THE "INCLUSIVE PLURALISM" OF JACQUES DUPUIS, ITS CONTRIBUTION TO A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS, AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN INTERRELIGIOUS CONTEXT

CHRISTOPHER GRZELAK

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD degree in the School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Supervisor: Prof. Susan Rakoczy

2009
Pietermaritzburg

ABSTRACT

This thesis falls within the area of systematic theology. It seeks, by examining Jacques Dupuis's theological concepts and proposals, to evaluate his perspective on a Christian theology of religious pluralism. The concepts which are examined include the idea of a single history of salvation and revelation, God's revelation in the sacred scriptures of other religions, the universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the church in relation to the Reign of God, and the characteristics of interreligious dialogue. The main theological proposals cover religious pluralism "in principle", the Trinitarian Christology for understanding God's saving activity outside of Christianity, and the world religions as "participated" mediations of salvation.

A brief characterisation is presented of Dupuis's life and theology in general, the influences on his thought and its evolution, and his difficulties with the Vatican. The research also covers the historical theological context out of which the theology of "inclusive pluralism" emerges, giving an overview of the main approaches to religions, namely, ecclesiocentrism, Christocentrism and theocentrism in a Christian theology of religions. Dupuis uses the Trinitarian approach to the religious history of humanity to explain the work of the Holy Trinity in the process of salvation of humanity focusing on a distinction between the enduring action of the eternal Word of God, the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ and the saving presence of the Spirit.

This Trinitarian Christology becomes the basis for Dupuis's proposal for perceiving the religious traditions as "paths" to salvation. Dupuis attributes to the religious traditions "participated" mediation on the basis of God's self-communication which takes place in other religions.

Because this dissertation has been written in the South African context, the final question concerns the possible applications of Dupuis's inclusivist thought to the present situation of dialogue among religions in this country. In this regard, a general background is given of religious diversity in South Africa. Relations among religions during respectively colonial and early apartheid years, the second half of the twentieth century and finally democracy are examined. The research suggests areas of application of Dupuis's proposals for dialogue among religions in South Africa.

The existing relationship between Christianity and Islam is the basis for a case study of the possible application of Dupuis's proposals. The research indicates areas of convergence between Dupuis's proposals and dialogue with Muslims. Concrete examples reveal that the most promising forms of dialogue with Muslims in South Africa remain dialogue of life and action that are especially needed in the process of reconstruction and nation-building.

The thesis concludes with an evaluation of the "inclusive pluralism" of Jacques Dupuis, its validity and contribution to a Christian theology of religions and to the future of interreligious dialogue.

CONTENTS

PART ONE

**INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW, AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF
JACQUES DUPUIS'S THEOLOGY**

CHAPTER ONE
The relation of Dupuis's inclusive pluralism to a Christian theology of religions:
Main thesis   1

CHAPTER TWO
An overview of the main concepts of Dupuis's theology and the main influences on
his theological thought   10

CHAPTER THREE
The historical-theological context from which Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism" emerges   38

PART TWO

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE THEOLOGY OF "INCLUSIVE PLURALISM"

CHAPTER FOUR
Dupuis's position on religious pluralism and a unified religious history of humanity   82

CHAPTER FIVE
Dupuis's Trinitarian approach to the religious history of humankind   115

CHAPTER SIX
Religious traditions as "paths" to salvation   138

PART THREE

**RELEVANCE AND POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF DUPUIS'S INCLUSIVIST
THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM TO THE INTERRELIGIOUS SITUATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

CHAPTER SEVEN
**The past and present situation of interreligious dialogue in South Africa and possible
areas of application of Dupuis's inclusivist theology**   162

CHAPTER EIGHT
An application of Dupuis's theology to the South African context of religious diversity
on the basis of relationship between Christianity and Islam (case study)   206

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD degree, in the Post-Graduate Programme in the School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the PhD degree in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

Christopher Grzelak

_____
Student name

10 March 2009

_____
Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all those who in different ways have contributed to helping me complete this thesis.

To my religious Family, the Priests of the Sacred Heart, for giving me the time, opportunity, and financial support which I needed to complete this study. I express my gratitude to all my confreres for their sympathy and encouragement during my writing of this thesis. I wish to thank the SCJ Hilton community, especially Adam Maslowski who provided assistance when it was most needed.

Special thanks go to my supervisor, Susan Rakoczy IHM. Firstly, I benefited greatly from her theology while writing my MA and now PhD theses under her supervision. Secondly, I am grateful to her for being my dialogue partner in this research on "inclusive pluralism". Her critical reading, knowledge and insights have helped me to view Dupuis from a different perspective and have helped me to produce this academic work. Thirdly, she made this dissertation possible. Her words of encouragement strengthened me during difficult hours of research. Her knowledge and critical approach to my writing helped to make my work enjoyable.

Thanks too, to the participants in the post-graduate seminars at St Joseph's Theological Institute and at the School of Religion and Theology of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal for the valuable sharing of their research and their helpful criticism of various aspects of my own thesis. I am grateful also to the staff of the St Joseph's and SORAT for their academic commitment to giving the best possible education to those in search of knowledge.

Finally, but with great appreciation, to Fern Rosetta for her meaningful contribution and to Sally Bamber for the editorial work.

I dedicate this thesis to Jacques Dupuis for whom the exploration of "boundary questions" and the search for truth became his life's goal.

Christopher Grzelak   November 2008.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*: The official gazette of the Holy See
AG	*Ad Gentes Divinitus:* The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity
AICs	The African Independent Churches
ANC	The African National Congress
AU	The Africa Union
BEM	Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry
CCM	"Christians Concerned for Muslims": A Christian fundamentalist group
CCC	The Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCSA	The Christian Council of South Africa
CDF	The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
CIC	Code of Canon Law
CMA	The Claremont Muslim Association
COI	The Call of Islam
CRS	The Catholic Relief Services
DH	*Dignitatis Humanae:* The Declaration on Religious Liberty
DI	*Dominus Iesus*: Declaration on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church
DP	"Dialogue and Proclamation": Document published by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples.
DS	H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer (eds), *Enchiridion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*
DV	*Dei Verbum*: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
EA	*Ecclesia in Africa*: The Post-Synodal Exhortation on Church in Africa
ELCSA	The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa
EN	*Evangelii Nuntiandi*: The encyclical of Pope Paul VI
ES	*Ecclesiam Suam*: The encyclical of Pope Paul VI
FABC	The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences
FE	"Fruitful Encounter": The document of the SACBC on interreligious dialogue
FELCSA	The Federation of Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa
GS	*Gaudium et Spes:* The Pastoral Constitution on the Church
ITC	The International Theological Commission
LCA	"Life Challenge Africa": Christian fundamentalist group
LG	*Lumen Gentium:* The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
LUCSA	The Lutheran Communion in South Africa
MJC	The Muslim Juridical Council's member
MYMSA	The Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa
NA	*Nostra Aetate:* The Declaration on the Church's Relations with the non-Christian Religions
ND	J. Neuner and J. Dupuis (eds), *The Christian Faith in the doctrinal documents of the Catholic Church*
NEPAD	The New Economic Policy and Development
NGK	The Dutch Reformed Churches
PAC	The Pan-African Congress
PACTs	The Pan-African Conciliation Teams
PAGAD	"People Against Gangsterism and Drugs"
PCID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
RH	*Redemptor Hominis*: The encyclical of Pope John Paul II
RM	*Redemptoris Missio*: The encyclical of Pope John Paul II
SACBC	The South African Catholic Bishops Conference

SACC	The South African Council of Churches
SC	The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
UDF	The United Democratic Front
UR	*Unitatis Redintegratio:* The Decree on Ecumenism
WARC	The World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCRP-SA	The South African Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace
WCC	The World Council of Churches
YMMA	The Young Men Muslim Association

Chapter Ten: Conclusion: Evaluation of the research

Introduction

This concluding chapter sums up the entire research and gives a general evaluation of the theology of inclusive pluralism. The evaluation shows what kind of theologian Dupuis was and assesses the validity of his thought on religious diversity for the current dialogue between the religions. Finally, the chapter refers to the validity of this research and its contribution to the debate on religions within Christianity.

10.1 The thesis' response to the main problem

The study reflected on the question with which Dupuis grappled for more than fifty years, namely, the mystery of God's plan to call all people to share in divine life through the Word incarnate and the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the study was to investigate Dupuis's theological model of "inclusive pluralism" which lays the foundation for a comprehensive Christian theology of religious pluralism. It also investigated those areas in which Dupuis advanced beyond the traditional limits in contemporary inclusivist theology. Finally, the study considered the relevance of Dupuis's theology of religious pluralism in the South African interreligious context.

In the first stage of the research, Dupuis emerged as a theologian who dedicated his entire theological career to the search for truth and to improving relations between Christianity and the religions. It became apparent that his theology was deeply influenced by the Asian (Indian) context, Asian theologies and theologians that equipped Dupuis with the necessary tools to construct a theology of "inclusive pluralism" based on Trinitarian Christology (Chapter Two). The evolution of Dupuis's thought on religions is facilitated by examination of his treatment of the difficult controversy concerning the question of God's saving plan for the entire human race, by an analysis of the history of suspicion of Dupuis's theology arising from the investigation by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), and by a demonstration of his approach to pluralist issues before and after the suspicion. This evolution is evident in his firm stand on religious pluralism *de iure* and a continuous defence of his central proposals for "inclusive pluralism" after the investigation. While those proposals brought him personal pain as a result of the difficulties with the Vatican, at the same time, they sparked a much-needed world-wide debate on religious pluralism and called for more respect and openness between Christianity and the religions.

With regard to Dupuis's view on various approaches to religions (Chapter Three), Dupuis sees the various models as a necessary "means" for understanding the reality of religious pluralism and as explaining the real complexity of theological reflection on religions. Whether this is

ecclesiocentrism, Christocentrim, theocentrism or any other current approach, they do not define the religious reality but explore and explain it. They are explanatory because they synthesise what one already knows about the reality. They are exploratory because they lead to new insights about the religious world. In this sense, they are enriching and need to be welcomed. The situation changes with respect to paradigm shifts which make distinctions that result in both conclusive and exclusive definitions. Thus they stand in opposition to each other. Dupuis in his theology welcomes a paradigm shift from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism, where Jesus and not the church occupies the core, as an important transformation in the church's view on religions. Nevertheless, he rejects a paradigm shift from Christocentrism to theocentrism, which took place within the pluralist school, because it replaces the uniqueness and the universal mediation of Jesus Christ with equally "valid" saving figures who lead to the centre identified with God. At the same time, he is aware of the main reservations directed towards Christocentrism, which insists on the centrality of the event of Christ, and the saving presence of Jesus Christ in other religions, even in situations where their adherents attribute such saving grace to other sources. Dupuis chooses a third way. He decides to reconcile Christocentrism with theocentrism on the basis of the Trinitarian approach which allows him to avoid the extremes of both "absolutism" and "relativism".

For Dupuis the first principle on which such reconciling theology should be based is his view of religious pluralism as willed by God. In his opinion such a view finds support in biblical universalism, in the patristic tradition with its focus on the activity of the eternal Logos, in the development of the idea of "baptism of desire", in "implicit faith" in medieval and modern times, and in the official church teaching both around and since the Second Vatican Council. Through meticulous examination of the various sources (Chapter Four), Dupuis reaches an important conclusion that, parallel to the exclusivist attitude towards religions which always existed in the history of Christianity, there was also present a theological reflection on their positive role and value in the economy of salvation. Being aware that the notion of religious pluralism "in principle" is a new concept in the history of Christianity, which challenges the uniqueness and the universality of Christ, it remains still an essential concept which allows a Christian theology of religions to move beyond the theory of "fulfilment" and to recognize the Spirit's abiding presence in religions. Religious pluralism "in principle" needs to be seen also as a consequence of the very Trinitarian character of God's self-communication to humanity in history.

This leads to the second principle upon which Dupuis's inclusive pluralism rests, namely, a unified history of salvation and revelation which embraces all other religions. This embodiment is evident in God's covenants with Adam and especially with Noah which have always remained valid and which

were never superseded by God's covenant with Moses or with Jesus Christ. The single history of revelation and salvation implies God's saving activity throughout human history and in various religious communities both before and after the event of Christ. Still, while this activity in other religions might be genuinely different from what one finds in Jesus Christ it can never be in contradiction to it. This explains the concept of "asymmetrical" complementarity between Christianity and the religions.

The above two principles, which are essential to Dupuis's core argument and understanding of his theology, lead to the third stage of this study which addresses the main problem, that is; whether Dupuis's model has the potential to overcome the dilemma between "Christocentric inclusivism" and "theocentric pluralism" and in this way make a genuinely unique contribution to a Christian theology of religions (Chapter Five). The research gave a positive answer to this question. The study confirmed that, theoretically, it is possible to hold together the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ in the economy of salvation as well as the salvific role of the religious traditions for their adherents on the basis of Trinitarian Christology. Indeed Dupuis's model combines two approaches which mutually relate and perfect each other: Christocentrism which is characteristic of inclusivism and the independent salvific activities of the Word and the Spirit of God which is regarded as characteristic of pluralism.

The research revealed that while holding to the centrality of Jesus Christ which includes Christ's universal mediation, Dupuis simultaneously affirms a diversity of religious paths which, even though they are "participated", still have true salvific value for their members (Chapter Six). "Participated" means that their salvific value is essentially and organically related to the event of Christ in the single history of salvation. Consequently, the study pointed out that the theology of "inclusive pluralism" cannot deny the one universal saving action of Jesus Christ, but at the same time it recognizes the other religious traditions as more than mere answers to the most fundamental questions of human existence, and also more than mere imperfect media of Christ's salvific grace. In this sense, the model of "inclusive pluralism" has to be seen as moving beyond the traditional limits of inclusivist theology. Furthermore, the model shows that it is possible to avoid making a choice between inclusivism and pluralism or Christocentrism and theocentrism as opposing paradigms. Dupuis deserves admiration for seeking a new way between the two. One must also add that the research in its evaluation rightly indicates that Dupuis's effort calls for further development and the elimination of certain shortcomings in order to reach a more satisfying answer to the situation of religious pluralism. Presently, Trinitarian theology cannot adequately explain the existing relationships between the diverse and the distinct Trinitarian activities in the context of salvation

history. Such theology remains limited in its attempt to describe "how" God's grace reaches people or "how" the religious traditions convey salvation to their adherents.

In order not to fall into abstraction, the last section of the research applied Dupuis's theology of religions to interreligious dialogue in South Africa. In Africa, and South Africa in particular, the coexistence of Christianity with other religious traditions is an essential component of the context in which reflection on the encounter between Christianity and the religions has taken place. In this last phase, the intention was to assess the relevance of Dupuis's work to the South African interreligious context. Here, the study focused on the existent relations between Christian churches and Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and African traditional religions (Chapter Seven). It showed that although the religions in South Africa were affected by the past political and economic situation of inequality, suppression and domination, they played an important role in overcoming the system by real but limited cooperation and by engagement in the struggle.

A case study of mutual encounter between Christians and Muslims (Chapter Eight) became the basis for investigating a possible application of Dupuis's ideas to the South African interreligious situation and pointed to the existing forms of relations between the two major religious groups. The conclusion is that Dupuis's proposals are indeed valid and applicable in South Africa but at the moment they cannot be successfully implemented at the doctrinal level; this would require from Christians, Muslims and other believers mutual acceptance of the legitimacy and the validity of their religious traditions as belonging to God's design. This form of encounter is still in a very initial stage. Thus application of doctrinal proposals remains theoretical and limited. Instead, as the research pointed out, mutual dialogue among religions in South Africa must be built on day-to-day, social, and spiritual relationships. This practical dimension of relations which focuses on addressing social challenges by people affiliated to different religious bodies creates a necessary *locus* for further development of mutual relations among Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and African traditionalists. The "Gift of the Givers" Foundation or the "Damietta" Project are the best examples of this practical dimension.

10.2 Limitations of "inclusive pluralism"

While Dupuis's model of inclusive pluralism can be seen as a comprehensive theory (Chapter Nine) which tempers the idea of Christianity replacing the other religions and establishes a basis for dialogue with them, it is not beyond critique. Despite its attractiveness, general coherence of various proposals and Dupuis's clear-minded theological language, it remains open to further considerations and improvements. Some limitations should not be regarded as faults but rather as the unavoidable consequence of exploring the "forbidden" areas and venturing into "new" territories which require

theological precision and care not to transgress the boundaries and become guilty of relativism. Moreover, the limitations could be a consequence of the method which Dupuis selected for constructing his model.

Undoubtedly Dupuis's combination of the deductive and inductive approaches in doing theology in the new context of religious diversity should be regarded as being in the right direction. While the deductive approach allows Dupuis to hold to non-negotiable beliefs or principles in Christian faith (for instance Jesus' divinity), the inductive approach allows him to test these doctrinal assertions in the context of interreligious dialogue. The shortcoming of this combination in the model of "inclusive pluralism" is the overemphasis of the deductive approach. A theologically informed reader would challenge Dupuis, because, despite his claim that his method is based on hermeneutical dialogue with the sources in the situation of religious pluralism, the above Trinitarianism still creates the impression that his theology is *a priori*, that is, from above. An *a priori* approach might be detected in his classical "high" Christology with the concept of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity in Jesus Christ. This implies that while Dupuis acknowledges both religious pluralism as existing *de iure* as well as the positive role and significance of other religions in the economy of salvation, his radical and "pluralist" recognition of religions does not call for reinterpretation of the classical Christian doctrine on Jesus' uniqueness nor the universality of Jesus' salvific mediation. Further emphasis on the inductive approach and further research in this respect would make his proposals more applicable to concrete interreligious situations whether in Asia, Africa or Latin America. It would further verify the validity of his theology.

Moreover, Dupuis's proposals remain manifestly Christian and specifically Catholic in perspective and orientation. The specific Catholic character of his concepts is the result of his dependence on the Catholic theological context which includes the conciliar teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar documents of the church. It becomes evident that one of the major sources for his own proposals is the theology of John Paul II. In spite of this, Dupuis does not limit his reflection to the central teaching authority but extends it to the theological reflection of Asian (mainly Indian) bishops, theologians and thinkers. Dupuis's theology still remains within Roman Catholicism. Should this be regarded as something positive or as a shortcoming? The fact that his proposals are narrowly Roman Catholic has to be regarded as a limitation, yet one must remember that the Catholic character of Dupuis's proposals is deeply rooted in his intention to establish a constructive dialogue first with the authority of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the role and value of the other religions in the economy of salvation. As seen, this dialogue with the Vatican was

challenging for Dupuis in areas which the authority found ambiguous and open to misinterpretation, namely, the salvific action of the eternal Word and the Spirit of God vis-à-vis the universal mediation of Jesus Christ, the completeness of revelation in Christ, the role of the church in the process of salvation, and the salvific role of the religions. Only later does Dupuis lead dialogue with the entire Christian church. It would be interesting to investigate which of his proposals could be fully accepted in theological circles in the other Christian churches.

There is also a need for modifying the model of "inclusive pluralism" by emphasizing more strongly the aspect of pluralism linked to theocentrism which resonates in various proposals with the "constitutive" pluralism of religions for which Dupuis argues so strongly. As it is at present, the theology of "inclusive pluralism" still maintains the superiority of Christianity over the other religions and supports excessive inclusion of those traditions into the one religion. This would be the pluralists' main demand with regard to Dupuis's model. They would also recommend, that in addition to Trinitarian Christology, more development or emphasis on Spirit Christology is needed; this would not separate the Spirit from Christ but would give the Spirit genuine freedom, although still in unity with Christ. Despite the fact that Dupuis did not intend to devalue the role of the Spirit, in reality he continues to subordinate the Spirit to the Word incarnate in Jesus.

With respect to the coherency of Dupuis's system and terminology, examination of the model of "inclusive pluralism" has proved that a certain part of it echoes the pluralist perspective and has radical consequences for the Christian theology of religions and interreligious dialogue. Consequently certain themes characteristic of pluralism seem to move Dupuis's reflection to a new stand between inclusivism and pluralism. This movement is especially apparent in his reflection on the multiplicity of "paths" leading to salvation and the other religious figures as "saving figures", God's revelation in Jesus Christ as "relative" and not "absolute", Jesus' uniqueness as "constitutive" but again not as "absolute", and on more truth and grace being disclosed in other religions than in the Christian faith alone. In the area of dialogue, Dupuis expresses sympathy for the idea that in interreligious dialogue the distinct religious traditions relate to each other in "reciprocal complementarity" and that they need 'each other to mediate the self-transcending experience called "salvation"' (1997:326-327).

Indeed, one could argue that all these formulations, which echo pluralism, are something more than just "indications" of the pluralistic approach to religions, that in reality Dupuis crosses the limits of inclusivism and finds himself in the pluralist school. Nevertheless, the study provides evidence that, solely on the basis of these "indications" of pluralism, it would be an exaggeration to say that Dupuis has constructed a theological system which regards the religions as real conveyors of God's

revelation and as "paths" to salvation. For Dupuis there are no other religious "truths" which can be placed on the same footing as the "truth" revealed in Christ. This also means that Dupuis does not seem to be entirely convinced that other "truths" can be added to the Christian "truth" in any significant way because Christianity lacks "something" essential. One must always bear this in mind while reading Dupuis's "pronouncements" on complementarity. Even if certain "elements" in other religions are in agreement with Christianity and can be integrated with it, there are still "elements" which contradict the Christian faith and cannot be compatible.

Some commentators (Knitter for instance) might suggest that this part of the model could be even viewed as a return to the "fulfilment" theory. This return seems to be hinted at when Dupuis explains the relationship between Christianity and other religions using terms which are linked strictly with the "fulfilment" perspective. For example, he speaks of other religions as 'incompleted "faces" of the Divine Mystery…to be *fulfilled* in him who is "the human face of God"' (1997:279) or that they are 'integral parts of one history of salvation that culminates in the Jesus-Christ event' (1997:303). Dupuis also suggests that this "culmination" will take place at eschaton, the end of history, when all religions within the entire creation will be *fulfilled* and find perfection under Jesus (1997:389). Nevertheless, to ascribe to Dupuis's proposals a return to the "fulfilment" theory would be unjust, especially since he dissociates himself from it on various occasions.

The conclusion is that, on the one hand, what Dupuis proposes cannot satisfy the pluralist requirements for considering the other religions as independent "ways" to salvation and their religious figures as equal to Christ. Yet, on the other hand, his theology cannot be reduced to another form of "fulfilment" theory or be regarded as a repetition of the traditional inclusivist stand. A legitimate question therefore emerges: why does Dupuis introduce terminology which does not easily apply to either inclusivism or pluralism? One could suggest that the "indications" of pluralism are the result of Dupuis's dependence on his Asian pluralist experience as the proper context for constructing a theology which takes religious diversity seriously and that he attributes more to religions than does contemporary Catholic theology. To achieve this aim certain pluralist formulations and constructs are required and that is why he often refers to the theology of Aloysius Pieris, the texts of the Indian Bishops Conferences and Institutes for Religious Affairs. One could also suggest that such "echoes" of pluralism are necessary to enable his theology to advance the position of inclusivism.

Nevertheless, the outcome of this research is that Dupuis's proposals reflect the pluralist approach to a certain degree, but that they do not cross the line. This finds support in the fact that most of his proposals argue against the pluralist perspective on religions and generally maintain their inclusivist

character. Hence what reflects pluralism in his proposals is more a matter of linguistic expression than of doctrinal stance. Proof of this is the notification text itself which speaks of certain ambiguities in Dupuis's theology but still within the limits of Christocentrism. It cannot be otherwise because of the proposals' strong emphasis on the uniqueness and universality of the redemptive work of Christ and on the particular unique divine self-communication of God in Jesus Christ who is the privileged way of God's revelation and the centre of the religious universe. His proposals' inclusivist character should not be a surprise because the main arguments are constructed within an entirely inclusivist framework of Trinitarian Christology with strong ties to the Christic mystery. This part of Dupuis's system is doctrinally traditional. Rather surprising is that, although the proposals were thoroughly inclusivist, they still became a subject of investigation by the CDF.

10.3 Contribution of "inclusive pluralism" to a Christian theology of religions

This painful encounter between Dupuis and the CDF was regrettable. What counts is that through Trinitarianism and the attempt to embody the Asian religious context in his proposals, Dupuis has contributed to the shift in theology of religions which nowadays is becoming more and more obvious. Although Dupuis's model is Christian and inclusivist, at the same time, it ventures into areas of thought which go beyond the traditionally understood inclusivism. It enters a "new" territory which for his inclusivist predecessors was forbidden and thus dangerous and inaccessible. A positive side of this combination of practical radicalism and doctrinal traditionalism is that his model moves beyond the contradictory paradigms of Christocentrism and theocentrism and has the potential to redirect the discourse in the Catholic theology of religions. By means of his "in-between" position, Dupuis encourages theologians to question their traditional convictions and beliefs and remain open to the positive challenge which the other religious traditions pose to Christianity: that their spiritual richness, their demands and their role cannot be ignored or reduced to a mere preparatory function.

As mentioned, venturing into and exploring "new" areas in theology is open to challenges and even to pitfalls; yet those who disagree with Dupuis's proposals or his theology in general, still acknowledge its importance. Dupuis fully deserves respect and admiration for raising difficult questions, attempting answers and building new routes in a familiar field of Christian relations with the religious traditions. There is little doubt that other Catholic theologians will continue to follow the road which Dupuis has discovered and will try to develop his thought. Continual dedication to the search for truth combined with insightful knowledge and an innovative model makes Dupuis's theology an important point of reference in the debate on religions and in leading interreligious dialogue. Various pronouncements of the Vatican Secretariat for non-Christians, the Asian Bishops'

Conferences and the teaching of John Paul II encourage one to move more and more in the direction of Dupuis's proposals for a Christian theology of "inclusive pluralism". If this tendency prevails his model of "inclusive pluralism" will long remain valid not only in the Roman Catholic theological debate on religions, but also in Christianity in general.

10.4 Validity of the thesis in the context of the current debate on religions

Dupuis's pioneering efforts in the new and complex issues of religious plurality remain valuable and enriching. His proposals have received a wide range of responses from church officials and theologians and his difficulties with the Vatican have given him wide recognition. To my knowledge, however, all these responses to, articles on, and analyses of, Dupuis's theological system do not constitute a sufficiently extensive treatment of his theology of religious pluralism or comprehensive study of his contribution to the theology of religions. These deficiencies invited the author of this research to further explore Dupuis's thought. This study built upon what has already been said in the field of theology of religions, including the analyses of Dupuis's theology. However, this particular project gives a more systematized view of the model of "inclusive pluralism" and its contribution to mainstream Christian theology of religious pluralism. By seeking the relevance of Dupuis's proposals to the South African interreligious context, this research can therefore be regarded as original. What is new in this thesis is the application of the various proposals of "inclusive pluralism" to the South African situation of religious diversity. To my knowledge no similar work has been done in South Africa on Dupuis's interreligious thought and its relevance to this particular religious context.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a general evaluation of Dupuis's concepts which constitute his theology of "inclusive pluralism". His thoughts on religious diversity, interreligious dialogue, and the Christian theology of religious pluralism of the future can be seen as a unique contribution to the mutual recognition and appreciation among the diverse religious traditions. It encourages theologians of religions and church leaders to continue their dialogue which may result in building further bridges among religions and their followers who, together with Christians, tend towards the same goal which is God, the Divine or the Real. It also gives the laity theological material for constant reflection. This material could foster mutual respect and knowledge, as well as further interest in the coexistence of religions and believers in the same God.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF
JACQUES DUPUIS'S THEOLOGY

**Chapter One: The relation of Dupuis's "inclusive pluralism" to a Christian theology of
religions: Main thesis**

Introduction

The history of theology reveals that the emphasis of the discipline has changed, especially when different times have generated new questions. The recent most important change has been the shift to the question of religious pluralism. There is little doubt that this question will dominate the theological debate on religions in the future. This explains the numerous attempts at constructing a so-called Christian theology of religious pluralism. The importance of this theology lies in the fact that it considers the precise nature and role of religions in God's plan of salvation for humanity. The theology of religious pluralism reflects on religious traditions in the light of God's desire to save the entire human family in Jesus Christ, and consequently engages the question of salvation and its mediation to those outside of the Christian tradition.

Although in the theology of religions various distinctions and perspectives on the religious traditions have been proposed, for example, by Paul Knitter in *Introducing theologies of religions* (2002); the threefold approach developed by Alan Race in his work entitled *Christians and religious pluralism* (1983) continues to dominate the debate. The first approach is described as "exclusivism" because of its claim that those who do not directly believe in Jesus Christ cannot be saved. Sources for this theology include the works of Karl Barth entitled *Church dogmatics* (1970) and of Hendrik Kraemer entitled *Why Christianity of all religions?* (1962) (Merrigan 1998:339). On the Catholic side, exclusivism is identical to ecclesiocentrism and the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church no salvation), and is usually linked with the names of St. Cyprian (210-258) and Fulgentius of Ruspe (468-533). This position eventually changed and in 1949 was declared no longer valid.

The second approach to the question of how "others" are saved, which is the opposite of ecclesiocentrism, is provided by a school of theology which is known as "pluralism". Pluralism interprets God's universal will to save in terms of the "common goal" which unites all religions and views the diverse traditions as authentic paths to salvation. The main emphasis of pluralism is on a "common ground" which can be found outside every particular religion. This "common ground" can be for example, socio-economic liberation, ecology, or an eschatological reality. Consequently, 'pluralist theologians insist that salvation is possible in and through a variety of independent and

more or less equally valid religious traditions' (Merrigan 1998:339). Representatives of pluralism include theologians from all Christian churches.

The third approach to the question of how members of other religions are saved is referred to as "inclusivism"; an "in-between" approach. It focuses on the historical mediation of God's salvation that is available to people in particular times and places (:339). Like pluralism, inclusivism represents the opinion of the majority of present day Christian churches. Inclusivism emphasizes that despite the genuine value and positive role of religions in the economy of salvation, Christ must always be implicated in the salvific process and the explicit Christian faith is the completion of any religious system (Karl Rahner); that salvation history is one but God's self-communication is Trinitarian (Jacques Dupuis); that with the Spirit as its starting point and centre, Christianity can be more open to others and more faithful to the Gospel (Gavin D'Costa); and that Jesus is the "universal" saviour who is in the centre of the theological perspective and through Jesus, God is partially present in other religions (Paul Tillich, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Bruce Demarest).

The "common element" which unites all three approaches to religions is the recognition that God desires to save all people. What distinguishes them is their diverse approach to the history of salvation (:339). These three perspectives are central to the understanding of the topic and the general purpose of this study. It is against this background that the investigation of Dupuis's model of "inclusive pluralism" is studied.

The first chapter defines and analyzes the main problem of this dissertation which is stated in the form of a question: Does Dupuis's model of "inclusive pluralism" solve the dilemma between "Christocentric inclusivism" and "theocentric pluralism" and enable him to make a genuinely unique contribution to the theology of religions? This chapter also outlines the other problems examined in subsequent chapters. Later, it describes the structure of the work and delimits certain aspects of Dupuis's theology relating to a Christian theology of religions which, because of their complexity could form a part of another study. Finally, it selects the method which is used in the entire work.

1.1 Motive of the study

The choice of Dupuis's theology as the subject of this study has to be linked with his challenging proposals which are unique and which represent a new development in Catholic theology. Their originality lies in the fact that Dupuis attempts to move Christian belief in the centrality of Jesus beyond the limits of the inclusivist approach, which characterizes official Catholic theology. He argues that the universality of the mystery of Christ and the uniqueness of Christianity are best

conceived as a unity of *inclusion* that embraces all of the values of truth and goodness that other religions bear. On the basis of the Spirit's abiding presence in the various religions, Dupuis states that Christians must recognize that these other paths have a "lasting role" and a "specific meaning" in what God hopes to achieve with humanity. In other words, God does not intend all people to find their fulfilment in the Christian Church. Also, the various religions exist not just as a "matter of fact" but as a "matter of principle". On this basis, Dupuis's "inclusive pluralism" seems the most promising theological model within Catholicism, because it seeks to move beyond a theology of "fulfilment" toward a theology of religious pluralism. His theology, while not compromising the uniqueness of the mystery of Christ, does not hesitate to speak of an "inclusive pluralism" which acknowledges the values proper to the other religions.

Furthermore, the choice of Dupuis has to be seen in the relatedness of his theology to the South African context, a context in which a richly diverse culture exists with people of different world-views and life-styles. From this perspective, South Africa occupies a special place in the context of world religions because of its rich religious diversity and its unique struggle to live in a peaceful and sustainable society. In order to test Dupuis's assumptions, beliefs, and doctrinal proposals as well as to investigate the relevance of his theology to the South African context, there is a need for a deeper study of the South African context of pluralism. Therefore the research examines the past and the present situation of relations among religions in South Africa. Preliminary research indicates that there is little mutual contact and understanding among members of the various religious traditions. In the past, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, and African traditionalists have been prevented from knowing and appreciating their spiritual richness and mutual beliefs. This opens new areas for research and justifies this thesis.

Despite the importance of all the above religions in South Africa, and especially the African traditional religions, the researcher has selected the relationship between Christianity and Islam as a case study to show the application of Dupuis's proposals to South Africa. This choice was made primarily because, at the level of political transformation in South Africa, hopes for a real social partnership between Christians and Muslims have grown significantly in the last decade, despite many challenges and pitfalls. In South Africa the social, political and religious debate is inseparable from the rest of life. Thus, the Islamic-Christian encounter is above all a practical expression of dialogue. In South Africa, Christians and Muslims increasingly tend to meet each other and address the same problems which both religious groups face. Most importantly this new dialogue seems to put down roots which go deeper than religious differences and historical circumstances, thus creating a common African tradition in which each person has a place and serves a common destiny.

This dialogue can also serve as a model for conversations with all other religious traditions. It seems unlikely that the existing religions will exclude each other in a struggle for transformation in South Africa, for this struggle demands their combined energies.

Because of this application, the thesis is much longer than required. The initial intention of the author was to limit the research to the analyses of Dupuis's main proposals only and see their contribution to the contemporary debate on religions. Nevertheless, before the research proposal was approved by the Higher Degrees Committee, it was recommended that Dupuis's "inclusive pluralism" be contextualized and applied to the South African interreligious situation. Doing such contextualisation in one chapter still remained too general. A case study was necessary to see which of Dupuis's proposals and what forms of interreligious dialogue remain relevant to South Africa. This however influenced the length of the research which hopefully will not diminish its quality and validity.

1.2 The main problem of the study

The main question that this study addresses is as follows: Does Dupuis's model of "inclusive pluralism" overcome the dilemma between "Christocentric inclusivism" and "theocentric pluralism" in such a way that he makes a genuinely unique contribution to the theology of religions?

There are several potential answers to this question. Firstly, the proposed "Trinitarian Christology" within "inclusive pluralism" as a model for theology of religions combines and holds together the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ in the order of salvation and offers a true, positive and salvific value of the other religious traditions to their followers. Dupuis's theology combines two models which relate to each other and complete one another: Christocentrism which is characteristic of inclusivism, and theocentrism which is peculiar to pluralism.

Secondly, while keeping to the inclusivist position by holding fast to Jesus Christ as universal saviour, Dupuis simultaneously recognizes a plurality of religious paths which have some salvific value for their adherents. This salvific value is not, however, without being essentially and organically related to the Christ event in accordance with the one divine plan of salvation for humankind.

Thirdly, such "inclusive pluralism", then, does not deny the one universal saving action of Jesus Christ. Yet, at the same time, this approach goes beyond the traditional limits of inclusivist theology; limits which view the other religions as merely answers to the most fundamental questions of human existence and imperfect media for the operation of Christ's salvific grace.

This study further addresses more specific questions concerning the theology of inclusive pluralism such as:

i)   What is the theological-historical context out of which Dupuis's theology emerges?
ii)   What is Dupuis's concept of the history of salvation and revelation?
iii)   What approach does Dupuis's theology insist on to preserve the essential unity of the salvific economy while allowing for legitimate religious diversity?
iv)   From Dupuis's perspective, what role do other religious traditions play in the salvation of their followers?
v)   What contribution does Dupuis's model of "inclusive pluralism" make to Christian theology of religious pluralism as a whole?
vi)   What is the relevance and possible application of Dupuis's inclusivist theology of religious pluralism to the interreligious situation in South Africa?

These questions will be dealt with in the chapters of this thesis.

1.3 Structure
This work is divided into three main parts covered in ten chapters including an introduction and a conclusion.

The First Part consists of the introduction, an overview of Dupuis's theology and its historical theological context. The Second Part presents the doctrinal proposals which constitute the theology of "inclusive pluralism". The Third Part seeks the relevance and possible application of Dupuis's "inclusive pluralism" to the interreligious situation in South Africa.

The First Part
Chapter One is an introduction to the study; it defines the reasons for choosing a study of Dupuis's thought, the main problem and the minor problems, a delimitation of the research area, and the method applied.

Chapter Two analyzes the main themes of Dupuis's theology. Divided into four sections, it first presents some biographical information about Dupuis. Secondly, it indicates the influences on his theology and its evolution. The third section gives a brief overview of Dupuis's concepts which contributed to constructing his model, namely Trinitarian Christology, a single history of salvation and revelation, God's revelation in the sacred scriptures of religions, the universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ, religious traditions as "ways" to salvation, the Church in relation to the Reign of God, the concept of dialogue, and religious pluralism "in principle". The fourth section describes Dupuis's difficulties with the Vatican, the process of investigation, his defence and its outcome.

Chapter Three covers the historical theological context out of which the theology of "inclusive pluralism" emerges. The chapter starts with a historical overview of the main approaches to

religions. Then it deals respectively with diverse attitudes to religions, namely, ecclesiocentrism, Christocentrism and theocentrism in a Christian theology of religions. These attitudes represent the transformation in relations between Christianity and the religions from total exclusion to an inclusive and pluralist view of them which leads to mutual understanding and collaboration. Finally, the chapter evaluates Dupuis's stand on the above approaches to religions.

The Second Part

Chapter Four examines Dupuis's position regarding a unified history of revelation and salvation. It gives a general background to the contemporary experience of religious diversity and views this pluralism as belonging to God's will and design. Religious pluralism "in principle" is reflected in various stages of divine salvation history. Similarly, all the covenants which God established with people at different times constitute God's single covenant with humanity. Consequently, this must point to a certain complementarity in the various ways of God's self-revelation.

Chapter Five introduces the main proposal for constructing the theology of "inclusive pluralism", namely, the Trinitarian approach to the religious history of humanity. This chapter argues that only Trinitarian Christology has the real potential for building an open theology of religions. The analysis explains the work of the Holy Trinity in the process of salvation of humanity focusing on a distinction, but not on a separation, between the enduring action of the eternal Word of God, the salvific activity of the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ and the saving presence of the Spirit. All these divine activates are essentially interrelated to, and interconnected with, the event of Christ.

Chapter Six applies Trinitarian Christology, which is the basis for Dupuis's further argument, for perceiving the religious traditions as "paths" to salvation. Dupuis sees Jesus as the "one mediator" and the "universal Saviour" but also attributes to the religious traditions "participated" mediation on the basis of God's self-communication which takes place in other religions. This chapter then analyzes the relationship between the church and religions in the Reign of God. The role of the church in the economy of salvation is to be the sacrament of the Reign and other believers should be viewed as the Reign's co-members and co-workers. The chapter ends with an evaluation of Dupuis's position.

The Third Part

Chapter Seven describes the past and present situation of dialogue among religions in South Africa and seeks possible areas of application of Dupuis's proposals. The first section gives a general background to religious diversity in South Africa. The second section discusses migrations of various nations, cultures and religions to South African soil which resulted in real religious

diversity. The following sections examine relations among religions during respectively colonial and early apartheid years, the second half of the twentieth century and finally democracy. The final section applies Dupuis's proposals for dialogue among religions in South Africa. Areas of application are suggested, the state of formal dialogue among religions is studied and challenges to interreligious conversations are pointed out. Thus, it emerges that Dupuis's dialogue of "praxis" is the most relevant form of encounter among religions. This however requires further investigation in the form of a case study.

Chapter Eight applies Dupuis's theology to the South African context of religious diversity on the ground of the existing relationship between Christianity and Islam (the case study). The chapter first examines relations between Muslims and Christians up to the present moment. Then it shows areas of convergence between Dupuis's proposals and dialogue with Muslims and Christians in South Africa, looking into the theological basis for dialogue with Muslims, the South African Catholic Church's position on such dialogue, and dispositions and the state of formal and doctrinal conversations with Islam in South Africa. It points out the most promising forms of dialogue with Muslims at the practical level. The chapter finally gives concrete examples of dialogue of life and action between Muslims and Christians especially during the process of reconstruction and nation-building.

Chapter Nine critiques Dupuis's proposals seeking their contribution to a Christian theology of religious pluralism. It argues that the model of "inclusive pluralism" exposes "boundary questions" in traditional Catholic theology of religions to further evolution. It also suggests that Dupuis's theology constitutes an attempt to indicate new routes in contemporary inclusivist theology. It moves beyond Jesusology, Christomonism and ecclesiocentrism; it interprets anew the question of religious pluralism for official Catholic theology and argue that it should be regarded as a comprehensive theory which replaces the traditional idea of Christianity's absoluteness.

Chapter Ten evaluates the validity of Dupuis's main proposals for a Christian theology of religious pluralism and makes concluding remarks on his model, on interreligious dialogue, and on a future theology of religions.

1.4 Delimitation of the research
There are certain issues, though interesting and important, beyond the scope of this research. This research, for instance, does not provide a presentation of each religious tradition's teaching. It does not present any doctrinal views of the various religious traditions with respect to their origins, their

historical development, and their current positions. These issues are broad and complex, demanding a separate study.

Concerning interreligious dialogue, the study concentrates on relations between Christianity and the other religions in general without any specific distinction between Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Judaism. There is no constant distinction among these various religious traditions. This limitation is partly deliberate and partly imposed because it requires specific knowledge of comparative theology. At the same time, one must take note that all religions, including Christianity, differ in their structures, beliefs, and practice.

From the Christian perspective it is justifiable that in interreligious dialogue one must accord a unique place to Judaism. This is because of its singular rapport with the economy of salvation effected in Jesus Christ by the God of Israel. Likewise, one must distinguish the monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) which a classic terminology now calls prophetical as distinct from the mystical religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. This, however, does not imply that all the other religions are "polytheistic" nor does it deny them any prophetic significance. The merit of this distinction consists, on the one hand, of stressing the common foundation of the religions of the Book in the faith of Abraham while, on the other hand, recognizing the "wisdom" or "gnosis" characteristic of the Eastern traditions.

This project does not focus on a comprehensive historical treatment of interreligious dialogue over the centuries. However, it attempts a brief historical overview of Christian attitudes towards the religious traditions which Christianity has encountered throughout the centuries. This should serve as a background to the theological perception of those traditions and the relationship to Christianity which has emerged in recent years within the context of religious pluralism. Also, this study gives a brief overview of the main models and paradigms which have developed through the Christian tradition. These have served for a certain period of time as the standard approach, on the part of main-line Christianity, in the evaluation of other religious traditions.

