, you've got to keep connected to the four biblical portraits of Jesus, the four gospels, and you've got to keep connected to the larger tradition of Christian

theology. In other words, we need, we need to be constantly tutored. This is another one of those constant vigilance things, right? And so in order to, because it's so dangerous, Carla, what you're describing, one of the roles theology can play is to help us be constantly alert to the ways that we're, we're not letting Jesus fully be the Christ among us. Does that make sense, Carla?

Carla: [00:24:37](#) Absolutely. Absolutely. And we were kind of discussing this before the podcast, and I think you alluded to this, Tony, but you did before the podcast, you talked about how a lot of times the dominant culture doesn't think it has the dominant view of Jesus.

Charmaine: [00:24:51](#) Right. It just thinks it has though the only one.

Tony: [00:24:56](#) Right? Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of like a the theological version of white privilege. Right. You know I'm a 62 year old educated white guy. And it wasn't until just in the last 10 years when I actually learned about the concept of white privilege and realized, Oh my goodness I've been a partaker of white male privilege all of my life. And, and so the, the nature of a dominating a dominant culture is that it just assumes its view of realities. The one everybody should hold and so that has to be constantly challenged by other views of reality, which is what Migliore trying to do in this chapter with these five different Christologies that he looks at.

Charmaine: [00:25:41](#) And, and what Migliore does, I think is really very, very helpful, goes back to the idea of God choosing to be with humanity. That the idea of the incarnation, Jesus being God with us, God present with us in the particularity in that time of a Galilean. The Galileans not being really that the top of the pile as far as Jews in his time, but kind of the Hicks and the, the country bumpkins who didn't, didn't get it, who had an accent and were on the outside, they weren't insiders. So he talks about how God chose to be present in that time and culture in, in the particularity of that time and culture. And then that, then what happens in the early church is as you know, if you think about Pentecost story and then the, the testimonies and the power of the spirit going out to other places as they tell the story of Jesus and, and name the kingdom of God is his message.

Charmaine: [00:27:02](#) What's happening is that that Jesus or God with us is being translated into these other cultures, into Gentile cultures, into the diaspora Jewish communities. And that that is, is God's intention is that Christ be translated into all cultures throughout time to, to be that presence, to be that conscience, to be that invitation to relationship with God, to unity with God to being



part of the purposes of the kingdom in the world. And so that, that that's something we've lost track of because there were because of the Western monopolizing of much of the world, whether through colonization in, perialism and its many different shapes that Christianity came along with all of that. And we became blind to the fact that the original intent is for, for Jesus or God with us to be constantly translated into the multiple languages and cultures of the world. Of all times. So I think that has really helped us on the positive side. You know, what, what does it mean that Christ is God with us at one time and that that's intended to be translated into all of our times and cultures.

- Tony: [00:28:49](#) I'm going to try something out here and see if I can get Charmaine's feedback and yours, Carla's. So it makes, think of it like there's, there's these two parts to the Christian life that the key, the key part, the starting part is divine acceptance. God loves us, accepts us in and through Christ. You know, unconditionally loves and accepts us. That's the one part. The other part is challenged. So acceptance and challenge. Being loved by a God in this way, challenges and calls us to become something more to change the cultural structures we're in that do not reflect that kind of love. Both things need to be held together. And so Christ becoming incarnate in each culture is first and foremost an act acceptance. In other words, you don't, you don't have to be one particular culture for Christ to love you or accept you. Christ. Christ is accessible to all cultures and all places. The love of God is can be known in every, every place. So that's going to be a universal aspect of divine love. And yet every culture has aspects, elements of it that are deep tendencies that want to resist the kingdom of God, that wants to resist God's justice and love for all. And so there's that challenge aspect of it. Then two, does that make sense? Does it, does that I'm interested to get your feedback on that.
- Charmaine: [00:30:18](#) Yeah, I mean, I think those, those two pieces, it's like yeah, no, I think that's a nice way to describe it.
- Carla: [00:30:29](#) Hey, I'm behind ya. I mean, I was thinking about the, Oh, after you said divine acceptance, I was like, Oh yeah, that's so beautiful. That's if you don't, and then I knew the next one was going to be much harder. It always is.
- Charmaine: [00:30:46](#) Yeah. Yeah. And I think maybe that's the whole idea of those, the divine acceptance and then the divine challenge is to keep that alive and keep that tension going is really important and important in the dominant culture. But it is particularly meaningful in cultures that have been dominated because there

