

Alternative Positions:

C: The class of people under consideration is made up of all and only those individuals throughout all periods of history up to the present who have never been presented with any of the details recorded in the New Testament about the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is, the Christian gospel. What then is the most defensible position to take regarding the salvation of the members of C?

1. **Complete agnosticism:** we do not have sufficient information to warrant a conclusion about the salvation of the people in class C.

2. **Pessimistic agnosticism:** we do not have sufficient information to warrant a conclusion about HOW God would bring about the salvation of the people in class C, and we have no reason to hope that God will provide a means of salvation for those people in class C.

3. **Optimistic agnosticism:** we do not have sufficient information to warrant a conclusion about HOW God would bring about the salvation of the people in class C, but we do have reason to hope that God will provide some such means of salvation for those people in class C.

4. **Hard exclusivism:** Only those who have knowledge of Jesus and profess faith in Him in this life can be saved, and for the most part the only way that such knowledge becomes available is through human means of transmitting the gospel.

5. **Soft exclusivism:** only those who have knowledge of Jesus and profess faith in Him in this life can be saved, and for the most part the only way that such knowledge becomes available is through human means of transmitting the gospel. However, exceptions are made for the class of people in C where C' can include the following:

- a. Fetuses, infants, and young children
- b. The mentally challenged
- c. Those who receive a very inaccurate presentation of the gospel
- d. Those who lived before and/or during Christ's lifetime on earth
- e. Any combination of a-d

6. **Interventionist exclusivism:** only those who have knowledge of Jesus and profess faith in Him in this life can be saved, and God provides every person in C

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions taken from a paper by Christian Miller, phd student, University of Notre Dame.

who seek after Him with such a chance to hear the gospel through the use of special revelation, angels, dreams, and/or divine intervention at the moment before death.

7. **Middle knowledge exclusivism:** only those who have knowledge of Jesus and profess faith in Him in this life can be saved, or would have professed faith in him in this life if they had been presented with the relevant opportunity, can be saved.

8. **Restricted postmortem exclusivism:** those who have knowledge of Jesus and profess faith in Him in this life will already be saved, and those in C who do not have such knowledge will be presented with an opportunity to freely accept or reject Jesus in the next life.

9. **Strong inclusivism:** A person in class C can be saved if he/she has faith in God/Christ based on the incomplete revelation available to him or her.

10. **Moderate inclusivism:** A person in class C can be saved if he/she is a devoted practitioner of his or her respective religious tradition.

11. **Weak inclusivism:** A person in class C can be saved if he/she is a good and ethical person according to the norms available in his or her time and place.

12. **Forced universalism:** For every person P in need of salvation, if P were to die and continue to freely reject Christ's offer of salvation well into afterlife, then God would automatically reconcile P to himself against P's will. Otherwise, P will be saved.

13. **Free universalism:** for every person P in need of salvation, Christ's offer of salvation will be extended to P in this life or the next, and at some point during the course of P's existence, P will freely decide to accept the offer of salvation and be reconciled to God.

Final considerations:

1. **Christological principle:** Any fallen human being must accept Jesus Christ in order to be reconciled to God.

2. **Justice principle:** A person P cannot be punished justly when the only means available to P to avoid the punishment is such that P could not reasonably expect to be aware of it.