1.5 Method

The analytical character of this research depends specifically on literary sources. Library research has been done both locally and internationally (Tilburg, Netherlands and Warsaw, Poland). Generally, the research data is available via interlibrary loan or the Internet. Dupuis's mother tongue was French; however, all of his theological works were first written in English and then translated into other languages. All his works are available in South Africa. Most of this material is available through libraries at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and St. Joseph's Theological Institute.

The method is grounded in an analysis of Dupuis's theology of religions. Thus, the researcher first highlights, examines and evaluates Dupuis's theology of religions. Once this foundation is established, issues that arise from his model of "inclusive pluralism" are addressed. This includes such considerations as the contemporary context of religious pluralism, the theological basis for regarding the other traditions as possessing a specific role and meaning in the history of salvation, the history of salvation and revelation. The researcher also considers Dupuis's Trinitarian Christology and religious traditions as "paths" to salvation, and the contribution of Dupuis's model to the corpus of inclusivist theology.

It is impossible in this work to address every particular context and indeed every single religion individually and separately. However, this research is applicable to any particular situation. Therefore, although it is not possible to remain directly within any specific context, the concerns of vastly different contexts must be taken into consideration. Thus, while being primarily concerned with general questions regarding the relationship between Christianity and the other religious traditions, the researcher focuses on the particular interreligious situation in South Africa.

As mentioned previously, the approach of this research is analytical. However, because it engages in a theology of religious pluralism and is intended to be applied to the South African context, inevitably the last part of the project required some sort of field work. This consisted of several interviews with those involved in interreligious dialogue both from the Christian (Catholic) and the other religions' (Muslim) perspectives. This field work allowed the researcher to investigate more accurately and practically the relevance of Dupuis's theological assumptions for religious pluralism in South Africa.

In all of the above, Dupuis's theology of religions constitutes the critical lens through which the researcher views the various issues.

Conclusion

This chapter introduces possible answers to a question about the contribution of "inclusive pluralism" of Jacques Dupuis to a Christian theology of religions and its relevance to the South African interreligious context. The chapter has also described the method which will be used throughout the entire work, and given a delimitation of the research. Finally, it has outlined the contents of the different chapters. The next chapter will provide an overview of the main themes of Dupuis's theology including a short biography of Dupuis, the main influences on his thought and its evolution, and the Vatican's investigation of his theology.

Chapter Two: An overview of the main concepts of Dupuis's theology and the main influences on his theological thought

Introduction

Interreligious dialogue remains a new phenomenon in the Christian church. Awareness that the contemporary world is shaped by a pluralism of cultures and religious traditions continually grows and gives new challenges to Christianity and its theologies. One of the purposes of theology is to react to these challenges. Entering new theological ground, however, is always risky. Dupuis was one of those theologians who personally experienced this risk. Exploration of new areas in the theology of religions, deeply rooted in his experience of encountering the major religions in India, led Dupuis into tension with the official authority in the Catholic Church.

This chapter considers, firstly, Dupuis's life and the interreligious context of India in which Dupuis began his theological studies and worked as a theologian serving the local church. Thus this part reflects on Dupuis's productive life as a widely recognized theologian at the Gregorian University in Rome, and an author of numerous works on interreligious dialogue. Secondly, this analysis examines the cultural, spiritual and theological influences on his thought. This second part also presents the main concepts of his proposal for a Christian theology of religious pluralism. Finally, this chapter describes Dupuis's discussion with church authorities and its eventual positive outcome.

2.1 A short biography of Dupuis
2.1.1 Dupuis's life and ministry in India

Jacques Dupuis was born in Huppaye, Brabant, Belgium on the 5th of December 1923 into a middle-class Catholic family. His parents sent him to a Jesuit elementary school after which he spent another six years in a Jesuit secondary school. At the age of 17, Dupuis entered the Jesuit Order. His further education was that of a Jesuit in pre-conciliar times: two years of Novitiate, two years of Juniorate, three years of Philosophy, and three years of Regency (Jesuit training). For his Regency, Dupuis volunteered to go to India. This type of mission work was common among Belgian Jesuits before the Second Vatican Council (Kaiser 2003:222-223). The main reason for Dupuis's decision to go to India was to gain teaching experience in one of the education centres run by the Jesuits. Another reason might have been his desire to make a difference to the church's evangelizing mission not merely as a carrier of European culture but as an explorer of new ways to 'plant an indigenous Gospel' (2003:223).

In Calcutta India, Dupuis joined a century-old Jesuit mission and began teaching at St. Xavier's Jesuit College. Between 1952 and 1955, he continued his theological studies for the priesthood at another Jesuit College, St. Mary's, in Kurseong (Gispert-Sauch 2003:147). There Dupuis was

ordained in 1954 and began to write a doctorate on Origen. After a year he went to Rome and, for another two years, continued his doctoral studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University.[1] Having successfully completed his thesis, Dupuis began to teach theology at St. Mary's Theological College in 1959 and remained a staff member of the theological faculty of St. Mary's until 1984. In time, Dupuis became a widely recognized theologian of the Asian church; helping it especially in the transition from pre-Vatican to post-Vatican times (Kaiser 2003:223).

Herbert Alphonso, Dupuis's colleague, writes that during his 36 years in India Dupuis served the Indian church

> not only in the field of theology, but also in that of the renewed postconciliar liturgy, and even pastorally through his publications, not the least of which have been his editing of, and contributing to, *The Clergy Monthly* and later *The Vidyajyoti Journal*, which reached out extensively to so many priests and religious, and later even to the committed laity, all over the Indian subcontinent (2003:118).

Dupuis was the editor of *The Vidvajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* for 12 years and a theological adviser to the Indian Bishops' Conference which often invited him to its general meetings. He also served on the bishops' panel for examining theological issues. His contribution to the Indian church was primarily in implementing the conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) within the Asian context and in building a closer collaboration among the many religious congregations working in India and the local bishops and clergy (Kaiser 2003:224).

A major landmark in Dupuis's theological career was the book entitled *The Christian Faith*.[2] Over the years, this book profoundly influenced not only the Asian church but also many Catholics world wide, as well as other Christians and non-Christians interested in the teaching of the church. *The Christian Faith*, published in 1973, was a result of cooperation between Dupuis and his teaching colleague, Joseph Neuner. Both theologians realized that after the Second Vatican Council there was a need for a fresh collection of the church's doctrinal statements from pre-conciliar, conciliar, and post-conciliar documents. Between 1973 and 2008, *The Christian Faith* was revised and updated in seven editions and has become a valuable source of information concerning the doctrinal teachings in the Roman Catholic Church (Kendall and O'Collins 2003: xi-xii). The latest edition of *The Christian Faith* (1996) takes the reader from the earliest creeds down to John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (1995). With this unique effort, Dupuis and Neuner have performed an extraordinary service for the official teaching of the Catholic Church.

2.1.2 Dupuis's productive life in Rome

In 1984, Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, the Jesuit Superior General, transferred Dupuis to Rome to teach systematic theology at the Gregorian University. By 1985, Dupuis was editor of the theological and philosophical quarterly, the *Gregorianum*; he remained in this office for 18 years. He also accepted teaching positions at universities in Bologna and Florence and, outside Italy, at European, American, Asian and African universities (Kendall and O'Collins 2003:xi-xii). Living and working in Rome offered Dupuis an opportunity to engage in high-level theological discussions both at the Gregorian University and inside the Vatican. During that time, Vatican officials asked him to assist in preparing a document on the Church's involvement in interreligious dialogue (Kaiser 2003:225). Thus his work became part of an official document entitled "Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and orientations on interreligious dialogue and the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ" which was published jointly in 1991 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Dupuis also served as an official adviser for the Vatican Council for Interreligious Dialogue between 1985 and 1995 (*The Tablet*, 21 November 1998:1550).

In 1991, Dupuis wrote another major work entitled *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions*. The book articulated Christian conviction about Jesus as the Christ in relation to the other religions. He examined the wisdom which these religious traditions were able to bring to Christianity. The work covered the basics of Christian and other traditions, focusing on the crossroad to which dialogue has brought the world's great religious families. Three years later, Dupuis issued a Christological book entitled *Who do you say I am? Introduction to Christology* (1994) which concerned the Christian doctrine of Jesus Christ. In 1997, he edited the most comprehensive study on the change in Catholic theology in relation to interreligious dialogue entitled *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism*. Thus, Dupuis had completed a trilogy on Christ's person, his redemptive mission, and interreligious dialogue. *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* was, firstly, a masterful presentation of the history of Christian attitudes towards other religions from the earliest times to the Second Vatican Council. Secondly, the book offered insightful interpretations of the conciliar texts and subsequent Catholic documents on interreligious dialogue. And, thirdly, this work offered challenging evaluations and provocative suggestions for the debate on religious pluralism, the significance of Jesus Christ, and salvation within the world religions. This work, however, plunged Dupuis into several years of painful controversy yet, at the same time, it encouraged many theologians to engage in 'the question of God's saving plan for the entire human race' (Kendall and O'Collins 2003:xii).

Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism became a theological bestseller and Dupuis was asked to write another book on the same subject but more accessible to a broader audience. Thus, in 2002 he produced *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue.* This book was not simply a summary of the previous work, but it proceeded in a different direction; reviewing the history of the Western Christian tradition in relation to the world religions and the breakthrough of the Second Vatican Council. It further reviewed the uniqueness of Christ and various theological proposals concerning the mediation of salvation within the other religious traditions. Breaking new ground, this book treated the relationship between the Reign of God and the church, interreligious dialogue in a pluralistic society and interreligious prayer. Indirectly *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* constituted a response to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and to theologians who raised serious reservations concerning Dupuis's previous work.

On June 10th 1997, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF)[3] opened an investigation into some of the theological points expressed by Dupuis in *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism*. Dupuis was informed of the investigation through his General Superior in October 1998. The investigation began during the final year of his teaching at the Gregorian University before his retirement. Although Dupuis was not prohibited from teaching, he withdrew from the courses 'so as to remain loyal to his conscience and to respect the Congregation…' (D'Souza 2003:ix). This investigation ended after 32 months. The CDF announced that the book contained certain ambiguities without, however, pointing out any doctrinal or theological errors (*The Pope Speaks* 2001a:273-276).

Unfortunately, Dupuis found himself side-lined for the period of the investigation. This difficult experience 'seemed like an irreparable blow to his standing as a scholar – in an important new branch of theology that [could] help humankind veer away from the kind of arrogant arguments that had triggered religious wars through much of human history' (Kaiser 2003:224). Since the beginning of the investigation, Dupuis had also been struggling with his declining health. He experienced personal emotional suffering as a result of the controversies over his book. Jacques Dupuis died on the 28th of December 2004 in a Rome hospital after suffering a cerebral haemorrhage (O'Connell 2005:4).

2.2 The main influences on his theological thought and its evolution
2.2.1 The Indian religious context and Dupuis's studies on Origen

The main influences on Dupuis's thought are rooted in his many experiences in India as a theologian and pastor. The Nepalese, Indians, Bhutanese, Chinese and Europeans who lived and worked in the region where Dupuis ministered, made it a mini-United Nations. Thus, early on, he was able to

interact with representatives from many of the great religious traditions of the world: Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. There is little doubt, therefore, that this multitude of people with different religious backgrounds, as well as more that 20 years of teaching in an international theological college offered Dupuis a privileged setting for reflecting on interreligious dialogue.

Although Dupuis's vocation as a theologian had essentially remained the same throughout his life, that vocation had forever been marked by his early contacts with India, its language and culture. Later, his vocation was strengthened by his initial teaching at St. Xavier's College and his studies in St. Mary's College in Kurseong. Robert Blair Kaiser, in his essay dedicated to Dupuis entitled "Dupuis profile" (2003), emphasizes that Dupuis's initial teaching at St. Xavier's College had an especially profound influence on his theological outlook. There, he met young men, non-Catholics, who impressed him with their genuine goodness and their attractive Hindu piety. From that moment on, in the world where the majority of people had never had an experience of Jesus Christ, Dupuis began to think differently about God's providence. He could not accept a situation in which a major part of the human family would be refused the salvation which, in the Christian view, comes only through Jesus. It was this first experience that opened his mind and eyes to the new reality of religious pluralism (Kaiser 2003:223). Moreover, this was the origin of Dupuis's inclusivist position, a position which was shaped by a growing awareness that God's universal salvific will must find expression in a variety of ways. It is apparent therefore that Dupuis, already at the initial stage of living and ministering in India, immersed himself in its culture and in its social and religious environment. In return, the Indian religious context became, for his theological thought, a source of inspiration and of religious experience (Kendall and O'Collins 2003:xii).

The above immersion in the Indian religious situation forced Dupuis to focus on the interaction between "text and context", between belief and experience. This was further strengthened by his doctoral studies on the religious anthropology of Origen, which served his future concept of "inclusive pluralism". Through these studies, Dupuis learned how to facilitate dialogue between faith and culture in Asia. Origen served him primarily as a basis for encountering the mystical tradition in India and for establishing a dialogue with that tradition. Dupuis strongly believed that theology must keep contact with the mystical tradition, whether in Rome or in Asia. That is why the relationship with the Indian mystical tradition is constantly present in his theology. Origen also served Dupuis as a point of reference in constructing his concept of the universal presence of the Word of God within the human family. He wrote:

> Like his predecessors, Origen professed a universal manifestation of the Word of God to humankind while affirming at the same time the singular and unique character of his incarnation in Jesus Christ: the same divine Logos had been and was universally present who took flesh in Jesus Christ (Dupuis 1997:79).

2.2.2 Asian Christian theologies and official church teachings

In time, Dupuis began to be regarded as one of the few Western theologians who were able to engage in a fruitful dialogue with the Asian theological world. Two factors contributed to this engagement. The first was his teaching experience in Kuresong. Years of educational ministry in India could not 'fail to leave permanent imprints on anyone's religious outlook and theological vision, the more so if one, like Jacques Dupuis, [was] a first-class intellectual with capacious mind, a generous heart, and a prolonged exposure to Asian realities' (Phan 2003:72). The second factor was life in Asia itself. For Dupuis, massive poverty and deep religiousness were the two most visible features of the Asian people. Undoubtedly these two characteristics of Asian society shaped both Asian Christian theologies and Dupuis's thought concerning inculturation, liberation, and interreligious dialogue. Both 'the Asian context and Asian theologies influenced Dupuis's theological method, his understanding of interreligious dialogue, and his theology of religious pluralism' (:73).[4]

The Asian context and Asian theologies are visible in his method. Dupuis rejected the deductive method which for many theologians was the only valid way of doing theology. In the past most theologians had employed this method in their research because it took the data of revelation and tradition as a basis for drawing theological conclusions. He also rejected an inductive method because of its limitations. Instead, he argued for a combination of inductive and deductive methods into a new way of doing theology which he called "hermeneutical theology"[5] (Dupuis 1991:4-7; 1994:5-8; 1997:13-19). For Dupuis, it was important that three realities be in constant interaction: 'the "text" (the data of faith), the "context" (the total reality, including its sociopolitical, economic, cultural, and religious dimensions), and the "interpreter" (both the individual theologian and the community)' (Phan 2003:73).

This inductive-deductive method was particularly applicable to a Christian theology of religious pluralism because it started from a praxis of dialogue with the other religions, and not from the Bible or from Tradition. Only such a praxis of dialogue was able to go beyond the existent traditional theology of religions, which acknowledged a mere fact of religious diversity and nothing else. "To go beyond" was a theology of religious pluralism which understood the cause of religious pluralism and its significance in God's plan of salvation (:73). Moreover, his inductive-deductive method enabled Dupuis to view the phenomenon of Asian poverty and religiousness as supportive

elements in combining interreligious dialogue with concrete action in favour of the liberation of the poor and the marginalized. In this, Dupuis followed Aloysius Pieris who believed that the praxis of both liberation and interreligious dialogue needed to be combined and united (Pieris 1983:113-139).

The influence of Asian theologies on Dupuis's thought is more visible in his Christology. In his book *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions*, Dupuis engaged in a long discussion on Neo-Hinduism and the concept of the "Unbound Christ". He explored different Christological models found in Neo-Hinduism: Mahatma Gandhi's moral approach to the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; Keshub Chunder Sen's devotional approach to Christ; Sarvepalli Radhakrisnan's Neo-Vedantine approach to Christ as the end-point of humanity's self-development and cosmic evolution; Swami Akhilanada's ascetical approach to Christ as an avatar;[6] Manilal Parekh's theological approach to Christ as the "yogi"; and Bhamanbadhab Upadhyaya's mystical approach to Christ as the teacher of the advaitic or neo-dualistic experience of Brahman (Dupuis 1991:18-45).

Bhamanbadhab Upadhyaya ["Friend of God"] (1861-1907) especially provided for Dupuis a basis for viewing Christ as the teacher of Christian yoga and the mystic of the *advaita*[7] experience of Brahman. The real name of Upadhaya was Bhawami Charan Banerji, a member of the Brahmo Samaj tradition, who converted first to the Church of the New Dispensation and in 1891 to the Anglican Communion and later joined the Roman Catholic Church. Influenced by Upadhayaya's attempt at harmonizing Hinduism and Christianity, Dupuis argued that the New Testament supports his conviction that Jesus performed all the three levels of yoga: psychophysical exercises, mental exercises of meditation and concentration, and the pure consciousness of God. Consequently, Jesus can be viewed as bringing the way of Christian *yoga* to his followers (1991:48-55). Dupuis wrote:

> Jesus the Christ is the model of being a Christian, that is, of discipleship. He is also its perfect accomplishment and end. Christian *yoga*, in other words, is entirely centred on the person of Jesus. Through techniques and concentration, it invites us to enter into Jesus' filiation vis-à-vis our Parent, in the movement by which he comes from his Parent and returns there. It invites us to enter into the filial consciousness of Jesus himself, which makes us cry out, "*Abba*, Father".… But we must add: this is possible only in faith. Faith and not techniques must be at the centre of any *yoga* that would style itself Christian (1991:54).

A separate area of influence of Asian theologies on Dupuis's thought concerns his concept of interreligious dialogue in relation to evangelization. Evangelization is a very complex issue in the Christian church; it includes the mission of the church consisting of such distinct activities as witness, proclamation, conversion, founding of churches, inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and human development (Dupuis 1991:207-229; 1997:360-370). Dupuis's problem was how to reconcile

precisely the two main activities, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the universal Saviour and dialogue with other religions as equal partners. He searched for an answer to this dilemma in the official church teachings of various Asian conferences and synods. In his theological reflection on the necessity of interreligious dialogue, Dupuis appealed to the International Theological Conference on Evangelization in Asia held at Nagpur, India, in 1971. This conference, to his satisfaction, stated that the various religious traditions could help their adherents to achieve salvation. The different sacred scriptures and writings of the various religions could be, to various degrees, expressions of divine manifestation and could lead to salvation (Dupuis 1991:213-214).

In his search for an answer to the dilemma of relationship between interreligious dialogue and Christian evangelization of peoples, Dupuis referred to the Synod of Bishops on evangelization in 1974, particularly to the position of D S Amalorpavadass. The bishops stated that 'while evangelization and the dialogue are theologically distinct, they are nevertheless joined together in a single life, in the case of many Christians' (Dupuis 1991:216). The Theological Advisory Commission's document "Theses on interreligious dialogue" (1987) of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) further supported Dupuis's conviction that proclamation and dialogue do not oppose each other (Dupuis 1987:371-372). Along the same lines, Bishop F M Fernando of Chilaw, Sri Lanka, at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985, stated that interreligious dialogue should be regarded as an integral part of evangelization (Dupuis 1991:225).

There are two other areas where official church teachings in Asia contributed to Dupuis's proposals. The first is the presence of God's revelation and salvation in world religions. The second is the presence of the Reign of God in other religious traditions. In arguing for world religions as ways of God's revelation and salvation, Dupuis referred to a number of statements. The first statement of the FABC's First Plenary Assembly in Taipei, 1978, reads: 'How then [could] we not acknowledge that God has drawn our peoples to himself through them?', that is, world religions (Dupuis 1997:220). The second statement issued by the Theological Advisory Commission of the FABC (1987) based its positive attitude towards religious traditions on the fact that God has only one plan of salvation for humanity (Dupuis 1997:220). Concerning the relationship between the Reign of God and the church, Dupuis appealed to various pronouncements of the FABC to support his argument on the Reign of God as "something" larger than the church, "something" which could also be found in other religions (:341-342).

2.2.3 Dupuis's friendship with Swami Abhishiktananda

In a way similar to Origen, Swami Abhishiktananda (the Indian-French *sannyasi*)[8] opened for Dupuis a new perspective on the relationship between Indian and Christian mysticisms. Dupuis

realized that there is a point of convergence between the Asian and Christian mystical traditions. This meant that interreligious dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity was possible, at least at the level of the mystical experience of God.

The real name of Swami Abhishiktananda was Henri Le Saux, a Benedictine monk who arrived in India in 1948 at the age of 38 with another Benedictine, Jules Monchanin. Le Saux had nearly twenty years of experience of contemplative life. He came to India at the invitation of one of the bishops to begin a contemplative ashram.[9] Both monks 'envisaged it in the tradition of St. Benedict, but wholly Indian in style. Soon the Indian experience transformed Dom Le Saux into Swami Abhishiktananda, a wandering *sannyasi* in search of the ultimate experience the Upanishads[10] offer' (Gispert-Sauch 2003:146).

Although Dupuis had arrived in India only a few months after Henri Le Saux, they had never met. Their first contact took place in 1969 at the ecumenical *Jyotiniketan Ashram* (:147).[11] If Dupuis knew Abhishiktananda before, it was mostly through his writings.[12] A book and two articles written by Abhishiktananda: *Sagesse hindue, mystique chretienne* (Paris 1965), "Notes for lectures on Christology and the Trinity" and "An approach to Hindu spirituality", had particular significance for Dupuis. His interest in Abhishiktananda related mostly to the cosmic influence of the Holy Spirit in other religions and a particular approach of Abhishiktananda to Hindu mysticism (Gispert-Sauch 2003:148). Through the help of Abhishiktananda, Dupuis began to see that perhaps the ever-present function of the Spirit might be the key to improved understanding of other religions and their scriptures. The sensitivity to the values of interior life and personal self-transcendence in God, which existed in some other religions, can be viewed as a sign of the sacred presence of the Spirit in people's hearts. This had the potential to create a basis for the Spirit's recognition in Christ (Dupuis 1973:117-138). Moreover, Dupuis borrowed from Abhishiktananda the idea of the Holy Spirit as the mystery of divine intimacy, the togetherness, the non-duality (*advaita*) of Father and Son, and consequently non-duality of God and human beings (Gispert-Sauch 2003:147).[13]

The most serious study of Abhishiktananda is found in chapter 3 of Dupuis's book *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions* (1991). Dupuis introduces Abhishiktananda as someone who came to India with a contemplative vocation and, after personally meeting Ramana Maharshi,[14] developed a desire to enter into the religious experience of India. Abhishiktananda felt a special call to become a Hindu Christian monk with all its consequences, indeed as a *sadhus*.[15] This life as a *sadhus* involves the renunciation of comforts, total detachment from material things, and readiness to empty the mind of all content. Abhishiktananda's purpose was to realize directly the Absolute which is beyond all name and form. It is evident, therefore, that Abhishiktananda's aim was not merely to

inculturate Christian monasticism or Christian theology in India, but rather to share and be transformed by Indian spirituality and the Hindu mystical experience. 'An authentic experience of the Divine must be self-validating; and if there is a variety of such experiences, since they all touch the Real, they must be compatible' (Gispert-Sauch 2003:151). This means that Christianity and Hinduism must be compatible at the level of mystical experience.

Abhishiktananda also experienced tension and conflict between his Christian upbringing, which he loved so much, and the Upanishads to which he was totally committed. Abhishiktananda was faithful to the end of his life to the Eucharist although he felt tension between it and *advaita* spirituality. Indeed, Abhishiktananda never found an answer to this dilemma. His main question was, if Brahman alone were true, was the entire history of salvation, including Jesus Christ himself, reduced to a lesser truth than the Truth of the Absolute Self? This question was never answered. One may say that Abhishiktananda's entire life became a search for an elusive synthesis, a search which was never completed (:151-152).

What was, therefore, the contribution of Abhishiktananda's life, works and mystical experience to Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism"? First, in Dupuis's view, Abhishiktananda's mystical experience went beyond inclInturation. Abhishiktananda's goal was to share both experiences; Hindu and Christian. For this reason, he became the point at which these two traditions fused with one another. This took place, not by theological reflection or synthesis, but by mystical depth (:152). Secondly, there is little doubt that the theologian (Dupuis) and the monk (Abhishiktananda) had a certain spiritual *symbiosis* which complemented one another. Unfortunately, this symbiosis can only be described from the perspective of Dupuis. The majority of Abhishiktananda's writings and letters have remained unpublished and those which have been published do not mention his relationship with Dupuis. This means that the relationship between the two, while asymmetrical, existed on a personal level and on the level of theological reflection. Abhishiktananda was not a theologian; rather he was a monk looking for solitude and mystical experience. He had little interest in theological concepts; yet, through his constant struggle with them, Abhishiktananda bridged Indian and Christian spiritualities. This is why he was so important for Dupuis. He proved for Dupuis that interreligious dialogue is possible at a much deeper level than the formal exchange of information (:153-154). Thirdly, Abhishiktananda, who lived as a Hindu and as a Christian and was intellectually productive, became for Dupuis a source of spiritual insight into Indian spirituality. In turn, Dupuis became for Abhishiktananda a theological interpreter of his teaching and writings (Gispert-Sauch 2003:154). Abhishiktananda became for Dupuis a profound example of the bridge between the Hindu and Christian traditions.

Abhishiktananda's life and mystical experiences were not the only sources for approaching the Indian tradition. There were also other sources which Dupuis reveals in his book, *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions*. In the first chapter, "The 'unbound' Christ acknowledged in Hinduism", Dupuis presents the Hindu understanding of Jesus Christ (1991:15-45). In another chapter, "Hindu and Christian Christologies: Doctrines and dialogue", Dupuis reflects on the role of Yoga and *advaita* in our understanding of Christ (:46-66).

2.2.4 Theologies of Aloysius Pieris and Choan-Seng Song and their influence on Dupuis

A presentation of different Asian influences on Dupuis's theology would be incomplete if one omitted two major Asian theologians whose works Dupuis often quoted: Aloysius Pieris and Choan-Seng Song. Pieris's theology[16] was inspired by 'his immersion in Buddhist studies and his exposure to Asia's massive poverty' (Phan 2003:76-77). Pieris states that the way in which Asian churches address the two challenges will determine the future of Christianity in Asia; thus, either the churches will remain in Asia simply as foreign entities or they will become truly churches *of* Asia. For Pieris, in order for the churches to become truly Asian, they must be immersed within the religiousness of the Asian traditions, and learn from this religiousness. Moreover, the churches must embrace the poverty of the masses and join in their struggle for liberation. In other words, interreligious dialogue and liberation practiced as a unified process of inculturation, has the potential of enabling Christianity to find a true home in Asia (:77).

A separate topic in Pieris's theology points to the outcome of dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity. Here, one finds the existent similarities between the processes by which Jesus began to be interpreted as Christ (Christology) and Gautama as Buddha (Buddhology). It is clear that, within such similarities, to make a claim of the uniqueness either of Christ or of Buddha becomes problematic. In order to find a solution to this problem, Pieris distinguishes three dimensions of the mystery of salvation about which both Christ and Buddha spoke: the source, the medium and the force of salvation. Buddhists and Christians, he argues, differ in their concepts about source and medium, but they agree on the necessity of the mediation of salvation through *agapè* and *gnosis* (:77). Pieris believes that any Asian liberation theology combines both *agapè* and *gnosis* and thus has the potential to produce a Christology which will not compete with Buddhology, but will complement it (Pieris 1988b:135).

Dupuis agrees with Pieris that the churches in Asia must become the churches *of* Asia. They can do so only if they are immersed in Asian religiousness and poverty. They 'must be engaged in interreligious dialogue and liberation as a unified process of inculturation' (Phan 2003:78). He is also of the same opinion as Pieris that 'a combined interfaith liberative praxis is an urgent task of

evangelization – and a *locus theologicus* (sic) for a theology of religious pluralism' (Dupuis 1997:375). He agrees with Pieris that the various religious traditions are diverse but converging ways to salvation. This is particularly visible in the complementarity between Christian *agapè* and Buddhist *gnosis* and in a doctrinal dialogue between the two religions (Phan 2003:78; Dupuis 2007:326-328,381).

Dupuis, however, finds in Pieris's proposals a certain ambiguity concerning 'the relationship between the "medium" of salvation and Jesus. Whereas Pieris [only] identifies this mediating reality with the Word, Dupuis goes further to affirm that the Word has become flesh in Jesus and that this Word "enlightens every human being" (Jn 1:9)' (Phan 2003:78). Consequently, the Word also enlightened Gautama-the-Buddha and each of his descendents (Dupuis 1997:328). Moreover, Dupuis disagrees with Pieris concerning the separation between the eternal Word of God and the Word of God incarnated, that is Jesus Christ who does not save. For Dupuis, 'the anticipated action of the Word of God is related to the event of Jesus Christ in which God's plan for humankind comes to a climax' (1997:196).

Choan-Seng Song is known primarily for constructing a truly Asian theology.[17] One of the characteristics of his theological method is the use of Asian narrative, especially of children, women and men who are poor, marginalized and oppressed. Song's theology, therefore, is a narrative theology. He correlates these stories with the main story of Jesus, thus rereading Jesus' message about the Reign of God. From the Reign of God present in Jesus' life and ministry, Song moves backwards to the stories of the Reign of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, and forwards to the people's stories outside of the Christian church (Phan 2003:78-79). This movement backwards and forwards allows Song to recognize the unified presence of God's Reign in the story of Jesus, of the Hebrew Scriptures, and those of the Asian people. The Reign and Jesus' role within it, therefore, is the central theme in Song's theology. The Reign of God becomes a key to understanding not only who Jesus is, but also recognizing that at the centre of God's Reign stand the "people"; the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed. The "people", at the heart of God's Reign, reveal who Jesus truly is (Song 1993:12).

This central theme further shapes Song's Christology. Song distinguishes between "church-centred" Christology and "Christ-centred" Christology. The former serves the interest of the church, especially its economic and political power and for this reason it must be rejected. Similarly, "Christ-centred" Christology views the various images of Christ which theological traditions have developed as serving the interests of the church. For example, these images serve as objects of worship, or topics for metaphysical speculation; yet, they are distortions of the real image of Jesus

Christ. In this kind of Christology the term "centred" points to its exclusivist character and therefore must be rejected. In place of these Christologies, Song proposes a so-called "Jesus-oriented" Christology which is inclusivist and open – "oriented" towards theocentrism. Such a theology 'does not need to choose between Christocentrism and theocentrism' because one can know God only through Jesus and one can know Jesus only through God (Phan 2003:79). Such a theology, Song emphasizes, emerges from the stories of the Reign of God, which are the stories of the oppressed (Song 1999:65-66). For this reason, only "Jesus-oriented" Christology is a truly liberating Christology.

In his writings, Dupuis refers to Song's theology less often than to Pieris's. Nevertheless, he has a particular interest in Song's theology because Song's concept of the Reign of God will help Dupuis construct the model of "inclusive pluralism". Indeed, he agrees with Song on the idea that the Reign is much broader than the church (Dupuis 1997:343). Dupuis is also of the same opinion on the universality of the Reign. This universality is supported by Jesus' global vision in the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk 14:15-24, Mt 22:1-14); by 'Jesus' two healing miracles in favor of non-Jews, i.e., the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28) and the servant of the Roman centurion (Mt 8:5-13)', and by Jesus' intentional but unnecessary crossing of Samaria 'on his way back from Jerusalem to Sychar (Jn 4:1-42)' (Phan 2003:80).

With respect to the relationship between the Reign and the religions, Dupuis adopts Song's inclusive interpretation of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:17-26). Song argues that the people to whom Jesus preached his Sermon on the Plain included not only his followers and disciples, but also those from Judea, Jerusalem, and the region of Tyre and Sidon (Lk 6:17). This means that Jesus' message was inclusive and directed to all people (Song 1994:214-220). All these scriptural references become central in Dupuis's writings. However, while Dupuis is in general agreement with Song's theology of the Reign, he does not draw on Song's Christology and his 'sociopolitical interpretation of Jesus' message about the [Reign] of God' (Phan 2003:81). Moreover, Dupuis objects to Song's way of speaking about Jesus as the "prototype" or "archetype" of God's love, thus omitting the Christian profession in Jesus' divinity. For Dupuis, Jesus' unique "divine filiation" is essential for Christian theology and is the basis for the theology of religious pluralism (Dupuis 1991:195).

2.2.5 Doctrinal teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar magisterium
Along with the above Asian influences on Dupuis's "inclusive pluralism", one must add the conciliar and post-conciliar teachings of the Catholic Church on other religions. In this regard, Dupuis was rather disappointed. This can be seen in his statement that next to

the silences and limits of Vatican II's teaching on the religions, we may mention a certain disillusionment and dissatisfaction that can be felt upon rereading some council texts almost forty years later. It is true that the council must be situated in the context of its time; but it is likewise true that it should be possible to "receive" it today…. It cannot be denied that certain expressions adopted by the council sound bad in [the contemporary] context (Dupuis 2002a:66).

The above shows that Dupuis expected from the Council much more openness towards the other religions. Still, he often refers to the conciliar documents *Ad Gentes*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate*, mainly to show different implications, shades of meaning, and different perspectives towards religions and interreligious dialogue. He argues that the various conciliar documents, without taking any side on the disputed doctrinal issues, show only a certain limited interest in interreligious dialogue with the world religions. In Dupuis's opinion, this is no doubt a precedent in comparison to previous conciliar documents on the subject, for instance, those of the Council of Trent (1545-63). However, he is disappointed that the Council never formally recognized the other religious traditions as "channels" of salvation for their adherents (Dupuis 2002a:59-66). At the same time, he praises the Council that it visibly inclined in that direction by implication, especially where the Council acknowledged the existence in those traditions not only of human values but also of elements of "truth and grace" (AG 9).

Concerning the post-conciliar magisterium, Dupuis views its teachings on world religions as containing certain ambiguities. On the one hand, Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) and the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) holds strongly to the "fulfilment theory" as traditionally understood before the Council. This theory regards the "pagan" religions as distant preparations for the one, true, revealed religion which is Christianity (de Lubac 1946, Congar 1961). On the other hand, Pope John Paul II, in his encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) and *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986) seems to go beyond the "fulfilment" perspective by emphasizing the universal active presence of the Spirit of God in the other religious traditions. Thus, John Paul II seems to show a greater openness towards the other religions; in reality, however, he does not depart from the official church's position of "fulfilment". This is apparent in some of his recent pronouncements, for example the apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (1994) (Dupuis 2002a:68-72).

In Dupuis's view, only one church document "Dialogue and Proclamation" (1991) allows the affirmation that God's grace and salvation reaches adherents of the religious traditions within those traditions and through them (:72). It is evident, therefore, that any influence of the conciliar and post-conciliar church's teachings on Dupuis serves only to further his own theological reflection on world religions and interreligious dialogue.

2.3 The main concepts of Dupuis's inclusivist theology of religious pluralism

Understanding Dupuis – or any other thinker – requires understanding of the issues he confronted. These issues relate to such concepts as Trinitarian Christology, the history of salvation and revelation, the universality of Jesus' saving mediation, the other religions as conveyors of salvation, the existence of religious pluralism, the relationship between the Reign of God and the church, and the role of interreligious dialogue. Consequently, this part of the chapter surveys the main concepts which constitute the theology of "inclusive pluralism". All these themes will be developed more fully in the later stages of the study.

2.3.1 Trinitarian Christology as a theological model

In his theology of "inclusive pluralism", Dupuis seeks to go beyond choosing between Christocentrism and theocentrism as "paradigms" which mutually exclude each other and advocates a "Trinitarian Christology" as a model for a Christian theology of religions. He insists on such a radically Trinitarian model for a number of reasons. Firstly, this approach has the potential of preserving the essential unity of the salvific economy, while at the same time allowing for the legitimate diversity as manifested in plural religious history. Secondly, Dupuis's Trinitarian Christology allows him to see God as Logos and Spirit working "freely" in the world's religions, from the beginning to the end of history. At the same time, this effective presence is essentially related to the Incarnation of the Logos in Jesus Christ who is the sacrament of what God as Trinity is carrying forward in history. In Dupuis's view, this dialectic binds together inseparably Christocentrism and Trinitarian theocentrism. Thirdly, Dupuis believes that the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus Christ is God's definitive presence to humanity. But, at the same time, human limitation, historicity, and the particularity of Jesus and his message, opens up a space for a fuller appreciation of God in other historical revelations (religions) (Dupuis 2002a:157-159).

2.3.2 Dupuis's concept of the history of salvation and revelation

Dupuis's determination to receive the other traditions in their own right finds its strongest expression in his concept of the histories of salvation and revelation as one history. This single history consists of three stages: (1) cosmic or "general" revelation, (2) "special" revelation to Israel, (3) "special" Christian revelation. In order not to exclude extra-biblical religions from belonging to "special" revelation history; Dupuis speaks of a 'universal process of divine revelation which occurs through concrete, limited manifestations' (religions as media) (Dupuis 1997:329). Similarly, he insists that God's saving action is one, and at the same time, is multifaceted. Thus the relationship between Christianity and the other religions can no longer be viewed in terms of contradiction and

opposition, but in terms of relational interdependence. Christianity and the world religions together constitute the entirety of human-divine relationships (Dupuis 1997:204).

Moreover, in this one history of salvation and revelation, there is also place for sacred scriptures through which God reveals God-self in other religious traditions. On the one hand, God speaks through the decisive word in Jesus Christ and the prophets of the Old Testament; on the other hand, God reveals God's words to humanity through the prophets of the nations. Traces of God's words can be found in the sacred scriptures of the other religious traditions. This means that the word of Jesus Christ does not exclude other words present in scriptures of the world religions. Dupuis believes that the initial word of God was spoken before the Old Testament and the sacred scriptures of the nations contain such initial, hidden words of God; however, they are not of the same character as those of the Old and New Testaments. He insists on calling them divine as long as God speaks them through the Spirit. For this reason the books which contain those divine words deserve to be called "sacred scriptures" (:250-251).

2.3.3 Jesus Christ the universal Saviour

The Christological question is central to the current debate surrounding the theology of religions. Dupuis is aware that a response to the question concerning the traditional understanding of Jesus Christ is what divides the various theologians involved in the debate. The significance and the role of the other religious traditions in the salvation of their adherents, including the significance of their "saving figures", is linked with the understanding and interpretation of the person and the event of Jesus Christ. Consequently, for the theology of "inclusive pluralism", Dupuis chooses a "high" ontological Christology which recognizes the personal identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. At the same time, he rejects a "low" Christology, peculiar to theocentrism which questions and denies such affirmations as the divine sonship of Jesus Christ (:280-281).

A "High" Christology allows Dupuis to recognize the continuous presence and activity of the Word of God and the Spirit of God, affirm the plurality of ways of salvation, and recognize other saving figures in history. Furthermore, a "high" ontological Christology allows one to distinguish between "relative" and "singular" uniqueness and universality. "Relative" uniqueness refers to the original character of every person which makes him/her different from others. In the same way, "relative" universality refers to the universal influence of various religious figures or religious traditions on people that represent divine paths to salvation. "Singular" universality, on the other hand, expresses indirectly that Jesus Christ is the "constitutive universal Saviour". In this way Dupuis affirms the uniqueness and universality of Christ as "constitutive" but not "absolute". Consequently, the Christ event has salvific significance for the entire human family because all people are saved in Christ but

God also reaches some of humanity through the medium of their own religions (Dupuis 1997:282-283).

2.3.4 The world religions as "ways" of salvation

Dupuis's concept of the various religious traditions as "ways" to salvation refers to God's search for human beings and God's sharing with them God's divine life. In order to fulfill this purpose God provides paths to salvation which are present in other religious traditions. Generally, God reaches people and mediates God's saving grace to humanity throughout history in numerous ways. Firstly, God mediates his salvation through the inclusive presence in history of the mystery of Jesus Christ. Secondly, this mediation is accomplished through the universal power of the Logos active before the Christ event and after. Thirdly, God communicates God's self through the unbound action of the Spirit (:316-321). For Dupuis the world religions are therefore visible and social expressions of God's self communication to people which God established with humanity at various times (:223-234).

As such the religions can be described as representing 'true interventions and authentic manifestations of God in the history of peoples; they form integral parts of one history of salvation that culminates in the Jesus Christ-event' (:303). Nevertheless, while on the one hand, Dupuis recognizes the salvific role of the various religious traditions, on the other hand, he describes them as "an incomplete mode of mediation" in which the mystery of salvation is present in an implicit manner. This is in contrast to Christianity where the same mystery is present in an explicit way (:312). All of this indicates that Dupuis, while viewing the other religions as paths of salvation, strongly holds to Christianity as a unique way of mediating God's salvation.

2.3.5 The concept of the Reign of God and the church

Dupuis affirms a close connection between the Reign of God and the church, but at the same time, he insists on a distinction between them. He speaks of the Reign of God in history as the universal reality of salvation extending beyond the boundaries of the church, in which the members of the other religions share with Christians (Dupuis 1997:336-346). Thus, Dupuis rejects the doctrine that the Reign and the church coincide (even if there are different degrees of realization) and refuses to reduce other religions to the status of merely "natural" religions. In this way, Dupuis clearly rejects the "regnocentric paradigm" but also distances himself from the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.

On the one hand, Dupuis does not forget the close bond which exists between Christ and the church, or makes possible "separation" between the action of Christ and the action of the church. Yet, on the other hand, he makes a clear distinction between the person Jesus Christ and the church community,

a distinction which is consistent with the doctrine of the church as Mystical Body (the head and the body – Christ and church members). Generally, therefore, Dupuis opts for the model of the universality of the Reign of God and the sacramentality of the church in relation to the Reign through which the church is called to testify to the Reign, that is, to serve and to announce the Reign. Such a regnocentric perspective opens new horizons and offers a broader perspective for a theology of religions and of interreligious dialogue than does a directly ecclesiocentric approach (:353-356).

2.3.6 The concept of interreligious dialogue

The significance of Dupuis's view on interreligious dialogue lies in the fact that in the past dialogue did not belong to the work of evangelization. While the Council encouraged Christians to engage in dialogue with other believers (NA 2; GS 92), it did not state anywhere that dialogue was a part of the church's mission. If there was any value attached to interreligious dialogue, it was only in the sense that dialogue constituted the first contact with the others which in reality was called "pre-evangelization" (Dupuis 2002a:219; 1997:359; 2005:20). In his theology of "inclusive pluralism", Dupuis refuses to identify dialogue with the "first contact" which serves to prepare for converting other believers to Christianity. For him, the aims of dialogue and proclamation differ: dialogue seeks a deeper conversion of both partners towards God, while proclamation focuses on inviting others to become disciples of Jesus in the Christian church (Dupuis 1997:360-370). Still in respect of dialogue, Dupuis emphasizes that it cannot stop at the theoretical level but must focus on praxis linked with liberation. In this way interreligious dialogue not only takes forms of dialogue of life, theological exchange and of spiritual communion, but also becomes a concrete common action at social, cultural, and racial levels. The purpose of such a dialogue is to liberate humanity from all kinds of oppression.