hasn't been that willingness to recognize, I mean, so the idea of God being Jesus being translated into these different cultures means that Jesus goes into them as they are, not that they have to be something else in order for Jesus to be there. And that's one of the things that Christianity being part of a dominant culture that's, has not always happened. So there's lots of places where in the first centuries of the church that Christianity didn't go because the Romans said, well, for instance, we can't, we're not gonna bother going to Ireland and missionizing because they don't even speak Latin. And they were not sure that they have the capacity to do that. They don't have a written language, so we have to civilize them before we can Christianize them. And basically that meant they had to make them Roman before they could become Christian. And so this is very much in, in contrary to that and, and saying no Christ can come into each culture independent of what language it speaks or, or if it has a sense of a, a purity culture or whether it, it is Westerners would see it as civilized.

- Carla: [00:32:37](#) You're not saying that Ireland has a purity culture?
- Charmaine: [00:32:40](#) Oh, no. Oh no. (laughter)
- Carla: [00:32:42](#) Sorry, Ireland. Yeah, sorry.
- Charmaine: [00:32:44](#) We love Ireland. And the reason that, that I know that is, is that St Patrick or Patrick as he goes back to bring Christianity there has a whole different kind of experience of the culture shaping how people are becoming this, these wonderful doorways for people experiencing who Christ is to, to finding reconciliation between each other and with God that didn't exist yet anywhere else in the church because it hadn't been to Ireland yet because it hadn't been in a culture that saw relationships differently, saw property differently. And so Ireland became this, this new and different culture that shaped Christianity in ways, in ways that eventually allowed Ireland to re Christianize most of Europe once the first phase of Christianity was beaten out of it. So anyhow, so, you know, there's another of the pluses for why, letting Christ be, be God present in different cultures is beneficial and healthy
- Tony: [00:34:10](#) I can think of an example in our own restoration tradition of where the dominant culture tried to beat something out of people. And that's in the society islands, French Polynesia and so on, where, where certainly reorganization missionaries who were highly allergic to dance.
- Charmaine : [00:34:30](#) And sensuality of any kind.

Tony: [00:34:32](#) Yeah. Yeah. So for forbade church members for generations, generations to do something that was intrinsic to their culture, which was dance and you know, not dancing was, was then sort of part of the RLDS identity and in French Polynesia for ages, that's changed fortunately. Oh, it's, it's, it's changing, I should say, but it's an example of where Anglo Saxon, Puritanised cultural values that were, were not, not critiqued from within. We're taken with the gospel and made part of the substance of the gospel. And then people were forced to give up an element of their culture in order to seem prim and proper to, to new Englanders I guess is the idea. But so, you know, so there's, you know, other thing is that there's, there, there can be this really mutually enriching interchange between Christ and culture and, and so, you know, a culture can, the, the resources of a culture can give a whole, whole new life to aspects of the message of Jesus. And the same way that the message of Jesus can, can offer transformation to aspects of the culture that are less than the kingdom of God.

Charmaine: [00:35:52](#) And I think this has been very,

Carla: [00:35:53](#) Oh, go ahead.

Charmaine: [00:35:54](#) I was just going to say, I think a really good example of that is Latin American liberation theology where, and this is some somewhat of a caricaturing of Catholicism in, in some of central and South America. But there are many theologians both within Catholicism and outside of it who would say that, that one of the ways in which the theology of Christianity in general had worked in central and South America was the idea of with the poor and the oppressed, of saying to them, you know, just put up with injustice in this time so that, so that you can be with Christ in, in heaven and it'll be so much better there. So you just put up with it here. And, and what happened, and, and this has been, in the sixties and seventies, starting in central and South America is Catholic priests and, and lay, leaders, starting to read the Bible, starting to read the gospel stories in a different way, reading it from the perspective of the marginalized, who Jesus reached out to, to those who are poor.

