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**Discussion guide: Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*,
(Paternoster, 1983; T. & T. Clark, 1992)**

Chapter Four: The Mediation of Christ in our Human Response

God-manward ministry in last chapter: now the man-Godward – High Priest, Advocate
Two parties to a covenant – but another factor: *a covenanted way of response* – God knew that Israel would not be able to fulfil the covenant provisions – hence the liturgies of expiation. ‘The servant of the Lord’ – an embodiment of the covenant – conflation of Moses and Aaron, guilt-bearer and sacrifice for sin.

The all-important middle factor: The vicarious humanity of Jesus

Revelation

A particular human being who actualized in himself the personal Word of God to man and the personal response of man to God’s Word. A way of response out of the depths of human existence in which each human being was free to share through communion with Jesus.

Reconciliation

With the Incarnation, the Sonship of the Son of God has been incorporated into the inter-personal and family structures of our human existence – being-constituting relations – which we polluted and twisted. He made his own the estranged and disobedient condition of our human being, and has converted it back in love and obedience to the Father. On the cross he penetrated to the utmost extremity our self-alienating flight from God, and turned everything round so that out of the fearful depths of our darkness and dereliction we may cry with him, ‘Our Father.’

The whole life and activity of Jesus was the vicarious human response which God has provided for us.

Representation and substitution. If only representation, Jesus would represent (express?) *our* response. If only a substitute detached from us, no ontological bearing upon us. Liberal reject substitution with scorn, Fundamentalists do not see its relationship to the *vicarious humanity* of Christ.

What the vicarious humanity means in the mediation of our human response to God in:

(1) Faith

Yes, we must have faith, but believing is not an autonomous, independent act. Hosea. Jesus steps in and provides that faith (i.e. faithfulness) in which we may share. Stress of Western individualism on freedom. Teaching his daughter to walk: his hand, not hers. Peter's faith and Jesus' intercession. Faith as an empty vessel. The 'author and finisher of faith.'

(2) Conversion

We must repent and believe. No one else can do it for us – except Jesus. He was baptised 'into repentance' – completed in the cross. We are unable to escape through our own free will for our free will is our self will. We are unable to repent, but Jesus turned everything round through his vicarious repentance. 'When were you born again?'

(3) Worship

The pattern of the OT liturgy – reflecting the events of Sinai. Jesus embodies in a vicarious form the response of human beings to God. Jesus in his self-oblation *is* our worship, our prayer. We do not pray in our own name and significance, but in his. In worship and prayer, he acts in our place so that what he does is nevertheless effected as our very own, issuing *freely* and spontaneously out of ourselves. 'Abba, Father!'

(4) The Sacraments

Sacraments of the finished work of Christ. We do not baptize ourselves, but are baptized. In the Eucharist, we are given communion in his very body and blood – the sacrament of our union with him in his great act of self-consecration. We participate in his self-consecration and self-offering to the Father. We come to the holy table not to protest our own faith or conversion, but put out empty hands to receive bread and wine which we eat and drink in communion with his body and blood.

(4) Evangelism

Unconditional grace and reconciling exchange. An evangelical way to preach the gospel and an unevangelical way. He will never let you go, even if you refuse him and damn yourself in hell. The freedom of Mary and of Jesus. Galatians 2:20: 'I, yet not I, but Christ' – the message of the vicarious humanity of Jesus Christ.