2.3.7 A religious pluralism of principle

Dupuis refuses to reduce the existence of the various religious traditions merely to the various expressions in different cultures of the human search for God. Instead, he places the foundation of a religious pluralism "of principle" in the mystery of God's self-communication to the human family which governs the one but plural economy of salvation (:386-387). The reason is that God always communicated God's self to people throughout history. Consequently, the other religions have to contain at least traces of this God's divine search for them. This further means that the religions must be viewed as expressions of a positive divine will; they must exist "in principle".

2.4 Dupuis's difficulties with the Vatican
2.4.1 Beginning of the investigation

Dupuis's difficulties with the Vatican began shortly after publication of his main work on "inclusive pluralism" *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (1997). At the end of 1997, on 22 November, the Gregorian University organized a conference with the aim of presenting Dupuis's book to the public. Giuseppe Pittau, rector of the university, chaired the conference. Among invited guests, there was also present Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, the secretary of the Council for Interreligious Dialogue. During this event, Dupuis addressed the central question concerning the positive meaning of the plurality of religious traditions in God's plan for humanity. He also gave an historical overview of the Christian approach to other religions, arguing that religious pluralism was part of God's plan and that the various paths to salvation can be seen to converge in history (*The Tablet*, 21 November 1998:1550).

The same day, the Italian Catholic newspaper *L'Avvenire* published a very positive review of the book signed by Enzo Bianchi, the founder and prior of the Bose Community. Bianchi praised Dupuis for the important contribution which the book makes to a Christian theology of religions in the third millenium (Dupuis 1999b:211). A month before, on 27 October 1997, the Éditions du Cerf organized another presentation of Dupuis's work in Paris, at the Institut Catholique. On 8 October 1998, an ecumenical symposium on the book was organized in Venice. The same year, the book obtained an Award of the Catholic Press Association for theology in the USA (:211). The outcome of all the conferences, presentations and publications on the book led to one conclusion. *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*, which dared to explore in an original fashion some fundamental yet delicate theological issues, had raised serious and significant questions for the ongoing progress of theological science.

It came as a surprise, therefore, to find that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) had been investigating the views expressed in Dupuis's book. First, the Congregation had discussed Dupuis's book *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* on March 30 and April 4 1998, and expressed strong negative criticism towards it (O'Collins 2003c:20, König 2003:16). Second, the CDF met again on June 10, 1998, and voted for opening an investigation of Dupuis's book.[18] Dupuis was informed about the CDF's investigation of his work indirectly by his General Superior, Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach (O'Collins 2003c:20).

In the meantime, in April 1998, a very negative article in relation to *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* appeared in *L'Avvenire* written by one of the professors, Inos Biffi, who was teaching in Milan (:20). Biffi wrote that the fundamental affirmations of Dupuis's work were

unacceptable both from the theological point of view and from the perspective of the Christian faith (Dupuis 1999b:212). This was followed by another critique. On 18 July 1998, Giuseppe Rosa published a severe assessment of the book in the *Civiltà Cattolica*. Rosa argued that some of Dupuis's positions did not do full justice to the data of the Christian Tradition and, most of all, of the New Testament scriptures. Thus, he called Dupuis's concept of religious pluralism "problematic" and "provocative" (:212).

On October 2, 1998, the rector of the Gregorian University gave Dupuis copies of Cardinal Ratzinger's letter. The document contained major questions and accusations of the book with an invitation to reply to it within three months through the Jesuit Superior General, Peter Hans Kolvenbach (*The Tablet*, 21 November 1998:1550). Unfortunately, we may only guess at the questions for they never became public.[19] We may, however, speculate on the basis of the critique Dupuis received from his opponents that the questions related mainly to the universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ. They related especially to Dupuis's view on Christ as "universal" and "constitutive" but not "absolute" Saviour, and the Christ-event as "decisive" rather than "definitive". Another area of disagreement might have been "complementarity" between Christianity and other religions, religious pluralism "in principle", and other religious traditions as paths to salvation. In addition, Dupuis himself disclosed the CDF's main objections in an article "The truth will make you free". He said that he came under fire for allegedly separating the salvific work of Christ from the Church (Dupuis 1999b:222-224,228,250-255).[20]

The Congregation's letter did not prohibit Dupuis from teaching. It made clear, however, that Dupuis was not to speak openly about the contested points. Fr. Kolvenbach, his Superior General, recommended that Dupuis withdraw from giving a course on Christology at the Gregorian University the following semester as well as from a seminar which Dupuis was going to teach in October. The official aim of this recommendation was to give Dupuis more time to prepare a response to the CDF (O'Collins 2003c:20). The news about the CDF's investigation of Dupuis spread when the Gregorian told students that Dupuis would not be teaching that semester and gave the reason for it. The note was posted on the university notice board with an explanation attached. The Italian news agency *Adista* was one of the first in the field with details of the case, gathered from sources unconnected with Dupuis. From then on the case was public. Unfortunately, because of the institution of the investigations as well as its publicity, Dupuis was hospitalized for three weeks (:20).

2.4.2 In defence of Dupuis

Since Dupuis began his battle with the CDF, he found help and support from his brothers in the Society of Jesus. The General Superior, Fr. Kolvenbach, encouraged the Jesuits to a quiet involvement in the matter. Gerald O'Collins (an Australian Jesuit teaching at the Gregorian University) became Dupuis's strong advocate before the CDF. O'Collins accompanied Dupuis to his only visit with Cardinal Ratzinger at the Vatican and led him to signing a final compromise with the CDF (Kaiser 2003:227). While some Jesuits defended Dupuis, other Jesuits attacked him. The man who reported Dupuis to the CDF was also a Jesuit. Another Jesuit (Giuseppe Rosa), an editor of the Italian *Civiltà Cattolica* wrote a severe assessment of Dupuis's theology of religious pluralism (:228).

The French Dominicans were divided over Dupuis's concept of "inclusive pluralism". The Dominican community at Montpellier, after weeks of reading the book, invited Dupuis to discuss it. Afterwards, one member of the community, Claude Geffré, continued a valuable dialogue with Dupuis in numerous articles. Yet, the Dominicans of Toulouse began a vigorous theological attack on Dupuis's book, mostly though articles published in the *Revue Thomiste* in 1998, 2001, and 2002 (:228).

In December 12, 1998, *The Tablet* edited a letter by Gerald O'Collins entitled "In defense of Fr. Dupuis" which presented Dupuis's main theological themes in relation to the Pope's teachings on the world religions and interreligious dialogue. O'Collins pointed out the main sources of Dupuis's proposals. Most of the themes, which Dupuis developed at great length, come from the Pope's teaching itself. Among these themes are: the need for interreligious dialogue as opposed to a falsely tolerant pluralism; God as the only One who is truly absolute and the maternal face of God (*Dives in Misericordia* 1980); the living actuality of the divine self-revelation whose fullness will appear at the end of times (*Fides et Ratio* 2); a deep respect for all "the treasures of human wisdom and religion" (*Fides et Ratio* 31,72). O'Collins, therefore, concluded that to condemn Dupuis on those issues would be to 'condemn the Pope himself' (O'Collins 1998b:1650).

Further support for Dupuis came from the president of the Indian Bishops Conference, Archbishop Henry D'Souza of Calcutta. The Archbishop wrote a letter[21] in which he was seriously concerned about the investigation opened by the CDF. D'Souza stated that Dupuis was known for his faithfulness and pursuit of theological reflection in conformity with the Church's position (*The Tablet*, 21 November 1998:1550).

A more detailed article "In defence of Fr. Dupuis"[22] was written by Cardinal Franz König, the former archbishop of Vienna and an advocate of interreligious dialogue. The article was edited by *The Tablet* on January 16, 1999. In it, Cardinal König expressed his surprise that the CDF, without consulting Dupuis directly, had sent him a number of questions via the Jesuit General Superior asking for clarification of some points in his book.[23] The Cardinal expressed his disappointment that the public would easily view such a move on the part of the Congregation in negative terms. He further said: 'It implies that something about Fr Dupuis's book is not in order, and that the congregation may well suspect him directly or indirectly violating the Church's teaching' (König 1999:76). Moreover, Cardinal König also stated that the most important element was the human aspect. The CDF engages not only with books but also with their authors. In the case of Dupuis, according to König, the CDF accused 'a distinguished theologian who taught at a renewed university and had pledged himself to fidelity to the Church's teaching authority' (König 2003:17). The outcome was a deeply felt hurt for Dupuis, as well as shock, ill-health and depression; and all of this could have been avoided, in König's opinion, if a different approach had been applied (:17). The Cardinal wished that the Congregation had found better ways to serve the church more effectively in cases like Dupuis, in particular when it came to research which broke new ground. König stated:

> The members of the congregation, most of whom are Westerners, are, of course, very much afraid that interreligious dialogue will reduce all religions to equal rank. But this is the wrong approach for dialogue with the Eastern religions. It is reminiscent of colonialism, and smacks of arrogance. The Indian way of thinking is very different and we must learn to understand other sorts of spiritual life (1999:76).

This defense of Cardinal König was followed by an open letter written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, published in the same *Tablet* magazine. In the letter, Ratzinger invited Dupuis to dialogue on the sensitive issues. At the same time, Ratzinger expressed his astonishment that Cardinal König had raised such accusations against the Congregation (Ratzinger 1999:385). In response to the accusation that the Congregation had not consulted Dupuis on the investigation, Ratzinger responded that the Congregation had sent Dupuis a number of questions which was 'precisely the same as consulting him' (1999:385). In Ratzinger's view, this was done with discretion involving only Dupuis's superior. Moreover, the Congregation had no intention to harm the author's reputation by public questioning or accusations; and for this reason, the CDF 'attempted to initiate a strictly confidential written dialogue' (:385). If this action became public, it was not the Congregation's doing but because of someone who had the intention to help Dupuis by mobilizing public opinion against the Congregation. Such an irresponsible action had injured both the author and the Congregation (:385).

The Cardinal also challenged König's statement that the Congregation, by attempting a dialogue, was suspecting Dupuis of directly or indirectly violating the doctrine of the Church. In this regard, he asked several rethorical questions:

> Is dialogue with authors to be forbidden to us? Is the attempt to reach confidential clarification on difficult questions something evil? Is it not rather a way of striving to serve in a positive way the further development of faith and theology? (:385).

To the argument that the investigation might have been viewed as a form of colonialism and arrogance, that it was the result of fear that interreligious dialogue would place all the world's religious traditions at the same footing, Ratzinger responded:

> But can a Christian engaged in dialogue relinquish his conviction of faith that Christ is truly the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, the Incarnate Son of God, and that, therefore, there is something in Christianity that is unique and different from other religions? Is he being honest with himself and with others if he sets this conviction aside? Does he not then make a fiction out of the foundation of dialogue? Parenthetically, it is certainly not my understanding that Fr Dupuis wishes to make such a position the precondition for dialogue; for him, the uniqueness of Christ and thus the differences between religions are, if I understand correctly, essential elements of his thinking (:385).

Ratzinger concluded by saying that his 'hope is that in spite of these public controversies, the discussion with Fr Dupuis will come to a good conclusion, so that, in the end, it will serve the truth, the Church and all of us' (:385).[24]

2.4.3. The outcome of Dupuis's case

In the meantime, in February 1999, Dupuis again became ill and cancelled his trip to India and Japan to discuss his theology of "inclusive pluralism". After his recovery, Dupuis went to France at the invitation of the Dominicans at Montpellier and to Douai Abby in England to present his book (O'Collins 2003:21). Around this time, he was encouraged by a new book edited by a Roman biblical scholar, Giovanni Odasso, on world religions from a biblical perspective. Odasso's book provided a strong biblical argument which supported Dupuis in his belief that the various religious traditions belong to the one God's saving plan for the human family, a plan which had its source and fullness in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (O'Collins 2003:21).

In January 1999, Dupuis presented to the CDF his response to its major questions and accusations. He received a response from the CDF in July 1999. This response welcomed Dupuis's clarifications and, at the same time, presented a short list of points[25] with detailed propositions which were considered "erroneous or ambiguous" (*The Pope Speaks* 2001a:273). In November 1999, Dupuis submitted the sixty-page reply to the second document from CDF which had asked for further theological clarifications. In August 2000, Dupuis was invited for a meeting with Cardinal Ratzinger

scheduled for the 2nd of September 2000, a day before the publication of the declaration *Dominus Iesus*.[26] The meeting took place in the presence of Cardinal Ratzinger, Archbishop Bertone, Fr. Angelo Amato of the Salesian University, Fr. Gerald O'Collins and the Jesuit General Superior, Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach. Later O'Collins reported the following:

> The agenda was the text of a "Notification" about Dupuis's book, which contained eight positive propositions (e.g. that Jesus Christ is "the unique and universal mediator of salvation for humanity"), with accusations against the book following six of these prepositions. During the two-hour exchange, it became clear that the false opinions the "Notification" listed were not to be found in Dupuis's book; he could not retract what he had never held. There was never any argument about the eight positive propositions (2003c:22).

Another, a shorter version of the "Notification" was presented to Dupuis in November 2000 with the purpose of obtaining his signature (*The Pope Speaks* 2001a:274). Finally, the text of the "Notification" (in a modified form), signed by the Pope, was published in *Osservatore Romano* on February 27, 2001 and in the 2001 September/October issue of the Church Documents Bimonthly – *The Pope Speaks*.[27] In the text, we read that the CDF thanks Dupuis for his 'willingness to provide the necessary clarifications' and his 'desire to remain faithful to the doctrine of the Church and the teaching of the magisterium' (2001a:273). But the "Notification" also said that the book contains 'notable ambiguities and difficulties on important points, which could lead a reader to erroneous or harmful opinions' (:273).

In spite of this official statement on Dupuis's book, he was not asked to change anything in subsequent editions of it. However, the CDF asked Dupuis to include the text of "Notification" in any new edition or translation of the book (:274). After the notification was publicly announced, the Superior General, Fr. Kolvenbach issued a public statement in which he acknowledged the originality, seriousness and richness of Dupuis's research. He encouraged Dupuis to continue his pioneering work in the field of interreligious dialogue; it had opened new perspectives in the church's evangelizing mission for the next millennium (Alphonso 2003:117).

Dupuis continued his pioneering work although, at the age of 78, he retired officially from teaching. He continued, however, to write, give talks, and participate in conferences around the world. It was painful, however, for Dupuis that as long as he was under investigation, he found himself sidelined as a professor. For Dupuis, this seemed an irreparable blow to his standing as a scholar in an important new branch of theology.

2.5 Evaluation
2.5.1 Dupuis as a theologian and the main influences on his thought

Even from the above brief biography, Dupuis emerges as a theologian dedicated to the search for truth, unity, and dialogue among religions. Indeed, one of Dupuis's most striking contributions concerns the Indian church. Through his theological activity, his involvement in the issues of inculturation, his numerous publications, and through the *Vidyajyoti Journal*, Dupuis enriched the Indian church pastorally and theologically. In turn, the Asian religious context, theologies and theologians, official church teachings, and friendship with Abishiktananda had a meaningful impact on his method, his concept of interreligious dialogue, and other aspects of his theology of "inclusive pluralism". One must also point out that despite Dupuis's spending most of his life in India and immersing his theology in the Asian situation of massive poverty and religiousness he remained moderate in his approach to liberation issues in Asia.

This lack of interest in liberation issues in his theology might be viewed as a shortcoming. While Dupuis was well informed about them his theology called for more involvement in the most urgent social problems of the Indian church and society. We may only guess that this seeming lack of interest was a result of his more extensive focus on dialogue among religions than on the struggle between classes. Despite this limitation Dupuis has to be viewed as one of the very few theologians in the West who became sufficiently trained to engage in serious dialogue between the Hindu theological tradition and the Christian faith. His theological reflection in the Indian context equipped Dupuis to establish dialogue between Asian and Christian theologies which he continued even in his later theological career in Rome through maintaining close contacts with the Asian theological scene and through directing doctoral theses and other research on Indian and Asian themes at the Gregorian University.

2.5.2 Difficulties with the Vatican

The theological debate on delicate issues and difficult questions which Dupuis addressed in his book *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*, brought him into conflict with church authorities. His book became a cause of disagreement and a sign of contradiction. Dupuis's case teaches us that it is one thing to disagree with certain opinions or positions of a theologian at the level of theological discourse. It is another thing, however, to accuse a theologian of grave errors against the Christian faith. The former is undertaken for the sake of the common search for truth; it encourages theological debate, especially concerning difficult topics. The latter can prevent real progress in theological reflection and research by closing doors to dialogue and debate on important questions. The latter can also be the cause of great suffering on the part of steadfast theologians.

Apart from the negative outcome of Dupuis's case, there is also a positive side to his disagreement with the Vatican. The case revealed that Dupuis's prudent presence on the interreligious scene was a good example of providence at work in human affairs. In the dialogue between the world religions and Christianity, many believed that the church needed scholars who would find the good, the true and the beautiful in every religion. Dupuis was one of those scholars whom the church was lucky to have. His disagreement with the Vatican placed him into a group of those (in fact very few) pioneering theologians who helped to give Catholic theology much needed vitality. Those theologians not only brought vitality to the church, but also made the church more relevant to the needs of Christians who wanted to live in harmony with people of other faiths. They wanted to share with members of other religions the same earnest wishes to make this world – a better world.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to introduce Dupuis as a theologian, writer and Christian who, through his theological works, seriously engaged and contributed to the present state of dialogue with the world religions. In addition, this analysis pointed out that, in fact, Dupuis is an author of one model which caused controversy but at the same time explored new grounds in a Christian theology of interreligious dialogue. The main concepts of "inclusive pluralism" return in each of Dupuis's works. Nevertheless, as it will be presented in the following chapters, these concepts move the reflection on the theology of religions forward. The next chapter will elaborate a historical-theological context out of which Dupuis's theology of "inclusivist pluralism" emerges.

---

[1] At the Gregorian University, Dupuis studied for his doctorate with another Jesuit, Avery Dulles. See "World religions and the New Millennium", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honour of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 3. Later Dulles became a widely recognized and influential theologian, an author of many books. His most representative works are *Models of the Church* and *Models of Revelation*. A few years ago, he was appointed a Cardinal in the Catholic Church.

[2] *The Christian Faith* relates to previous editions of the Church's official teaching. In 1938 Joseph Neuner and Heinrich Roos published *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung* which was a collection of major doctrinal documents of the Roman Catholic Church. Later (1961) Karl Rahner added subsequent editions to the above collection of documents and in 1971 Karl-Heinz Weger took over the work and continued it until the end of his theological activities. See Vorgrimler, H, *Karl Rahner: His life, thought and works*. Translated by Quinn, E (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 47. Although this German work had been translated into many languages, Dupuis and Neuer decided to prepare a fresh collection of the church's documents omitting irrelevant texts and adding new material mostly from the conciliar teaching of the Second Vatican Council as well as significant texts from modern teaching and theology. *The Christian Faith* consists of 23 chapters and has grown in length from 711 pages (1973) to 1135 pages (2001). See "Preface", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), xi-xii.

[3] The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is a congregation of the Roman Curia originally established by Pope Paul III in 1542. Another Pope, Sixtus V, changed its name to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Inquisition (1588) and then it became the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (1908). In 1967, Pope Paul VI renamed this congregation as the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the purpose of promoting and safeguarding of faith and morals. See McBrien, R P, *Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1995).

[4] Peter C Phan argues that Dupuis's major works show differentiated influence by Asian theologies and Asian context on him. The least influence is visible in his earlier work entitled *Who do you say I am? Introduction to Christology* (1994).

The greatest influence of Asian theologies is evident in *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions* (1991). Dupuis's main work which brought him theological recognition, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (1997) lies somewhere in-between. See Phan, P C, "Jacques Dupuis and Asian theologies of religious pluralism", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honour of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 83.

[5] In postulating a combination of two methods deductive and inductive in a theology which he calls "hermeneutical theology" Dupuis is not entirely original but follows another Catholic theologian Claude Geffré, who appropriately defined "hermenutical theology" as 'a new act of interpretation of the event of Jesus Christ' (Geffré, C, *The Risk of interpretation: On being faithful to the Christian tradition in a non-Christian age* [New York: Paulist Press, 1987], 50).

[6] In Hinduism, Sanskrit: अवतार, IAST A*vatāra* ("descent") means the incarnation of a deity in human or animal form to counteract some particular evil in the world. The term usually refers to the 10 appearances of Vishnu: Matsya (fish), Kurma (tortoise), Varaha (boar), Narasimha (half man, half lion), Vamana (dwarf), Parasurama (Rama with the axe), Rama (hero of the *Ramayana* epic), Krishna (the divine cowherd), Buddha, and Kalkin (the incarnation yet to come). See *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Microsoft Edition, 2002).

[7] Advaita (Sanskrit: "Nondualism" or "Monism") is one of the most influential of the schools of Vedanta, an orthodox philosophy of India. It has its historical beginning with the 7th-century thinker Gaudapada who argues that there is no duality; the mind, awake or dreaming, moves through maya ("illusion"); and only nonduality (advaita) is the final truth. See *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Microsoft Edition, 2002).

[8] In Hindusim, Sannyasi (Renouncer) is a religious ascetic, one who has renounced the world, having achieved the fourth ashrama, or stage, of life. The name Sannyasi also specifically designates an ascetic who pays particular allegiance to the god Siva, who is sometimes known as "the great ascetic". See *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Microsoft Edition, 2002).

[9] Ashram – a religious retreat esp. of a Hindu sage. See *Religions of the world* (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1995).

[10] Upanishads are Hindu esoteric, mystical and philosophical writings grouped in the Aranyakas, which are part of the Veda. The underlying concern of the Upanishads is the nature of Brahman, the universal soul; and the fundamental doctrine expounded is the identity of *atman,* or the innermost soul of each individual, with Brahman. Other topics include the nature and purpose of existence, various ways of meditation and worship, eschatology, salvation, and the theory of the transmigration of souls. See *Encyclopedia Encarta* (Microsoft Edition, 1996).

[11] Dupuis expressed his interest in creating a similar ecumenical ashram which would be a continuation of *Jyotiniketan* enlarged, however, by Roman Catholic members. He wanted to call it an "Ashram Seminary". He thought about such a place as a center for priestly formation run in the spirit of Indian ashrams. It was suppose to be a centre of religious dialogue for the clergy trained in a new fashion with liturgical innovations and new elements of inculturation. This new project, however, went beyond the allowed liturgical innovations and the process of inculturation and met the disapproval of Indian bishops. Only years later in 1978, this project found its realization after the report of an Inculturation Commission was issued in the Indian church. The Jesuits began at that time to organize regional theological and formation centers which began to be much closer to the people. This project has been continued until now. See Gispert-Sauch, G, "Jacques Dupuis and Swami Abhishiktananda", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 147.

[12] After 1969, Dupuis continued his contact with Abhishiktananda. When the St. Mary's Theological Faculty moved from Kurseong to Delhi in 1972, Dupuis persuaded Abhishiktananda to deliver to students at the Faculty some lectures on Christology and the Trinity from the Indian perspective. Unfortunately, Abhishiktananda's heart attack and death in July 1973 made it impossible. See Gispert-Sauch, G, "Jacques Dupuis and Swami Abhishiktananda", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 149.

[13] Gispert-Sauch says that thirty years ago it was very bold for a theologian to use the language of *advaita* in relation to the Trinity. Dupuis may have been criticized for using this language by some of the Faculty of Krurseong who were reluctant 'towards the theological ventures of the French monk' (Gispert-Sauch, G, "Jacques Dupuis and Swami Abhishiktananda", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003], 147).

[14] Ramana Maharshi was born on December 30, 1879, Madurai, Madras state, India. He died on April 14, 1950 in Tiruvannamalai. His *original name* was *Venkataraman Aiyer*. He was a Hindu philosopher and yogi called "Great Master", "Bhagavan" (the Lord), and "the Sage of Arunachala", whose position on monism (the identity of the individual soul and the creator of souls) and *maya* (illusion) parallels that of Sankara (AD 700–750). His original contribution to yogic philosophy is the technique of *vicara* (self-"pondering" inquiry). See *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Microsoft Edition, 2002).

[15] In India, Sadhus and Swami are religious or holy men. Sadhu signifies any religious ascetic or holy man. Swami usually refers to an ascetic who has been initiated into a specific religious order and, in recent years, has come to be applied particularly to monks of the Ramakrishna Mission. See *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Microsoft Edition, 2002).

[16] Aloysius Pieris (1934-) is a Sri Lankan Jesuit. He is the first proponent and architect of the ethical bridge to interreligious dialogue. Pieris's theology is contained in his three major works: *An Asian theology of liberation* (1988),

Love meets wisdom: A Christian experience of Buddhism (1988), and *Fire and water: Basic issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity* (1996).

[17] Choan-Seng Song (1929-) is a Presbyterian from Taiwan who however spent most in his life in Europe and the USA. The most noteworthy works of Song include *Third-eye theology: Theology in formation in Asian settings* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982); *The compassionate God* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982); *Tell us our names: Story theology from an Asian perspective* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984); *Theology from the womb of Asia* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1986); his Christological trilogy: *Jesus the crucified people* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); *Jesus and the Reign of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); *Jesus in the power of the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); and *The believing heart: An invitation to story theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999). For a presentation of Song's theology see Phan, P C, "Jesus the Christ with an Asian face" (*Theological Studies* 57, 1996), 417-421.

[18] The first and second version of the notification were both seen only by Fr. Kolvenbach, the general Superior, Jacques Dupuis, and Gerald O'Collins, Dupuis's theological adviser. Later, according to Cardinal König, these versions were deposited in the CDF's archives. See König, F, "Let the spirit breathe", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 16.

The only officially published notification on the book *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* states that '[after] a preliminary study of the book…the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith decided to proceed to a comprehensive examination of the text by means of its ordinary procedure, in accordance with Chapter 3 of the "Regulations for Doctrinal Examination"' ("Religious pluralism and the uniqueness of Christ: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's notification on the book 'Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism', January 21, 2001" [*The Pope Speaks* 46/5, 2001], 273).

[19] Even Cardinal Ratzinger's response to Cardinal König published in *The Tablet* avoids engaging in any issue involved in CDF's investigation. Ratzinger said: 'I do not want to take a position here on the substantial issues in the discussion with Fr Dupuis, since, for my part, following the regulations of the congregation, I feel bound to confidentiality which they prescribe' ("Cardinal Ratzinger replies" [*The Tablet*, 13 March 1999], 385).

[20] Dupuis provides a discussion of this criticism and a response to it in the above-mentioned article.

[21] Fragments of this letter were published in *The Tablet* on 21st of November 1998. Archbishop Henry D'Souza wrote: 'Well, I do not think you will have much difficulty in explaining your position. However, I am worried over the fall-out. No theologian will be wanting to write his thoughts, if this is the approach. He who steals my purse steals trash, he who steals my name steals all I have…. You have been known for your orthodoxy and steady pursuit of theological reflection in conformity with the Church's teaching. It is a pity that you have had to stop teaching in order to defend yourself…. On the one hand there is reaffirmation of inclturation and the need to be open to God's presence in the world and in other faiths and the teaching of other religions. And on the other hand, there is a fear that any thought which would not be stated in the same words as in the past becomes suspect…. You remain in my prayers, and perhaps we have to pray also for those who still build walls around the faith and rob it of the rich insights which it can get from the sharing and interchange with Spirit's presence outside' (*The Tablet*, 21 November 1998:1550).

[22] Another similar article on Dupuis's case by Franz Cardinal König entitled "Let the spirit breathe" appeared in the April 7, 2001 issue of *The Tablet*. Later, in 2003, this article was reprinted and appeared as a chapter in a book dedicated to Dupuis entitled *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*, edited by Daniel Kendall and Gerald O'Collins. These two articles in defence of Jacque Dupuis give a holistic view of Dupuis's difficulties with the Vatican and for this reason they are quoted in this section simultaneously.

[23] The purpose of the idea of informing general superiors, in cases when the members of religious orders were to be investigated, was to enable their entire orders to come to their help. See König, F, "Let the spirit breathe", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honour of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 16.

[24] After publication of this riposte Cardinal König phoned Cardinal Ratzinger and had a conversation, as he reports. They agreed that dialogue with Dupuis must remain a priority. See Ratzinger, J, "Cardinal Ratzinger replies" (*The Tablet*, 13 March 1999), 385.

[25] The list of points 'concerned the interpretation of the sole and universal salvific mediation of Christ, the unicity and completeness of Christ's revelation, the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit, the orientation of all people to the Church, and the value and significance of the salvific function of other religions' (*The Pope Speaks* [46/5, 2001], 273-274).

[26] The declaration *Dominus Iesus* was issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in August 6, 2000 and engaged in Christ's unique and universal impact as Saviour. The CDF stated that the declaration was published because of tendencies in some circles to undermine the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church. According to the CDF, the main purpose of the declaration was to protect essential truths of the Catholic faith. See *The Pope Speaks* (vol. 46/5), 33-52. In reality, many Christian churches and some representatives of the world religious traditions began to view *Dominus Iesus* as a step backwards in the ecumenical movement and interreligious dialogue.

[27] In addition, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a Commentary on the Notification on *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*, by Jacques Dupuis. See *The Pope Speaks* (46/5, 2001), 277-282.

Chapter Three: The historical-theological context from which Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism" emerges

Introduction

In recent decades the most spectacular shift in theological reflection has taken place in Christian theology of religions. There are several reasons for the shift in focus. The first is the rise of historical consciousness and a new theological understanding of religious pluralism in the world which forces Christian theology to re-evaluate its view on world religions. The second is the challenge of inculturation. All religions, including Christianity are culturally conditioned and as Christianity moves from Western to Asian, African, and Latin American cultural forms of expression, it is faced with the challenge of religious diversity. These factors give rise to new questions concerning the relationship between Christianity and the religions. Theologians representing different theological views have proposed various answers, some more satisfying than others.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the historical-theological context out of which Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism" emerged. This, however, cannot be done without presenting the various responses to the phenomenon of religious diversity and the place of Jesus Christ and Christianity in the entire spectrum of religions. Thus, this analysis begins by introducing an *exclusivist* position on world religions in Protestantism and Roman Catholicism over the centuries. Later, it reflects on *inclusivism*, describing numerous factors which contributed to a positive change of attitudes towards other believers in the main line Christian churches. It will be seen that inclusivism as a theological model is particularly associated with Jacques Dupuis and other contemporary Christian theologians. Finally, this analysis engages in the current theological debate among the *pluralist* theologians who place the religions on the same level as Christianity, viewing them as equal paths to salvation.

3.1 A general introduction to a historical overview of various approaches to religions

In a current theology of religions it has been a common practice among theologians to distinguish three approaches to other religions: *exclusivism*, *inclusivism*, and *pluralism* and in parallel three basic perspectives of *ecclesiocentrism*, *Christocentrism*, and *theocentrism* (Lane 1999:151). Other typologies, both interesting and innovative but at the same time very complex, have been proposed. Paul Knitter proposed one such typology in his book *Introducing theologies of religions* (2002).[1] Knitter distinguishes a "Replacement" model (*exclusivism*), a "Fulfilment" model (*inclusivism*), and a "Mutuality" and an "Acceptance" model (*pluralism*). Other theologians such as Gavin D'Costa, Joseph DiNoia, Roger Haight opt for more flexible categories. They argue that the traditional

distinction between *exclusivism*, *inclusivism*, and *pluralism* is no longer useful. It is "wordy" and "dysfunctional" (Haight 1997:272) and hardly advances the dialogue between religions. Similarly Joseph DiNoia expresses his criticism by saying that this threefold 'typologyzing obscures the more basic issue posed by current circumstances of religious interaction: how to affirm the universality of the Christian dispensation without sacrificing its particularity' (DiNoia 1992:180). In addition, the traditional typology fails 'to recognize the religious other as *other*, not as a mere outsider to, reflection, extension, or unwitting member of, one's own tradition (e.g. "non-Christian")' (Tilley 1999:323).[2] The entire debate indicates that there is a real need for moving forward and constructing new categories which would be better suited in expressing the diversity of numerous approaches to the theology of religions.

Despite this real call for a new typology, the threefold approach of *exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism* continues to prevail. The reason for this is that the three fundamental and mutually incompatible perspectives have dominated the entire debate on religions for decades. This is also one of the reasons that this analysis will refer to the threefold perspective of *exclusivism-ecclesiocentrism*, *inclusivism-Christocentrism*, *pluralism-theocentrism*. Moreover, Jacques Dupuis himself in his proposals, which are the subject of this investigation, uses this traditional category. However, while discussing the pluralistic model I will refer to Paul Knitter's typology which distinguishes two models in *pluralism*, "mutuality" and "acceptance" (Knitter 2002). Knitter's typology seems to capture more adequately the real diversity of the theological debate on world religions within the pluralistic perspective itself.

Turning to the first religious model which is *exclusivism*, one needs to emphasize that its main claim is that only those who as Christians can be saved. According to *exclusivism,* Christianity is meant to replace all other religions. Nowadays, this is mainly the position of Evangelical Christianity, especially those Christians who consider themselves fundamentalists. It is also the belief of Protestant and Catholic fundamentalist groups (Huang 1997:197). While *exclusivism* emphasizes the idea of Christianity replacing the other religions, *inclusivism* sees Christianity rather as a "fulfilment" of the other religious traditions. In general, *inclusivism* gives equal attention to two essential Christian convictions. Firstly, that God's love is universal and therefore reaches other believers. Secondly, that God's love is particular and is made visible in Jesus. While *exclusivism* is characteristic of Evangelical Christianity, *inclusivism* is the practice of the main line Christian churches: the Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Anglican, Greek Orthodox, and Roman Catholic. Among proponents of the inclusivist perspective are Anthony Bloom, Gavin D'Costa, Jacques Dupuis, Walter Kasper, Hans Küng, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Karl Rahner, John

Sanders, David Tracy, Rowan Williams, and others (Huang 1997:199). The inclusivist perspective can be found not only among theologians of the main line Christian churches but also among theologically informed Christian laity in those churches. In general, these informed Christians believe that the other religions do contain some values and God is present in them. Hence, Christians need to dialogue with them because these religious traditions have the potential to enrich Christianity just as Christianity has the potential to enrich them.

This analysis will focus mainly on the church which first developed *inclusivism*: the Roman Catholic Church. It might be found surprising that this church, which is often slow to accept some innovations already accepted in other churches, should be at the forefront of new theological thought. This is not to say that inclusivist theology is not present in other main line Christian churches. It is rather that the history of Roman Catholic attitudes towards other religions is very complex and facilitates an understanding of how the inclusivist perspective developed over the centuries.

Another school of theology known as *pluralism* provides a different answer to the question of how "others" are saved. *Pluralism* is a modern view of the world religions claiming that there are many paths leading to the same God who reveals God-self in many different ways. Each one should therefore walk one's own path as devotedly as possible in order to be saved (Tilley 1995:158). In other words, pluralist theologians insist that salvation is possible in and through a variety of independent and more or less equally valid religious traditions.[3] Pluralists also consider themselves theocentrists. We saw that *inclusivism* places Christ and Christianity at the center of the religious universe. Other religions evolve around this center and find salvation and fulfilment only through Jesus Christ who is superior to any other religious figure. Pluralists, on the contrary, place God rather than Christ 'at the center and Christ is reverenced and valued as one of the many saviour figures together with them, revolving around the one God' (Huang 1997:202). This means that there might be other saviours and revealers besides Jesus Christ, and Christianity is just one among many great world religions through which people can relate and communicate with the Divine (Knitter 1987a:225). Moreover, while the inclusivist model usually emphasizes Jesus' particularity, the pluralist model emphasizes God's universal love and presence in other religions. The main concern of the pluralist model is therefore how to create a genuine dialogue with other religions and remain faithful to the Gospel. Proponents of *pluralism* consider dialogue as an ethical imperative to love one's neighbor but also to be ready to listen to other believers, respect them and learn from them. Consequently dialogue is viewed as a relationship of "mutuality", a "mutual" conversation where partners to dialogue are open to learn from each other and possibly change.

Just like *inclusivism*, *pluralism* is characteristic of the main line Christian churches. Representatives of *pluralism* include theologians such as Mark Heim, John Hick, Roger Haight, Gordon Kaufman, Paul Knitter, Raymond Panikkar, Aloysius Pieris, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Stanley Samartha, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, and others (Huang 1997:201). Moreover, the pluralist model is complex and diverse, and includes various approaches (also called bridges) to other religions and interreligious dialogue. Thus, one may distinguish the historical-philosophical approach of John Hick, the theological-mystical approach of Raimon Panikkar, the ethical-practical approach of Aloysius Pieris, and the "acceptance" approach of Mark Heim (Knitter 2002).[4]

3.2 A historical overview of *exclusivism* in a Christian theology of religions
3.2.1 *Exclusivism* in Evangelical Christianity[5] and Protestantism[6]

In order to understand the historical context of *exclusivism* in Evangelical Christianity one needs to look at the background of Karl Barth's life (1886-1968), work, and theology. Barth's active ministry dates back to the 1920s and 1930s which was a time of new ideas emerging from science and the study of "oriental religions". In his theology, Barth tried to adapt Christian faith to the humanism of the Enlightenment and to show the existent coherence between human experience and Jesus' message, but he did not succeed. Barth noticed however that the new liberal theology of his time touched neither his nor people's hearts and he gradually became disillusioned with liberalism (Knitter 2002:23). In spite of the support of liberal theology, people were unable to commit themselves to the Christian message, even when such commitment was so necessary; at a time of evil embodied in the tragedy of the First World War (1914-1918) (Scott 1971:131).

This disappointment with liberal theology led Barth to further investigate how to overcome evil in the world and enable Christians to become real followers of Jesus Christ. With time, through his sermons and his revolutionary classic works entitled *The Epistle to the Romans* and *Church dogmatics*, Barth changed the course of Protestant theological thought in the Western world (Knitter 2002:24). His message, based on the message of the Gospel and of St. Paul, was that people could achieve salvation not by themselves but together with God if they stepped back and let God be active in their lives (Barth 1956 1/2:295-300). Barth's message found its expression in the "alones" (*sola scriptura, sola gracia, sola fide*) which continue to inspire Protestant Christianity even to this day.

Assessing the human condition in the world, Barth concludes that, in reality, any religion should be regarded as unbelief (Barth 1956 1/2:299-300). Because of religion, therefore, people are unable to trust God and invite God, in Jesus Christ, into their lives. Because of religion people try to be saved through their own words, beliefs, rituals, and laws. Thus, religion becomes a human and not a divine

invention (Scott 1971:134). In reality, God enters human life to save people not through their "works" of religion but through God's personal gift of *grace*. Barth's negative evaluation of religion referred not only to world religions but also to Christianity itself. Christianity as a religion with its theology, worship, church structure, morality and ethics obscures the Divine and becomes idolatrous and self-righteous (Knitter 2002:25-26). Thus, Christianity was essentially the same as any other religion. However, what made Christianity a true religion among all others was the fact that Christianity knew that it was a false religion and that it was saved through Jesus Christ (Barth 1956 1/2:325-326). For Barth, therefore, the privileged place of Christianity had little 'to do with Christianity as a religion [but it had] everything to do with Jesus Christ' (Knitter 2002:26). At this point Barth used the analogy of the sun. In the midst of all the false religions, Christianity is the only false religion upon which the sun of Jesus Christ shines all the time. Hence, one can easily predict Barth's verdict on Christian relationship with other religions. This relationship has to be exclusive (:26).

Although Barth's theology was radical, he encouraged Christians to respect the good will and sincerity of other believers in their search for God. He also fully respected the religious freedom of adherents of other religions. However, because of the exclusive presence of Jesus Christ in Christianity, whom one could know only by *faith* and *grace* alone, in other religions there was no revelation and no saving grace. Dialogue with other religions, therefore, could not make any sense and in reality was impossible. All that Christians could do was to proclaim the Gospel and thus allow the light of Christ to replace 'the darkness which existed without him' (:26).[7]

Christians, who approve of Barth's theology of religions, maintain that they are simply faithful to the Gospel which says that Jesus Christ is the only means of God's salvation. Jesus is the *only* absolute Saviour without whom people cannot escape their sinful predicament. Consequently, representatives of this "radical" *exclusivism* view other religions as of little value or as without the presence of God in them. Religions are entirely human inventions (:27). They have 'no role in the divine program [of salvation]' (Grenz 1994:51). In theological terms, they contain neither revelation nor salvation. The only kind of dialogue which Christians can establish with other religions is to learn to know them better in order ultimately to replace them with Christianity.

This "radical" or "traditional" *exclusivism* however seems to be a harsh assessment of the other religious traditions, and many Christian theologians opt for a more embracing, open, ecumenical, and moderate position. To this group of theologians belong Carl Braaten, Millard Erickson, Harold Netland, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Clark Pinnock, John Sanders and Paul Tillich. In reality, their theology constitutes a step forward from *exclusivism* and is often regarded as an inclusivist approach

to religions. These theologians' basic criticism of "radical" *exclusivism* is that it lacks recognition of the very real presence of God in other religious traditions (Knitter 2002:33). Thus, these theologians recognize and affirm a genuine revelation of God in and through other religions which is often called "original revelation" (Tillich 1968/1:140-142) or more commonly "general revelation" (Brunner 1980:113-132). The term "original" or "general" revelation means that there is an authentic presence of God within human beings and within structures of the world religious traditions. In addition, the different religious communities represent more than merely groups of people engaging in fundamental questions which concern their existence. They 'represent ways in which God gives answers and reaches' people (Knitter 2002:34).

These Protestant theologians find their support in Paul's message to the Romans (Rom 1:20; 2:15), in Paul's speech to the Athenians (Acts 17:27), and especially in John's announcement that the Word of God made flesh in Jesus was in the world from the beginning, giving life to the world and 'this life was the light of all people' (John 1:1-14). Consequently, Paul Tillich confirms what the Bible positively states about God's communication to all people: that they experience God's presence when they find themselves reached by "an Ultimate Concern", which gives an answer to the question of the meaning of their lives (Tillich 1968/1:153-155). Wolfhart Pannenberg points to concrete events of history as the locus for God's speaking to humanity. Thus, Pannenburg argues that the history of religions is 'the history of the appearing of the divine mystery presupposed in the structure of human existence…' (Pannenberg 1971:112; 1968:3-21,125-158). Hence, for Tillich and Pannenberg these religions are enriched by God's divine presence that speaks to other believers through their own religious traditions (Knitter 2002:34-35).

On this basis, one would expect that the next logical step would be to recognize the world religions as certain "paths" leading to God and salvation. This is however not the case. While Pannenberg, Tillich and others do positively acknowledge the presence of God's revelation in other religions, they hesitate to admit that there is salvation in them (:36). In other words, they acknowledge that God speaks through other religious traditions, but they cannot recognize that God also brings other believers to salvation, that is, to unity with God within them (Shenk 1996:117-120). These theologians base their argument on the lack of evidence for such recognition in the New Testament.