Charmaine: [00:37:28](#) Those who did not have access to healthcare, those who didn't have a voice in their culture and began to make real for people in what they were called base communities. And they would have Bible study together and they would take in these stories of Jesus of Jesus who was for them, Jesus, who spoke about the injustice against them. And from that rehumanized whole portions of the population who had been told, you know, you just, you know, you just keep struggling and working and that

will ensure that you have a reward in heaven, but it, it revolutionized their beginning their ways of beginning to think about who Jesus is, but who God is and what God intended in their culture and their time. And it, it caused a whole different kind of sensitizing to why there was poverty.

Charmaine: [00:38:33](#) What were systems that ensured that there would always be underclass people who worked for little or nothing so that the rich could be comfortable and prosperous? And it started to, to give people within Catholicism cause to pause and say, Oh, you're right. This is what Jesus did. This is who Jesus, the part of God that Jesus represented in justice and in challenge to our systems. And you know, Ramero, we've talked about this before I think, but if you haven't seen the movie Romero, that's a really good, good place to begin to see how, not just people who are working in, in the communities with people who are, who are oppressed by poverty and by systems, but eventually leaders in Catholic church began to see that Jesus had more to say to them in their time and in their place.

Charmaine: [00:39:47](#) And in some places it contributed to challenging the government. In some places it meant civil war which, you know, liberation theologians did not intend or want, but it, it helped people to have a voice and to claim their belovedness, to God, to, to claim their humanity in this time and to trust that Jesus could be with them even if the society told them that they had no value. Powerful, powerful theology. And, and it's based around a Christological view that the Christ challenges that, that Christ is for the poorest for the voiceless, for those who have been overlooked or intentionally trampled

Tony: [00:40:45](#) And is incarnate among them. That's, yeah, in the struggle that the Latin American liberation Christologies are. That's the first of the kind of five samples that Migliore does here. And the second one is African American Christology. That is various various forms of black theologies, of liberation, particularly in the United States. Who is Jesus Christ for us in the context of racism and poverty that are built into the structures of American society? Who is Jesus for us? And a key figure there is James Cone, the theologian James Cone, who's, whose book God of the Oppressed really should be on, on everybody's in everybody's must read list, I think. And, you know, Cone argued the very provocative idea that Jesus is black. And he was, he was trying to use it as a metaphor to describe how Jesus is incarnate among the abused and those who have been pushed to the edges, those who suffer unjustly because that's the Jesus story. So that's another example of a, of a Christology being reframed by a different context. And then Migliore goes into

feminist, womanist and mujerista Christologies. And so was there some that were, especially feminists we're familiar with and like to teach them in some of our classes. So here's this, the issue of, of who is Jesus, who can Jesus be for women inside the structures of patriarchy that have always told women, women that they are less than

Charmaine: [00:42:27](#)

Well, not just within structures of patriarchy, but to challenge the structures of patriarchy that right from the beginning Jesus came into a into a culture where patriarchy meaning men in power creating structures where men in power will be the consistent pattern into the future. Is the, is the norm. And he came into that culture and names women. And calls women to be disciples, to be to be baptized, not as part of their husband's household, which would have been the norm, but he names women in their, in their particularity charity women who are ill, women who have been marginalized, women who have had several husbands women who have fallen awry with the, the judging systems of, of their time. Eh, women who are outcasts. So, so already, if we look at what's, what is there in scripture, which we've been dutifully trained to be blind to, we, we see some of this unsettling behavior on Jesus' part of lifting women up.

Charmaine: [00:44:10](#)

And so part of the, whether feminist or womanist or move Harvista theology is to say, you know, even some of these Christologies of liberation have been primarily done by men who have had the, the benefits of being having education having theological background and, or have eventually have women, you know, so the first feminists are typically white women who have education and various kinds of power granted to them by the culture. and, and womanist and mujerista theologians saying, yes, you may have you may be lifting up, aisle women's culture, but you are not lifting up black women's culture or Hispanic Hispanics women's culture. And so these are our wonderful places to see what does it mean to translate Jesus into a subculture that has been denied for a long time. A subculture that has been told that it's only value is in service to a more dominant culture. S yeah, these are places where the, the necessary recognition of patriarchy in our culture today is, is essential. So that we don't place Jesus in the male hierarchy of our culture and see that he hit and miss the fact that he actually challenged that in his own day. Yeah.

Tony: [00:46:07](#)

Then then Migliore goes onto Hispanic Christologies and it's kind of interesting because the F the first example, he gives a Hispanic Chris' Christologies, he names Virgilio Elizondo this Catholic priest who was a co award winner of the Community of

Christ peace prize. About a decade or so ago, but Elizondo is trying to speak to Mexican Americans. And he uses this concept of a mestizo this mix of cultures and ethnic backgrounds in this kind of being not being one and not being the other. And that Jesus, Jesus coming from Galilee was exactly like that. So, and then he, then he, Migliorie talks about Gonzalez and it's all us attempts to show how some classical Christian language about Christ as fully definable human is actually real. It can be a really potent help to the concerns of, of Hispanic Christians. And then the final one that he walks through in this chapter is Asian American Christologies. And these are, these are some that I'm the least familiar with of all of these. But the experience of, of Asian immigrants to the U S is a completely different experience. Who, who is Jesus Christ for people whose frameworks are Eastern and.

- Charmaine : [00:47:35](#) who, who may draw on Buddhist or Confucian understandings of human experience and what it is that, that makes for order within the self or between people.
- Tony: [00:47:50](#) And so coming back to that question, who is Jesus Christ for us? In each of these cases that we've lifted, lifted up Migliore walks through. Who is Jesus Christ for the poor and oppressed of Latin America? Who is Jesus Christ for African Americans? Who is Jesus Christ for women? Who is Jesus Christ for African American women? Who is Jesus Christ for a Latina women? And then who is Jesus Christ for Hispanics? Who was Jesus Christ for Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, Japanese Americans, highly contextualized understandings of Jesus that find in Jesus in the Jesus of the gospels and the Jesus of the Christian tradition, great resources for helping them understand and want to transform their own situations. So, so that's why the the Christ in context, you know, Christ, if Christ is going to be real for us, me, you Christ has to be contextualized in my setting in a way that I can understand. That's the whole point of the incarnation. And so I think the, the problem is that the dominant culture has always said, well, yeah, we understand what that means. And it's how Jesus has for us is how would you use this, should be for everybody. And it's like, no, I don't think so.
- Charmaine: [00:49:12](#) So, so we have a challenge for ourselves and for those who may be listening to this. And that is to recognize first that with that each of us live in several different contexts at the same time. So we, anyone who lives in North America is living within a dominant culture that shapes a whole bunch of things about how we see things and how we see ourselves and how we see others and how we see the world and even how we see God,

how we see Christ. But we're also probably part of other contexts or cultures within separate from that dominant culture. So for instance I'm a woman and I care about how women are marginalized and abused and dismissed within our culture. So there's, so there is that that part, that cultural context, that is one of my context, one of my contexts.

Charmaine: [00:50:18](#) I also have the context of being an immigrant, of not being a citizen. And so, but think about for yourself what are some other contexts besides the dominant cultural context that are part of who you are and name them. And then I would invite you to say, what does it mean? What would it mean to translate Jesus into that context to, to let the messages to let the life and the actions of Jesus speak into that context. To me, what would it mean for me to see myself as the woman that has been bent over for 18 years? I think it's 18 years in which gospel? In Luke. What would it be like to, to recognize you know, for those who are, are victims of sexual abuse, to identify with that bent over a woman, that woman who's, whose life has been twisted out of shape or not been able to stand with dignity for 18 years to, to, for those who have dealt with a sexual abuse, to think of Jesus addressing them.

Charmaine: [00:51:52](#) Like Jesus addressed the woman who was bent over who he called over to come to him. So that would be my, my challenge is to think about what are some of the different contexts in your own life that, that you haven't had the opportunity or the perspective to invite Jesus to come into that context with all of who he is to, to tell us who God sees us as, to, to challenge us to be loved fully and to love more fully, to, to let go of our biases to let go of our need to be better than others in order that we by more fully let Christ's love and acceptance and healing be part of who we are. Just, it's a way of, of letting this have a little bit more room inside.

New Speaker: [00:52:51](#) Amen. I don't have anything to add to that. It's just I like the challenge that that offers.

Carla: [00:52:58](#) Well, you know, after listening to the different types of Christologies you've described, I keep going back to Pope Francis and what a huge deal it was. And I don't, I'm not an expert on the Pope's, so I don't really know where all Pope's have come from. But at least in this modern era, most of them have come from Europe, I think. Right? And having him come from South America and this liberation Latino theology or Hispanic theology, I don't really know which one he subscribed to, but I mean that's a big deal.