Erickson, Braaten and Pannenberg claim that in the Scriptures there are no people who became true believers by responding to "general revelation" alone which 'is totally insufficient as a vehicle for salvation' (Erickson 1996:158). "General revelation" is insufficient because of the "ontological necessity" and the "epistemological necessity" of Christ. The "ontological necessity" implies salvation brought about by Jesus Christ and only by him. After the "fall of humanity" caused by

Adam and Eve, God bridges the gap between God's self and humanity in Jesus through whom people can reach the Divine. For this reason it is only by a real and personal contact with Jesus that people can be united with God, that is, saved (Braaten 1992:74-78). The "epistemological necessity" means that only in Christ, can people realize that they are saved by faith. Hence, salvation is not simply a deep experience of unity with God or a sense of inner peace and self-fulfilment but it is unity with Christ (Knitter 2002:37-38). Consequently, in order to be "saved", to know and experience God's love and presence, people have to somehow encounter Christ and this usually takes place through the proclamation of the Gospel. Without the Gospel the world religions cannot bring God's revelation to fruition even if they are viewed as bearers of this revelation (Braaten 1992:78).

The question which arises in this context concerns the possibility of interreligious dialogue. It has already been mentioned that "radical" *exclusivism* does not find anything in other religions which would constitute a basis for such dialogue. Nevertheless, Pannenberg, Tillich, Erickson and others speak of interreligious dialogue as a way to sensitivity, courtesy, and respect. Whatever the state of salvation of other believers, they are also children of God, and Christians are called to love them.[8] In such a situation, interreligious dialogue focuses mainly on the exchange of information about one another to correct false ideas about each other and to eradicate prejudice, mistrust, and conflict. Such a dialogue might also engage in topics which relate to social, environmental, or political concerns resulting in common action in this regard (Knitter 2002:40-41).

It is evident, in Protestant theology, that a relationship between Christianity and the world religions is possible; however, the role of religions is to prepare the way for the Gospel. They generate questions and indicate certain directions which in fact only Jesus Christ can answer and guide.

3.2.2 *Exclusivism* in Roman Catholicism

Exclusivism in the Roman Catholic Church relates to ecclesiocentrism expressed in the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Originally, this axiom did not relate to the members of other religions. It was meant for members of the Christian church (Sullivan 1992:22-23). It was believed that those who intended to leave the church risked losing their eternal life. The declaration is usually linked with Cyprian (210-258) and Fulgentius of Ruspe (468-533) and also with Origen (185-254) and Augustine (354-430). Concerning Origen's position on non-Christians, he remained ambiguous in his theology of salvation outside the church. On the one hand, Origen supported the Logos theology of Justin in which the Word of God was present in human beings. On the other hand, he believed that God's salvation existed only in the church, and that outside of it, no one could be saved (Dupuis 1997:87).

St. Augustine disagreed with Cyprian, who taught that baptism outside the church was invalid. The matter in dispute was the efficacy of baptism in the conventional accepted forms, when it was administered by heretics. Cyprian's rigid stand developed as a response to Pope Stephen I's declaration (255) that baptism by heretics was valid if administered according to the institution either in the name of Christ or of the Holy Trinity. This was the official view of the church. Cyprian, believing that outside the church there was no true baptism, regarded that by heretics null and void, and baptized, as if for the first time, those who joined the church. More than a century later, in his controversy with the Donatists, Augustine argued that although baptism by heretics had value, it did not convey the gift of salvation. Thus, those baptized outside the church (including tribes in Africa of which Augustine had heard, and to whom the Gospel had not yet been preached) were excluded from salvation (Dupuis 1997:90-91).

Later, through his writings and preaching, Augustine began to emphasize that people could only be saved by grace. His theology of grace was mainly influenced by his reading of St. Paul and his personal experiences of a loose lifestyle before conversion. This was the reason for his strong insistence on grace without which people in this life and in the next were entirely lost. Moreover, looking at the "barbarian" tribes[9] who were fighting against the Roman Empire and the church, Augustine clearly saw in them the example of this lost humanity. Hence he came to the conclusion that God's saving grace could be found only within the church and not beyond it. Nevertheless, in this way he 'leaned heavily toward the pessimistic understanding of salvation for those living beyond the juridical borders of explicit membership in the visible church' (Hillman 1989:29).

Fulgentius of Ruspe, Augustine's faithful follower, confirmed the axiom in its rigorist form and attributed it to "pagans", Jews, heretics, and schismatics.[10] Later, when Christianity became the official religion of the empire, other Church Fathers such as St. Ambrose, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Chrysostom, continued to apply this exclusivist declaration both to Jews and "pagans" who had failed to become Christians (Dupuis 1997:89).

In general, from the fifth century onwards the axiom was applied exclusively to other believers. Thus, the church was saying that this part of humanity, which did not belong to the church, was lost forever. In the Middle Ages *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* was directed mainly towards Muslims, who, besides the Jews, were the only believers known to Christians. An exception to this belief was found in the positive attitude towards Muslims found in the letter of Pope Gregory VII to Anzir, Muslim King of Mauritania (1076). The letter stressed that both Christians and Muslims worshiped the same God, creator and ruler of the universe, but in different ways (McBrien 1981:274, Dupuis 1997:102-103). However, in the Middle Ages, Muslims began to occupy the "Holy Land" and they

represented a real threat for Europe. This made the situation even worse. Christians continued to regard Muslims as not just other believers but as political and military enemies (Hillman 1989:29-30). Hence, instead of interreligious dialogue, the world began to witness the Crusades and the "holy wars". In such circumstances, the exclusivist declaration was emphasized even more strongly.

From this moment on, the axiom had gradually found its way into official documents issued by the teaching authorities of the Catholic Church (Dupuis 1997:86,92). The declaration extra *ecclesiam nulla salus* was not only heard from pulpits or teaching cathedrals but also appeared in solemn and official declarations of bishops, popes, and universal councils. Thus, the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) repeated the axiom adding a further restriction "Outside the church, no salvation *at all*" (Sullivan 1992:66). Pope Boniface VIII in his bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302) repeated the same teaching. The most rigid formula on the necessity of the church for salvation was expressed in the Decree for the Copts of the General Council of Florence (1442). The Decree stated:

> (The Holy Catholic Church) firmly believes, professes and preaches that "no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans", but also Jews, heretics or schismatics, can be partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the "eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" *(Mt 25.41)*, unless before the end of their life they are received into it (ND 1005).

However, before the Council, the first positive change of this rigid attitude towards other believers was evident in the theology of Raymond Lull (1232-1316). In his writings, Lull acknowledged a possibility of one common faith in God existing amongst Christians, Jews and Muslims. Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1461) further developed this aspect of Lull's theology. He attempted to show that the monotheistic religions were in basic agreement, at least implicitly, and if they differed they did so because God in God's self was entirely incomprehensible. Historical religions therefore transcended reality imperfectly and none of them possessed the absolute truth (Dupuis 1997:105-109).

The second positive change of attitudes took place fifty years after the Council when Christopher Columbus traveled to the "New World". Until this moment, a Christian belief of the nonexistence of other worlds had been conditioned both historically and psychologically. Historically, Christians thought that the Gospel had already been preached to the ends of the world, to all peoples living on earth. Psychologically, Christians could not imagine that someone hearing the Gospel and seeing its truth and beauty would reject it, unless someone did not have good will and was entirely evil (Sullivan 1992:199-204). Therefore, when Christianity encountered the other faiths of East Asia and America in the sixteenth century, some theologians and especially missionaries 'sought to find positive elements in these religions and even to incorporate indigenous elements into Christianity, as was done in the so-called Chinese and Indian rites' (Dulles 2003:3).

After Columbus's voyages to the Western Hemisphere the above belief among Christians was challenged but the negative attitude towards other religions prevailed. The awareness of other peoples, however, initiated the development of a new perspective among theologians. In reality, there were peoples who had never heard the Gospel and even after hearing it, they preferred their traditional ways of believing. They preferred them because there was a big gap between the Gospel message which was preached and the actual lifestyle of colonizing Christians. Yet, the theological response to the existence of entire nations who had never heard the Gospel became innovative and, for those times, even generous. This was, therefore, the period of ideas of implicit faith emerging. For a detailed discussion of these ideas see Chapter 4.2.4.

Besides these positive "signs" of change in Christian attitudes towards other believers, officially the Church continued to uphold the declaration *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* until the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century began to be viewed as the era of liberalism, when it was believed that any religion was 'as good (or as bad) as another' (McBrien 1981:273). Initially, the church while condemning indifferentism, again characterized other religions in negative terms. The condemnation of religious indifferentism was apparent in the encyclical letters *Ubi primum* (1824) by Leo XII; *Mirari vos arbitramus* (1832) by Gregory XVI; *Qui pluribus* (1846), *Quanto conficiamur moerore* (1863) and the "Syllabus of Errors" (1864) by Pius IX (McBrien 1981:274). The axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is also evident in Pope Pius IX's encyclical *Singulari Quadam* (854) (ND 1010).

More openness in official Catholic teaching towards other religions appeared during the pontificate of Leo XIII when in his encyclical letter *Immortale Dei* (1885), he stressed that 'nobody (is to) be forced to join the Catholic faith against his will…' (ND 1015). This pope's teaching anticipated the Second Vatican Council's doctrine on religious freedom. This was also the moment when the position of the church gradually but definitively began to change. In the 1940s, Leonard Feeney accused the Archbishop of Boston and later the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of heresy because of the new position which claimed that non-Catholics could be saved (Huang 1997:197). In 1949, Pope Pius XII officially condemned Leonard Feeney for holding onto the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in its rigorest form, thus indicating that it was no longer valid (Dupuis 1997:99).[11]

Certainly, one may argue that all the positive efforts to recognize other religions were insufficient and still exclusivist, but one must recognize that these efforts from the sixteenth century onwards also constituted a more positive approach to other religious traditions. This recognition is especially valid when one sees that throughout this time most theologians and church leaders had never

thought that other religions could generate grace and reveal God or offer salvation to their adherents (Dupuis 1997:105-109).

The Catholic belief in the necessity of the church for salvation was abandoned in the 1960s when new theologians emerged who went 'beyond considering the possibility of salvation for individuals and [affirmed] positive values in the religious lives of persons outside of the church, as well as in their religious traditions' (Dupuis 2002b:103). Jean Danielou, Henri de Libac, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Yves Congar belong to this group of theologians. All these theologians began to regard the values of other religions as 'endowments of human nature, facilitating a valid natural knowledge of God. But that knowledge alone was incapable of leading to salvation' (:103). Finally, the church recognized other religions at the Second Vatican Council in 1962-1965.

Exclusivism is no longer recognized in the Catholic Church, although to some extent it may still be found among some contemporary Catholic theologians, one of whom is a Dutch missionary and theologian Henrik van Straelen. He continues to say that explicit expression of faith in Jesus Christ is necessary to be saved, that 'no revelation of the non-Christian religions took place during the Second Vatican Council, and there was no talk of a Copernican revolution in this field' (Straelen 1998:227). Fortunately, he is only a single voice in the entire spectrum of theologians who acknowledge positive values and God's presence in other religious traditions.

3.3 A historical overview of *inclusivism* in a Christian theology of religions
3.3.1 *Inclusivism* in the early church

Christianity's emphasis has varied over the ages. At times it has stressed the universal view that God loves and saves people, and at other times it has stressed the God who saves humanity through Jesus Christ. As the previous analysis showed, for Catholics the particular view was not only Jesus but also the church. For Catholics, the real and full encounter with Jesus always took place in the community of believers. Consequently, insistence on Jesus and the church as the necessary means of knowing God and being saved, had for much of Catholic history been more important than the belief that God saves all people on the basis of God's universal love. Nevertheless, this was not the case at the very beginning of Christianity (Knitter 2002:64).

Authors of the New Testament books and the Christian communities, for whom the books were written, did not pay much attention to the "other religions". For them the existent relationship with Judaism, their mother religion was more important. This situation changed during the second century as the various Christian communities interrelated with the Greco-Roman world. In this "new world", Christians constituted a minority, often challenged by the philosophies and religions in

which they were immersed (:64). Consequently, Christians were forced to ask questions concerning their relationship with their neighbors. 'The main question was what to think of the person of Jesus Christ and his saving activity on the one hand and, on the other, of the philosophies, the individual philosophers and the many religions and cults, in the midst of which the young church was living' (Piryns 1985:57).

The first three centuries were the time when the early Christian theologians tried to discover the meaning, if any, of God's presence in other religions. Among the early Christian theologians one school represented by Tertulian was especially 'concerned to make a very sharp distinction between the Christian religion and others' (:57). Another school, on the contrary, sought unity between the two. Theologians from the second school constructed a central theme of God's Word present in the world and developed a new terminology describing this presence of God as *the logos spermatikos*. Theologians argued that the Word of God made flesh and embodied in Jesus was also scattered in the Greco-Roman world (Urban 2000:587). Moreover, they believed that seeds of the divine *Logos* were 'spread throughout the whole of humanity long before it manifested itself in Jesus of Nazareth' (Piryns 1985:57).

The most prominent theologians of this school were Justin Martyr (d. 165), Irenaeus (130-220) and Clement of Alexandria (150-215). Justin Martyr acknowledged the operation of God's Word (*Logos*) among individual non-Christians. Irenaeus, building on Justin's theology, added the concept that divine manifestations (cosmic and historical) took place through the *Logos*. Thus, God's theophanies, applied to the Word, became Logophanies. For Ireneus, to know God the Father was to know God as a person at the existential level who graciously addressed God's self to people as *Logos*. Irenaeus believed that this knowledge of God was granted to all. This means that Irenaeus attributed to the *Logos* God's self-disclosure in the economy of salvation (Dupuis 1997:60-66). Clement of Alexandria extended this influence of the *Logos* beyond the boundaries of the Judeo-Christian tradition into the Greek world. Clement argued that Greeks, through their philosophy, actually sought God. Philosophy, in Clement's understanding came from God and constituted, for the Greek world, a divine economy parallel to the Jewish economy of the Law. Both economies were designed by God to lead people to Christ. Consequently, Clement called Greek philosophy a covenant made by God with people; it is a "stepping-stone" to the "philosophy" of Christ, that is, the Good News (:66-77).

The view of the early Fathers remained partly alive in the theology of their successor Origen, the pillar of the Greek patristic tradition. Although Origen remained ambiguous in his attitudes towards other religious communities, nevertheless in his later theological activity he emphasized that

salvation in Christ had been possible for all the people who had lived before and after the Christ event, whether they were Jews or Gentiles (Dupuis 1997:79-83). It is apparent therefore that for all these early church Fathers the 'seeds of the Word, or [the] reflections of the eternal Truth, [were] like a preparation, a prefiguration, of the fullness of revelation that will coincide with the coming of Jesus Christ' (Geffré 2003:51).

As the previous section (3.2.2) indicated, this belief in God's saving presence beyond the church was soon to change. Historical development in the fourth century influenced the shift

> from a stress on God's universal love and presence to a stress on the particular importance of the church. Under Emperor Constantine and under Emperor Theodosius (379-95), the often-persecuted minority community of Christians suddenly became the official state religion. The Bishop of Rome became the "Pontifex Maximus" – the high priest who now wielded not only spiritual but political power. The welfare of the church was now wedded to the welfare of the state, which meant that the enemies of the state became the enemies of the church (Knitter 2002:65).

It is understandable therefore that Christian attitudes towards those who were "outside" the church, that is, non-Romans and non-Christians, began to change.

An analysis of the exclusivist axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* showed that strict evaluation of other religions remained in the Catholic Church until around the sixteenth century, and in a modified form until the middle of the twentieth. However, in a parallel way to *exclusivism*, the view of the early Fathers on other religions containing seeds of the divine *Logos* had also been more or less prominent in Catholic theology until the Second Vatican Council (Dupuis 1997:153-157). Many years before the Council, one of the influential theologians who engaged in the issue of salvation for non-Christians was Louis Caperan. His book entitled *Le problème du salut des infidèles* (vol. 2, 1912, rev. 1934) laid a solid foundation for future interreligious dialogue. Authors like Jean Danielou, Henri de Lubac and Urs von Balthasar often referred to Caperan's proposals in their theological works. Nevertheless, it was in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s that a real shift in Catholic theology of religions was initiated. This shift relates to a theological concept called a "fulfilment theory".

3.3.2 The "fulfilment theory" in Catholic theology of religions

Jean Danielou[12] should in fact be regarded as the main constructor of this theory. Danielou looked at the other religions from the Christian perspective of God's design for the salvation of humanity. For him a theology of history was a gradual manifestation of God to humanity and salvation history was limited only to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Salvation history '[culminated] in Jesus Christ, whose message of salvation has been entrusted to the Church' (Dupuis 1997:134). Any other history which

preceded God's manifestation to humanity in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Danielou called a "prehistory" of salvation. Consequently, he applied this term (prehistory) to all religions outside the Judeo-Christian world.

In addition, Danielou distinguished between the natural and the supernatural and between religion and revelation. For Danielou the "natural" meant a revelation of God who spoke to every human being through the cosmos, the conscience and the spirit. However, this natural knowledge of God was imperfect and a human person required a more positive (supernatural) revelation. The "supernatural" revelation was given in the Bible and in the life of the church. The Old Testament depicted God in terms of truth, justice and goodness. The New Testament unfolded the mystery of the Trinity. The knowledge of God was developed in the sacramental life of the church and in mystical experience. Christianity belonged to the Judeo-Christian revelation, to the supernatural faith. The world religions belonged to the order of natural reason. Hence, even if these religions reached the knowledge of God through the created world or through their own conscience, it was still in the order of nature. Because of that these religions contained 'truth and falsehood…light and darkness…upright conduct and evil ways' (Dupuis 2002a:49). Moreover, because they represented what was proper to the "cosmic covenant" (God's covenant made with humanity through Noah), they belonged to the order of "cosmic religion". Thus, they were both expressions of the human search for God as well as natural and human creations unable to reach out and experience the Divine. Hence, they could not lead their adherents to salvation through faith because they had no saving power in themselves (Danielou 1958:115-116,118-119).

Henri de Lubac built on Danielou's distinction between nature and the supernatural and added that both were 'intimately united in Jesus Christ. In him and through him, the supernatural [did] not replace nature, but [informed] it and [transformed] it' (Dupuis 2002a:51). De Lubac further argued that the same relationship existed between Christianity and the world religions. When the two encounter each other, Christianity purifies and transforms the traditions thus revealing their real value. In this context the religious traditions do not play any significant role in the mystery of salvation and certainly cannot constitute "ways" to salvation. Assigning to the world religions any special role in God's plan of salvation would mean placing them in competition with Christianity and thus 'obscuring the uniqueness' of Christianity and 'destroying the unity of the divine design' (de Lubac 1969:148-149).

Urs von Balthasar contributes another element to the "fulfilment theory" by characterizing the mystery of Jesus Christ as the "Concrete Universal". In this way, Balthasar indicates both the absolute character of Jesus Christ through whom God manifests God's self to humankind and the

absolute character of Christianity in relation to other religions. In reality, Christianity 'assumes and fulfills all the positive elements involved in the fundamental religious attitude of the human being, while at the same time transcending them' (Dupuis 1997:141-142). Therefore, Christianity fulfills all the aspirations of the natural religions. In this way, Balthasar places Christianity in sharp opposition to other traditions. Both represent opposite attitudes and directions; Christianity belongs to the supernatural and other religions to nature. Ultimately Christianity assesses and fulfills what is good in the other, and purifies and transforms it (:143).

In general, the "fulfilment theory" acknowledges that other religions search for a Christ who can fulfill their spiritual desires. However, only Christianity possesses Christ and thus is the only saving religion which has its origin not in human aspirations but in God's 'divine and supernatural self-communication' (Huang 1997:198). If Christ saves the other believers, it is not through their religious communities but *in spite* of them. This also means that Christians should admire and respect the human goodness of other believers but there is no need to engage in a meaningful dialogue with their religions. The reason is apparent, since as religious communities they do not possess God's saving grace although individual believers from these religions, in a mysterious way known to God, can be touched and saved by Christ's grace (:198). The theory of "fulfilment" has found its place in most of the documents of the Second Vatican Council and especially in Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangeli Nuntiandi* (:197). In *Evangeli Nuntiandi*, the pope repeated, after Jean Danielou and his colleagues, that the world religions are unable to establish 'with God an authentic and living relationship' although 'they have… their arms stretched out to God' (EN 53).

One of the main objections towards this theory is that it operates on the basis of "some secrecy". It states that most people who are non-Christians 'are saved secretly, through some mysterious, unmediated action of the Holy Spirit, that is, not *through* but *despite* their religions' (Huang 1997:198). An even deeper objection towards the theory is expressed by Dupuis. Dupuis argues that the theory creates a dichotomy between "subjective religion" which is the religious experience of individuals and "objective religion" which is the religious community to which the individual believers belong. The "objective religion" is also the socio-historical "codification" expressed in sacred books, rituals, practices and beliefs of individual's subjective religious experience. Consequently, if people are social and religious beings, their personal religious experiences have to be mediated and related to the particular religious communities in which they function. This means that religious communities have to play a specific role in the process of mediation between God and people. Dupuis writes that 'it seems both impracticable and theologically unrealistic to maintain

that, while the members of the various religious traditions can obtain salvation, their religion plays no role in the process' (Dupuis 1991:144).

3.3.3 Karl Rahner's "anonymous Christianity"

Just as the "fulfilment theory" was a step away from *exclusivism* in the Catholic Church, a radical turn in the Catholic approach to the world religions took place through the theology of Karl Rahner who was one of the pioneers in exploring new areas in a Christian theology of religions in the twentieth century. Although Rahner had never studied other religions directly, he dialogued with numerous Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim thinkers around the world (Egan 1998:19). His analysis of Christian doctrine made him believe that 'God's world was much bigger than the Christian world' (Knitter 2002:68). Certainly, it was much bigger than the Roman Catholic Church. In the 1960s, Rahner began to pay closer attention to "non-Christian" religions in an essay entitled "Christianity and the non-Christian religions" published later in 1966 in his *Theological Investigations*. Using standard Catholic doctrines, Rahner undoubtedly built a progressive theology of religions.

The central theme of Rahner's theology was that God is love who wants to reach and embrace all people of all nations. In other words, God wants to save the entire human family and to do it, God wills to find all the necessary means. This is possible for God because God constantly communicates (reveals) God's self to every human being. At the same time, God enables every person to experience God's self-communication in the world (Knitter 2002:68). God does it through *grace* giving this saving grace to every single human being and not just to Christians (Rahner 1978:153-161,170-175). On this basis, Rahner drew an important conclusion that human nature is not just "natural" but "graced" nature which unites the human person with the presence, power, worth and peace of God. He called such nature "super-nature" or the "supernatural existential", the ontological orientation of the person to God. By being human, people are touched and graced by God. The "supernatural existential" allows people to experience God and to hear God's "voice" which is beyond and yet already within them (Rahner 1964:114-143; 1961:309-317; 1969a:226-247).

Besides insisting that people are truly graced, Rahner added another element in his theology of religions; the world religions might therefore be "possible" ways of salvation for their adherents. He argued that '[in] more than a millennium of struggle, theology has overcome Augustinian pessimism in regard to the salvation of the individual' and the church began to assume 'supernatural salvation in the immediate possession of God to all those who do not freely reject it through their own personal fault. Our question now must be whether theology can regard the non-Christian religions with the same optimism' that the other religions are also in immediate possession of God and are

"ways of salvation" (Rahner 1984:291). Rahner's claim was therefore that God's grace was also active in other religions. God was offering the gift of God's self in and through other religious beliefs, practices, and rituals. He based this claim on what contemporary anthropology and psychology were saying concerning human beings as social beings embodied in their social groups. People become who they are not by a sort of spiritual transfusion but through the immediate environments in which they live. If this is true of people as human beings, it must also be true of people as spiritual beings. God uses others, social and religious bodies to grace people because grace must be embodied (Volgrimler 1965:61).

Consequently, the religions of the world might be viewed as the most effective ways in which God's presence dwells in human history. It is in religions that human beings search for deeper meaning and answers to their existential questions. If Christians believe that God acts throughout human history and God's actions have to be visible, then religions are the first areas where one needs to seek God's presence. Moreover, if the community of believers for Christians themselves is the primal locus of God's presence, so for Buddhists or Hindus their own religions must also be the embodiment of God's grace. Thus, Rahner arrived at the far-reaching conclusion that God reaches other believers in and 'through the beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and indigenous religions' (Knitter 2002:71). All these religions might be a positive means of salvation, means that are willed by God and positively included in God's divine plan to save humanity (Lehmann and Raffelt 1993:53-54).

One needs to emphasize, however, that in his new theology of religions, Rahner was careful not to say that the divine presence of God in other religious traditions and God's saving action was "reality". Instead of "reality" he spoke of the "possibility" or the "probability" of other religions being ways of salvation (Knitter 2002:71). Whether the "possibility" was the "reality" was another issue which needed to be proved through concrete studies and dialogue with the religious traditions. Yet Rahner was opening a new ground for the theology of religions. On this basis, Christians were invited to approach other believers in a new way. Members of the other traditions were no longer people who did not know anything about God. Rather they were people to whom God had been present and had revealed him/her/itself long before the arrival of the Christian missionaries (Rahner 1966b:131).

At the same time, Rahner introduced in his theology the special role of Jesus Christ in God's plan of salvation. If God's grace is present in human nature and history, it is because of Jesus. Jesus is the cause of whatever "revelation" or "salvation" is present in the world and Jesus is God's clearest and final Word spoken to humanity. Consequently, Christ is the "absolute" guarantee, "support", and

"source" of strength that enables people to live a worthwhile, graced life and achieve unity with God in this and in the next world. This means that Jesus is the "only" and "absolute" Saviour (Lehmann and Raffelt 1993:52).[13] In addition, those who do not know Jesus can still experience God's saving love but they do not see where this experience is leading them. Consequently, 'any Buddhist or Hindu or Aboriginal Australian who experiences the grace of God's love in their religion is already connected with and oriented toward Jesus, because Jesus represents the ultimate goal of God's gift of love and grace' (Knitter 2002:73). This implies that other believers who are graced by God through their own religious traditions are already directed towards the Church of Christ. In a way, Rahner states, they are already Christians and experience what Christians experience in Jesus Christ but still without their full awareness of it. In this sense they can be called "anonymous Christians"[14] (Rahner 1976a:280-294).

Rahner's concept of "anonymous Christianity" was for some a continuation of the "fulfilment theory",[15] for others it became a challenge and an inspiration, and for yet others a real threat undermining the Christian message. The danger was that if other believers or non-believers were already "Christians", the church no longer needed to be considered the only means of salvation and truth in the midst of other religions. Missionaries no longer needed to rescue other believers from the devil and perdition. Consequently, if the "pagans" did not need to be saved, what was the purpose of proclaiming the gospel and doing mission work? Nevertheless, in Rahner's view, the church was intended to be something more than a rescuer from perdition; it was to be a *sacrament* that embodies and reveals what is already there. The task of the church was not to rescue others but to help them walk firmly on the road to unity with God. Consequently, Christian proclamation was supposed to be carried out for more noble motives than conversion to Christianity. Its main purpose was to share the gospel with others in order to help them become more aware of who they were, children of God, called to live in their own lives, in the love and justice visible in Jesus (Knitter 2002:74).

If Rahner's concept put limits on the Christian church, it equally put limits on the other religions. In reality, his concept was clearly saying that Jesus Christ alone was the *final cause* of salvation. Only in Christianity did God truly reveal God's self in Jesus who is an "absolute" Saviour. Therefore, the function of the religious traditions was to prepare their adherents to eventually take 'the last step and join the Christian community...' (:75).[16] Some of Rahner's theological insights are found in the official pronouncements on religions of the Second Vatican Council.

3.3.4 The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

Undoubtedly from the Catholic perspective, the Council will always constitute a step forward in the history of Roman Catholicism in relation to other religions (Bronk 2000:611). There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the Council seriously reflected on 'the subject of interreligious dialogue and of religious pluralism' (König 2003:14) and secondly, it gave 'a positive evaluation of the other religions of the world' (Lane 1999:147). The religions were filled with elements of "grace" and contained "rays of Truth". It was a new direction undertaken by the church. From this moment on the church would see positive things in the other religious families and call upon Christians to take these religions seriously as partners in dialogue.

Looking closer at the conciliar documents, one realizes that the most positive evaluation of the other religions is contained mainly in the "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*).[17] In relation to religions, the Declaration states that God's love and saving presence goes beyond the boundaries of the church.[18] It places 'all religions in the context of the shared search for answers to ultimate questions about the meaning of existence, with particular reference to the origins and destiny of life' (Lane 1999:150). The Declaration furthermore offers a specific description of how the various world religions respond to God's revelation, summarizing the basic beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. It also speaks positively of other indigenous religions, recognizing their profound religiosity. The teachings and practices of the world religions represent what is "true" and "holy" and reflect 'a ray of Truth that enlightens all people' (NA 2). Therefore, the church encourages Catholics to dialogue and collaborate with other believers and so 'in witness of Christian faith and life, to acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral good found among these people' (NA 2).

Nostra Aetate was not the only official document which acknowledged positive elements in the other religions. The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*) recognizes in the other religions "elements of truth and grace" (AG 9) and "seeds of the word" (AG 11,15) embodied in Jesus. These seeds now became the foundation for "seeds of contemplation" (AG 18), the "secret presence of God" (AG 9) in those traditions. Another conciliar document, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) continues to recognize in those religions "precious things, both religious and human" (GS 92) (Knitter 2002:76). In this way the church accepts that 'God's saving will is at work in many different ways in all religions and that the Spirit of Christ is active outside the bounds of the visible Church' (Piryns 1985:57). This means that the church's view of other religions is no longer *ecclesiocentric* but *Christocentric* with special emphasis on the role of Christ in the human family.

There is little doubt that all these conciliar pronouncements echo the theology of Karl Rahner. There are, however, two elements of Rahner's thought on religions which the Council refused to implement, namely that the other believers are "anonymous Christians" and that the world religions are "possible" ways of salvation. As indicated in the previous section, the concept of "anonymous Christians" 'was too controversial among Christians [and] too uncomfortable' for the other believers and, to the satisfaction of many, was rejected by the Council (Knitter 2002:76-77). However, to the disappointment of others, the Council also rejected Rahner's notion of other religions as "possible" or "probable" ways of salvation (:77).

Various theologians interpret differently this lack of endorsement of Rahner's view on the religions. Some argue that the conciliar fathers refused to accept Rahner's view because it diminished the value of what God has done in Jesus. For this reason, besides the presence of genuine revelation of God in other traditions, they contain only "rays of Truth" which is not enough for God's saving grace that brings salvation to people (D'Costa 2000:101-109). Others argue that the Council agreed with Rahner and indirectly acknowledged the presence of God's salvation in other religions. To recognize in them "rays of Truth", "holiness", "grace", "sacred presence of God" is to say that the other believers are touched by God and can respond to God's voice and consequently be saved (Kunnumpuram 1971:90-91). Rahner himself wrote that the Council did not decide whether other religions are "ways" of salvation or not but left this essential problem open and for this reason the 'theological quality of non-Christian religions remains undefined' (Rahner 1984:290).

Despite the Council's rejection of Rahner's notion of "anonymous Christians" and the notion of religions as "ways" of salvation, it echoed the final element of Rahner's theology of religions. In *Lumen Gentium* the Council stated: 'Whatever goodness or truth is found amongst them is considered…a preparation for the Gospel' (LG 16). This means that having recognized the real value and goodness of other religions, the Council, in order to remain faithful to the church's traditional doctrine, repeated once again that what God did to humanity, God has done in Jesus Christ and continues to do so in the church. Consequently the religions can find their fullness only in Christ, but for Catholics, this also means the church. That is why besides all the praise given to other religious traditions, the Second Vatican Council stated: 'For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help towards salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained' (UR 3; LG 14). This would indicate that all the goodness, truth and presence of God in the other religions serves to orient them to Christ and to the church (LG 16).

The question, which immediately arises, is: What is therefore the real aim of dialogue with the world religions? *Ad Gentes* answers that for Christians the aim of dialogue is to 'learn of the riches

which a generous God has distributed among the nations. They must at the same time endeavour to illumine these riches with the light of the Gospel, set them free, and bring them once more under the dominion of God the saviour' (AG 11). That is why Dupuis remained critical of the Second Vatican Council even though it constituted a real turn in the theology of religions. He argued that the Council

> spoke of "seeds of the Word" or of a "ray of that Truth which enlightens everyone" and which is found in the religions, but the Council did not specify the meaning of these expressions or state that the other religions can be means of salvation for their followers. The theological significance of the religions was left unanswered (2002b:104).

The Council did not engage in this issue because, in reality, it was not prepared to go beyond the concept of "fulfilment" which treated the other religions as *preperatio evangelica*. Claude Geffré is of the same opinion; he argues that this theology of "fulfilment" strongly underlined the main conciliar documents, namely the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*,[19] the Decree *Ad Gentes*, and the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (16,17) (Geffré 2003:47). Therefore, the suggestion in the conciliar document is that 'the great religious traditions can be bearers of saving values that prepare for the recognition of the fullness of truth found in Christianity' (:47-48).[20]

In this way the Council wanted to be consistent with the core of the Gospel giving special place to Jesus Christ in whom God expresses God's love for all people.[21] After the Council, the Catholic community continued exploring the frontiers of the conciliar approach to the world's religious traditions.

3.3.5 The church's post-conciliar teaching on religions

This exploration of the conciliar approach can be seen in the public statements of Catholic officials. The first part of the pontificate of Pope Paul VI was rather cautious in establishing serious foundations for interreligious dialogue on doctrinal grounds. The pontiff in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) wrote:

> It is obvious that we cannot agree with various aspects of these religions and that we cannot overlook differences or be unconcerned with them, as if all religions had, each in its own way, the same value…. Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly what we believe, namely that there is one true religion, the Christian religion, and that we hope that all who seek God and adore him, will come to acknowledge this (ES 655).

At the same time, the pope acknowledged

> with respect the spiritual and moral values of various non-Christian religions, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals…. On these great ideals that we share with them we can have dialogue and we shall not fail to offer opportunities for it whenever, in genuine mutual respect, our offer would be received with good will (ES 655).

Unfortunately, in the later part of his pontificate in another document, his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), Paul VI returned to Christianity's exclusive claims. The other religious traditions were presented in rather negative terms:

> Even in the face of the highest forms of natural religions, the Church thinks that…the religion of Jesus which she proclaims through evangelization truly puts human beings in contact with the plan of God, with its living presence and his action…. In other words, through our religion an authentic and living relationship with God is truly established, such as other religions cannot bring about even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven (EN 53).

Indeed, this papal statement confirms that Paul VI upheld the "fulfilment theory" in its classical form. All the positive things said about the religions at the Second Vatican Council became diminished in the pope's official teaching.

At the same time, a continued call for interreligious dialogue was coming from another direction, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions (established in 1964) which later (1989) became the Vatican Commission for Interreligious Dialogue. The official Catholic teaching on other religious traditions gradually began to emphasize that 'God's Word is active through the Spirit *and* (sic) in the hearts of people *as well* (sic) as in their religions *and* (sic) their cultures of which the religions are the ferment' (Piryns 1985:57). This emphasis on God's Spirit acting equally in the world and in the religions became the main theme of Pope John Paul II's theology of religions. His teaching began to constitute a further call for openness to know and to talk with the other faiths. In his attempt, John Paul II went beyond the existent concept that there was "only one true religion, the Christian religion" which was still present in official statements of his predecessor Pope Paul VI.

Before engaging in investigating the pope's view on religions, one needs to admit that, in general, John Paul II made an enormous contribution to the theology of religions and interreligious dialogue not only through his extensive and ground-breaking writings on the subject, but also, and perhaps more significantly, through his numerous symbolic actions. Firstly, on a daily basis, he encountered people of other religions. His gathering of different religions, particularly, to pray together for peace in Assisi in 1986 'gave concrete witness to the importance of inter-religious dialogue among all peoples of faith' (Lane 1999:151). Secondly, were also numerous visits to places of worship of other religions. One of them was the pope's pilgrimage to Jerusalem where he visited the Yad Vashem and the Wailing Wall during the Jubilee year (2000), and his visit to the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus in 2001 (Geffré 2003:56). The pope's concept of openness to talk with other faiths was also apparent when he visited Palestine and Israel. He went there to foster further relationship

between Muslims and Jews as well as to ask their forgiveness for the sins committed by Catholics in the past.

Nevertheless, it was the pope's official teaching on religions that became the most important contribution for a Christian theology of religions. There are three themes in the pope's teaching which significantly contributed to the theology of religions: a) the presence of the Holy Spirit in other religions which allows one to view them as "possible" ways of salvation; b) the dialogical character of the church; and c) the church's service for the Reign of God. All these themes represent steps forward in interreligious dialogue and are a continuation of what the Second Vatican Council taught on religions (Knitter 2002:81-84).[22]

The first theme is John Paul II's focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world which became his source of inspiration. The pope writes about the faith of other believers as being the effect of the Spirit of "Truth" operating outside the visible confines of the church. The Spirit is operative in the lives of other believers not in spite of their religious adherence, but rather as its essence and foundation. This presence of the Spirit allows the pope to see spiritual treasures in the world religions and a fundamental unity among those traditions beneath the surface of existing differences. This is the result of the Spirit's activity before Jesus Christ and after him within the different religious families. The pope states that the Spirit 'blows where [s/he/it] will' (John 3:8) (RH 11; *Dominum et Vivificantem* [1986]). In *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), the pope speaks about the Holy Spirit being present in the very structures of the human condition. He writes that the Spirit is to be found 'not only in individuals but also in society and history, peoples, cultures, and religions' (RM 28). This means that the divine Breath also dwells in religions (Knitter 2002:81).

The second theme in the pope's teaching relates to the dialogical character of the church. To be a Christian means to be in dialogue with believers of other faiths. This sounds like a repetition of what the Council said in *Nostra Aetate*, but it is not. That conciliar document was encouraging Christians to dialogue but only after the essential elements were in place. In *Redemptoris Missio*, dialogue becomes the main obligation of Christians. Thus, both "dialogue" and "proclamation" become two inseparable ways of carrying out the mission of the church (RM 55). According to another document "Dialogue and Proclamation" this mission is expressed in two activities: firstly, Christians are to let people hear the Gospel and, secondly, in this way they will 'transform humanity, making it new' (DP 8). Therefore, Christians are obliged not only to proclaim the Gospel but also to dialogue (DP 77) (Knitter 2002:82).

The third theme, which appears in the pope's post-conciliar church teachings on religions is that the church is in the service of God's Reign. The Second Vatican Council expressed this theme in its pronouncements, but more carefully and more indirectly. Perhaps the reason for this cautious approach lies in the traditional conciliar pronouncement that there is salvation outside the church, but still the church is "necessary" for salvation. The post-conciliar teaching went much further in this regard by saying that 'the church of Jesus is meant to be a servant of the Reign that Jesus proclaimed and himself served' (Knitter 2002:84). The pope states: 'The church is effectively and concretely at the service of the Kingdom' (RM 20). The mission of the church is therefore to foster the Reign of God (DP 35).

One must, however, emphasize here that although the post-conciliar official Catholic teaching affirms the positive values of other religious traditions, it also carefully balances this assessment. The church says that what God is doing in and through other religions, is to be seen in relation to what God did and is doing in Jesus. Consequently, the church is speaking about Jesus as the universal Saviour of humanity (RM 5,6; DP 22,28). In addition, dialogue with other religions must have limits. This means that although dialogue and proclamation are two components of the church's mission, in the end, proclamation must have priority over dialogue (RM 44,34). This further means that dialogue and proclamation are not at the same level. In reality, dialogue always remains 'oriented toward proclamation' (DP 77,75). The declaration further states: 'Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with the conviction that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation' (RM 55; DP 19,22,58). Thus, it is evident that the purpose of Christian dialogue with other believers is not only oriented towards proclamation but also "conversion" (RM 47-49). In short, dialogue has the purpose to form new Christian communities by gaining converts from other religions (Knitter 2002:84-85).

Finally, the Reign of God and the church can be distinguished but not separated (:86). The pontiff says: 'The Kingdom cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church' (RM 18). The Kingdom is inseparable from the church because 'both are inseparable from the person and work of Jesus himself' (DP 34). Consequently, although the church is always the servant of the Reign of God its role as a servant is unique and necessary. It is true that the Reign of God is present beyond the borders of the church but this "external reality" 'needs to find [its] completion through being related to the Kingdom of Christ already present in the Church' (DP 35).

3.3.6 The inclusivist approach to religions in recent theology

Only recently, on the basis of openness towards other religions made by Karl Rahner, the Second Vatican Council and Pope John Paul II, a number of Catholic theologians belonging to the

inclusivist school decided to go beyond the Christian traditional view of religions and dialogue with them. Their new concepts are expressed in an entirely different language to that of "fulfilment", namely a language of dialogue, witness and relationship (Knitter 2002:86). To this group belong such theologians as Michael Barnes, Gavin D'Costa, Jacques Dupuis, Monica Hellwig and Hans Küng. The development of their inclusivist position has been influenced by a growing awareness that God's universal salvific will must find expression in a variety of forms, including the structured religious life of the world religions. One of the theologians who began to shape this inclusivist position is Hans Küng and his concept of the "historical" Jesus.

Hans Küng's position on the religions is expressed mainly in his work entitled *On being a Christian* (1977). In his early theological career, Küng already advocated the need for a more positive Christian attitude towards other religions. He believes that those religions give testimony to the conviction that God exists and that they have the capacity to respond to questions which God's existence generates. Attempting to answer the Christological question in the theology of religions, Küng begins neither from presupposition of the reality of God nor from the incarnation of the Word. The basis for his Christology becomes the history of Jesus which ultimately leads to the recognition of Jesus' divinity. The incarnation as a way of understanding the mystery of Christ detracts, Küng argues, from the essential aspect of the Christian message and leads to simplistic identification of Jesus with God (Küng 1977:436,399,286-287). By challenging the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation, Küng is also challenging the traditional claim to the uniqueness of Christ. He suggests a concept of incarnation which implies a pre-existent *Logos* that enters human history once and for all in order to transform it and change it (1977:449).

The main claim of Küng's concept is that it is possible to know Jesus' way of life and his self-awareness historically. He wrote: 'We know incomparably more that is historically certain about Jesus of Nazareth than we do about the great founders of the Asian religions' (:147). Although Küng does not deny the significant role of the other religious founders in leading their followers to God, he argues that because of the historical knowledge of Jesus, Jesus Christ is superior to any other founder. And because of the peculiarity and the singularity of Christianity, Jesus Christ is definitive and decisive for our relationship with God and for our relationship with others including the other believers (:317). Küng's further evaluation of other religions is based on their agreement (harmony) or disagreement with Christianity. Therefore, he takes Jesus Christ *a priori* as the final norm for any religion. If other religions are ways of salvation, they are "extraordinary" ways of salvation. They are ways 'only in a relative sense, not simply as a whole and in every sense' (:104). Christianity is therefore a kind of "cultural catalyst" for other religions (:121). Moreover, even if other religious

traditions do have some answers to their human search for the ultimate reality, these answers do not have the same value as those of Christianity. In Küng's view, this claim that Christianity offers an adequate response to religious questions is entirely legitimate.

On the basis of Küng's Christology one may draw the following conclusion: that, to a certain extent, Küng brings something new to inclusivist theology through his concept of a historical Jesus. To a certain degree, his concept contributes to the Logos Christology which has been the main focus of *inclusivism* for a long time. Later the Logos Christology, as it will be seen, becomes enriched by another element; the activity of God's Spirit (D'Costa's and Dupuis's proposals). In addition, Küng's view of the religions as "extraordinary" ways of salvation should be regarded as innovative in the theology of religions. In reality, however, Küng's position on other religions does not differ much from that of Karl Rahner's or from the post-conciliar traditional church's stand on Jesus' role. What is positive and valuable in other religious traditions can be brought to full realization only in Christianity. Consequently, although other religions play a certain role in the economy of salvation for their adherents, their role is secondary (Küng 1977:113).