- Tony: [00:53:31](#) It is a big deal. And he's a, he also was a Jesuit, I think he's the first Pope, whoever come from the Jesuit order, the Jesuit order has been a very, a very signal force throughout Latin America in trying to translate the ideas of liberation theology locally. Especially in terms of Christology. So he's shaped by that.
- Charmaine: [00:53:53](#) Well, yeah, he's, he's shaped by it, not just because he's taking it in, but because he was uncomfortable with it initially and he was in some of his first peer leadership roles. I think as Bishop he was a wary of those priests and other leaders in his area who were more of the liberation theology approach or liberation Christology approach. And and he, he came around and has even acknowledged that, that at first he saw this as disruptive, but it has over time, he has taken it in.
- Charmaine: [00:54:36](#) And, and I think that's where a lot of his sensitivity to the poor and what does it mean to serve like Christ, you know, as he washing the feet of people in prison. You know, those kinds of things. You could see that this has captured him and, and he's, you know, especially early in his role as Pope to, to step away from some of the structural emphases of the Pope having to have grand things to have you know, to be separated from the people to have ease and comfort. He really represented who is Jesus.
- Tony: [00:55:25](#) And he took the name Francis, which is named after Francis of Assisi.
- Charmaine: [00:55:29](#) So it's like, yeah, that's pretty that's a great example, Carla, of someone who has let this contextualize Christology, reshape who he is in the world here.
- Tony: [00:55:45](#) Here's a, here's an element of contextualized Christology that Migliore does not deal with in this chapter that I think is like unbelievably crucial for us right now. And that is who is Jesus Christ for an endangered planet, a planet whose oceans are being filled with microplastics, a planet in which one of the most powerful nations lags behind in terms of dealing with climate change, a planet in which people are often unable to, to make wise choices about what they use and what they discard. A planet in which, fossil fuel companies recklessly w I mean literally recklessly try to increase the use of fossil fuels for their own, for their own wellbeing when it's constantly threatening the whole creation. Who is Jesus Christ, the incarnate one. For us in that context, that's when I wish Migliore had dealt with in this chapter. There you need a kind of what's sometimes called a cosmic Christology in which the incarnation, the word becoming flesh becoming matter, is absolutely connects with all



that or that Christ Christ is embodied in the world. And so what we're doing to the ecosystem we are doing to Christ in a, in a very real sense as the incarnate one that's, that needs to, that should have been teased out in this chapter. And I, and Migliore's sensitive to that, I, he just not doing it in this chapter, but I think it's a place where it could have been done. So,

- Carla: [00:57:22](#) So my, my last question is, is one that we've touched on a few times in the podcast, but are there different authors or different places where we can look that will help us break out of this? My, Jesus is the right Jesus kind of,
- Charmaine: [00:57:43](#) I, there are lots of them out there. As far as some Latin American liberation theologians.
- Tony: [00:57:51](#) Yeah, sure. I mean, there's, there's so there, there's just so much here. Here's, here's a shameless, here's a shameless requests that take some seminary classes from us, but some authors, for example, Latin American theologians Gustavo Gutierrez is kind of the, the grandfather of all these Leonardo Botha Brazilian theologian. John Sobrino, who I think a Salvadoran. Those are some names. Juan Se- gundo is another one. These are some, some names too to look for in African American theology. James Cone is really important. I think that's, that that would be one's best starting place. God of the Oppressed as a classic book.
- Charmaine: [00:58:36](#) And I think always, you know, going to some of the sermons of Martin Luther King jr, you're going to see a Christology in action there. You can see this, this whole idea of reclaiming Christ in a specific culture and letting him speak loudly there. Within feminist and womanist and mujerista authors or, or presenters. I would suggest people, this is a womanist her name is Renita Weems. And something that I found really amazing and stirring is a sermon that she did at Riverside church. So if you did a YouTube search for Renita R E N I T A Weems W E E M S at Riverside church you'd be in for she's not talking so much about womanist issues, but it's, it's all through her sermon and wonderful. Another person. Uet's see. Well, there's actually a, within the last decade, a lot of womanist theologians have come to the fore and a young one is Michelle Higgins who comes actually from an evangelical background, but is a reshaping theology and some, some wonderful ways from her context. Other feminists. Elizabeth Johnson.
- Tony: [01:00:23](#) Yeah. Her book, She Who Is is a magnificent it's a large, magnificent book. Not all large books are magnificent, but this with this large book is magnificent, a magnificent understanding

of the nature of God from a feminist perspective. So yeah. Gosh, there's so, and actually in Migliore chapter just following his footnotes is a really good reading list. Yeah. Yeah. Then Hispanic Christologies again Elizondo, I think that book is titled the Future is Mestizo. The future is mixed and then Gonzales our seminay students know Gonzales as a staple in history of Christian thought classes, but he's written a number of, of other books. One of, I think the one that Migliori is constantly citing as something like I think it's titled mañana. The Asian-American, once again C S song and Sang Lee.

- Tony: [01:01:24](#) Those are ones that Migliore sites. There are Asian feminist theologians to like Kwok Pui-lan. Who is very, very interesting to read. There are actually, they're African theologians. That's a whole other context. Not African American, but theology being done by Africans in Africa. But another interesting way to, and then in ndia they are Christian theologians who are trying to think through Christian faith and who Jesus is for them, especially from the perspective of the Dalit caste. You know, who, who is Jesus Christ for the untouchables and stuff like that. So those are some suggestions Carla. Some places to go. I think that I would start by just looking at Migliore footnotes and see where you can go from there.
- Carla: [01:02:16](#) Well, that sounds awesome. Like that sounds like if people wrote, read everyone you talked about listening to everybody, they wouldn't be doing much else. So that's pretty important stuff.
- Tony: [01:02:27](#) Of course we're giving these to Carla for you to read in your spare time.
- Carla: [01:02:30](#) Oh yeah. I have a lot of that. I'm pretty bored. Don't believe that for a minute.
- Tony: [01:02:36](#) Nope. Don't believe that.
- Carla: [01:02:38](#) Well, you too. As always, this has been just a fascinating podcast. I've really enjoyed it. And my final question always is, is there something that you wanted to say that I didn't let you say or any question I didn't ask that you wanted me to ask?
- Charmaine: [01:02:52](#) Nope. I think just want to reaffirm the idea that who Jesus is, who Christ is. However you see him there. e is very transferrable, translatable, and challenging to all the pieces and the parts of our lives and our world. So, so don't you know,

don't keep him in his, in his happy little corner in your religious view, but give him some room

- Tony: [01:03:24](#) and also pay attention to Community of Christ's Sings. Our, our hymnal has an incredible selection of various kinds of Christology from various contexts. It's, it's, it's in, it's amazingly powerful. So read, read all the Christological hymns in our hymnal. I think that's a pretty, pretty good place to go. And we should say that for next time. Carla, we're going to be dealing with the Holy spirit. So traditionally speaking, we've, we've dealt with, we've dealt with what is theology, a revelation, how do we know God? God, creation, humanity, Jesus Christ. The next place to go is the Holy Spirit who is the Holy spirit. And so that'd be Migliore's chapter ten that we'll be looking at the Holy spirit and the Christian life.
- Carla: [01:04:09](#) Sounds like a good one.
- Tony: [01:04:11](#) They're all good for us!
- Carla: [01:04:11](#) But you two are nerds. I mean they're good for me too. I'm a nerd too. I don't mind to say it. Thank you again so much. Always for taking time out of your definitely busy schedule too. And for, you know, speaking to us about these important things. And you know, I have some people coming up to me and saying, you know, Carla, I've been listening to the God shot series and I think I'm starting to understand this systematic theology thing. So that's a good thing.
- Tony: [01:04:40](#) It is! Alrighty. Glad to know that.
- Josh : [01:04:46](#) Thanks for listening to Project Zion podcast. Subscribe to our podcast on Apple podcast, Stitcher, or whatever podcast streaming service you use. And while you are there, give us a ive star rating Project Zion Podcast is sponsored by Latter-day Seeker Ministries of community of Christ. The views and opinions expressed in this episode are of those speaking and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Latter-day Seeker ministries or Community of Christ. The music has been graciously provided by Dave Heinze
- Speaker 1: [01:05:42](#) [inaudible].