A step forward in the inclusivist approach is made by the Indian theologian Gavin D'Costa[23] who emphasizes a Trinitarian character for a Christian theology of religions. D'Costa's theology emphasizes that Christians believe in God who is Trinitarian. In Trinitarianism God relates to the world in various ways expressed by different symbols: the Parent expresses the Divine as the source of all creation; the Word communicates God's self in Jesus of Nazareth; and the Spirit sustains all of creation with God's life-giving energy. D'Costa focuses mainly on the third way of relating within God, the Spirit. It is through the Spirit that Christians should view and dialogue with other religious traditions; the reality of God cannot be expressed exclusively through the activity of Creator or the saving Word, but also through the Spirit. It is the activity of the Spirit which makes God present in other religions (D'Costa 2000:99-138). By introducing the presence of the Spirit, D'Costa affirms the universality of God in all cultures and religions. Because of the presence of the Spirit in other religious traditions, Christians have to be ready for challenges when meeting them. They also have to listen to and learn from others. As a result, the church has to be dialogical in order to remain the real church of Christ (D'Costa 1990a:23). In addition, in a Spirit-based approach to other religions, the church has to abandon the idea of "fulfilment", because "fulfilment" works in only one direction. In a real dialogue with others, the church opens itself 'to genuine change, challenge, and questioning' (D'Costa 2000:134). In this way, D'Costa moves beyond the "theory of fulfilment" to "mutual fulfilment" which is something different. "Mutual fulfilment" abandons the idea of Christianity's superiority and is a result of a two-way dialogue (Knitter 2002:88).

Although D'Costa gives a privileged place to God's Spirit in his theology of religions, this Spirit is always oriented to the Word of Christ. Consequently, whatever the Spirit does in other religious traditions has to be evaluated in the context of the Word spoken in Jesus. Hence, although the Spirit acts and rules beyond the Word spoken in Jesus, it cannot go beyond the content of God's Word in Jesus (:89). Therefore, D'Costa concludes: 'There is no independent revelation through the Paraclete, but only an application of the revelation of Jesus' (2000:122).[24] Despite D'Costa's concept being both innovative and challenging, it raises a serious question as to how the universal activity of the Spirit is related to the particular Word of God in Jesus. Unfortunately in his theology, D'Costa was not able to give a clear and satisfying answer to this question. A more concrete answer as to how the Spirit relates to the Word of God is proposed by Jacques Dupuis who also uses the Trinitarian approach to other religions (Dupuis 1997:130-157,180-201). Using Trinitarianism, Dupuis explores areas of thought which may lead beyond the traditional limits of inclusive theology. His theology will be the subject of examination in the forthcoming chapters.

While Dupuis attempts in his proposals to move a Christian belief in the centrality of Jesus beyond the limits of the inclusivist approach, other theologians try to make this approach more inviting to others. One of these theologians is Monika Hellwig whose theology is more traditional than Dupuis's and who focuses mainly on the centrality of Jesus. She argues that Christianity will collapse 'if the definitive claim for Jesus Christ is denied' (Hellwig 1990:109). Jesus stands in the center of God's plan and it is an offence to place him on the same level with other religious figures. In Jesus, 'Christians know that God *has* (sic) provided the final word and a firm place' (Knitter 2002:94). Thus, Hellwig makes a practical suggestion as to how Christians, in dialogue with other believers, can make their claim about Jesus in a loving and generous way. She emphasizes that in Jesus God has done and offered something really unique which has the potential to transform the lives of individuals and societies. In dialogue with other religions, it is not so important to argue on the basis of what the Bible says about them but on the basis of what can be observed in what Jesus has done for people, how he influenced and continues to transform people's lives through his message and person (:95). However, she also adds that the claim to the universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ does not deny 'the salvific actual or potential role of other saviour figures' (Hellwig 1990:111-116).

What Hellwig proposes might be challenging both to other partners to dialogue and to Christians themselves, but the strength of her argument depends only on how authentically Christians live out the values of Gospel. One must realize, however, that the authenticity of Christians' lives is not

always self-evident to other believers. Consequently, on this basis alone, Christian witness may fail to lead other believers to an authentic religious engagement with Christianity.

All these attempts to explore further the traditional Catholic stand on other religions indicate that the inclusivist school itself is characterized by a real diversity of views. This diversity of approaches to God, religion, dialogue and the role of Jesus Christ in the economy of salvation is even more visible among the pluralist theologians.

3.4 Pluralist approaches to religions in recent theology
3.4.1 The philosophical-historical bridge (John Hick)

Pluralist models of religions move sharply beyond *inclusivism* and its claim to the universality and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. A representative of the first approach to religions is John Hick, a British philosopher and theologian.[25] Hick regards his model as a call for a Copernican revolution in Christianity. In reality, his model constitutes a real paradigm shift from *Christocentrism* to *theocentrism*. His Copernican revolution in theology places neither the church nor Jesus at the center of the universe but God called the "Real", the "Reality" or the "really Real". Hick calls his concept *a hypothesis* since he cannot prove that there is only one center for all religions. In general, Hick's *hypothesis* says that the same divine "Reality" forms the "heart" or "source" of all the different religions. Absence of this common "heart" would guide the religions in different directions (Knitter 2002:114-115). Although people do experience the Real in an authentic way, their experience is never direct and immediate, and hence they can never grasp the Real in-itself.[26] All religions form diverse 'ways of experiencing, concerning, and living in relation to an ultimate divine Reality which transcends all our varied versions of it' (Hick 1989:14).

Consequently, the religious experience of the Real which all religions share is always expressed in symbols, myths, and metaphors. Thus, the Real is pictured as Father, Mother, Spirit, Fire, Way or Force. All religious symbols, stories, or myths in which this experience is expressed tell people something true about the Real, yet at the end they tell them more about themselves than the Real. Since the Real is one and religions are many, the symbols by which the Real is perceived and expressed will also be many. At times, these symbols (personal or impersonal) will be contradictory because of the diversity of human cultures.[27] In reality, religions are equally effective or ineffective 'in guiding their followers to change the direction of their lives from self-centeredness to Other-centeredness whether they use personal or impersonal symbols of the Real...' (Knitter 2002:117).

Furthermore, although the different religions experience the same Real within themselves, they are not of the same value.[28] Hick argues that it is apparent, 'at least since the Axial Age,[29] that not all

religious persons, practices, and beliefs are of equal value' (Hick 1989:89,299). Criteria for evaluating the "true" and the "false" in the different religions are provided by the religions themselves. Religions which lead their followers from self-centerdness to Other-centerdness, from selfishness to self-sacrifice, from exclusion to acceptance, are religions of value and truth. These criteria are therefore more ethical than doctrinal. Nevertheless, the complexity and diversity of religions do not allow one to gather the necessary data to compare their ethical fruits. Consequently, one cannot talk about the superiority of one religion over the other. Whether any religion is better than another will only be known at the end of history. Therefore, partners to dialogue should put aside such questions as which religion is better or surpasses the others (Knitter 2002:118-119).

Concerning the role of Jesus in revealing the Real, Hick offers Christians a picture of Jesus which is based on concrete Christian experience in the New Testament. Hick argues that early Christians, when speaking about Jesus and describing him, used a symbolic and metaphorical language. Thus when they referred to Jesus as Messiah, Saviour, Word of God, Son of Man, and especially Son of God, it was not that they had arrived at a definition of who Jesus really was. Rather they tried to express in words 'what they had experienced in and through him' (:120). In describing these experiences, Christians used poetic, and not philosophical or scientific language. They adopted this poetic language with its symbols, metaphors and images from the culture in which they lived, namely Judeo-Greco-Roman culture (Fredericks 1999:42). Consequently, they used such themes as incarnation with all its implications that Jesus was the incarnated Word of God, the Son of God. Later, during the early councils of the church, the concept of incarnation was further developed with the help of Greek philosophy. The concept was also enriched with philosophical words such as "nature", "person", and "substance". Thus the poetry of the New Testament was put in doctrinal definitions and changed 'from metaphorical Son of God to a metaphysical God the Son, of the same substance with the Father…' (Knitter 2002:120).

Viewing Jesus as the only Son of God, of the same substance as the Father, was for the Greco-Roman Christians an effective way of making Jesus significant and unique, as someone through whom God encounters people. Yet, contemporary Christians should avoid perceiving Jesus in this way. The language of "one-and-only" attached to Jesus must be put aside because it disrupts dialogue and offends other believers. Hick claims that he is not so much for rejecting the traditional Christian belief in incarnation and in Jesus as the Son of God, as for taking it for what it is: metaphor and symbolism. Therefore, the central themes of Christian faith should not be understood *literally* but rather *seriously*, that is, symbolically (Hick 1977:170-178). Instead, contemporary Christians should focus more on Spirit Christology which is found in the New Testament. Spirit

Christology views Jesus as divine not because God was literally incarnated in Jesus but 'because Jesus was completely filled with the Spirit' (Knitter 2002:122). In this notion of Jesus as Spirit-filled, Jesus' greatness is recognized without diminishing any possibility that similar greatness can be attributed to other religious figures (Hick 1973:159).

If Jesus is only one among many other saviours and Christianity is of the same value as any other religion, what is the purpose of mission for the pluralists? Paul Knitter[30] answers that such a mission focuses mainly on engaging in constructive and critical dialogue of equals. The aim of such dialogue is to promote their common interest in the salvation of people which for Christian means building the Reign of God here on earth. If, in this process of building, the other believers become converted to Christianity, it will not be as a result of forcing them to become Christians but rather the natural outcome of transforming their hearts and committing them to God and God's truth. In addition, if a Hindu, after hearing about Jesus, remains Hindu but becomes a better Hindu then dialogue will reach its goal of conversion to the Reign of God (Knitter 1996:120-122).[31]

3.4.2 The theological-mystical bridge (Raimon Panikkar)

While the philosophical-historical approach argues that no religion can claim to have the full and final experience of the Real, the theological-mystical approach of Raimon Panikkar[32] begins with the Divine Mystery. This Mystery is the same for all religions. Believers experience the Mystery through their diverse socially and culturally conditioned religious communities. This is also the source of fundamental differences among the religions. Nevertheless, despite these differences, all religions have the same divine core which is the "mystical" center for all of them. The deeper one enters into religious mystical experience in one's own particular religion, the more profoundly one recognizes the existence of the same Mystery in all other religions that nourish them (Knitter 2002:125).[33]

Thus, Panikkar calls this "mystical" core or center "the fundamental religious act", 'present everywhere and in every religion' but known only through experience (Panikkar 1978:2-23). As an experience, this "act" gives people a sense of being united and connected with the Mystery that is transcendent, immanent and part of the finite world. The Divine Mystery consists of three interrelated but different components: the Divine, the human, and the earthly. Trying to express this activity within the Mystery in human language, Panikkar names it a "cosmotheandric experience" and everything which exists – a "cosmotheandric reality" (Panikkar 1981:22).[34] Although there is one "religious act" which unites religions, this unity is one and many at the same time. In this way, Panikkar rejects Hick's concept of one denominator, namely the Reality to which religions can be reduced. On the contrary, the religions are like pieces of different puzzles which can never be put

together into one picture or religious system. This means that religious traditions cannot be compared; one cannot measure a religion by another religion using one religious system. Thus, although the religions are ways which lead equally to one mountaintop, they lead by different routes (Knitter 2002:128-129). On this basis, it is necessary to create relationships among the various religious traditions because, by relating to each other, the religions will discover and experience their true identities. This is what Panikkar means by interreligious dialogue, namely growth both in difference and unity which is the outcome of a genuine dialogue based on mutual trust which ultimately leads to harmony. Nevertheless, this harmony will never be a perfect harmony because of the existing differences; consequently interreligious dialogue will essentially remain an unfinished symphony (Panikkar 1981:58-61).

Like the philosophical-historical, the theological-mystical bridge calls Christians to refocus their understanding of Jesus. This refocusing is necessary since throughout the centuries and especially in the colonial period, Christians made Jesus a "tribal God" whose aim was to conquer all other gods. In the new millennium Christians need to overcome this "tribal" Christology by a Christophany, which will allow them 'to see the work of Christ everywhere without assuming that they have a better grasp on or a monopoly of that Mystery which has been revealed to them in a unique way' (Panikkar 1987a:145). Panikkar's "Christophany" or "universal Christology" will therefore allow 'the Christ to shine from all religions…without privileging or giving the monopoly to any one of them' (Knitter 2002:131). Such a view of Christ will revive the traditional beliefs about Jesus. Concerning the relationship of the universal Christ with the particular Jesus, Panikkar argues that Jesus is not identical with Christ. He views Jesus as the Christ but Christ is more than Jesus. This means that the mystery of Christ includes all other manifestations of God in history. Thus, Panikkar affirms Jesus as Christ but, at the same time, opens the door to affirm other religious figures. For Panikkar the name of "Christ" includes all other such historical figures as Rama, Krishna, Iswara, or Purusha. To reject or diminish one of these names would mean losing a unique part of the Mystery because all of them, including Jesus, constitute the Mystery (:133).

3.4.3 The ethical-practical bridge (Aloysius Pieris and others)

Proponents of this approach prefer another way of realizing a dialogue of "mutuality" among the religions. This way focuses on ethical issues and ethical responsibility which, in their view, have the potential to sustain a new kind of interfaith exchange. Hence, Aloysius Pieris and others speak about "global responsibility" for the world and its inhabitants, and state that religions should play a major role in fulfilling this task. Like previous approaches, the ethical-practical bridge tries to find a common element for all the religions which unites them. This common element is not Hick's "Real"

or Panikkar's "one religious act", but "suffering". In the contemporary world, there is an enormous amount of suffering which threatens humanity more than ever before. Firstly, this suffering consists of human suffering expressed in a variety of different but interrelated forms, such as poverty, victimization, violence, patriarchy, etc. Secondly, there is the suffering of the earth and its creatures caused, for example, by material consumption of the so-called First World, or global warming. Both kinds of suffering affect all religious communities wherever they exist and function. At the same time, they constitute a call and a challenge to all religions (Knitter 2002:136-137; 1995:97-117). If a religion refuses to face these challenges, it means that it has lost its relevance and perhaps its validity. For this reason, the ethical-practical bridge calls for a common ethical task (a global ethic)[35] which should remain essential if nations, with the help of religions, want to eradicate the existing ecological-human suffering.

A global ethic does not mean a list of commandments, but rather the embodiment of 'a consensus of ethical values about the dignity of the individual, the integrity of the earth, the responsibility that unites [all people], and the need for justice and compassion' (Knitter 2002:138-139). To reach such a consensus among nations seems, however, impossible without the cooperation of the religions. Moreover, addressing human and ecological suffering is not only a necessity but also an opportunity for a deeper and more fruitful interreligious dialogue (Knitter 1987b:185-186). This means that ethical dialogue leads to religious dialogue. If religions together address eco-human suffering, they will also be more successful in talking to one another about their religious experiences and beliefs. Furthermore, in this kind of dialogue it no longer matters whether one religion fulfills the other, whether one's notion of the Divine is superior to another or not. What counts is that people be helped practically, that conflicts among nations be stopped, and the ecosystem be protected (Amaladoss 1992:158-174).[36]

As with the other bridges, the most difficult issue here is the role of Jesus. '[The] ethical-practical bridge seeks to base its view of Jesus on what contemporary New Testament scholarship [says] about the historical Jesus' (Knitter 2002:143). One of the conclusions about Jesus is that the essence of his message was the Reign of God, its announcement, initiation, and fostering. The concept of the Reign defines who Jesus was. Jesus hoped, expected and led his life so that God's Reign could take shape in this world within human society. Although the Reign extends beyond the limits of earthly life, it is also meant to affect and transform earthly life. Such a view of the Reign allows the ethical-practical model to see Jesus as liberator. With his message, Jesus brings liberation and transformation of people's hearts. The biblical term for Jesus as "liberator" is "prophet". Advocates of this approach add that Jesus was a Spirit-filled "prophet" (Sobrino 1988:82-84). This means that

'his commitment to liberation and action flowed from his deep religious experience of the Spirit' (Knitter 2002:144). This was the source of Jesus' prophetic hope and courage which enabled him to reach out to the poor and the marginalized. Consequently, if Jesus was Reign-centered so the theology of religions must also be Reign-centered. In this context, the priority of interreligious dialogue is not so much to bring other believers into the Christian community but to engage with them in liberating the poor or promoting equality and justice. These will also be the signs that these religions are already involved in advancing God's Reign here on earth (:146).

Concerning the uniqueness of Jesus, Aloysius Pieris who is the main architect of the ethical-practical bridge, identifies it not with Jesus' incarnation but with the fact that in Jesus, God was incarnated as human who became a "slave" and one of the many poor and oppressed. Consequently, Christians have something distinctive to offer to interreligious dialogue. They can help the other believers to realize that to experience and be united with God, is also to be concerned 'for the victims of this world' (Knitter 2002:147). In this way Christians bring to dialogue something vitally important of their own identity and at the same time, remain faithful to the uniqueness of Jesus (Pieris 2000:187-231).

3.4.4 The acceptance approach (Mark Heim)

Mark Heim[37] proposes a pluralistic yet essentially different approach to religions. While the previous three bridges sought unity (mutuality) in the religious diversity, this approach emphasizes real differences among religions which should not be reduced to a "common" ground that unites them. Thus Heim attempts to give equal right and equal respect both to Christianity and to the other religions, to Christ and to other religious figures. He reverses the argument that religions are different because they have different doctrines and religious languages and states that religions have different doctrines and religious languages because they are really different. Nevertheless, if religions are such different realities, can their adherents, who have never heard of Jesus Christ, find salvation? Heim answers affirmatively, with the proviso that there be not "one" but "many" salvations. All the religions do not lead to one salvation but to many salvations. They all tend towards different destinations and presumably reach them. Buddhists reach Nirvana and Christians reach union with God. This means that even after this life, people will be happy in many and very different ways (Knitter 2002:192-193). In addition, these real differences among religions and their destinations may also extend into differences in God. Thus, Heim claims that there might be a multiplicity of Ultimates that is more than one divine Being or God. This would better explain why there is plurality among religions, because there is plurality within God (Heim 1995:153-155).

Needless to say what Heim suggests does not fit easily into traditional Christian theology. Yet Heim argues that his concept requires new theological imagination and that, in reality, Christians do believe that God is not just one but also many. He is referring to a Christian belief in God as the Trinity. Through the revelation of Jesus the Christ, Christians attempt to explain that God is not just one reality but many. God is many 'in the way God relates to the world [and] many, also, in the way God relates to God's self' (Knitter 2002:194). Heim concludes that if diversity of God is true then the diversity of the world which God created, including human beings must be true. To affirm that God is Trinitarian is also to affirm that human beings' existence and life originate from differences which are the source of their relationships. A person cannot really live unless that person is in relationship, and one cannot be in relationship unless there are others who are diverse (Heim 2001:175). Thus, as there is a community of differences in relationship within God's self so there is a possibility of diverse relations with God. For this reason there are many distinct ways in which people relate to and find their happiness in God. These different ways of relating take concrete living forms in the religious traditions (Knitter 2002:195).

Because of the diversity of religions, there is also the possibility of a far richer dialogue. The framework for such a dialogue is constructed by the belief that each religion has its own absolute claims and that its perspective is superior to any other. This is normal and valid. In interreligious dialogue, mutual acceptance of such claims should lead to mutual openness and learning from others. This kind of interchange fosters witnessing and being witness to because all religions are to some extent missionary and want to preach their "truths" to the world. This is positive as long as each religion also allows other religions to dialogue their "truths". Consequently, dialogue can result not only in new information about other religions but also in transformation in oneself (:198-199). Such a dialogue can also lead to social and ethical changes in the world. However, this should not be done on the basis of looking for a common "ethical ground". This should rather be done on the basis that each religion upholds its own concept of justice or prosperity as the "best" and, at the same time, recognizes that there are also other valid concepts (Heim 1995:195-98,205-208).

Finally, although Heim uses a Christian belief in the Trinity as the basis for his theology of religions, he also indicates that his Trinitarian picture of God remains "Christocentric". Heim insists on the Christocentric character of his theology for two reasons. Firstly, Christians have come to experience God as Trinity only through Christ. Secondly, Christ reveals to people that God is a community and diversity of persons and that because humans are diverse, God's revelation to them must also be diverse (Heim 2001:134). From this picture of Christ as the revealer of diversity, Heim draws the following conclusions. Jesus Christ cannot be an exhaustive or exclusive source of

knowledge of God. God's saving action also makes use of other religious systems and figures to reveal and save. Consequently, despite Jesus being the "constitutive" Saviour for Christians, this does not exclude a possibility of many other different mediators or saviours in the religious traditions leading to different "salvations" (:134,269).

3.5 Evaluation
3.5.1 Dupuis's stand on the various approaches to religions

In his theology of "inclusive pluralism", Dupuis regards the various religious models as equally valuable and necessary "instruments" for describing both the existent religious diversity and the complexity of the theological debate on religions. In his view *ecclesiocentrism*, *Christocentrism*, *theocentrism*, and more recent categories, are ways of emphasizing different aspects of some religious realities without, however, defining them. This means that the above categories are of a descriptive character and do not lead to any final definition of other religions, interreligious dialogue or Jesus' role in the economy of salvation. In short, they are proposals open to further development. Hence the various models do not exclude each other but remain complementary. The situation changes where paradigms are concerned. In recent theology of religions, Dupuis distinguishes two paradigm shifts which proceed from *ecclesiocentrism* to *Christocentrism* and from *Christocentrism* to *theocentrism*. Paradigms are not descriptive but defining. By interpreting reality, paradigms make sharp distinctions and lead to final definitions and thus they are in opposition to models and to one another. In this sense, they remain exclusive (Dupuis 2002a:75).

3.5.2 Dupuis's view on *exclusivism*

Dupuis has no doubt that most theologians from the main Christian churches have rejected *exclusivism*, Karl Barth's "dialectical theology", and the liberal views with which he was in conflict at his time (Dupuis 2002a:74). He is also convinced that the rigid interpretation of the ancient declaration *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is definitively excluded from the debate on the religious traditions in the Catholic Church. Therefore, Dupuis regards the change of attitudes (paradigm shift) from *ecclesiocentrism* to *Christocentrism* as a valuable and significant transformation both for the theology of religions and for theology as a whole. It indicates that in the center of Christian mystery is no longer the church but Jesus Christ. From Dupuis's perspective such refocusing from the church to Christ is necessary if theology intends to avoid extreme tendencies of which Barth's "dialectical theology" or the axiom *extra ecclesia nulla salus* are examples. Moreover, this paradigm shift implies a clear separation between the role of Jesus Christ and the role of the church in the history of salvation. Whatever role the church might play in the history of salvation, it can never be placed on the same level with the role of Jesus Christ. In a parallel way, the necessity of the church for salvation can never be compared with the necessity of Jesus. This leads to two conclusions. Firstly, a

Christian theology of religions cannot be built on the ecclesiocentric emphasis. Secondly, the mystery of the church is relative to the mystery of Christ and cannot be the means of measuring of salvation in others (Dupuis 2002a:76-77).

Although it is apparent that most theologians, including Dupuis, disagree with the exclusivist way of interpreting the Bible or making it the "only" source of God's revelation, it seems that they can still learn something positive from *exclusivism* as a religious model. Theologians can learn that Christianity draws not just "truth" but also life from the Spirit present in the Scriptures. *Exclusivism* reminds one that Christianity is a way of life and witness to Jesus Christ and that this witness is normative for Christians and requires avoiding anything that would lead them astray. In this context, the challenge of religious pluralism requires that theologies which engage in interreligious dialogue remain based on the witness of the New Testament, be rooted in the Bible, and remain biblical (Knitter 2002:51). Another message which comes from *exclusivism* indicates that any religion might be as dangerous as it is necessary. There is a danger within any religion to try to capture God in language, human knowledge, codes or cults. All these might become more important than God and God's revelation. For this reason, Barth's principle which views religion as "unbelief" should always be remembered in interreligious dialogue. It will remind partners to dialogue on all sides about the painful record of religion in human history; that is, religious wars, violence, and religious unrest in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe (:55).

Nevertheless, *exclusivism* generates serious problems and this is why Dupuis and other inclusivist and pluralist theologians separate themselves from the way it perceives the religious traditions in relation to Christianity. To view the religions by using one source (the Bible) or one perspective (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) is to narrow the view of the others and to miss seeing the real value of God's revelation in them. Although it is impossible for Christian theologians to put aside the Bible while they study other religions or suspend their own religious identity, still those who come into dialogue with other believers need to change and correct not so much what the Bible says about the others as what they *think* that the Bible says of the religions. They equally need to abandon their exclusivist conviction that Christianity is the only valid revelation of God which leads people to salvation. To make such a claim would mean one is certain that no other religion and its religious figures affect people's lives in the same way as Christianity and Jesus transform Christian lives. However, such knowledge is impossible, especially when the other believers' claims concerning their own religious figures sound very familiar to Christian claims about Jesus. All this indicates that one must be cautious in claiming the absoluteness of one religion or church over the other or interpreting the various religious worlds from a single religious perspective (:56-60).

3.5.3 Dupuis's stand on *inclusivism*

It is apparent that Dupuis, who as a theologian was influenced by the inclusivist approach to religious diversity, values all attempts which recognize that there is not only truth and grace (revelation) in other religions but also a "possibility" or "probability" of salvation. For him all these inclusivist attempts indicate that theology has slowly and fearfully reached the conclusion that the other religious traditions can be "channels" of God's saving grace. In his opinion, this attitude of openness towards other religions deserves praise. He also believes that in both Protestantism and Catholicism, *inclusivism* constitutes a departure from rigid *exclusivism* (Dupuis 2002a:45-47,52-59,61-73). This departure is visible in the affirmation that God's Spirit can touch people's lives "outside the church" (Catholicism) and "outside the preached Word" (Protestantism). Therefore, God's Spirit, who touches people through other people and may do so through other religions, should be placed in the center of any Christian theology of religions (Knitter 2002:100).

In numerous writings, Dupuis emphasizes that in Roman Catholicism, mainly through the theology of Karl Rahner, *inclusivism* brings an entirely new dimension to the human condition in the world (2002a:8-9,212-213,215). Although human nature is a "fallen nature" and the world is challenged by real evil, this human nature is a "graced" nature because of God's constant self-communication to humanity. *Inclusivism* reminds one that this communication between God and humans does not occur only in the heart of individual people, but also through a religious community, its words, rituals and symbols. Consequently, if one believes that God touches people through the words and sacraments of the Christian community, one should at least accept a "possibility" that God may also do so through the beliefs and rituals of other religions (Knitter 2002:101). Consequently, Dupuis arrives at the conclusion that if God is present in other religious traditions, interreligious dialogue is not only necessary and logical but has to be an essential part of the church's mission (Dupuis 2002a:224-225).

Nevertheless, while *inclusivism* is open to dialogue, it also clearly reminds theologians and ordinary Christians about their non-negotiable elements. All religions have them and they determine the identity and the authenticity of the religion. Thus engaging in interreligious dialogue requires knowing one's own religious identity. Dupuis strongly insists that for Christians those non-negotiables relate mostly to Jesus Christ (:157-159). In Jesus as in no one else, God has done something special. Thus, despite some similarities between other religious figures and Jesus, he will always remain entirely different and unique. This difference and uniqueness must therefore be preserved. This does not mean that inclusivists are not open to find in other religions "truths" about God which they have not received through Jesus. However, they cannot imagine agreeing to

anything that contradicts what they have experienced in Jesus. As Dupuis states the presence of the Spirit of God in other religions could reveal even more about those traditions, but the Spirit cannot be separated from, or opposed to, Jesus (Knitter 2002:103).

This chapter has indicated that inclusivist theologians and church officials sincerely and genuinely desire dialogue with other believers and their communities. They sincerely believe that dialogue can be enriching, challenging, and transforming, and some, like D'Costa and Dupuis believe that such a dialogue could lead not to one-sided "fulfilment" in Christianity but to "mutual fulfilment". A question, however, remains as to how far they can engage in interreligious dialogue with the assumption that it is only in Jesus that God has spoken God's final Word. This seems to be one of the barriers that inclusivists are not able to cross. Although they try to construct proposals which emphasize the role and presence of God's Spirit in the world, they still hold firmly to the universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ and his message.

3.5.4 Dupuis's evaluation of *pluralism*

It has already been mentioned that Dupuis welcomes all religious models as an important contribution to the theological debate on religions. This also includes the various pluralistic models (Dupuis 2002a:74-75). For Dupuis, of the group of pluralist proposals the most innovative and at the same time the most challenging are again those which relate to the view of Jesus. Looking at the way the pluralists understand Jesus, it seems that the most important issue in a current debate on religions is the need for new answers as to who Jesus really is (:170-171). This is why the pluralists propose to move forward from the picture of Jesus as the only Saviour and God's final Word to a more "modest" view of Jesus' position in the early Christian communities. Consequently, the pluralists challenge Dupuis and the inclusivist theologians to reinterpret the traditional language about Jesus as the "only" Saviour and revealer. This reinterpretation might provide new answers to how Christians can continue to announce Jesus' uniqueness in interreligious dialogue and remain open to the uniqueness of Buddha, Krishna or Muhammad (Knitter 2002:151-152).

A second challenge which pluralists pose to Dupuis and his theology, and which he welcomes, is the Spirit-Christology. This type of Christology might have the potential to balance and correct all the dominant flaws of the Logos Christology.[38] According to pluralists, Logos Christology diminishes Jesus' humanity by replacing the human center or person of Jesus with the second divine person (*Logos*). Consequently, Jesus' followers feel unable to imitate him. Thus, Jesus is entirely divine and none of the other religious figures can be compared with him since the incarnation of the Word cannot be separated from Jesus the human (:154). On the contrary, in Spirit Christology Jesus' divinity is understood more in terms of empowerment. Jesus is empowered by the Spirit (Dupuis

2002a:92). This makes it easier for Christians to understand how Jesus was both divine and human and why they are called to imitate him. In addition, the Spirit Christology allows Christians to recognize the presence of the Spirit in other believers and their religions and encourages 'them to listen to, learn from and so engage in dialogue with that Spirit' (Knitter 2002:156).[39]

Nevertheless, despite Dupuis's positive evaluation of the various pluralistic models, he strongly argues against the paradigm shift from *Christocentrism* to *theocentrism* which has taken place within *pluralism* (Dupuis 2002a:77-79). This paradigm shift abandons the centrality of Jesus Christ in the process of salvation replacing it with God and God alone. This means that the universal and constitutive mediation of Jesus Christ is replaced with many equally valid "ways" or saving figures that lead to God who becomes the Centre. Dupuis asks whether such theology is still Christian in its character if Jesus Christ plays a secondary role. He believes that the Christological question must still stand at the center of the debate if a Christian theology intends to remain Christian (:87-90,157-159). In the context of the Christological question Dupuis's reservations towards *pluralism* refer to the attempt to interpret the "one-and-only" language of the New Testament as "love" or "symbolic" language (:173-174). To say that in calling Jesus and praying to him as the only Son of God, the one mediator, the only way to the Father, Christians were using "love" or "symbolic" language, is historically unfounded. In reality the early Christians not only expressed their love for Jesus but they also gave Jesus a special, focal, decisive and final place in what they believed was God's relationship with humanity. This means that they were "ranking" Jesus; they were asserting that if God was acting in history and in other religions, this had to be evaluated by what God had done in Jesus. Christians were therefore aware of the other religions around them and they continued to use the language of the "one-and-only" (Küng 1991:99).

Moreover, viewing Jesus solely as a "symbol" seems to be inadequate, especially since Christianity identifies Jesus' message with his person. Jesus does not symbolize or represent the truth of God's love and justice but for Christians he *is* and *constitutes* the truth. For Christians, Jesus is Christ and Christ is Jesus. Hence, ordinary Christians might not easily accept the new ideas about Jesus as one among many (Küng 1991:101). It is not that these views seem to contradict what the New Testament says about Jesus but because they do not resonate with what Christians feel in their hearts about Jesus Christ. Jesus for them is not just truly God's revelation but also God's decisive and definitive voice in their lives.[40] Furthermore, some critics of *pluralism* such as DiNoia and D'Costa argue that in seeking to promote dialogue the pluralists end up as imperialists. They are imperialists in two ways. Firstly, by insisting on discovering a "common ground" for dialogue they seem to forget that there might be no "common ground" for dialogue because of the religions' diversity. Also, any

attempt to bring those religions together on some kind of "common ground" or principle of unity might damage their diversity. Secondly, by defining and setting up rules for dialogue the pluralists assume that these rules will be affirmed and accepted by all authentically religious people. The pluralists however seem to forget that all religions have their own "non-negotiables" which they will not compromise in interreligious debate (DiNoia 1990:120).[41] Therefore, it is unlikely that they will accept some common "commandments" for the sake of interreligious dialogue.

In addition, the "common ground" which the pluralists (Hick, Knitter and Pieris) propose is relative; namely the notion of "truth" is either so broad, so diversified, or so distant that one questions whether anybody actually possesses the "truth". For instance John Hick's "Real" that is present in all religions is as vague as it might be real. It can include every image of the Divine or God which the human imagination can create. Panikkar's Mystery present in all religions is not only at the top of the mountain but is made of all the paths leading to "the top". This, however, raises a question: How might one tell when a path does not lead to the top? Also if Christ has as many names as can be found in the world religions, how can one tell when a religious name does not really fit what Christ really is? In the ethical-practical bridge such noble concerns as "justice", "well-being" and "global responsibility" seem to be unclear or too universal. Because of different backgrounds or cultures, these terms might have different meanings. Therefore, using these concerns as a "common ground" for interreligious dialogue will not work (Knitter 2002:162-163).

In the context of the above contradictory claims of both *inclusivism* and *pluralism*, Dupuis calls for some consensus which will help to avoid both "absolutism" and "relativism" (Dupuis 2002a:87). From his perspective, a Christian theology of religions must undoubtedly be a theology of plurality of religious traditions. It must also show that commitment to one's faith is not in opposition to openness to that of another; that one's religious identity grows not from confrontation with other identities but from encounter with them. For Dupuis, as it will be seen, such a Christian theology which both preserves Jesus Christ and is simultaneously open to diversity of religious traditions must be based on a Trinitarian Christology. It is a Christian theology of "inclusive pluralism".

Conclusion

In this chapter a historical overview of the various approaches to the world religions was studied. This overview focused especially on inclusivist and pluralist perspectives as the two most common approaches in the current debate on religious pluralism. Special attention was paid to the development of the inclusivist model in the Catholic Church referring first to the early Church Fathers and afterwards to *Logos* theology. The analysis pointed out that the theology of the *Logos* was always present in Catholic attitudes towards other believers throughout history alongside the

exclusivist axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Later, this inclusivist theology was echoed in the "fulfilment theory", "anonymous Christianity" of Karl Rahner, the Second Vatican Council's stand on other faiths, and in the post-conciliar official teaching. This chapter also presented the various pluralistic views on religions with their complexity, challenges and unavoidable shortcomings. All these serve to place Dupuis's theology of "inclusivist pluralism" in a particular context which will be used as a framework for presenting and evaluating Dupuis's main proposals for a Christian theology of religions in the forthcoming chapters.

In the next chapter I shall analyze Dupuis's position on a unified religious history of humanity. The issues addressed will be the meaning of religious pluralism and its significance in God's own plan for humankind; the stages of history of salvation and revelation; and the relational interdependence between Christianity and the world religions.

---

[1] Another book entitled *The myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions* (1987) edited by Paul Knitter and John Hick discusses the pluralistic model moving beyond the traditional approaches of *exclusivism* and *inclusivism* towards a view which recognizes the possibility of many valid religions. The book distinguishes in *pluralism* three different models, also called "bridges": the historical-cultural bridge (relativity), the theological-mystical bridge (mystery), and the ethical-practical bridge (justice).

[2] For further criticism directed towards the threefold typology of *exclusivism*, *inclusivism*, and *pluralism* consult Tilley, T W, "Christianity and the world religions: A recent Vatican document" (*Theological Studies* 60, 1999), 323-327.

[3] An extensive discussion of the nature of pluralist theology is available in Knitter, P F, *No other name: A critical survey of Christian attitudes towards the world religions* (London: SCM Press, 1985), and Hick, J and Knitter, P F (eds), *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987). Terrence Merrigan while not in the pluralist school, provides a full exposition of pluralism in his "Religious knowledge in the pluralist theology of religions" (*Theological Studies* 58, 1977), 687-707.

[4] This distinction comes from Paul Knitter and his book entitled *Introducing theologies of religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

[5] It is difficult to define a movement as broad and disparate as evangelical Christianity. Gabriel Fackre has identified Evangelicals as those Christians who have 'espoused and experienced justification and scriptural authority in an intensified way: personal conversion and a rigorous moral life, on the one hand, and concentrated attention to the Bible as a guide to conviction and behavior on the other, with a special zeal for the dissemination of Christian faith so conceived [evangelism]' ("Evangelical, Evangelism", in Richardson, A and Bowden, J (eds), *A New dictionary of Christian theology* [London: SCM Press, 1983], 191). Although personal conversion is undoubtedly essential for evangelicalism, other important traits, such as a high regard for the Bible and an emphasis on Christian mission contribute to the "family resemblance" that enables evangelicalism to be viewed collectively as a movement. One needs to emphasize that some Evangelicals have engaged in interreligious dialogue, but it seems that it is safe to say that most evangelical laity and many of the leaders of evangelicalism would view such an endeavor with suspicion. See Netland, H A, "Application: Mission in a pluralistic world", in Rommen, E and Netland, H (eds), *Christianity and the religions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 265. For examples of evangelical engagement in dialogue see Rudin, J and Wilson, M (eds), *A time to speak: The Evangelical-Jewish encounter* (Grand Rapids, MI: William, B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987).

[6] *Exclusivism* has also been prominent in the wider Protestant tradition. Perhaps the most significant twentieth-century declaration of this position was the highly controversial work of the Dutch missionary Hendrik Kraemer *The Christian message in a non-Christian world* (London: Edinburgh House, 1947). Drawing from the theology of Karl Barth, Kreamer asserted that there was a great discontinuity between human religions and God's revelation in Christ, and, therefore to decide for Christ means a break with our religious past. See Kraemer, H, *The Christian message in a non-Christian world* (London: Edinburgh House, 1947), 70.

[7] One must mention here that Barth's view of other religions in the early period of his theological activity (*Epistle to the Romans*, first published in 1922 and *Church dogmatics* especially "Paragraph 17") differs from his later evaluation of them. Later Barth speaks of "other words and other lights outside the walls of the church". See Knitter, P F, *Towards a Protestant theology of religions* (Marburg: N G Elwert, 1974). A small minority of theologians claim that in the later

stage of his theological activity, Barth developed a more positive view of the religions, particularly in his anthropology. Peter Harrison in his essay "Karl Barth and the non-Christian religions" (*Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 23/2, 1986), 202-224 gives an account of positive interpretations and attempts to show a positive evolution in Barth's evaluation of the religions. Despite Barth's more positive assessment, there is no doubt that predominantly his early views had a broad influence on Protestant attitudes towards other religious traditions in the twentieth century.

[8] For philosophical and biblical arguments favoring and opposing interreligious dialogue especially from an evangelical perspective on this topic, see Jones, M S, "Evangelical Christianity and the philosophy of interreligious dialogue" (*Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 36/2-4, 1999), 378-396.

[9] Mostly these were the Visigoths who captured Rome in 410 and laid siege to Augustine's own city of Hippo as he was dying in 430. For the Visigoths' invasion of Africa, see Hughes, P, *A Short history of the Catholic Church* (London: Burns & Oates, 1977), 57-58.

[10] Fulgentius of Ruspa wrote: 'Hold most firmly and do not doubt that anyone baptized outside the Catholic Church cannot come to eternal life if before the end of his life one does not return and become incorporated into the Catholic Church' (*De fide liber ad Petrum* 37). And he added 'that not only all pagans, but also Jews, and all heretics and schismatics who die outside the Catholic Church, will go to the eternal fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels' (*De fide liber ad Petrum* 38).

[11] In connection with the case of Leonard Feeney, Pope Pius XII stated: 'To gain eternal salvation it is not always required that a person be incorporated in fact as a member of the Church, but it is required that he belong to it at least in desire and longing…. When a man is invincibly ignorant, God accepts an implicit desire, so called because it is contained in the good intentions of soul by which a man wants his will to be conformed to God's will' (*The Church Teaches* [Comp. by the Jesuits of St Mary's College, St Luis: B Harder, 1955], 274-275).

[12] The main works of Jean Danielou include: *Holy pagans in the Old Testament* (1957); *The Lord of history: Reflections on the inner meaning of history* (1958); *The Advent of salvation* (1962); *The Salvation of the nations* (1962); *The faith eternal and the man of today* (1970); *Gospel message and the Hellenistic culture* (1973).

[13] Rahner wrote that 'Christianity claims to be the absolute religion destined for all people, which cannot tolerate any other as having equal rights beside it. This thesis is the basis for the Christian theological understanding of other religions. Christ, the absolute Word of God, has come in the flesh and reconciled (united) the world to God through his death and resurrection, not only theoretically but also in reality. Ever since, Christ and his permanent historical presence in the world that we call church are *the* religion which binds the person to God' (Lehmann, K and Raffelt, A (eds), *Karl Rahner – The Concept of faith: The Best of Karl Rahner's theological writings* [Translation edited by Egan, H D New York: Crossroad, 1993], 52).

[14] One needs to clarify here that Rahner did not construct this concept for Buddhists, Hindus, or Muslims but for Christians to liberate them from their negative views of other believers outside the Christian church. Rahner wanted Christians to begin to understand that God is much greater than people think and that God is really inclusive in the divine saving plan for humanity. For a critique of Rahner's terminology of "anonymous Christians see Hillman, E, *Many paths: A Catholic approach to religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 39-40.

[15] For Claude Geffré, even the idea of "anonymous Christians" is a continuation of the "fulfilment theory". Based on the "supernatural existential" present in every human being, the theory refers to 'a kind of implicit, *anonymous*, hidden fulfilment, being embodied only in the upright conduct of life' ("From the theology of religious pluralism to an interreligious theology", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003], 48).

[16] For a comprehensive presentation and evaluation of Rahner's inclusivist theology, see Gelpi, D, *Life and light: A Guide to the theology of Karl Rahner* (1967); Kelly, G B (ed), *Karl Rahner: Theologian of the graced search for meaning* (1992); McCool, G A, *The Theology of Karl Rahner* (1969); O'Donovan, L J (ed), *A World of grace: An Introduction to the themes and foundations of Karl Rahner's theology* (1995). For a critique of Rahner's concept of "anonymous Christians", see Riesenhuber, K, "Rahner's anonymous Christians" (*Theology Digest* 13, 1965), 163-171; Stassen, P, "The Anonymous Christians" (*Christ to the World* 13, 1968), 246-247; Fredericks, J L, *Faith among faiths: Christian theology and non-Christian religions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 24-33; Richard, L, *What are they saying about Christ and the world religions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 29-35.

[17] Most of the conciliar commentators say that the development of this document was providential. Originally, the bishops decided to produce only a statement on the Jews to correct negative attitudes of Christians towards the Jewish people additionally fostered by anti-Semitism. For this reason, a new perspective on Judaism was essential. But when bishops from other countries in which Christians lived side-by-side with other believers realized that a new opportunity was emerging in the context of relations between Christianity and Judaism they wanted to extend this new positive attitude to other religious traditions. In this way, a statement intended to be only an appendage to the conciliar Decree on Ecumenism became an important declaration on interreligious dialogue. See D'Costa, G, *The Meeting of religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 102.

[18] The Second Vatican Council in another document went even further saying that not only other believers but also atheists who follow their conscience are (although unknowingly) following God and are saved (*Lumen Gentium* 16).

[19] In connection with *Nostra Aetate*, Geffré argues that although it 'proposed a certain ethic of dialogue' with the world religious traditions, the Declaration 'did not provide a theological basis that could clearly justify the dialogue

encouraged by the Church' ("From the theology of religious pluralism to an interreligious theology", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In Many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003], 47). Moreover although '[the] conciliar document presents a positive judgement on non-Christian religion…it does not explicitly take a position on the positive relationship that the different religions may have towards the Absolute' ("From the theology of religious pluralism to an interreligious theology", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In Many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003], 47).

[20] Paul Knitter views the Second Vatican Council "as a watershed" between two eras. See *No other name: A critical survey of Christian attitudes towards the world religions* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 123-124. In addition, a positive evaluation of the conciliar position on the world religions is given by Nichall, D, "Other religions (*Nostra aetate*)", in Hastings, A (ed), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and after* (London: SPCK, 1991), 132; Kunnumpuram, K, *Ways of salvation: The Salvific meaning of non-Christian religions according to the teaching of Vatican II* (Poona, India: Pontifical Athenaeum, 1971), 91. He argues that according to the conciliar teaching the world religions can serve as ways of salvation for their adherents. The Irish theologian Dermot A. Lane argues that *Nostra Aetate* might still become one of 'the most radical of all the documents of the Second Vatican Council' (*Christ at the center: Selected issues in Christology* [New York: Paulist Press,1999], 147-148). A different opinion, less optimistic, on the initiatives undertaken at the Second Vatican Council concerning the other religions is given by Cardinal Avery Dulles. For his understanding of the Council's position on the religions, see Dulles, A, "World religions and the new millenium: A Catholic perspective", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In Many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 3-13.

[21] For a further discussion of the teaching and the ambiguities of the Second Vatican Council concerning the other religious traditions and their saving values, see Sullivan, F, *Salvation outside the Church? Tracing the history of the Catholic response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 162-168.

[22] Once again, more careful and reserved evaluation of the post-conciliar magisterium's recognition of the other religions as possible "ways" of salvation and its openness to interreligious dialogue is given by Cardinal Dulles, A, "World religions and the new Millennium: A Catholic perspective", in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 8-11.

[23] Gavin D'Costa's main works include *Theology and religious pluralism: The Challenge of other religions* (1986); *Christian uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of a pluralistic theology of religions* (ed) (1990); *The Meeting of religions and the Trinity* (2000).

[24] Here D'Costa is quoting Barrett, C K, *The Gospel according to John* (London: SPCK, 1978), 467.

[25] John Hick is a British theologian and philosopher, a Presbyterian minister, for many years Professor of the Philosophy of Religion, and Director of the Blaisdell Programs in the World Religions and Cultures at the Claremont Graduate School, California. Among his many works the most well known are: *Christianity at the center* (1968); *God and the universe of faiths: Essays in the philosophy of religion* (1973); *The Myth of God incarnate* (ed) (1977); *God has many names: Britain's new religious pluralism* (1980); *Problems of religious pluralism* (1985); *An interpretation of religion: Human responses to the transcendent* (1989); *A Christian theology of religions: The Rainbow of faiths* (1995); *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions* (ed) (1987).

[26] Hick's argument is based on Emmanuel Kant's understanding of how the human mind works. Kant argues that we never experience anything directly, what one experiences is an image reflected in the mirror. For Kant's criticism of metaphysics, consult Popkin, R H and Stroll, A, *Philosophy* (London: Allen, W H & Company, [1969] 1973), 133-138.

[27] The Real for instance, according to Hick, might be expressed as Father, Mother, Shiva, Krishna but also as Emptiness, Way or Force.

[28] There were many religious practices in history which were and still are intolerable: the Crusades, apartheid, tortures, burning of widows, burning of witches, etc. These practices clearly indicate that within a religion there is a possibility of distortions which undermines its value. See Gilkey, L, "Plurality and its theological implications" in Hick, J and Knitter, P F (eds), *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 44-46.

[29] "Axial Period" is defined by Karl Jaspers as the time between 900 BCE to 200 CE when the formation of the main world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Confucianism took place.

[30] Paul Knitter first became interested in cross-cultural, interreligious dialogue as a member of the Society of Divine World Missionaries. He is presently an Emeritus Professor of Theology at Xavier's University, Cincinnati where he taught courses in world religions and theology of religions. His main works include *Towards a Protestant theology of religions* (1974); *No other name: A Critical survey of Christian attitudes towards the world religions* (1985); *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions* (ed) (1987); *One earth many religions: Multifaith dialogue and global responsibility* (1995); *Jesus and the other names: Christian mission and global responsibility* (1996); *Introducing theologies of religions* (2002).

[31] A lucid critique of *pluralism* is covered by Gavin D'Costa's book *Theology and religious pluralism: The Challenge of other religions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) and Peter Phan's essay "Are there other 'Saviours' for other peoples? A Discussion of the universal significance and uniqueness of Jesus the Christ", in Phan, P (ed), *Christianity and the wider ecumenism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 163-168. Also consult Joseph Ratzinger's response to Paul Knitter and John Hick and their thought in "Relativism: The central problem of faith today" (*Origins*, 26 October 1996), 310-317.

[32] Raimon Panikkar (1918 -) was born into and lived within two cultures: Hindu-Christian, Eastern-Western. He earned doctorates in chemical sciences, philosophy and theology. Panikkar studied and lived in Spain, Germany, Italy, India, and the USA and served as professor at universities in Madrid, Rome, Harvard, and California. Among his numerous works the most important are: *The interreligious dialogue* (1978); *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1981); *The Cosmotheandric experience: Emerging religious consciousness* (1993); *The intra-religious dialogue* (1999).

[33] It is interesting to note that most of the proponents of this approach which focuses on "Divine mystery" are Asian or have been influenced by the Asian religious context: Stanley Samartha, Michael Amaladoss, Sebastian Painadath, Felix Wilfred, Francis D'Sa and Seiichi Yagi.

[34] "Cosmotheandric" means that the Divine, the human, and the earthly constitute reality. The Divine breathes within the human and the material. As humans we become aware that the divine has its being within us and that the earth forms us. In addition, we care for the earth because we sense its sacredness and oneness with us. See Panikkar, R, *The Cosmotheandric experience: Emerging religious consciousness* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), ix.

[35] For an extensive discussion of global ethics and universal values, consult Kushel, K-J and Mieth, D (eds), "In search of universal values" (*Concilium* 4, 2001), 7-153.

[36] In order not to fall into relativism, for those who take part in a globally responsible religious dialogue, it is important that the true or false, good or bad among the different practices and beliefs be measured against whether a particular belief or practice is able to generate greater peace, justice or unity in the world. This is the measuring stick for religious truth and goodness. The persons who help most to apply this measuring stick are the poor and oppressed themselves who struggle to make their world better. See Amaladoss, M, "Liberation as an interreligious project" in Wilfred Felix (ed), *Leave the temple: Indian paths to human liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 158-174.

[37] Mark Heim is an Evangelical Christian committed to the Good News and Jesus Christ and later influenced by the religions of Asia where he lived for some time. Heim's main works include *Salvations: Truth and difference in religions* (1995) and *The Depth of riches: A Trinitarian theology of religious ends* (2001).

[38] For discussion of the Logos Christology, the universality of the Word and the centrality of the event of Jesus Christ, see Dupuis, J, *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 156-162.

[39] Roger Haight, one of the advocates of a Spirit Christology, explains this special help for Christians: 'A Spirit Christology, by recognizing that the Spirit is operative outside the Christian sphere, is open to other mediations of God. The Spirit is spread abroad, and it is not necessary to think that God as Spirit can be incarnated only once in history' (Haight, R, *Jesus symbol of God* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999], 456).

[40] This argument is further elaborated by Hellwig, M, "Re-emergence of the human, critical, public Jesus" (*Theological Studies* 50, 1989), 480.

[41] For further critique see DiNoia's, J, "Pluralist theology of religions: Pluralistic or non-pluralistic", in D'Costa, G (ed), *Christian uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of a pluralistic theology of religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 120ff.

PART TWO

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE THEOLOGY OF "INCLUSIVE PLURALISM"

Chapter Four: Dupuis's position on religious pluralism and a unified religious history of humanity

Introduction

Investigation of Dupuis's proposals for "inclusive pluralism" requires analysis of the main principles which guided his approach to religions. The first principle, which Dupuis examines in his works, is the existence of religious pluralism, its meaning and significance in God's own plan for humankind. For Dupuis, religious pluralism is not only a matter of "fact" but also a matter of "principle", namely, that religious diversity is willed by God and belongs to God's design of the religious world. In order to show that this is the case, Dupuis employs in his investigations a Trinitarian approach according to which God manifests God's self to humanity in history in a Trinitarian way. The concept of a unified history of salvation and revelation is therefore the second principle on which his theology of "inclusive pluralism" is based.

This chapter, first, engages in describing the different meanings of religious pluralism and the various contexts of religious diversity which convinced Dupuis that the existence of other religions is willed by God (*de iure*). Then this analysis probes Dupuis's view on a unified history of salvation and revelation, emphasizing that God's revelation and saving deeds have been present not only in Christianity but also in other religious traditions. Consequently, Christianity and the world religions, to a certain degree, not only contradict but also complement one another.

4.1 Different meanings of religious pluralism

Before turning to Dupuis and his argument for viewing religious pluralism as a component of God's design in the history of salvation and revelation, one must make a few distinctions concerning the various meanings of "pluralism". On the one hand, "religious pluralism" might have a theoretic character and thus relate to religious doctrines and moral codes of the various religions. On the other hand, it might have a practical character when it concerns religious practices of the same traditions. "Religious pluralism" might also mean the mere existence of various religious traditions in the past and in the present (Bronk 2000:608). Yet, "religious pluralism" might also refer to a group of philosophical-theological positions on the world religious tradition (DiNoia 1992:38). In this sense, "religious pluralism" is linked to a group of philosophers and theologians who view Jesus Christ as one among many equally and universally valid saviours and redeemers. See Chapter 3.4.

"Religious pluralism" to which Dupuis constantly refers in his proposals has a double meaning. It means either pluralism *de facto* or pluralism *de iure*. "Pluralism" as "a fact" (*de facto*) recognizes the obvious fact of the multiplicity and diversity of the world religious traditions existing in the world. Pluralism "in principle" (*de iure*) regards religious diversity as an unchangeable element of God's design of the religious world. The latter, "religious pluralism" as a principle (*de iure*), might be understood in two distinctive ways. Firstly, it might be conceived in the following way that the world religious traditions 'have equal authority, and hence in principle are equally valid, separate paths to salvation' (O'Collins 2003c:25). An example of this kind of pluralism "in principle" is its Hickian form. See Chapter 3.4.1. Secondly, pluralism *de iure* might however take another form mentioned in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* which follows the lead of John Paul II's theology (e.g. his 1990 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*). This version of pluralism *de iure*

> acknowledges that God becomes present to people through the "spiritual riches" that their religions especially embody and express (8). "The presence and activity of the Spirit" touch not only individuals but also "cultures and religions" (12); the "elements of religiosity" found in the diverse "religious traditions" come "from God" (21) (O'Collins 2003c:25).

Thus, there are theologians, not only in the Catholic Church but also in the other Christian churches, who understand pluralism *de iure* as willed by God and belonging to God's design of the religious world which serve the purpose of God's plan of salvation for humanity. At the same time, however, they openly exclude themselves from the pluralist school. This means that they have the intention of relativizing neither any objective truths, nor the complete and definitive character of Christian revelation, nor the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ's role in the history of salvation, nor the personal unity between the Logos and the historical Jesus (Geffré 2003:49-50). Geffré writes:

> Without claiming to know the reason of the multiplicity of ways to God, these theologians are simply seeking to interpret an apparently insurmountable pluralism in the light of what we know of God's universal will of salvation. This pluralism cannot be simply the consequence of culpable human blindness over the centuries, and even less the sign that after twenty centuries the Church's mission has met defeat. Hence, it is theologically permissible to interpret it as a pluralism that corresponds to a mysterious divine design (:50).

Dupuis, while speaking about pluralism *de iure*, refers to the above described interpretation which recognizes the activity of the Holy Spirit in various religions and which says that all the spiritual riches, including the elements of "truth and grace" and their contemporary function, come from God (O'Collins 2003c:25). Thus, although the declaration *Dominus Iesus* speaks against theologians who attempt to distinguish between pluralism *de facto* and *de iure* (DI 4) warning against relativism, it is justifiable to allow the existence of at least two different interpretations of religious pluralism *de iure*. Certainly, Dupuis's concept of pluralism "in principle" is not on the same level of the Hickian

form which puts all religions on the same footing. It is rather similar to the theology of John Paul II and mentioned in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* (DI 8,12,21).

4.2 Religious pluralism in God's design for humankind
4.2.1 Religious diversity in the New Testament in general

If the Spirit is active in other religious traditions and if religious diversity prevails in the foreseeable future, a question arises concerning its significance for a Christian message of salvation. This is also one of the main subjects which Dupuis addresses in his works. To find answer to these questions he examines the biblical data of the New Testament, early Christian literature, the history of Christian doctrine, the conciliar and post-conciliar teachings, and contemporary theological views on religions. First it is the New Testament in which Dupuis investigates the phenomenon of religious diversity, attempting to picture it as permanently inscribed in God's design. Dupuis's initial impression is that the biblical data concerning religious pluralism and particularly the Gentile religions are both very complex and open to different interpretations. He refers here to the biblical studies by Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmeuller in their book entitled *The biblical foundations for mission* (1983) on Jesus and the relationship of Christianity to the "pagan" religions. The studies revealed that there was no clear solution to the above relationship between Christianity and the "pagan" religions in the Bible, yet certain "conclusions" can be reached.

Although the religion of Israel was familiar with Gentile religions and cultures in general, the chosen people of Israel judged other faiths as idolatrous and superstitious. This also influenced the New Testament writings in which only Judaism and Christianity have value. The Gentile religions as such had no value. Senior and Stuhlmeuller write that although some biblical critics, especially Paul, came close to recognizing the other traditions as "natural religions" in which their members could discover God through the beauty of creation, most of the biblical writers had no admiration at all for the "extrabiblical" religious systems. Nevertheless, there are certain themes in the New Testament which might constitute a basis for a more positive evaluation of the Gentile religions. These themes are mainly an awareness of an expansive character of religious experience, an awareness of God's revelation through nature, the Gentiles' capacity to respond to the Gospel, and an awareness that the Divine can exceed beyond boundaries set by human expectations (Senior and Stuhlmueller 1983:344-347).

Commenting on the above findings, Dupuis argues that the biblical data concerning the "extrabiblical" religions and Christian attitudes towards them in the New Testament are 'often ambivalent, if not seemingly contradictory' (Dupuis 2002a:18). Moreover, the early church's interpretations of the Christ-event in the New Testament and the way in which the church

understood itself had a great influence on the attitudes which most Christians had towards religions in Jewish and Hellenic societies. Hence, in apostolic times and beyond, the church instead of looking objectively at the complexity of biblical data concerning the other religions emphasized only the Old Testament's view of the Gentiles' idolatrous practices and polytheistic beliefs. As a result, the early Christian interpretation of the Gentile religious practices provided a foundation for a doctrinally negative evaluation of the other traditions (:18).

Dupuis suggests, therefore, that in the context of contemporary openness, mutual understanding, interreligious dialogue, and the greater tolerance which the church has adopted in recent times, theologians should highlight the opposite, that is, the more positive elements of the biblical data concerning the relationship between Christianity and the "extrabiblical" religions. This new task would produce 'a valid basis for a more generous theological appreciation of the other religious traditions in the world' (:18). In his examination, Dupuis focuses on two stages of New Testament data. Firstly, he pays attention to Jesus' attitude towards those who did not belong to the "chosen people" of Israel and to Jesus' assessment of their beliefs, practices, and moral codes. Secondly, he examines the apostolic church's evaluation of the "extrabiblical" religions in the light of its paschal faith in Jesus Christ (Dupuis 1997:45-52).[1]

4.2.2 Jesus' attitude towards other believers

Concerning the first stage, Dupuis points to continuity and discontinuity in Jesus' attitude towards Judaism, arguing that Jesus did not intend to abolish Judaism with its law (Mt 5:17) or replace it with a new "religion". Instead, he established a new order of higher justice in comparison to the one of the Old Testament but did not separate himself from the Jewish community (Dupuis 1997:20). Dermot Lane shares this same opinion; he writes that even the Christian community after Jesus' resurrection did not separate itself directly from Judaism. In reality, Christianity 'came into being through a process of dialogue with Judaism that took place in the early centuries…' (Lane 1999:159). It had remained within Judaism for decades before it developed its own distinctive religious identity and eventually broke away from its origin, never however forgetting its Jewish roots. Thus, the Jesus 'movement of the first century was primarily a reform movement from Judaism' (:159). Jesus had therefore no intention of establishing a new "religion" separate from Judaism. He did however intend a spiritual renewal of religion which became for him the basis of his personal attitude towards Gentiles. In reality, Jesus' main purpose was to establish the Reign of God (Dupuis 2002a:20).

In this way, Dupuis attempts to show that the concept of the Reign of God is much broader and more inclusive regarding other believers and the "extrabiblical" religions than the idea of beginning

a new Christian church. It is the theme of the Reign of God which stands in the centre of Jesus' ministry (Dupuis 1991:132). Dupuis sees the constitution of God's Reign in the "Sermon on the Mount" and the Beatitudes. Although the Reign of God begins to be present in the world through Jesus' earthly life, only later does it become deeply rooted here on earth through the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Reign of God means God's decisive presence in the world manifested through Jesus' human actions. All Jesus' miracles and exorcisms are not so much signs of credibility that Jesus is a prophet at the service of the Reign as they are 'the first fruits of the operative presence of the Reign of God among human beings' (Dupuis 2002a:21). The Reign of God is therefore the dominion of God among people characterized by freedom, sister-brotherhood, justice, peace and love. And in the light of this dominion Jesus begins to interpret the religious life of "pagans", of "foreigners" and of other nations.

The first observation of Jesus, according to Dupuis, is that God is the God of all people and God's salvation is not limited to the members of Israel only but is intended for all humans. Dupuis writes: 'The universal scope of salvation goes hand in hand with the universal God of the Reign' (:22). The various episodes found in the Gospels[2] reflect signs of the entry of Gentiles into the Reign of God. Dupuis points out two instances. The first is the healing of the centurion's paralyzed servant in Capernaum (Mt 8:5-13). The second is the healing of the Canaanite woman's possessed daughter (Mt 15:21-28). These two stories occur outside of Jesus' own religious community and indicate that faith, which saves, is also possible outside of it. Furthermore, the universality of the Reign of God and the saving faith is apparent, for instance, in the parable of the banquet (Mt 22:1-14; Lk 14:15-24). The parable clearly shows that the Reign is already operative and includes even "outsiders" and "foreigners". It also reveals that for Jesus 'the faith and conversion that lead to salvation do not entail moving to any different religion, but mean conversion to the God of life, love, and freedom, that is, to the God of the Reign of God, of all human beings' (Dupuis 2002a:23). Faith and conversion, therefore, and not belonging to a particular religion, are the sign of the universality of God's Reign and consequently the universality of salvation present in the world.

At this point it is important to see that Dupuis's argument extends the universality of the Reign of God with its message of salvation for all people beyond Israel and beyond the "Christian community" instituted by Jesus and his disciples.

As examples of this extension, Dupuis points to Jesus' crossing of Samaria and to his conversation with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:4-15) regarded by the Jews as a "foreigner". Dupuis stresses several points concerning this event. Firstly, the event shows that Jesus does not reject or oppose the worship of Samaritan people on Mount Garazim or oppose it. Thus, Jesus indicates that a true

spiritual adoration of God is more important than all forms of worship. Secondly, Jesus' crossing of Samaria on the way to Galilee, which he could have avoided if he had wanted to, needs to be interpreted in terms not of human but of divine necessity and providence (Dupuis 2002a:26).[3] Thirdly, the entire conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman reveals that human religious efforts find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ who is the symbol of God's Reign and an image of God's love for all people (:26-27). It is not only the Samaritan woman but also other Samaritans (the "good" Samaritan - Lk 10:29-37, the "grateful" Samaritan in the group of the ten lepers who were cured – Lk 17:11-19), whom Jesus gives on various occasions 'as examples and models for an attitude of the faith and of brotherly and sisterly charity through which the Reign of God is entered' (Dupuis 2002a:27). The conclusion concerning these episodes is 'that, for Jesus, saving faith is available to "pagans" and "foreigners" not only from afar; it is really at work in their midst' (:27). Thus, the call to belong to the Reign of God goes beyond the boundaries of the chosen people of Israel (Dupuis 1991:132).

In the above context, what is, therefore Jesus' assessment of the "extrabiblical" religions? Jesus takes explicit stand on the "extrabiblical" religions in the Gospels. One may only presume Jesus' view on them, taking into consideration the universality of God's Reign and the universality of salvation for all people. One thing is certain and which Jesus made clear, was that his message was not directed solely to the limited group of his disciples or friends but to all people regardless of their cultural or religious affiliation (Dupuis 2002a:29).[4]

4.2.3 The early Christian community in relation to the "extrabiblical" religions
In the same way as he analyses the biblical data concerning Jesus' position on the Gentiles, Dupuis also examines the view of the early Christian community on the religions. He focuses his attention mainly on the Acts of the Apostles and on Paul's letters (Dupuis 1991:132). On the one hand, Paul is aware of the universality of sin. Thus, he writes that God's judgment will fall on all "pagans" because they lack recognition of God's revelation through the cosmos (Rom 1:18-32), yet he adds that the Jews will also be judged despite their special gifts received from God, if their works become contrary to God's commands (Rom 2:9-11).[5] On the other hand, Paul teaches that God reaches the Gentiles through the new covenant based on the Law imprinted in their hearts (Rom 2:14-16).

Dupuis's comment on this text is that although the Gentiles did not receive biblical revelation they still act according to the Law written in their hearts which is not the "natural law" but 'love itself, the *agapè* of the New Testament' (Dupuis 2002a:33). For Dupuis as for the Apostle, those Gentiles who act according to the "Law" inscribed in their hearts, are reached by the saving grace of Jesus Christ in a mysterious, although imperfect, way of which they have no knowledge (:34). He

concludes that on the basis of what Paul says concerning the Gentiles' religious life it is evident that the Gentiles can reach faith which saves, that is,

> without explicit faith in Jesus Christ, in whom the mystery of salvation has been achieved by God…. But that is not all. The religious life of the Gentiles cannot be reduced to some "natural religion" (:34).

To support his argument that the Gentile religions should not be viewed as "natural religions", Dupuis refers to Paul's preaching to the Gentiles in Acts both in Lystra (Acts 14:6-18) and in Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:22-31). He suggests that both texts should be interpreted with an emphasis on Paul's openness towards the religiosity of the Gentiles (Dupuis 2002a:35; 1991:132). In Lystra Paul healed the paralyzed man because of his faith (Acts 14:8-11). Dupuis interprets the second part of this episode, Paul's emphasis on God's self-manifestation through nature (Acts 14:16-17), as God's self-manifestation through the cosmos of which Paul speaks later in his letter to the Romans (1:18-32). In Paul's speech in Areopagus, Dupuis sees a message which recognizes that the religions of the Greeks are not without their own value, but they must still 'find in Jesus Christ the fulfilment of their aspirations' (Dupuis 2002a:35; 1991:132). Paul's speech in Athens is also the beginning of a new mission, a new way of preaching the Gospel based on a positive attitude and recognition of the Greek people's religiosity (Dupuis 2002a:37).

In order to see the true religiosity of the Gentiles outside the boundaries of the Christian tradition, Dupuis examines another episode from the Acts of the Apostles; the conversion of Cornelius' family from Caesarea (Acts 10:1-17). The text portrays Peter as crossing the limits of his own religious tradition. The importance of this event lies in the fact that despite acting against his own tradition, Peter acknowledges that one religious or ethnic group has no authority to judge as unclean or profane the customs or practices of another group (:37). This episode indicates that because of the divine origin and common destiny of all people, God moves beyond ethnic, cultural or religious differences. God shows no partiality or preference of one group over the other. This principle of "impartiality" becomes the main force of the apostolic church to cross the human, cultural, and religious borders (:38).

The principle of "impartiality" and the universality of God's saving action, raises a question concerning Jesus' constitutive uniqueness as the universal saviour. If God really moves beyond ethnic, cultural and religious differences reaching all people, what role does Jesus play in this process? In answering this question, Dupuis attempts to remain within the limits of inclusivist theology which does not compromise Jesus' uniqueness and universality. He writes that the biblical data and the theology of the apostolic church create a basis for a positive evaluation of members of

the other religious traditions of that time. This does not mean that the central Christian belief in 'the constitutive uniqueness of Jesus Christ as universal Saviour of humankind be softened down' (:39). Nevertheless, this central belief requires a correct interpretation both in the light of the biblical and the apostolic church's data as well as in the light of the contemporary context.

To show what is meant in this statement, Dupuis refers to some biblical texts which in the past were interpreted as supporting an exclusivist approach to religions and their members. These texts are: Jn 14:6 where Jesus is presented as "the way, and the truth, and the life" leading to the Father and the "great commission" texts and the texts of the "universal mission" (Mt 12:18-20; Mk 16:15-18; Lk 24:47-49; Jn 20:21-23). Dupuis rejects any exclusive interpretation in this regard whereby those who do not hear the Gospel or are not baptized are excluded from salvation. Rather these texts should be viewed as 'different aspects of the mission entrusted to the disciples: in Luke it is about "giving witness" (*marturein*) (Lk 24:48; Acts 1:8); in John about "forgiving sins" (Jn 20:23); in the "conclusion of Mark" about "proclaiming the gospel (*kèrusein to euanggelion*) to every creature" (Mk 16:15)' (Dupuis 2002a:43). For Dupuis the text of Mark which reads: 'Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned' (Mk 16:16), indicates that not baptism but faith decides about one's salvation.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that although Dupuis speaks about faith as a necessary requirement for salvation, he is careful not to deny the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the process of salvation or the fact that the early Christian church spoke about it. Thus, he admits that the apostolic church affirmed the constitutive uniqueness of Jesus Christ but 'in terms of different contexts and in any case avoiding any tendency to exclusivism' (:41).

4.2.4 The theological tradition of implicit faith

When Christianity separated itself from Judaism, it also distinguished itself from the other religions. The central question for Christians was what to think of the person of Jesus Christ and his saving activity on the one hand, and, on the other, of the philosophies, the individual philosophers and the many religions and cults in the midst of which the young church was living. The question was therefore whether there was any relation between Christianity and the religions, cults and philosophies. In general, in those times Christian attitudes towards other religions and their practices were rather negative (Dupuis 1991:133). These attitudes were partly influenced by the exclusivist interpretation of the biblical data, mainly Paul's writings. Thus, the early Church Fathers passed a negative judgment on the so-called "pagan" religions as being idolatrous and superstitious (Dupuis 1997:53-54).

The previous Chapter 3.3.1 revealed that some early church theologians, especially those associated with Tertullian, refused to see any possibility of a positive relationship between Christianity and the "pagan" religions. They also made a sharp distinction between the Christian religion and the others. This sharp distinction could easily be used as an argument against Dupuis's view of pluralism "in principle". Nevertheless, one must place the theology of the early Fathers, like the biblical data, in their own historic situation. One must also bear in mind that even though the early Church Fathers encountered the biblical "pagan" religions, they had limited experience of the main world religions such as Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism. For instance, Islam arose at the beginning of the seventh century, and the Church Fathers were rather poorly informed about the Eastern religions. Perhaps only certain of Origen's texts indicate that Brahmanism[6] was present in the Christian world in such cities as Alexandria (Geffré 2003:50-51).

It is on this basis that the converse argument supporting the idea of religious pluralism "in principle" might also be constructed. Despite the atmosphere of hostility towards the "pagan" religions, there was a positive recognition of the "wisdom of the nations" in Greek philosophy (Dupuis 1997:54-55; 57-60). Theologians such as Clement, Irenaeus, and to some extent Origen were prepared to recognize that the wisdom of philosophers contained the seeds of the *Logos*, the very Word of God (:55-56). Unfortunately, alongside the period of positive evaluation of religions in the early church theology, had developed a long history of a much less positive view of them.

The previous chapter, while discussing various approaches (models) to religions, examined the ancient axiom "outside the church no salvation" (Chapter 3.3.2). This chapter dealt with the origin of this axiom, different interpretations of it, and its presence in official church teachings. It is however important to emphasize that although the axiom later developed a strong influence on the church's attitude towards other religions, and amounted to the conviction of the necessity of the church for salvation, this axiom since the very beginning, had raised problems in the minds of some Christian theologians in the post-apostolic tradition and the Medieval Ages. If God's saving will was universal then *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* was putting limitations on this universal will. If the Gospel was promulgated to the entire world, which at that time was limited to "Christendom", and God equipped all people with "general help" leading to salvation and still they were outside the church and condemned for eternity, this meant that this "help" was insufficient. Yet, even though it was insufficient, the "pagans" themselves were held responsible in some way or other for lacking this divine help. Consequently, the concept of God's universal will to save was weakened and there was a need for other clear explanations and solutions (Dupuis 1997:110).

For Dupuis, these new explanations and solutions constituted a visible sign that the question of religious diversity and salvation of the other believers was continually present in Christian theological reflection. One must therefore go back to those moments in the Christian history of theology at which the question of religious pluralism and, more specifically, of salvation of "infidels"[7] was becoming increasingly urgent. Those moments refer mainly to the history of the idea of "implicit faith" and the "baptism of desire".

In the process of rethinking the conditions for salvation, Dupuis refers mainly to the Dominican scholars from the University of Salamanca and the Jesuits from the Roman College. These scholars came up with a new solution to the problem of the salvation of "infidels". This new solution was the theory of "baptism of desire" which later found its endorsement in the church's official doctrine at the Council of Trent (1547). Dupuis is, however, careful not to attribute any revolutionary role to the theological reflection of the sixteenth century or the official doctrine of "baptism of desire" itself. For Dupuis the church's official pronouncement cannot be regarded as a turning point in fostering new approaches towards other believers or granting them salvation. Such attempts had already been made long before the Council of Trent (:111).

In a synthetic way, Dupuis discuses at length the various models of substitution. His intention is, firstly, to show that the issue of religious diversity, combined with the destiny of members of other religions, was not something new. Secondly, Dupuis attempts to show that God's universal salvific will, which at times was doubted or even weakened, has been continually upheld. It was upheld 'because it belongs to the substance of the Christian message contained in the New Testament: "God our Saviour…desires all human beings to be saved" (1Tim 2:4)' (:111). Thirdly, Dupuis intention is to show once again the importance of faith for salvation and how this salvific faith was present in those who lived before or after Jesus, although they did not know him personally.

The first "substitute" which Dupuis discusses to support his argument on religious diversity and the universality of salvation is the solution of *evangelization beyond death* based on 1Peter 3:18-20 which portrays Christ after his death as going and preaching the "good news" 'to the spirits in prison who formerly did not obey [him]' (:112). In the early Christian communities this passage was interpreted by some Christian writers, including Origen, as conversion and baptism beyond the tomb. According to this interpretation, Jesus visits Hades to convert those who failed to accept his message when they were alive. For Dupuis the shortcoming of this belief lies in its perception that the eternal destiny of souls is decided at death. A more flexible solution to the problem of salvation of non-Christians was the *Limbo* theory which was constructed by Pelagius[8] and in a modified form upheld by Augustine. It stressed that "infidels" before Christ who lived virtuous lives and performed

good actions, which however lacked supernatural motives, held a natural beatitude of *Limbo*. In other words, although the "infidels" were adults, in the realm of morality and decision-making, they were like infants. Consequently they could not chose or reject Jesus Christ (:112-113).

Nevertheless, in Dupuis's view it was the "implicit faith" in Jesus Christ, constructed by Thomas Aquinas, which had the real potential to attribute salvation to those living before and after Christ. While Aquinas never dismissed the necessity of explicit faith for salvation, he believed that some "Gentiles" were saved before Jesus' incarnation. They were saved because of their implicit faith in God's providence and liberation of humankind. In the case of those who lived after Jesus incarnation, Aquinas upheld the belief that after hearing the Gospel the explicit faith was necessary to be saved. Yet on the basis of the universality of God's salvation, according to which God cannot deny salvation to anyone, even those after Jesus' incarnation who had never heard the Good News, had a chance to be saved. For this purpose, Aquinas contracted a theory of *baptism of desire* of both explicit and implicit character[9] which led to justification (:114-116).

A similar "substitute" developed by Aquinas for the adults who had never heard of Christ's message, was called the *fundamental option*. Before reaching the age of reason a person was confronted with a 'moral decision before God, aided by grace' (:116). Thus, such a person could choose or reject God. If this one fundamental option was positive, then the grace of justification removed one's original sin. Moreover, if a person could direct him/herself towards God on reaching the age of reason, that person had both an implicit faith in Jesus Christ and an implicit desire for baptism and thus attained salvation. This theory was however criticized for lack of clarity as to whether a child was capable of committing any sin before making the *fundamental option*. It also lacked clarity as to whether a person, on reaching the age of reason, was bound to the *fundamental option* which would lead to either justification or perdition (:116-117).

Despite the apparent shortcomings of all the substitutes, Dupuis privileges primarily the proposals of Thomas Aquinas as the ground-breaking theories for the flowering of implicit faith. These proposals showed a growing awareness of religious pluralism and the inclusion of other believers in God's saving action. They also revealed that, despite Aquinas being entirely convinced of the necessity of explicit faith for salvation, he was at the same time aware of the existence of the vast majority of people outside of Christianity who had never heard the Gospel (:118). Theologians who further elaborated the theory of "baptism of desire" were Domingo Soto, Alberto Pigge, Robert Bellarmine, Francesco Suárez and Juan de Lugo. This development took place in the fifteenth century in the context of the voyages and colonization of the "New World" and became an important theological response to it (Sullivan 1992:69-102). Later, as mentioned, the theory of "baptism of desire" entered

into the official church doctrine through the conciliar teaching of the Council of Trent. The possibility of justification through "baptism of desire" was repeated by the church on various occasions (Dupuis 1997:121).[10]

Dupuis mentions especially two important documents promulgated by the church, even before the Second Vatican Council, which engage in the issue of salvation of members of the other religions and the issue of implicit faith. The first is the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943) by Pius XII. The second is the letter of the Holy Office to the archbishop of Boston which condemns Leonard Feeney (1949). In *Mystici Corporis*, despite the unfortunate identification of the Roman Catholic Church with the Mystical Body of Christ, from which members of the other Christian churches are excluded, Pope Pius XII also adds that all those outside the Catholic Church, indirectly including members of other faiths,[11] can be saved. In the second document, a letter to the archbishop of Boston, Pope Pius XII condemns Leonard Feeney's position that explicit faith is necessary for belonging to the Church of Christ and being saved. The pope teaches that to be saved it is sufficient to be somehow related to the church but explicit membership of it is not required. Thus, implicit desire or a longing related to the church and supported by supernatural love and faith is sufficient for salvation (Dupuis 1997:127).

For Dupuis's argument for religious pluralism "in principle" all these formulations, including the theory of "implicit faith" as sufficient for salvation, constitute a timid inclusion of other believers in the universality of God's salvation. In his opinion the "substitutes" show the church's progressive understanding of God's universal will to save those outside the church. They show a gradual awareness of the existence of other religious traditions besides the Christian faith. Finally, although the problem of the impossibility of salvation without belonging to the church continued to prevail, it forced the church to rethink further its position on the salvation of others and on the existence of religious pluralism.

4.2.5 The contrasting theories about the religions surrounding the Second Vatican Council
This process of further reevaluation of the church's position on other religions was intensified in the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar era in the twentieth century. In this past century, Dupuis distinguishes three periods in which the religions were approached and evaluated differently.

The first period, identified with the beginning of the last century, was dominated by apologetic theology. Other religions were still perceived in negative terms. At the same time, however, the theory of "implicit faith" in Jesus Christ which emphasized faith in God's providence and the imperative of following one's own conscience enlightened by grace began gradually to be rethought.

The focus of this new apologetic attitude was 'the problem of the possibility of salvation for the members of other religions' (Dupuis 1997:12). Unfortunately, this reflection was still in terms of salvation of "infidels". As a characteristic sign of this approach, Dupuis mentions various entries in theological dictionaries and encyclopaedias entitled the "salvation of infidels" (:12). Nevertheless, this reflection opened a new horizon concerning religious diversity strengthened by the theological renewal prior to the Second Vatican Council.

The second period of major change in approach to religious pluralism led to and followed the Second Vatican Council (the 1960s). It is characterized by a change of climate, a less defensive and more positive attitude to religions. Theology and theologians became more optimistic concerning salvation of adherents of other religions, attributing to them positive values and the possibility of a positive role in the economy of salvation. The emergence of sciences such as the history of religions, phenomenology of religions, psychology of religions, religious sociology and philosophy of religions began to take place in those years. This emergence 'served as a powerful incentive for, and [was] instrumental in calling upon, theologians to reflect on the meaning and value of the religious traditions of the world in the light of the Christian revelation' (Dupuis 1997:4). In Dupuis's opinion, it was mainly the various sciences of religions which equipped the theology of religions with the indispensable data without which the theology would remain an 'abstract exercise, out of touch with the concrete reality of the religious traditions' (:4). This was the beginning of a new Christian theology of religions.

There were two main positions on the relationship between the other religions and the Christian faith which were held by Catholic theologians in the pre-conciliar era and at the time of the Council. Both positions were partially discussed in the previous chapter. Here, one must relate them to the context of religious pluralism and the question of its significance and role in God's plan of salvation.

According to the first position, previously discussed as "fulfilment" theory (Chapter 3.2.2), the world religions are human inventions representing the human desire for union with the Divine. This desire is expressed in different ways in various diverse cultures and in different geographical areas of the globe. That is why there are a multiplicity and diversity of religions. At the same time, only Jesus Christ and Christianity constitute 'God's personal response to this universal human aspiration' (Dupuis 1997:132; 2002a:47). Only Christianity is a "supernatural religion", the world religions are diverse expressions of "natural religion". In his theology, Dupuis argues against this theory for it says that God's grace (salvation) reaches adherents of the religions in their own traditions through the mediation of Jesus Christ. On their own, those religions have no lasting role in conveying

salvation to their members. They play no role in the mystery of salvation. This, however, means that religious pluralism is instead a side effect of the human quest for the Divine (Dupuis 1991:127-128).

The opposite position views the other religions as divine interventions in salvation history which are oriented to the salvific event of Jesus Christ. In this context, the world religions play a positive role before Jesus' event as *praeparatio evangelica* and they continue to play a positive role even now. They do so because of the operative presence of Christ's saving mystery in them (Dupuis 1991:128-129; 2002a:47). Dupuis calls this second position the "theory of the presence of Christ in the religions" or of "Christ's inclusive presence" (Dupuis 1997:132). This theory includes Karl Rahner and his notion of "anonymous Christianity" (Chapter 3.3.3), Raimondo Pannikar and his concept of the "unknown Christ", Hans Küng and the idea of religions as "extraordinary ways of salvation" (Chapter 3.3.6), and Gustave Thils and his view of the other religious traditions as "mediations of salvation" (Dupuis 1997:143-157; 2002a:47; Richard 1981:29-43). Dupuis also argues against this second position because, although it views religious pluralism as something positive and good, this goodness is only temporal and ultimately Christianity should overcome it. Consequently, God does not will the religions but "employs" them to realize God's salvific will in history.

Despite their shortcomings, the two positions clearly indicate that religious pluralism was beginning to be approached from a different perspective. While before the pre-conciliar era an ecclesiocentric viewpoint on religious diversity largely dominated the theological debate, later a Christocentric perspective was stressed. The theological debate on religious pluralism shifted from an ecclesiological question concerning the salvation of those outside the church to the salvation of members of other religions in and through Jesus Christ. It was Jesus Christ who reached them in a "mysterious" way through their own traditions, beliefs, rites, and laws.

One would expect that the Council, while reflecting on religious pluralism, would opt for one of the above positions. However, this did not happen for various reasons. One such reason was the pastoral and non-doctrinal character of the Council. Thus, the main interest of the Council became not dogmatic definitions but the issue of fostering positive attitudes of mutual understanding, cooperation and dialogue between Christianity and the religions. Opting for a particular position on the religious traditions which was, at that time, in the centre of the theological debate, was beyond the Council's concern. Dupuis sees one more reason for the Council's withdrawal from getting involved in theological discourse; the fact that the conciliar fathers came from theologically diverse backgrounds. There was a feeling therefore that this factor might cause a strong division on theological issues and certainly on the question of the meaning and role of religious pluralism (Dupuis 1997:158-159).

Ultimately, the Council decided to emphasize the need for 'a change of attitude of Christians and the Church toward the members of other religions' (:159). And religious pluralism began to be seen as an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the "others" in order to understand one's own tradition. The origin of such a view of religious pluralism was a belief that the Spirit of God also acts outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, and consequently dialogue with the other traditions might lead to a deeper understanding of God's self-revelation present in the Church (Merrigan 2003:62). This position was further developed during the last few decades by the theology of John Paul II. In particular, the role of God's Spirit, acting outside of the Judeo-Christian traditions and reaching members of the main world religions, is emphasized in his encyclicals *Redemptoris Missio* (28) and *Dominum et Vivificantem* (53).

This brings us to the third period of major change in attitude towards the main world religious traditions and the question of the significance of religious pluralism which began in the 1980s and continues to prevail in the Christian theology of religions. This third period relates to the emergence of various responses to the existence of religious pluralism in a contemporary Christian theology of religions. It further relates to various answers to the question of the meaning and significance of religious diversity in God's plan of salvation. There is no need to discuss once more the various responses to the phenomenon of religious pluralism. What is preferable now is a closer look into Dupuis's view of religious pluralism as a matter "of principle" which constitutes an essential element in the model of "inclusive pluralism".

4.2.6 The meaning and significance of religious pluralism in God's plan of salvation
Dupuis's notion of "inclusive pluralism" based on a Trinitarian Christology is considered by some theologians (Geffré, O'Collins, Merrigan) to be the most promising initiative in contemporary Catholicism as it attempts to go beyond the theology of fulfilment in religious pluralism. Dupuis views religious diversity as willed by God and consequently as having a lasting role in the economy of salvation. This also means that the task of theology is no longer to investigate 'what role Christianity can assign to the other historical religious traditions but [to search] for the root-cause of pluralism itself, for its significance in God's own plan for humankind, for the possibility of a mutual convergence of the various traditions in full respect of their differences, and for their mutual enrichment and cross-fertilization' (Dupuis 1997:11; Panikkar 1978).

Hence, for Dupuis the question is not so much about what value Christianity can assign to the world great religions, but about the real origin of religious diversity and its significance in God's own plan of salvation (Dupuis 1997:11; 2002a:4). Dupuis's response to the above questions brings him very close to the pluralist position of John Hick or Paul Knitter which regards the other religious

traditions including Christianity as entirely independent and equally valid paths to salvation. The difference is that while attributing to the religious traditions a vital and indispensable role in God's plan of salvation for humankind, Dupuis insists that their effectiveness can never be separated from the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Their validity always depends on Jesus Christ's mediatory function. In this way, Dupuis continues to preserve Jesus' uniqueness and universality as the mediator of salvation (Merrigan 2003:62-63). In reality, this is one of the points where Dupuis differs profoundly from the pluralists. One must acknowledge, however, that while remaining faithful to the uniqueness of the mystery of Christ, Dupuis has the courage to speak of "inclusive pluralism". His concept of "inclusive pluralism" acknowledges both the value and the meaning of the other religious traditions.

The analysis of Dupuis's investigation of signs of religious pluralism in the Scriptures, Christian tradition and recent theological reflection show that the question of the origin of religious diversity, its meaning and role, became for Dupuis the primary and fundamental question. An answer to it constitutes a principle or theological basis for his theory of "inclusive pluralism". Moreover, Dupuis addresses this question encouraged by the Council which, although it had separated itself from narrow ecclesiocentrism and positively evaluated the world religions as possible carriers of saving grace, did not consider them as "ways" of salvation and did not theologically reflect on the meaning of religious diversity (Geffré 2003:49). It is precisely this lack of theological evaluation of religious pluralism and a new Christian experience of it in the contemporary world that forced Dupuis to reflect and interpret God's divine plan of salvation for humankind (Geffré 2003:49). In this process Dupuis takes account especially of the Asian churches' relationship with the religious traditions on the continent where religious diversity is inscribed in a religious landscape and where Christianity constitutes a real minority. Perhaps this is the reason why he refers several times to the conclusions drawn by various documents of the Asian church concerning the significance and meaning of religious diversity. In this way, Dupuis indicates that although the universal church has not yet arrived at a definitive statement on the above significance and meaning, the various particular churches, inspired by the divine Spirit and because of the interreligious situation and pastoral needs, have reflected profoundly on the phenomenon of the multiplicity of religions.

Dupuis argues that a view of religious pluralism which goes beyond the conflicting claim to uniqueness both on the part of Christianity and also of the world religions found its echo in, and support of, an official statement of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Indian Theological Association (from 28 to 31 December 1989). The statement was entitled "Towards an Indian Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism". In the context of the limitations of the various

categories (ecclesiocentrism, Christocentrism, theocentrism, regnocentrism, soteriocentrism, etc.), used in the theological debate on religious pluralism the statement says that the Indian theologians approach religious pluralism from their own perspective of faith. This perspective allows them to see the real purpose and meaning of the diversity of religions and its role in the process of salvation. Dupuis quotes the statement[12] at length:

> The religions of the world are expressions of the human openness to God. They are signs of God's presence in the world…. In their specificity, they manifest different faces of the supreme Mystery which is never exhausted. In their diversity, they enable us to experience the richness of the One more profoundly. When religions encounter one another in dialogue, they build up a community in which differences become complementarities and divergences are changed into pointers to communion (Dupuis 1997:199-200).[13]

Along these lines, the Bishops' Institutes for Religious Affairs (BIRA) organized by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) clearly see the roots of religious pluralism in the self-manifestation of the Triune God in history. In this light they argue that the various traditions as 'the many ways of responding to the prompting of the Holy Spirit must be continually in conversation with one another' (16) (BIRA no 3).[14] Dupuis also refers to two other documents which address the issue of religious pluralism, its role and significance. The first document is entitled "Theses on Interreligious Dialogue" published by the Theological Advisory Commission of the FABC in 1987. The document openly expresses its positive evaluation of the significance and role of the diverse religious traditions in the history of salvation (Dupuis 1997:220).[15] The second document is the "Guidelines for Interreligious Dialogue" published by the FABC's Commission for Dialogue and Ecumenism. The text reads:

> The plurality of religions is a consequence of the richness of creation itself and of the manifold grace of God. Though all coming from the same source, peoples have perceived the universe and articulated their awareness of the Divine Mystery in manifold ways, and God has surely been present in these historical undertakings of his children. Such pluralism therefore is in no way to be deplored but rather acknowledged as itself a divine gift (25) (Dupuis 1997:315).[16]

Perhaps these texts are not as authoritative as *Nostra Aetate*, "Dialogue and Proclamation" or post-conciliar encyclicals on interreligious dialogue or religious diversity. Nevertheless, according to Dupuis, they represent the great Asian church's openness to the world religions. They view religious diversity as planned by God. This is why God is seen as being active and present in them and through them God draws people to God's self. Thus, religious pluralism witnesses the multiple ways of God's relation to individuals and entire nations. On this basis Dupuis refuses to view the religions and their "role" as only "accidental" or "preparatory" which equips the other believers to accept Christianity, as it was the case of the "fulfilment theory" (:130-142). On the contrary, Dupuis begins

to view the world religious traditions as having 'a lasting role and a specific meaning in the overall mystery of the divine-human relationships' (:211).

Generally, Dupuis's stand on religious pluralism does not differ much from views of many contemporary theologians. Religious diversity as such (*de facto*) will also remain in the future and it is a matter of realizing it and welcoming it. The cause of its persistence lies in many factors, one of which is a partial failure of Christian mission in various parts of the world and especially in Asia (:386). Yet, religious pluralism in reality has its roots in God's generosity of manifesting God's self 'in manifold ways and to the pluriform response which in diverse cultures human beings have given to the divine self-disclosure' (:386). Hence, for Dupuis the question is rather whether, from God's perspective, religious pluralism is merely permitted or is designed and willed by God. In other words, can one acknowledge in religious pluralism any positive meaning in God's plan of salvation for humanity? Dupuis answers affirmatively.

There is a theological basis for religious pluralism *de iure*. Yet neither can such a theological foundation be seen in the belief in diversity of persons in Godhead. This would not be a sufficient basis. Nor can it be seen in the diverse character of the world, that is, the diversity existing in nature, seasons, space, time, etc. Nor can it be seen in human limitations in expressing the Divine which would lead to diverse religions and beliefs. This would mean that plurality is merely a result of the human search for God. The real foundation of religious pluralism "in principle" is rooted in something else. Dupuis states:

> The divine plan for humanity…is one, but multifaceted. It belongs to the nature of the overflowing communication of the Triune God to humankind to prolong outside the divine life the plural communication intrinsic to that life itself. That God spoke "in many and various ways" before speaking through his Son (Heb 1:1) is not incidental; nor is the plural character of God's self-manifestation merely a thing of the past…. Religious pluralism in principle rests on the immensity of a God who is love (1997:387).

This means that religious diversity is deeply rooted in God's plan of salvation for humanity and God's multifaceted self-manifestation (revelation) in history. Dupuis views the two as the realization of one divine plan designed by God for all people and all nations (:371). Here, however, we are touching on one of Dupuis's most controversial proposals.

It will be seen that the concept of a single history of salvation and revelation serves several purposes in the theology of "inclusive pluralism". Firstly, it reaffirms what was discussed in the entire section that religious pluralism is willed by God. Secondly, it shows that all religions are included into this one plan of salvation; they interrelate and coexist with Christianity. Thirdly, the concept indicates that God manifested God-self in diverse ways and saves in diverse ways through the activity of the

Logos and the Spirit but in unity with Christ. This God's trinitarian revelation-salvation must also be imprinted somehow in the religions. Finally, the concept builds a solid basis for viewing the other religious traditions as "participated" mediations through which God channels salvific grace to their adherents.

4.3 Stages of the history of salvation and revelation
4.3.1 A single divine salvation history

In his theology, Dupuis consequently insists that the history of salvation and revelation should be regarded as one.[17] From the historical perspective one may experience a variety of God's self-manifestations and at the same time see clearly that there is one divine plan of salvation for humankind, which is complex, but at the same time singular and universal (Dupuis 1991:116). The initial question therefore, in which Dupuis engages, relates to the relationship between salvation history and the history of the world. Do they coincide and if they differ, does salvation history begin with the creation of the universe and extend to the entire world?

Firstly, Dupuis rejects the notion that salvation history began only in the call of Abraham when it received its "sacred" character and became "sacred history" (Dupuis 1997:215; 2000:212). Such a tendency in his view reduces God's engagement with humanity before and outside the call of Abraham. This "a priori" tendency led Karl Barth to the certitude that all other religions are human attempts at self-justification, and have no value and are "unbelief". Such a view of salvation history which began with Abraham led Jean Danielou and Hans Urs von Balthasar to a less negative but an equally restrictive approach to the world religions as "cosmic religions"[18] (Dupuis 2002a:98-99).

Secondly, Dupuis rejects the idea of "prehistory" in which salvation and revelation are separated from each other. He does so because the notion of "prehistory" creates two equally exclusive positions. On the one hand, "prehistory" implies God's "revelation" through the cosmos but remains exclusive to salvation. On the other hand, "prehistory" might imply that salvation was accessible for people before Abraham, but that God's revelation 'remained hidden in the future until God's revelation to Abraham' (Dupuis 1997:217; 2000:212; 2002a:99).

Thirdly, Dupuis rejects the idea of limiting salvation-revelation history to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Instead, he argues that salvation history is coextensive with the world history (Dupuis 2000:212). He refers here to Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) which states that

> salvation history coincides and is coextensive with the history of the world. It consists of human and world history itself, seen with the eyes of faith as a "dialogue of salvation" freely initiated by God with humankind from creation itself and pursued through the

centuries until the fulfilment of God's Reign in the eschaton (Dupuis 1997:217; AAS 56 [1964]:609-659).

Likewise, Dupuis points to Karl Rahner to affirm that both God's self-manifestation and salvation through human history have been one (Dupuis 1997:217; 2002a:100). He especially refers to Rahner's notion of the "supernatural existential" which constitutes an affirmation of God's revelation-salvation and is linked with the universal and free gift of God's self-revelation to any human being (Rahner 1966a:103;[19] 1978:138-175; Dupuis 1997:217). Because of God's constant self-communication to people salvation and revelation history must be one and must coincide with world history. Rahner names this general history of salvation-revelation – "transcendental" and the Judeo-Christian history of salvation revelation "categorical" (1978:153-161,170-175).

"Transcendental" history is always expressed in a concrete form as the history of religion or a particular form in the historical religions. These religions might serve as historical mediations of God's self-revelation to their members and as possible channels of reaching salvation. On the contrary, the special or "categorical" history of salvation takes place in Judeo-Christian traditions. According to Dupuis, the idea of a special history of salvation which is particular to Judeo-Christian traditions should not be reduced exclusively to these traditions. In reality, 'other religious traditions too may contain prophetic words interpreting historical happenings as divine interventions in the history of peoples' (Dupuis 1997:219). This implies that any theology needs to be careful in drawing a clear line of separation between what belongs to "general" and what belongs to "special" revelations.

Undoubtedly, a special bond exists between Israel's history and the Christ-event, but there is also a similar bond between histories of other nations and the Christ-event. Therefore, the question is whether or not other people's history can play a role "analogous" to that of Israel's concerning salvation. A history made of historical events, which have salvific significance, and whether "special" salvation history should not be extended to "extrabiblical" traditions (Dupuis 1997:220; 2002a:101-102). This question is especially valid in the context in which the presence of the fruits of God's Spirit in other religious traditions often 'testifies to God's saving and revealing action among them through their history' (Dupuis 1997:220).

In explaining God's saving and revealing action in the history of the nations, Dupuis applies his model of a Trinitarian Christology (Dupuis 2002a:109-113). He reminds one that from a Christian perspective the Christ-event is the central point in God's plan of salvation for humankind. At the same time, the Christ-event is the fundamental basis for God's dialogue with humanity in the entire history and concretization of God's divine plan of salvation. The Christ-event is also a final cause

which influences the final history, that is, the Christ-Omega who draws pre-Christian and post-Christian history to himself. Despite Christocentrism's centrality in the economy of salvation, it does not obscure but rather calls for acceptance of, the universal action of the Logos and the Spirit of God throughout salvation history, especially in the "extrabiblical" religions. Dupuis argues that this finds support in the Old Testament biblical tradition which regards the divine Logos-Wisdom and the divine Spirit 'as "medium" for God's personal interventions in history, both in Israel and outside' (Dupuis 1997:221,41-45). This also finds support in the New Testament view of the Logos-Wisdom and the Spirit who were operative in pre-Christian salvation history, 'as two distinct persons within the mystery of the Triune God: the Son who became incarnate in Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and the Spirit of Christ, on the other' (:221).

Nevertheless, the question arises as to how the universal active presence of the *Logos* and the Spirit present in the salvation history of "extrabiblical" traditions relates to the Christ-event constructing one economy of salvation (:222). In other words, how Christocentrism, on the one hand, and Logocentrism and pneumatocentrism on the other hand, coexist and complement each other in the divine plan of salvation. In clarifying this coexistence and complementarity, Dupuis emphasizes that the Christ-event is the goal of the anticipated saving activity of the *Logos* and the Spirit in the world. The saving activity of the *Logos* and the Spirit from the beginning of salvation history is oriented towards the Christ-event. This means that there exists a relationship between the function of the *Logos*, the Spirit and the Christ-event which mutually and equally complement each other in the one Trinitarian Christological economy of salvation. Dupuis writes: 'The Christ-event never stands in isolation from the working of the Logos and the Spirit, any more than these ever operate without relation to it' (:222).

For Dupuis, therefore, this unique economy of salvation is one but at the same time logocentric, pneumatocentric and Christocentric.

4.3.2 God's single covenant with humanity

The one salvation history is inseparably connected with God's covenants established with the human family. In this regard, Dupuis pays particular attention to the concepts which view all God's covenants established with humanity as a single covenant. In his argument, he consults two groups of biblical scholars. The first group emphasizes that the covenant which God established with humanity in Noah, has lasting value. According to these scholars (Stoeckle 1967; Bühlmann 1982) God has never ended this covenant by establishing other covenants and consequently the covenant with Noah must have a special significance for the theology of religions.

The second group of scholars suggests that God had already established a universal covenant with humanity in the creation of the world.[20] One of the biblical interpreters who supports this view of a unique cosmic one-covenant with humanity in Adam is A. Rizzi. According to Rizzi, the Abraham-Moses covenant is not a different covenant from that one with Adam. Rather, the Abraham-Moses covenant constitutes a new self-awareness of the one universal covenant in creation among the people of Israel (Rizzi 1992:4). The same relates to the "new covenant" in the New Testament where Jesus is viewed as a "refoundation" of the universal covenant. Hence, Christianity constitutes a sign that God has re-established the universal covenant with humanity through the event of Christ (:6).

In general, Dupuis agrees with Rizzi's interpretation which clearly shows the existing continuity in the history of salvation from creation to the Christ-event. Yet, at the same time, Dupuis argues that this interpretation overlooks God's covenant with Noah and reduces the significance and the newness of God's covenant through Jesus Christ. On the basis of Rizzi's interpretation 'Israel and Christianity stand to each other as two "analogous" signs of God's universal covenant with humankind in Adam' (Dupuis 1997:224). Instead, Dupuis recalls Christian tradition (Saint Irenaeus' theology) which distinguishes four covenants established by God with humanity: in Adam, in Noah, in Abraham and Moses, and in Jesus Christ (Dupuis 2000:212). In his works *Adversus Haereses* and *Demonstration of Aphraates*, Saint Irenaeus raises an important question which relates to the issue of continuity between the covenants and the issue of interpretation, especially of God's covenant in Noah. It is precisely this relationship which encourages Dupuis to investigate the significance of the covenant in Noah and whether it is still valid after the Christ-event (Dupuis 1997:225).

Firstly, Dupuis argues that nothing suggests that any of the four covenants abolishes the preceding one. In reality, they hold together and represent many ways of God's engagement with humanity through the *Logos* (:225-226). Secondly, turning to the covenant in creation and the covenant in Noah, Dupuis writes that the Genesis narrative reveals 'God's familiarity with Adam and thus…a personal relationship between the Creator and humankind' (Dupuis 1997:226; 1991:118). This intimate relationship between God and humanity is also evident in the covenant with Noah (Gen 9:1-17) with special emphasis on the covenants extended forever to Noah's descendents (Gen 9:16). Dupuis interprets it as 'a personal commitment of God toward the nations; that is, the universality of the divine intervention in the history of peoples, of which the religious traditions of humanity are the privileged testimonies' (Dupuis 1997:226; 1991:118). This means that the covenant with Noah has a special significance for the theology of religions, especially since the religions belong to the "extrabiblical" tradition and continue to be in the covenant with God. Consequently, people who

belong to the "extrabiblical" religious traditions are also covenant people; they are "peoples of God" (Dupuis 2000:212; Bühlmann 1982).

Thirdly, in the human history of salvation God always communicated God's self through covenants in the Trinitarian way, that is, through the Son and in the Spirit because God is a triune community of persons. In other words, God's self-communication and self-manifestation is characterized by the Trinitarian rhythm: from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. This Trinitarian character is visible in the creation of the world when God creates through his Word (Gen 1:3) and in the Spirit (1:2). This Trinitarian character is also apparent in the history of Israel based on the Abrahamic-Mosaic covenant (Dupuis 1997:227). Yet, this Trinitarian rhythm is less evident in the covenant with Noah. Nevertheless, Dupuis writes that the perspective of Christian theology and the logical consequence indicates that the Trinitarian imprint must also be visible in the covenant with Noah and in the "extrabiblical" religious traditions. This means that the "extrabiblical" religions also contain traces of the Trinity including the religious life of their adherents (:228). He concludes that on the basis of 'a "high" Trinitarian theology, though not without foundation in the Christian scripture' the fact remains that 'individually as well as collectively, extrabiblical religious humanity is assumed by God into fellowship with himself in grace and hope' (:228).

An unavoidable question, which Dupuis attempts to answer, is whether, in the Judeo-Christian traditions, the "old covenant" established with Israel has been replaced by the "new covenant" of the Christ event. For Dupuis if the "old covenant" continues to be valid, all other covenants must also be valid and their members must be a covenant people. To support his way of thinking, Dupuis refers to a scriptural exegete Norbert Lohfink and to Pope John Paul II. In his studies entitled *The Covenant never revoked: Biblical reflections on Christian-Jewish dialogue* (1991), Lohfink engages with the above issue and writes that in reality the Old Covenant has never been revoked (Dupuis 2000:212). The same opinion is shared Pope John Paul II who, in a speech given at Mainz, Germany in 1980, said that the Old Covenant continues to be valid (AAS 73(1981)80). Lohfink's findings especially indicate that the "old covenant" of which Paul speaks in the letter to the Corinthians (2Cor 3:14) is not abolished by the new but is "unveiled" by it, in the sense, that the "new covenant" spreads 'abroad the splendour of the Lord which the first [covenant] contained without revealing it fully' (Dupuis 1997:231). Lohfink opts therefore for a "one covenant" theory which embraces both Jews and Christians. Nevertheless, despite the existence of one covenant there are two ways in which God's salvation is present in the world: one destined for the Jewish people, the other for the Gentiles in Jesus Christ (Lohfink 1991:84-85).

Dupuis welcomes Lohfink's conclusion, yet he warns that the two ways of salvation within one covenant must not be treated as separable, parallel, or independent ways which 'would destroy the unity of the divine plan' of salvation for humankind which reaches, in Jesus Christ, its 'eschatological fullness in the Christ event' (Dupuis 2000:212-213). The divine plan of salvation must be viewed as an organic unity, yet expressed in history in a dynamic way through various steps which are complementary. The Christ-event cannot exist without Israel, as God would never choose the people of Israel if the Christ-event were not to take place. Dupuis selects the case of Judaism and Christianity to highlight that, analogically, the religious traditions symbolized by the covenant with Noah keep their lasting value as well. Just as the Mosaic covenant has not been revoked by the Christ-event neither has the cosmic covenant in creation and in Noah (Dupuis 1991:123-124). For Dupuis all this serves one purpose 'that the distinction between the general and special history of salvation must not be taken too rigidly: extrabiblical religious traditions…cannot be excluded a priori from belonging to special salvation history' (Dupuis 1997:233).

4.3.3 God's universal self-revelation to the human family

Consequently, if the "extrabiblical" religions cannot be excluded from special salvation history, God's self-revelation has to be extended to all nations embodied in God's covenantal relationship with humanity. Is God's revelation thus coextensive with the history of salvation which is at the same time coextensive with world history? How does one understand that Jesus Christ is the "fullness" of divine revelation if one considers that God also revealed God's self through other prophetic figures in the world traditions before and after the Christ-event? Do the other "sacred books" or "oral traditions" of the religions offer only a human discourse about God or perhaps contain, as the Bible does, the "Word of God" directed to adherents of those religions and even to the entire humanity? And if Jesus is the "fullness" of God's revelation, does it mean that this revelation has already come to an end or it is rather an "ongoing process" within Christianity and at the same time in other religious traditions?

These are the questions which Dupuis addresses in his argument for God's universal revelation both within Christianity and outside of it (Dupuis 1997:235-236). His central point is that if the whole of history is the history of salvation then God's revelation must also be universal, especially since the biblical data testify that deeds and words, events and people go hand in hand. This is also what the constitution *Dei Verbum* of the Second Vatican Council enunciates (DV 2).[21] Hence, Dupuis writes that on the basis of the universality of the divine revelation it is justifiable 'to search for divine speech in the nonbiblical religious traditions…' (:236). This does not mean that the concepts of "revelation" in other religious traditions do not differ. They differ; yet a Christian is obliged to

respect those differences and look at them from the Christian perspective. A Christian way of perceiving revelation in other religions, according to Dupuis, again must be Trinitarian and Christological. Thus, his investigation becomes a search for imprints and signs of a Trinitarian action both in experiences and events which laid the basis for the existence of religious diversity mainly in the sacred books and oral traditions of the religions (:237).

In his investigation of signs of the divine revelation in other religious traditions, Dupuis appeals to Avery Dulles' work entitled *Models of revelation* (1992). Dulles distinguishes five models: a) revelation as doctrine; b) revelation as history; c) revelation as inner experience; d) revelation as dialectical presence; and e) revelation as new experience (Dulles 1992:36-114). The author demonstrates how the various models have been applied to God's revelation in the Judeo-Christian tradition and whether some of these models can be applied to "extrabiblical" traditions, thus leading to recognition in those traditions of divine revelation. Dulles writes that the first, the second, and the fourth models exclude any possibility of divine revelation in "extrabiblical" religions. The third and the fifth models allow access to revelation for all people because God constantly communicates God's self to humanity in the entire and yet incomplete history of creation (Dulles 1992:121).

In both models, Dulles refers to Rahner's concept of God's constant self-communication to humanity in the form of "illuminating" or "divinizing" grace. Such grace, which is prior to any particular message expressed in doctrines, truths, and conveyed by religious tradition, can be called revelation. This means that other religions and not only Christianity can bear witness to God's self-revelation (:71-72). Moreover, revelation as new human awareness (fifth model) can be applied to all religions on the basis of God's universal offer of divine grace to humans. In reverse, human beings respond to God's offer and this ultimately leads them to unity with God. The fact that people are capable of responding to God's offer and achieve unity with God means that God's revelation has taken place (:100,107).

Dupuis is aware that such affirmation of God's revelation in other religious traditions and their members based on the "supernatural existential" is rather formal and, a priori, and would need to be proved in a concrete way. He states, however, that the scope of his analysis is limited and he does not attempt in his argument to make such an a posteriori verification. Yet, he makes a fundamental distinction concerning the world religions. With caution, Dupuis distinguishes between the "prophetic" religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and the "mystical" religions of the East such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, or Taoism. He makes this distinction in order to point out, on the one hand, a common historical origin and a common resemblance between the

prophetic religions, and on the other hand, the common elements of "wisdom" or "gnosis" characteristic of the "mystical" religions (Dupuis 2002a:117-125).

It seems that the differences between these two groups of religions are so immense that they constitute entirely different worldviews such as the search for divine revelations or concepts of God. This does not mean, however, that those who live in dispensation of the "cosmic covenant" have no experience of the triune God. An example of such an authentic religious experience of the triune God might be prayer which always involves communication with God. Any prayer is a sign of God's personal approach to an individual person in God's self-revelation and the individual's response to this revelation in an act of faith. This means that those who respond to God in faith, even if their concept of God is imperfect and the concept of prayer is not dialogical and is limited, are saved if salvation really depends on a personal response made in faith (Dupuis 1997:240; 2002a:121-122).

Moreover, even if there is a big gap between experience and its formulation in the "mystical" religions or there is no personal dialogue between God and the human being (Hindu *advaita*, Buddhist *nirvana*), as happens in "prophetic" religions, as long as there is a genuine religious experience God's revelation is taking place. Dupuis writes that

> despite the limitations marking the enunciation of the experience of God in those traditions, still, wherever there is genuine religious experience, it is surely the God revealed in Jesus Christ who thus enters into the lives of men and women, in a hidden, secret fashion. While the concept of God remains incomplete, the interpersonal encounter between God and the human being – for which God takes the initiative, awaiting the response of faith on the part of the human being – is authentic (1997:241; 2002a:122).

Dupuis takes a step further and states that any authentic religious experience in any particular stage of salvation history or any moment in people's personal story of salvation also involves an active presence of the Spirit who manifests and reveals God. He writes that the Holy Spirit 'is the necessary "point of entry" of divine truth and life into the human spirit'. This means that '[every] personal encounter of God with the human being and the human being with God occurs in the Holy Spirit' (1997:244).

This leads to the conclusion that as there is a Trinitarian rhythm of God's interventions in the history of salvation, so there must be a Trinitarian structure in God's self-revelation. In other words, God has always spoken to humanity 'through the Word, in the Spirit' (Dupuis 2000:213). Dupuis sees God's self-revelation through the Word in the Prologue of the Gospel of John where the Word of God is pictured as 'the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world' (Jn 1:1-3,9). Yet he also sees God's self-manifestation in the activity of the Spirit which is universally

present not only in the lives of other believers but also in their religious traditions as it was analyzed in the previous Chapter 3.3.5. This makes Dupuis write that the active presence of the Spirit 'anticipates the event of Jesus Christ and, after that event, extends beyond the confines of the Church. The Spirit spreads throughout the world, vivifying all things. The cosmic revelation itself is caught up in this transformation' (1997:243). Consequently, this mediation of the Spirit in revealing God must also be operative not only in individual believers and their traditions but also in the sacred scriptures of those traditions (1997:244; 2000:213; 2002a:125).

4.3.4 God's self-disclosure in the "sacred scriptures" of other religions

For Dupuis therefore the real issue is not only revelation itself but also the sacred books and the question as to how divine revelation is present not only in the Christian scriptures but also in the sacred books of other traditions and whether they really are the word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. Dupuis approaches this issue from a Christian perspective which views the sacred scriptures as containing 'memories and interpretations of the divine revelation' (Dupuis 1997:246). These moments and interpretations were written down under a divine impulse or guidance making God the author of this writings without, however, denying the full exercise of the human faculties of those who were writing or compiling the sacred books. In reality, both God and humans, on different levels however, are the authors of the sacred books. Because God is the author of the sacred books, they are God's word and not just human discourse about the Divine. Likewise, because humans are their co-authors God's word addressed to people is also a human word. It must be a human word because it is the only word which people can understand.

To explain this uniqueness of authorship, Christian theology introduced the concept of *inspiration*. Dupuis argues that until recently biblical theology has not put enough emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration in which God respecting the human author's activity communicates God's word and becomes its author. In reality, an emphasis on the function of the Holy Spirit allows one to examine whether the sacred scriptures of other religious traditions contain a word of God directed to human beings and inspired by the Holy Spirit; or whether it is merely a human word directed to God with the intention of receiving some divine response. In addition, if one acknowledges that those sacred scriptures contain the word of God, what is the connection with the decisive word spoken by God to people in Jesus Christ and recorded in the New Testament (:246).

To answer these questions, Dupuis first argues that the Spirit also influences the religious experience of the prophets or holy peoples in other religious traditions. In the same way as God communicates God's word to people through the Judeo-Christian sacred scriptures, so God 'has secretly entered the

history of peoples, guiding them toward the accomplishment of the divine design' (:247). This implies God's will that the sacred scriptures of the nations also contain words of God spoken to people through their prophets as long as these prophets report the sacred words revealed to them in their hearts by the Spirit. These words are destined by God to 'lead other human beings to the experience of the same Spirit' (:247). This does not mean, however, that Dupuis suggests that the entire content of the sacred scriptures of the nations is the word of God or that they represent God's final word to humankind. Dupuis writes:

> Our proposition comes down to this: the personal experience of the Spirit by the *rishis*, inasmuch as, by divine providence, it is a personal overture of the part of God to the nations, and inasmuch as it has been authentically recorded in their sacred scriptures, is a personal word addressed by God to them through intermediaries of divine choosing (:247-248).

How should we therefore understand the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ? Both the letter to the Hebrews and the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* say that in Jesus Christ, God spoke God's final word to humanity (Heb 1:1) and that Jesus Christ brings to fruition and completes God's revelation (DV 4). The fullness of revelation is not the *word* written in the New Testament but 'the very person of Jesus Christ, his deeds and his words, his life, his death, and his resurrection…the total Jesus Christ-event itself…' (Dupuis 1997:248). Thus, the New Testament testimony is normative for the faith of the people of God but does not constitute the fullness of God's revelation and 'reports the event of Jesus Christ only incompletely (Jn 21:25)' (:249).

The fullness of revelation is therefore a matter of quality, but not quantity. The fullness of revelation owes its quality to Jesus Christ's personal identity with God as the Son who incarnated in a human nature and consciousness. In a sense, there is no revelation of God that can be compared with the depth of what happened at the incarnation of the divine Son. Nevertheless, Dupuis argues that

> this revelation is not absolute. It remains relative. On the one hand, Jesus' human consciousness, while it is that of the Son, is still a human consciousness and therefore a limited one. It could not have been otherwise. No human consciousness, even the human consciousness of the Son of God, can exhaust the Divine Mystery. On the other hand, it is precisely this human experience that Jesus had of being the Son, in relation to the Father, that enabled him to translate into human words the mystery of God that he revealed to us (:249).

In Dupuis's view, the emphasis on the qualitative character of the fullness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ is no obstacle for recognizing that the divine self-revelation continues to take place through the prophets or holy religious figures of the religious traditions even after the historical event of Jesus Christ. Thus, it is possible to acknowledge that God's revelation continues to happen

in history, however, it can never 'surpass or equal the one vouchsafed in Jesus Christ, the divine Son incarnate' (:250).

Dupuis's last view on God's divine self-communication as not limited only to Jesus Christ but extended also to God's future revelation, raised a serious controversy and became open to further criticism. Along these lines, Terrence Merrigan challenged Dupuis's concept of revelation (1998:355) which relates to the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ, and which Dupuis calls "incomplete" and "relative" (Dupuis 1997:248-250). One must admit that in general, the term "relative", which Dupuis often uses in his writings, is unfortunate and ambiguous. In his latest work *Christianity and the religions*, the term "relative" is abandoned and Dupuis begins to speak of the revelation in Jesus Christ as "limited" or "finite" (Dupuis 2002a:130,131,132). Hence, reading Dupuis's theology in a holistic way, one must understand that although he uses the term "relative", his intention is to preserve the transcendent and the unsurpassable character of the fullness of God's revelation in Jesus. This "fullness" of God's revelation in Jesus Christ is "qualitative" and not "quantitative" and thus remains "limited" because revelation in Jesus Christ does not exhaust the mystery of God.

4.3.5 Complementarity of various ways of God's self-revelation

Finally, to complete Dupuis's argument on the unified history of salvation-revelation one needs to introduce his view on God's revelation as progressive, differentiated and at the same time, complementary (Dupuis 2000:213, 2002a:129-137). Even if one acknowledges the singular character of the Christ-event and gives a unique place to this event in the mystery of God's revelation to humanity, it is still possible to speak about 'an open theology of revelation and sacred scriptures' (Dupuis 1997:250). Such theology will recognize that while God revealed God's decisive word in Jesus Christ and spoke through the prophets of the Old Testament, God also spoke God's initial word through the prophets of the nations. As indicated this initial word can be discovered in the religions' sacred scriptures. This would mean that God's word in Jesus Christ does not exclude other words but complements them and that God's initial word is not only reported in the Old Testament but in sacred writings of the world religions. This further means that 'the sacred scriptures of the nations, along with the Old and New Testaments, represent various manners and forms in which God addresses human beings throughout the continuous process of the divine self-revelation to them' (:250). Dupuis writes:

> It may even be said that between revelation inside and outside the Judeo-Christian tradition there exists a true complementarity – without prejudice to the decisiveness of the Christ-event. And, equivalently, it may even be said that between the sacred books of the other religious traditions and the biblical corpus a similar complementarity may be found.

...[The] same God spoke in history through his prophets who also spoke to seers in the secret of their hearts. All truth comes form God who is *Truth* and needs to be honoured as such, whatever the channel through which it comes to us (:251-252).

From the Christian perspective, in order to distinguish divine truth from untruth one needs to use a normative criterion which is Jesus Christ. Whatever contradicts him as the "Word" cannot be regarded as coming from God. This however does not mean that between the Old and the New Testaments' scriptures and between the biblical and "extrabiblical" scriptures, there is no possibility of the complementarity of God's word. Dupuis explains:

> The latter may contain aspects of the Divine Mystery which the Bible, the New Testament included, do not equally highlight. Examples are: in the Qur'an the sense of the divine majesty and transcendence and of the human being's submission to the holiness of God's eternal decrees…and in the sacred books of Hinduism, the sense of God's immanent presence in the world and in the recesses of the human heart (Dupuis 1997:252).

Hence, to the question whether God can speak to Christians through the prophets, sages, and the sacred books of the religions, Dupuis's answer is that 'the fullness of revelation contained in Jesus Christ does not gainsay their possibility' (:253).

In the light of the above holistic vision of religious pluralism and a unified history of salvation, Dupuis argues that Christianity's relationship with the other religious traditions can no longer be viewed as Christianity being the absolute religion and the other traditions being merely potential and preparatory religions for final inclusion in Christianity. Dupuis writes:

> It must henceforth be thought of in terms of the relational interdependence, within the organic whole of universal reality, between diverse modalities of encounter of the human existence with the Divine Mystery. The Catholic Church will, no doubt, continue to hold that the mystery of the Church willed by Jesus Christ "subsists" (*subsistit*) in it while it "exists" to a lesser extent in other churches. Similarly, the Christian faith will continue to imply a "fullness" of divine manifestation and revelation in Jesus Christ not realized elsewhere with the same fullness of sacramentality. Nevertheless, in both cases, the realities involved will have to be viewed as mutually related and interdependent, constituting together the complete whole of human-divine relationships (:204).

In order to see this relational interdependence between Christianity and the world religious traditions one must investigate another proposal of Dupuis's theology of religious pluralism, namely his concept of Trinitarian Christocentrism. Trinitarianism helps to see the presence of the Divine Mystery both in Judeo-Christian tradition and in the world religions and to view the other religious traditions and Christianity as convergent paths to salvation (:204).

Conclusion

The chapter examined Dupuis's concepts of pluralism *de iure* and a single salvation-revelation history. It revealed that one of the subjects of Christian theology, as Dupuis reads it, is the status of

religious pluralism in God's design for human history according to the Christian perspective. The main criterion on which such theology should rest is the view that religious pluralism is willed by God "in principle", and consequently the religions have to be perceived as possible channels of God's saving grace and authentic revelation. It became apparent that the biblical data do not give a clear answer to the question of why religious pluralism exists but only give witness to the profound ambiguity of the religious history of humankind. In the early patristic times, while there is a negative assessment of these religions by Tertulian and his school, there is also a positive recognition of the presence of "wisdom" in Greek philosophy and the theology of *Logos*. This in turn results in the various theories of the "substitutes" for the Gospel which led to the development of a broader interpretation of a Christian belief in God's universal will to save humanity.

The second principle, which the chapter discussed as a theological basis for "inclusive pluralism", was the concept of a unified history of salvation and revelation. By constructing this concept Dupuis attempted to include all other religions into the single economy of salvation. The main argument is that the covenant in Adam and particularly that with Noah has never been revoked in history either by the covenant through Moses or later by the "New Covenant". The other religions must therefore be included in God's covenant with humanity. For Dupuis the concept of a single salvation-revelation history indicates that the theology of religions, which intends to remain credible, should recognize not only the validity of the other religions but also allow the possibility of real complementarity between religions engaged in dialogue. Such a truly inclusive theology is possible if it acknowledges the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the world. Dupuis's argument is clear: the Spirit is alive and active throughout history, especially in religious communities before and after the Christ event.

The two principles of religious pluralism *de iure* and the single salvation-revelation history are essential to Dupuis's core argument for "inclusive pluralism". It will be shown that these two principles serve as pillars for his Trinitarian Christology through which he attributes to other religious traditions a unique role in conveying salvation to their adherents and making them possible paths to salvation. In the next chapter, Dupuis introduces his radically fresh Trinitarian approach to religions which preserves the essential unity of the salvific economy while recognizing the diversity which is part of our plural religious history.

---

[1] Dupuis's treatment of the New Testament data concerning the Gentile religions is very limited in his main work *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (1997). Much more extensive engagement in the subject of Jesus' and his contemporaries' attitudes towards the religions appear in Dupuis's last book *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (2002). The following analysis is based mainly on this latest source.

[2] Dupuis's analysis of the entry of the Gentiles into the Reign of God is based on Choan-Seng Song's works *Jesus and the Reign of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) and *Jesus in the power of the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

[3] Song writes: 'It must have been not human necessity but divine necessity; not human accident but divine providence, that prompted him to take the road leading to Samaria' (*Jesus and the Reign of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993], 103).

[4] This is especially visible in the Beatitudes of Jesus (Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23) and the Sermon on the Plain (Mt 5:1-7:29; Lk 6:17-49). With the support of Song's hermeneutics of these biblical texts, Dupuis perceives the beatitudes as the constitution of the Reign of God with its universal character and openness to all who wish to enter it. In his argument, he refers to numerous exegetes who view the beatitudes as a compilation of "sayings" preached at different times and different places not to a single gathering but to diverse groups of people. Such an understanding of the beatitudes includes not only Jesus' disciples in the Reign of God but also people from all of Judea, Jerusalem, and coast of Tyre and Sidon (Lk 6:17). Furthermore, despite the beatitudes being numerous, Dupuis privileges the first one which refers to the poor who possess the Reign of God. By reducing the beatitudes to the one of poverty, he argues that it refers to all people of good will, is open to faith and conversion, and can be found in any ethnic group or religious tradition where the poor are. See Dupuis, J, *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 29-31.

[5] 'Trouble and distress will come to every human being who does evil – Jews first, but Greeks as well; glory and honour and peace will come to everyone who does good – Jews first, but Greeks as well. There is no favouritism with God' (Rom 2:9-11).

[6] Brahmanism, the religion of ancient India that evolved out of Vedism. It takes its name both from the predominant position of its priestly class, the Brahmans, and from the increasing speculation about, and importance given to, Brahman, the supreme power. Brahmanism is distinguished from classical Hinduism that succeeded it by the enhanced significance given in classical Hinduism to individual deities, such as Siva and Vishnu, and to devotional worship (bhakti). See *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Microsoft Edition, 2002).

[7] In the initial stage, the reflection was mainly related to the possibility of salvation of "infidels".

[8] Pelagianism, in Christian theology, is a rationalistic and naturalistic heretical doctrine concerning grace and morals, which emphasizes human free will as the decisive element in human perfectibility and minimizes the need for divine grace and redemption. The doctrine was formulated by the Romano-British monk Pelagius who denied the existence of original sin and the need for infant baptism. He argued that the corruption of the human race is not inborn, but is due to bad example and habit, and that the natural faculties of humanity were not adversely affected by Adam's fall. See *Encyclopedia Encarta* (Microsoft Edition, 1996); McBrien, R, *Catholicism* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981), 167.

[9] *Baptism of desire* of explicit character was a case of someone who wished to be baptized but suddenly died before receiving baptism. *Baptism of desire* of implicit faith was a case of someone who had not heard of Christ but through his/her desire to accept the will of God developed the necessary faith and love for being "justified".

[10] In the sixteenth century in response to the heresies of Baianism, Pope Pius V in the bull *Ex Omnibus Afflictionibus* (1567) condemned Michael de Bay's (Baius) (1513-1580) opinion that all the works and philosophies of "infidels" were sinful. In a similar way, Pope Innocent X condemned Cornelius Jansen (Jansenius) (d. 1638) who together with his followers rejected the possibility of salvation without explicit faith. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the condemnation of Jansenist theologians was first repeated by the church under Pope Alexander VIII in 1690 and later by the Constitution *Unigenitus Dei Filius* of Pope Clement XI in 1713 (DS 2305,2308,2311). In the nineteenth century, the encyclical *Singulari Quadam* by Pius X (1854), spoke of '*invincible ignorance* (sic), by which people are subjectively excused from embracing Christianity' (Dupuis, J, *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books], 121-123). A similar belief concerning other believers exists in the encyclical of Leo XIII *Immortale Dei* (1885) (DS 3176).

[11] The pope did not distinguish the situation of members of other Christian churches from the situation of members of the other religions. He spoke in general about "orientation". Only later would the Second Vatican Council make clear the distinction between other Christians and members of other religions. The Council would state that while other Christians are "joined" to the Church of Christ, members of other religions are "oriented". The word "oriented" specifically relates to the world religions. See Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 127.

[12] Most of the statements of the Indian church bodies are neither available in the library loans in South Africa nor on the Web sites. For this reason they are quoted after Dupuis from his works; some of them can be found in various theological periodicals which are indicated in endnotes.

[13] The full statement of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Indian Theological Association (28 to 31 of December 1989) is available in Pathil, K (ed), *Religious pluralism: An Indian Christian perspective* (Delhi: SPCK, 1991), 338-349.

[14] The text is available in Rosales, G and Arévaldo, C G (eds), *For all the peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences Documents from 1970-1991* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 261.

[15] The document says: 'Its experience of the other religions has led the Church in Asia to [a] positive appreciation of their role in the divine economy of salvation. This appreciation is based on the fruits of the Spirit perceived in the lives of the other religions' believers: a sense of the sacred, a commitment to the pursuit of fullness, a thirst for self-

realization, a taste for prayer and commitment, a desire for renunciation, a struggle for justice, an urge to basic human goodness, an involvement in service, a total surrender of the self to God, and an attachment to the transcendent in their symbols, rituals and life itself, though human weakness and sin are not absent (2,2-2,3)' ("Theological Theses on Interreligious Dialogue" by the Theological Advisory Commission of FABC, available in Gnanapiragasam, J and Wilfred, F (eds), *Being Church in Asia*, vol. 1 [Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1994], 7-24).

[16] The text was published by the Commission for Dialogue and Ecumenism in 1989 in *Guidelines for interreligious dialogue* (New Delhi: CBCI Centre), 29.

[17] Dupuis engages in a limited way in this subject of the Christian meaning of history, the single history of salvation-revelation, and the Jesus Christ event as the centre of salvation history in his first major work entitled *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991). A detailed analysis of the same subject is present in *Towards a Christian theology of inclusivist pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 211-223.

[18] On the one hand, Danielou acknowledged the religions as "cosmic religions" which preceded the covenant with Abraham and belonged to the "concrete historical supernatural order". Nevertheless, they constituted "a prehistory" through which God revealed God's self to people not personally but indirectly through the cosmos. Hence, Danielou's conclusion was that all religions, which did not belong to the Abrahamic-Mosaic traditions, constituted a human quest for encountering God. See Danielou, J, *The Advent of salvation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1962), 8. On the other hand, Hans Urs von Balthasar regarded only those religions which originated from Abrahamic covenant as "religions of revelation". Only those religions belonged to the history of salvation, in which God reveals God's self to humanity. Consequently, all other religions were natural. See Balthasar, H, "Catholicism and the religions" (*Communio* 5, 1978), 7-8.

[19] 'Every man exists not only in an existential situation to which belongs the obligation of striving towards a supernatural goal of distinct union with the absolute God in a direct vision, but he exists also in a situation which presents the genuine subjective possibility of reaching this goal by accepting God's self-communication in grace and in glory. Because of God's universal saving purpose, the offer and possibility of salvation extend as far as extends the history of human freedom…. Furthermore, this offer of the supernatural reality of the person enabling one to move by one's spiritual and personal dynamism towards the God of the supernatural beatifying life…must be thought of as a change in the structure of human consciousness…. The horizon within which the normal, empirically experienced realities of consciousness are grasped, and the ultimate orientation of consciousness are changed by grace' (Rahner, K, "History of the world and salvation history" in *Theological investigations*, vol. 5, *Later writings* [Translated by K-H Kruger. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966], 103).

[20] Although the term "covenant" does not appear in the Genesis story of creation (Gen 1-2), yet there are signs outside of the book of Genesis that creation itself is a cosmic covenant. Such a text for instance is Jer 33:20-26. The term "covenant" appears for the first time in Genesis and refers to the covenant with Noah (Gen 9:1-7). This term reappears in the context of Abraham's engagement with God (Gen 17:1-14), and later in the life situation of Moses (Ex 19-24). The term "new covenant" mentioned in Jer 31:31-34 is materialized in the paschal mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection (Mt 26:28-29; Lk 22:20; 1Cor 11:25).

[21] '[The] economy of revelation is realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other. As a result, the work performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain' (DV 2).

Chapter Five: Dupuis's Trinitarian approach to the religious history of humankind

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that Dupuis takes the single history of revelation and salvation as the framework within which he considers the question of the validity of religious traditions. The unified history consists of the trinitarian rhythm of God's dealings with humanity as manifested in the active presence of the Word of God and the dynamic action of the Spirit of God in the world both united with the personal mystery of Jesus Christ. This rhythm is also imprinted in the religious lives of the other believers and their traditions. To explain this Dupuis proposes a Christology grounded in the intra-trinitarian relationship, as an avenue of approach to a Christian theology of religious pluralism. This trinitarian approach then affords Dupuis the possibility of viewing other religious traditions as mediations of God's salvation to their adherents.

The chapter begins by discussing the Christological question and the concept of Trinitarian Christology. Then, it engages in an analysis of three important areas of Dupuis's Trinitarian model. The first area is the salvific work of the Word of God as such, that is distinct from the Word operating in Jesus Christ the human being, risen and glorified yet continually in "union" with the Word. The second area relates to the existing unity between the work of the Word as such and the event of Jesus Christ in the single plan of salvation. It reaffirms the "constitutive" uniqueness of Jesus Christ on the basis of biblical data, Christian tradition, and Christological interpretation of it in the context of religious pluralism. The third area is the divine salvific work and presence of the Spirit of God before and after the event of Christ which allows one to view the religions as "participated mediations" of salvation for their adherents.

5.1 A general introduction to the Trinitarian Christological model
5.1.1 Jesus Christ as the "one mediator" and the "universal Saviour"
In the theological debate on religions and in the process of shifting from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism and from Christocentrism to theocentrism,[1] the Christological question occupies a central place. What is at stake in both cases is the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all people. Both beliefs constitute a fundamental theme of any Christian theology of religions. This theme is even 'more urgent and more radical in the current context of religious pluralism and the blending of the various traditions' (Dupuis 1991:191). The Christological question is therefore essential for a Christian theology of religions if this theology intends to remain inclusive and attribute to other religious traditions and their religious "figures" a certain saving role in God's plan of salvation. This process, however, requires a correct interpretation of the person and the event of Jesus Christ.

By applying Trinitarian Christology, Dupuis attempts to demonstrate that a sound interpretation and understanding of the personal identity of Jesus Christ as the "only" Son of God does not oppose an "open" theology of religions and religious pluralism. On the contrary, it allows one to recognize 'the ongoing presence and activity of the Word of God and of the Spirit of God' (Dupuis 2002a:164; 1997:282).[2] Furthermore, such interpretation

> makes it possible to affirm a multiplicity of "ways" and "routes" toward human liberation/salvation, in keeping with God's plan for humankind in Jesus Christ; it likewise opens the way for recognizing other "saving figures" in human history (2002a:164).

It has already been emphasized on various occasions that the pluralists challenge both the particularity of the event of Jesus Christ, which is historic and thus limited to space and time, and the universal value of this event for all of humanity. They argue that for the sake of interreligious dialogue, Jesus' uniqueness and universality must be softened by viewing both as "relative". This in turn would allow one to see Jesus not as the "constitutive" Saviour but as the 'most inspiring symbol – the one that best responds to human aspirations – the perfect type or paradigm of human relations with God' (Dupuis 1991:201).[3]

Dupuis is aware that like Christianity the other religions make similar conflicting claims to the uniqueness and universality of their faiths and their religious figures. Nevertheless, in his argument, he emphasizes not so much the exclusiveness but the inclusiveness of such claims. In this, he refers to the theology of R. Bernhardt (1994:101-102), to point out that even the so-called prophetic religions, which are more inclined to make claims to the "uniqueness", "universality", and "absoluteness" of their religious figures than the Asian or Eastern religions, are more open in their demands that they appear to be (Dupuis 1997:289).

For instance, in Islam the above claims relate mainly to the Qur'an. While for Christians, Jesus Christ is the Word of God and through him God's word was revealed, for Muslims the Qur'an is the definitive word of God. Muhammad as prophet is important only to the extent that through him God's word has been communicated to people. The central place is therefore occupied by the Qur'an which in relation to other religions says: "This book is not to be doubted. It is a guide to the righteous" (Surah 2:2); "the only true faith in God's sight is Islam" (3:19); "he that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the world to come he will be one of the last" (Surah 3:85) (Dupuis 1997:289). Dupuis adds, however, that contemporary Islamic hermeneutics understand the above texts more inclusively than they appear to. The Islamic exegetes say that in reality the Qur'an does not deny or condemn the true character of Christian and Jewish revelations but confronts Christianity and Judaism with a claim that Islam 'is the completion of their

revelation' (Bernhardt 1994:105; Dupuis 1997:290). Thus, while for Christianity the fullness of revelation is in Jesus, in Islam the fullness of revelation is the word of God found in the Qur'an.

In Hinduism, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is Hindu *bhakti*, seems to regard 'Krishna as a universal saviour [who] saves not only those who have recourse to him (*Bhagavad-Gita* 9:22,25), but even those who, with faith, "adore other gods"…(*Bhagavad-Gita* 9:23)' (Dupuis 1991:202; 1997:290). This shows that here there is some similarity between the concept of "anonymous Christianity" and Krishna as the saviour even of those who in their ignorance worship other gods. The difference, however, between Krishna and Jesus is that Krishna's saving work is in no way rooted in the concept of incarnation of a god among people. In other words, Krishna is not viewed as God incarnated into the human family as God's incarnation in Jesus Christ is viewed in Christianity (Dupuis 1991:202).

In the *Mahayana* Buddhist tradition, there is deification of Gautama the Buddha. Similarly, in the early Christian tradition, there is a gradual recognition of Jesus as the divine. In both cases, therefore, the same process of deification is identified. The major difference is that Buddha is a human being who became deified which is an act of believers. In Jesus, on the contrary, God became humanized which represents an act of God. Moreover, if Buddha is a saviour, he is so on the basis of being the "enlightened" one who 'shows human beings the way of salvation' (:202). In the case of Jesus, he himself is the "way". In this sense, Jesus has been recognized as the universal Saviour of humanity since the early age of apostolic Christianity (Dupuis 1997:291).

Dupuis agrees with Bernhardt's final interpretation that none of the main world religions, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam in their exclusive approach, and Hinduism and Buddhism in their inclusive approach, 'understand themselves as unique and universal' (:292). In reality, these three monotheistic religions hold strongly to their absolute basis of faith as the source of their identity. In the case of Christianity, such a theological basis of Christian identity is the belief that Jesus Christ is the "Son of God" in whom all people find salvation (:292). It is precisely this central Christian belief which the pluralists reject.[4] They call for reinterpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, claiming that there is a real discontinuity between who the historical Jesus was and the "mythic" views of his person held by the Johnanine community and the apostolic church influenced by the Greek tradition (Dupuis 1991:203; 1997:281). The pluralists insist on Jesus' complete centeredness on God and his proclamation of God's Reign. Only later the apostolic church distorted this original message by its Christocentric proclamation which constituted a new paradigm shift from theocentrism to Christocentrism which now needs to be reversed (Dupuis 1997:281; 2002a:169).

Consequently the pluralists argue that although Christians can be saved through Jesus Christ, he is not a universal Saviour for all humanity. See Chapter 3.4. They dispute that the very existence of other religions implies that Jesus Christ is not "constitutive" for other believers (Dupuis 2002a:87). Acceptance of this "new" Christology constitutes an essential departure from the Christology of mainstream Christianity. Still, the pluralists debate that this "new", "reinterpreted", and "revisionist" Christology[5] is justified especially in the new situation of religious diversity. They claim that such "revisionist" Christology finds its support in a new contemporary historical consciousness; in the relative character of any experience of the Divine which is inexhaustible; and in the particular and contingent character of the historical event of Jesus Christ (:88).[6]

For Dupuis, the arguments of the pluralists raise a fundamental question as to whether, in the context of religious pluralism and dialogue there is a real need for a new interpretation of the undisputed witness of the New Testament to the unique and universal role of Jesus Christ in saving humanity. Is there any basis for viewing Jesus' uniqueness and universality as merely a cultural expression of the early Christian community which does not belong to the substance of the Gospel message? Will this New Testament's witness continue to be valid once it is confronted by contemporary religious context and dialogue?

In Dupuis's view, the interpretation of Jesus' uniqueness as universal Saviour in the New Testament by the pluralists does not need to be so radical. Yet, even if it is, there is still a possibility of viewing this uniqueness as "constitutive". Dupuis expresses this explicitly when he writes:

> The uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ are neither "relative" nor "absolute". They are "constitutive", that is, they belong to the essence of salvation insofar as Jesus Christ has saving significance for all of humankind, and insofar as the Christ event – in particular the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection – is truly "cause" of salvation for all human beings (2002a:166).

In this sense, Jesus' uniqueness and universality does not have to be understood in such a way that leads to "condemning" the other religious traditions. What is required is a new interpretation of it in the contemporary situation of religious pluralism by using an inductive method linked with "praxis". In the new context, "praxis" means interreligious dialogue (Dupuis 1997:293). Dupuis believes that such an inductive approach will "soften" Christian claims to Jesus' uniqueness. It will also help to see the revealed 'word of God as a dynamic reality' (Dupuis 2002a:172) which calls for reinterpretation and new application in the specific situation of interreligious encounter.

Viewing Jesus' uniqueness as "constitutive" will, on the one hand, affirm Christian faith and, on the other hand, abandon "absolutization" of it, often supported by several texts from the New

Testament, such as Acts 4:12; 1Tim 2:5; or Jn 14:6. It will equally abandon the "absoluteness" of Christianity".[7] The idea of "absoluteness" must be reserved solely to "the Ultimate Reality" or the "Infinite Being" (Dupuis 1997:282,292; 1999a:214). Moreover, through viewing Jesus as "constitutive" the various biblical texts, which support "absoluteness" of Jesus Christ, will be interpreted in a holistic way and supported by interreligious encounter which in turn will lead Christians to discover new aspects of God's revelation in other religions. To get a glimpse of what Dupuis really means in this regard, one needs to quote the following:

> The Word "pitched his tent among human beings" (Jn 1:14) in Jesus Christ; but Wisdom had previously taken possession of every people and nation, seeking among them a resting place (Sir 24:6-7), and "pitched her tent" in Israel (Sir 24:8-12). Likewise, Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6); but the Word who was before him was "the true light that enlightens every human being" by coming into the world (Jn 1:9). Again, "in these last days" God "has spoken to us by a Son"; but he had previously spoken "in many and various ways" (Heb 1:1) (2002a:173).

While Dupuis opts for a new interpretation of some of the New Testament texts concerning "absolutization" of the uniqueness of Jesus, he argues against the pluralists' "revisionist" Christology. He is convinced that there is a solid ground and a valid reason to view the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as "constitutive" without any diminishing of the saving role of the other traditions and their religious figures.

While being aware that any faith-conviction cannot be proven scientifically, Dupuis still argues that 'the Christian faith-claim for Jesus Christ' has merits and credibility (Dupuis 1997:295; 2002a:173). Against the pluralists' argument that there is an unbridgeable gap between the historical Jesus and the Christ proclaimed by the apostolic church, Dupuis states that

> the Christian faith in Jesus-the-Christ is firmly grounded in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth…. Continuity-in-discontinuity must be made to stand out at every stage: between the messianic expectation of the Jewish scripture and its coming to fulfilment in Jesus; between the prepaschal Jesus and the Christ of the apostolic kerygma; between the Christology of the early kerygma and later biblical enunciations between New Testament Christology and that of the Church tradition; and so forth (2002a:173-174; 1997:295).

The above reveals that whereas Dupuis calls for a new understanding of Jesus' uniqueness and universality in the context of contemporary interreligious dialogue by using an inductive method of "praxis", he continues to uphold the central belief in Jesus' "constitutive" role in the process of saving humanity. He cannot imagine that Christology would give up the Christian claim for Jesus Christ without losing something essential which belongs to the very core of the Christian message.

5.1.2 A Trinitarian Christology as a model for an open theology of religions

Indeed, Dupuis is aware that most of contemporary Christologies begin their reflection "from below", that is, from the human historical Jesus. In the past, Christologies initiated their reflection "from above", that is, from Jesus personal identity as the only pre-existing Son of God. Dupuis disputes that there is nothing wrong with an initial Christological analysis "from below" because the dynamism of faith itself will ultimately direct any theological reflection toward a "high" Christology. Only a priori rejection of the ontological affirmation that Jesus Christ is the pre-existing Son of God will keep any Christology 'on the level of a "low" Christology' (Dupuis 2002a:89). This, however, will not be compatible with any inclusivist or Christocentric theology of religions which requires to be consistent with "high" Christology.

Generally, the Christian tradition will always argue that in order to maintain the singular uniqueness of Jesus Christ, Jesus' personal identity must be acknowledged as the only pre-existing and incarnated Son of God. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Christian tradition will compromise "high" Christology, especially since all main line Christian churches believe that only such Christology can provide the basis for viewing Jesus Christ as the only universal "Mediator" and "Saviour" (:89).

For obvious reasons the pluralist school rejects this ontological argument of Christian theology. Perhaps this is why Dupuis attempts to indicate that, in the contemporary Christological debate on religions, mutual rejection and exclusion of one's views does not have to be the case. After all, a Christian theology of religions does not have to make a choice between "low" and "high" Christologies. If it does, it always leads either to Christocentrism or theocentrism as exclusive and opposing paradigms which generate serious consequences for an open theology of religions. The consequences are that the pluralists reject Jesus' uniqueness and universality as a sign of Christian "absolutism" and "discrimination". They equally reject any kind of reduction of the other saving figures to mere and insignificant religious founders as it is in the case of the Christocentric paradigm. In turn, the inclusivists accuse the pluralists of relativism, reductionism, and uncritical compromise of Christian identity (:89).

In order to avoid mutually exclusive stands and negative consequences for the theology of religions Dupuis proposes a model which attempts to go beyond the above limits of both paradigms. His model reveals that 'whereas inclusive Christocentrism is nonnegotiable for Christian theology, it can be combined with a true theocentric pluralism, both aspects being complementary in a single reality' (Dupuis 2002a:90). What is needed therefore is to view Christocentrism and theocentrism not as exclusive paradigms but as descriptive models. When they are understood in this way, they do not contradict one another but rather complement each other (Dupuis 1997:190-192,205). They express

'interrelated aspects and complementary elements of the indivisible, whole, and entire reality; they can only wrongly be set in opposition to one another' (Dupuis 2002a:91). The dilemma between Christocentric exclusivism and theocentric pluralism as contradictory paradigms can therefore be overcome on the grounds of a "Trinitarian Christology". Dupuis writes:

> Such a Christology will place in full relief the interpersonal relationships between Jesus and the God whom he calls Father (Abbà), on the one side, and between Jesus and the Spirit whom he will send, on the other' (2002a:91; 1997:205).

The value of a Trinitarian Christology lies in its emphasis on personal intra-Trinitarian relationships. Precisely because of a lack of such emphasis on the interpersonal dimension in inclusivist Christology, Christocentrism became a restrictive paradigm opposed to theocentrism (2002a:91; 1997:205). In his earlier work *Who do you say that I am?*, Dupuis explains what he means by interpersonal Christology:

> Christology has often sinned by imperialism. To remedy such a shortcoming, the personal and Trinitarian dimension of the mystery must be present everywhere. A Christology of the God-man is an abstraction; the only Christology that is real is that of the Son-of-God-made-man-in-history. The personal intra-trinitarian relations must, therefore, be shown to inform every aspect of the Christological mystery (1994:36).

Applying Trinitarian Christology to a theology of religious pluralism will have the following positive results. Firstly, it will not allow Jesus Christ to replace God (Dupuis 2000:211). In the same way as Jesus is "God-centred", so the Christian kerygma about Jesus the Christ will always remain "God-centred" (Dupuis 1997:205). This means that despite the existing unity between God and earthly Jesus, which is rooted in the mystery of incarnation, there is also 'the unbridgeable distance that remains between the Father and Jesus in his human existence'. This indicates that 'God (the Father) stands beyond Jesus', although 'Jesus the man is uniquely the Son of God' (Dupuis 2002a:92).

Secondly, a Trinitarian Christology will highlight 'the pneumatological aspect of the mystery of Jesus Christ', that is, the relationship of Jesus to the Spirit (:92). What is proposed here is a kind of Spirit-Christology[8] which serves to illustrate that a theology of religious pluralism must also pay attention to the universal active presence of the Spirit in the single history of humankind. This does not mean that the relationship between the saving work of Jesus Christ and the saving presence of the Holy Spirit constitutes two distinct and separate economies of God's salvation. On the contrary, it constitutes a single and complementary God's salvific engagement with humanity (Dupuis 1997:206-207). Dupuis writes that

while the functions of the Son and the Spirit need to be kept clearly distinct, there is between them no dichotomy but total complementarity in a single divine economy of salvation: only the Son became man, but the fruit of his redemptive incarnation is the outpouring of the Spirit symbolized at Pentecost. The Christ event is at the centre of the historical unfolding of the divine economy, but the punctual event of Jesus Christ is actuated and becomes operative throughout time and space in the work of the Spirit (2002a:93; 1997:207).

Thirdly, a Trinitarian Christology will be able to recognize the saving and mediating role of religions and consequently recognize the various ways in which God has intervened in human history. In this sense, a Trinitarian Christology will offer a solid 'basis for a true understanding of the meaning of interreligious dialogue' (Dupuis 1999a:31). Dupuis explains what this means. An interreligious dialogue built on Trinitarianism will allow both Christians and other believers to experience the saving presence of the Spirit.

Believing that both Christians and others share the same Spirit will positively influence their attitude towards each other. Christians will then respect not only the religious experience of other believers, no matter how different it might be from their own, but also through mutual interactions Christians will discover 'previously unknown movements of the Spirit' (:31). In the process of sharing their own experience of Jesus Christ and the Spirit, Christians will easily realize the new elements or areas of the Christic mystery. Dupuis writes that interreligious dialogue built on a Trinitarian Christology will benefit all partners. In such dialogue, they will theologically influence and change each other under the guidance of the Spirit (:31).

All this reveals that a Christian theology of religious pluralism constructed on Trinitarian Christology will have the ability to combine and hold together the saving action of the Word of God as such, the central character of the Christ event and the universal salvific presence of the Spirit (Dupuis 1999a:27-28; 2000:212). Furthermore, such a Christology will facilitate the comprehension of God's self-manifestation and self-gift, both in peoples' cultures and their religious traditions, outside of Christianity. This will happen without any separation of Christology and pneumatology as two distinct economies of salvation, one for Christians and the other for members of the other religions (Dupuis 2002a:94; 1997:207).

It is clear, therefore, that the new model, which Dupuis proposes for a Christian theology of religions, is the Trinitarian pneumato-Christological model named "inclusive pluralism" or "pluralistic inclusivism".

5.2 The work of the Holy Trinity in the economy of salvation of humankind
5.2.1 The enduring action of the Word of God

The first component of Dupuis's Trinitarian Christology which is the core of his theology of "religious pluralism" is the permanent action of the Word of God as such or the eternal Word. Dupuis begins his analysis of the universal action of the Word as such from the affirmation that there is a personal identity between the Word of God and Jesus Christ and between Jesus and the Christ (Dupuis 2002a:139-140). In this, he follows the thought of the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) where Pope John Paul II writes that introducing 'any sort of separation between the Word and Jesus Christ is contrary to the Christian faith'. The pope also adds that 'one cannot separate Jesus from Christ' (RM 6). For Dupuis, this post-conciliar church teaching is of special importance, especially since, after publishing his main work *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*, he was misunderstood by many to be attempting to separate the Word of God from Jesus Christ. In his latest book *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue*, Dupuis strongly emphasizes:

> The personal identity between the Word of God and Jesus Christ in virtue of the assumption of the humanity of Jesus in the divine person of the Word of God through the mystery of the "hypostatic union" must therefore always be maintained (2002a:140).

The meaning of this statement is that the salvific effectiveness of the Word as such cannot be separated from the salvific significance of the historical event of Jesus Christ in the sense that salvation occurs exclusively through the Word to the disadvantage of Jesus the human (:140). Nevertheless, this does not mean that one cannot distinguish between the salvific work of the Word as such and the same salvific work of God through the humanity of Jesus. One must, however, bear in mind that the Word of God as such and the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ is one and the same.

In order to establish the action of the Word before incarnation and the Word after Jesus' incarnation and resurrection, Dupuis turns to the biblical data and to tradition. Firstly, he refers to the economy of Wisdom in the Sapiential literature of the Old Testament which reveals the universal presence of salvation in human history. In this he consults the previously mentioned study by Giovanni Odasso, which engages in the hermeneutics of four texts from Wisdom literature, namely, Job 28:1-28; Prov 8:22-33; Sir 24:1-32; Wis 9:1-18.[9] Examination of these texts leads Odasso to the conclusion that the Bible, through the Wisdom literature, gives a new insight into histories, cultures, entire nations and into the destiny of human beings. Moreover, in the light of the Wisdom literature, 'religions present themselves as the context by autonomasia where man allows himself to be taught by Wisdom and guided by her towards the destination of the whole of humanity: full, invigorating and eternal communion with the living God' (Odasso 1998:222).

For Dupuis, this universal presence and effectiveness of the Wisdom of God is the very beginning for an inclusive and open theology of religions (Dupuis 2002a:140).

The theme of the Wisdom of God who is present and working in cultures and religions and the theme of close relationship between the Wisdom and the Word of God is further developed in the New Testament. The Christology of the New Testament identifies Jesus Christ with both the Wisdom and the Word. To a certain degree, the theme of the Wisdom might be seen in the Johannine Prologue. However, in the Prologue the notion of the Word of God incarnated in Jesus Christ is much more clearly emphasized. In this sense, Dupuis observes that the author of the Fourth Gospel reaffirms 'a universal action and presence of the Word of God already in human history before the incarnation, as also the permanence of this action of the Logos as such after the incarnation of the Word and the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (:142).

To Dupuis's satisfaction, a similar view is shared by some contemporary exegetes, namely X. Léon-Dufour, R. Schnackenburg, J. Dupont, A. Teuillet and M-E. Boismard. Referring to the exegetical works of these authors, Dupuis writes that

> [it] seems therefore possible to talk of an action of the Word of God, not only before the incarnation of the Word but also after the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, distinct from the salvific action through his humanity, provided that this continued action of the Word be not "separated" from the event in which the insuperable "concentration" of the self-revelation of God according to the one divine plan for the universal salvation of humankind takes place (:144).

Indirectly, a reference is made here to the Council of Chalcedon and its Christological dogma which states that the two natures of Jesus Christ despite being "inseparable" are "distinct" (ND 613-615). Along this line, the Third Council of Constantinople explains the true identity of two "actions" or "operations" between the divine action of the Word and the human action of Jesus Christ (ND 635-637). On the basis of this permanent "identity" and continued "distinction" of the action of God's Word, therefore, the Word of God as incarnate remains the Word of God as such. Dupuis explains:

> The Word continues, therefore, to be the one who "was in the beginning with God" and by means of whom "everything was made" (cf. Jn 1:1-3), without the human historical being of Jesus, which was not yet in existence, being able to serve as instrument for the divine act of creation. Similarly the Word remains still the true light, that which "enlightens every man coming into the world" (Jn 1:9) beyond the salvific action of the Word incarnate through his humanity (2002a:144-145).

This is followed by Dupuis's argument that the biblical affirmation of the salvific action of the Word as such after the incarnation and Jesus resurrection is also present in the theology of the Church Fathers in the second century. Dupuis refers here especially to the doctrine of the Logos

spermatikos. In the second century, the concept of Logos occupied a central place in Greek philosophy and Semitic religious thought. For the Greeks, Logos represented an intelligent principle existing in the world. For the Jews, Logos was a manifestation and revelation of Yahweh. In the context of these two views, the Johannine concept of the Logos incarnated must have been regarded as a real innovation. The Christian Logos was distinct from Yahweh and at the same time 'exercised the functions attributed by Hellenism to the impersonal Logos' (:147). It is no surprise, therefore, that the Church Fathers had to struggle with questions as to whether the eternal Logos manifested himself to all people or only to Jews and Christians. Did people from outside the Jewish-Christian tradition, who lived before it, participate in the life of the eternal Logos or only those who awaited him when he became incarnated? In their approach to these questions, as has already been indicated, the Church Fathers were divided (Chapter 3.3.1). Some, such as Tertullian, Origen and Augustine were exclusive, others such as Justin, Ireneaus, and Clement of Alexandria remained inclusive (Dupuis 2002a:147).

A separate question which arises here is whether the Logos of the three theologians, which is present everywhere, refers to the *logos* of the Stoics or rather should be identified exclusively with the Logos of the Johannine Prologue. Only the latter is present and active in human history and finally incarnated in Jesus Christ. Dupuis points to the complexity of this question which cannot be answered by definitive statements. He writes that the Johannine concept of the Logos already integrates some characteristics of the Stoics' *logos* into the notion of the Word of God present and active in history. The early Fathers do the same, giving the *logos* a divine meaning. They see it 'as the principle of intelligibility of creation, world and history' (:154). At the same time, they attribute this function 'to the personal Logos present in the divine mystery and operating through the whole of history, of which the Prologue of John spoke' (:154).

This implies that the early Fathers combine the *logos* of the Stoic philosophy present in the universe with the biblical concept of the Word of God present in the form of "seeds" among peoples. In this way, they affirm the active presence of God's Word in the entire human family and also outside the Judeo-Christian tradition (:154-155). The early Fathers see the influence of the divine Logos outside the Christian tradition, especially in the pre-Christian activity of the Logos present in Greek wisdom, as a "preparation for the gospel". In addition, the role of Greek wisdom as a divine pedagogy for the gospel does not stop with the historical event of Jesus Christ, but continues afterwards until individual believers personally encounter the Christian message. For Dupuis all this reveals that the theology of the Logos of the Bible and of the early Fathers is important and relevant for an open theology of religions. His main conviction is that the new theology of religions, by

building on the Logos theology, has the potential to affirm 'the universal presence and action of the Logos of God in persons belonging to other religious traditions and in those traditions themselves' (:155-156).

Nevertheless, Dupuis expresses his regret that over time Christian theology has reduced the significance of the theology of the Logos-sewer to the mere possibility of natural knowledge of God within the human family. He regrets that with time Christian theology began to deny the value of religious traditions outside Judaism and Christianity. The "seeds of the Word" started to be viewed as gifts of human nature capable of reaching God. Thus, although the Second Vatican Council used the patristic idea of the 'seeds of the Word which lie hidden among [the religions]' (AG 11), it did not specify whether these "seeds" belong to nature or to God's personal gifts through the Logos. This uncertainty as to whether the Council recognized a positive significance for religious traditions in conveying salvation for their members prevails in contemporary theology. Dupuis claims that it is precisely the task of the post-conciliar theology of religions to develop such positive significance of other religious traditions in the economy of salvation. This can be done partly through recalling the biblical reflection on the economy of Wisdom and the economy of Logos and partly through recalling the patristic theological reflection on the same universal presence and activity of the Word of God.

The above analysis leads to the conclusion that Dupuis has no doubt that there must exist a salvific action of the Word of God as such which is distinct from the Word of God operating through Jesus Christ the human being, risen and glorified. At the same time, the two salvific actions must be in "union" with each other. In addition, the salvific action of the Word of God as such must not be seen as an abstract but as a reality deeply rooted in God's revelation. Therefore, on the Scriptural basis, supported by the early Christian tradition, it is possible to point out the various moments of God's saving action in history through the activity of the Word of God as such before and after the incarnation. It is equally possible to show that this salvific work of God's Word as such relates to Christ's event in the economy of salvation which culminates in the mystery of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ and in Jesus' paschal mystery. In turn, this gives a glimpse of how the religious traditions can possess salvific significance for their adherents in the one plan of salvation.

5.2.2 The salvific event of Jesus Christ and its relation to the Word of God

Dupuis further attempts to demonstrate that there is no contradiction between the universality of the Word of God as such and the centrality of the event of Jesus Christ. Both the universality of the Word's salvific action and the centrality of Christ's historical event 'are neither identified nor separated; they remain, however, distinct' (Dupuis 2002a:156). Both call for mutual harmonization

in the single plan of salvation. For Dupuis, it is apparent that the salvific action of the Word of God which extends beyond the boundaries of the Judeo-Christian tradition cannot be reduced, through wrong identification, to the historical event of Jesus Christ. In the same way, it is apparent that the personal and historical incarnation of God's Word in the progressing history of salvation has to be viewed as "constitutive" of salvation. Only such understanding can affirm a universal and active presence of the Logos before incarnation which one finds in the Prologue of John (Jn 1:1-4) and which continues its saving action after incarnation. This in turn does not prevent one from viewing the Word incarnated (Jesus Christ) as the universal "Saviour" and the only "Mediator" between God and humanity. Dupuis explains that

> whichever might be the divine manifestations through the Word as such, the event of Jesus Christ remains the climax of God's plan for humankind and of the history through which this plan unfolds. The Word as such and the Word incarnate belong together to the one history of salvation (:157).

Dupuis sees in Jesus' personal identity as the only Son of God a theological basis for the universality of the event of Jesus Christ (Dupuis 1991:196). This does not mean that Dupuis denies the importance of Jesus' earthly activity of initiating the Reign of God and putting forward his human project, that is, his struggle for the poor and the marginalized, and his denouncing of injustice. Nevertheless, Jesus' earthly activity cannot be 'decisive for making him unique for salvation' (Dupuis 1999a29). The theological basis for the unique and universal meaning of the event of Jesus Christ can only lie in the fact that, through the incarnation of God's Word, God 'established an unbreakable bond of union with the whole of humanity' (Dupuis 2002a:158). In this sense

> [the] incarnation represents the most profound and immanent way in which God personally committed himself to humanity in history. It follows from this that the Jesus Christ event in its entirety, from the incarnation to the resurrection and glorification, seals the decisive pact which God institutes with humanity. It is, and remains, throughout history the sacrament and seal of that pact. In this quality the Jesus Christ event obtains, in the history of salvation, a unique and irreplaceable place. It is a truly "constitutive" element in the mystery of salvation for the whole of humanity (:158).

Indeed, this last statement leaves no room for doubt that between the Word of God and Jesus Christ there is a personal identity which can never be denied or separated. Jesus Christ is the Word of God made human in history. This is also what the "hypostatic union" means, that the humanity of Jesus is united with the divine person of the Word. Thus, although the humanity of Jesus started its existence at the incarnation and was "submitted" to earthly conditions (time and space), it continues to exist 'beyond death, in the glorified and risen state, having become henceforth "metahistorical" or "transhistorical", that is, having reached beyond the conditioning of time and space' (Dupuis

2002a:158; 1997:297). Because of this "metahistoricity", the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ always remains at the centre of God's divine plan of salvation for humanity.

One must, however, remember that the historic event of Jesus Christ is particular and conditioned by time and space; that is, Jesus' life as a human which is situated in a particular time and location. In addition, Jesus' resurrection is an historical event. Yet, the same resurrection transferred Jesus the human into a "transhistoric" reality. Dupuis argues that despite this new "metahistoric" reality, 'the historic salvific event becomes present and actual for all times and in all places…this event does not by itself exhaust – nor can it exhaust – the revelatory and salvific power of the Word of God' (Dupuis 2002a:159). Hence, while there is unity between the human Jesus and the person of the Word of God which can never be separated, the two natures can never be identified and must remain distinct.

How should one therefore understand the relationship between God's manifestation through the Word as such and the complete manifestation in Jesus Christ in regard to the other religious traditions? There is no doubt that the Word manifested itself in Jesus Christ in the best possible, complete and human way in history. Nevertheless this way of God's self-manifestation itself suggests certain limitations and incompleteness (Dupuis 1999:29). Dupuis explains these limitations as follows:

> The Word of God remains beyond whatever can be manifested and revealed in the human being of Jesus, assumed personally by him. In his humanity, therefore, Jesus Christ is the "universal sacrament" – the efficacious sign – of the mystery of the salvation which God offers to the entire humankind through his Word; but the God who saves through him remains beyond the human being of Jesus, notwithstanding his personal identity with the Word, even when he has reached his glorified state (2002a:159).

In other words, Jesus Christ is the "primordial" universal sacrament of salvation. However, this reference, "primordial" sacrament of salvation could never be applied to God the Creator. This implies that although there exists personal identity between the humanity of Jesus Christ and the divinity of the Son of God, there is also a distance between God the Creator and Jesus who is 'the human icon of God' (Dupuis 1999a:29; 2000:215). In addition, it implies that even if the Christ event is the universal sacrament of God's saving will and action, this does not necessarily have to be the only exception of this God's will and action (Dupuis 1999a:29).

In Dupuis's view the relationship between the particularity of the event of Christ and the universality of God's will to save allows one to approach the Christian theology of religious pluralism from a different perspective and consequently to create space for viewing the other religions as "paths" to salvation (:30). This is possible because all God's manifestations in history

through the Word and in Jesus Christ indicate that God's salvific action is unique but, at the same time, "multifaceted". God's salvific action is never separated from the event of Jesus Christ, yet God's action through the Word is not exclusively united to the Word's becoming human, historically, in Jesus Christ. Dupuis explains the different dimensions of God's mediation of the salvific grace in this way:

> The Christ event, while it is inclusively present and actual in different times and places, does not exhaust the power of the Word of God which became flesh in Jesus Christ. The working of the Word goes beyond the limits which mark the working presence of the humanity of Jesus even in his glorified state, just as the person of the Word goes beyond the human being of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the "hypostatic union", that is, the union in the person. In this way one is able to catch a glimpse of how seeds of "truth and grace" (*Ad Gentes* §9) can be present in other religious traditions of the world, which serve, for their followers, as "ways" or "paths" of salvation (2002a:160).

For Dupuis, the above constitutes a strong argument that these "seeds" of God's Word cannot be understood merely as "stepping stones" or gifts of nature which wait for their divine self-manifestation in the future. In reality, they are true and independent self-manifestations of God, although still 'initial and germinal' (:160). This indicates that God's self-manifestation and saving action is 'universally operative before its manifestation in the flesh [of Jesus Christ], and remains operative through the whole history of salvation, even after the event of Jesus Christ and beyond the boundaries of Christianity' (:160).

In early Christianity, the apologists had already discovered that not only individual persons in other religious traditions could be "illuminated" and receive some divine truth from the Word, but also that the "philosophy" and wisdom of the Greek and the Eastern worlds could become channels of the divine "light" reaching peoples in various traditions (Dupuis 1999a:30). From this, it follows that religious traditions, in which their prophets and followers have an authentic experience of the divine truth,

> contain seeds of "truth and grace" (*Ad Gentes* §9) sown in them by the Word, by means of which his illuminating virtue and strength remain operative. The divine Word continues even now to sow his seeds among peoples and religious traditions: revealed truth and salvific grace are present in them through his action (Dupuis 2002a:160).

In the above statement, Dupuis attempts to preserve the unity of the single divine plan of salvation which at the same time includes the whole history of humanity.

5.2.3 The saving presence of the Spirit in history

What has been said so far concerning the Trinitarian model would remain incomplete without explaining how the saving action of the Word of God and the universal saving value of the Christ

event relate to the active and universal presence of the Spirit. Indeed, the Trinitarian perspective or approach to religions also leaves space for the universal saving presence of the Holy Spirit which is analogous to the saving action of the Word of God as such. Dupuis refers here mainly to a Spirit Christology which expresses well the Spirit's universal presence and action, before and after the event of Christ. This event 'both derives from the working of the Spirit in the world and gives rise to it' (Dupuis 2002a:178). They mutually influence or condition each other. Thus, although in God's plan of salvation, the event of Christ is the highest point and the universal sacrament of salvation, the salvific action of the three-persons in God remains distinct. One may say, therefore, that God saves with the Word and with the Spirit, which according to theology of St. Irenaeus constitutes the "two saving hands" of God (Dupuis 2000:212).

This universal active presence of the Spirit is emphasized both in the Old and the New Testaments. It is also emphasized in the conciliar documents, and especially in recent church teaching. It is no surprise that already the Old Testament points to the promise of an outpouring of the Spirit of God as a source of spiritual renewal which, unfortunately, is reserved for the people of Israel (Ez 11:19, 36:26, 36:37). This Old Testament promise is fulfilled at Pentecost and is fully realized by the apostolic community. The first Christian community is the recipient of God's gift of the Spirit. A question, however, arises as to whether this outpouring of the Spirit is extended to all of humanity or is limited instead to the apostolic Church. Dupuis interprets the Lucan story of Pentecost as assumption of

> at least an intentional universality of the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:4,5-6), transcending the narrow bounds of the people of the covenant. The message entrusted to the apostles is destined for all; the universality of tongues symbolizes universal mission (1991:154).

A related question would be whether the active presence of the Spirit is already operative and reaches people before the time of the apostolic church and independently of it. A positive answer to it could be seen in Peter's statement during the Jerusalem controversy (Acts 15:18), that the Gentiles have also received the Spirit before the outpouring at Pentecost. Nevertheless, the earlier text of Acts 10:44–11:18 contradicts the above and links the possessing of the Spirit by Gentiles with hearing and accepting the apostolic message and becoming baptized (Dupuis 1991:155).

Therefore a positive answer to the above question raises certain complications. Dupuis attempts to give some insight into this difficulty. He states that firstly one must be aware that the New Testament writings were directed mainly to the Christian church and naturally strongly emphasized the link between receiving the Spirit of God and Christian baptism. Secondly, the presence of the Spirit cannot be limited only to Christians but must be extended to all of humanity on the basis that

'[the] Spirit of God has become the Spirit of Christ (cf. Rom 8:9), and is dispensed to human beings by him, because the Lord is the Spirit (2Cor 3:17)' (Dupuis 1991:155). In other words, the Spirit of God is present in all people who are saved and is recognized by the fruits which their lives produce. This is why, on the one hand, St Paul links the active presence of the Spirit with the lives of Christians, and, on the other this active presence of the Spirit is extended to all people on the basis of the event of Christ which opens to new life in the Spirit. This is expressed through such central themes of Paul's theology as "new creation" (2Cor 5:17); "new humanity" (Eph 2:15-16); "reconciliation of all things in Christ" (Col 1:20); "a new way to the Father opened to Jews and Gentiles in one Spirit" (Eph 2:18); "convergence of all things in Jesus the head" (Eph 1:10).

The above shows that Paul sees the action of the Christic mystery through God's Spirit as not only limited to the church, which constitutes a privileged place of this activity, but also extended to the entire universe. The church and the universe are two circles around the mystery of Christ; the church the inner circle and the universe the outer circle embraced by the same activity of Christ's Spirit. Therefore, although one cannot deny that the church is the body of Christ (Col 1:18; Eph 1:22-23), Christ is the head not only of the church but also of the universe (Col 1:18; Eph 1:22).[10] In a similar way 'while the Holy Spirit is in a special way the soul of the church, it is also the soul of the universe, for Christ pours forth his fullness upon the whole of creation, and the universe is filled with his presence (cf. Col 1:19)' (Dupuis 1991:156). Dupuis continues:

> The Spirit poured forth on Pentecost causes the action of the Paschal event to be an action of today, as well. It is by the Spirit that the mystery of salvation, accomplished once for all in Jesus Christ, becomes concrete reality for human beings…. The activity of the Spirit gives birth to the community of the church, but transcends the boundaries of the Christian fold to give life to men and women and transform the cosmos (:156).

The same theme of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the world and in other religious traditions is also emphasized by the Second Vatican Council. Dupuis sees this as a sign of positive evolution in the church's doctrine on the Spirit's role in the economy of salvation (:158). He states that whereas *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* do not say anything meaningful in relation to this theme, *Ad Gentes* and *Gaudium et Spes* are much more open and explicit on it. On the one hand, *Ad Gentes* (4) speaks of the active presence of the Spirit of God in the human family before and after the event of Christ and outside the Christian faith.[11] The same Decree in point (5) directly acknowledges the active presence of the Spirit in the world before the event.[12] On the other hand, *Gaudium et Spes* (22) explicitly recognizes the possibility for any human being to be linked with Christ's Paschal mystery because of the activity of the Spirit. One must state, however, that although the Constitution acknowledges the possibility of the active presence of the Spirit in other believers, it does not acknowledge it in their religious traditions. At the same time, however, *Gaudium et Spes*

refers to the activity of the Spirit outside the church emphasizing that this activity does not take place exclusively in religious undertakings of people 'but also in the cultures, the universal aspirations, even secular, that characterize the present world' (Dupuis 1991:159).

Indeed, Dupuis's interpretation of the above conciliar teaching is rather optimistic. This is why he argues that the Council sees the influence of the Spirit not only in various areas of human activity but also in human religious institutions. Dupuis argues that the active presence of the Spirit in the world religions is emphasized in various statements in the Constitution (10,11,15,37 and 41). He writes that generally all these texts affirm the 'cosmic effects of the Jesus Christ event and the universal activity of the Holy Spirit that derives from that event [which] are everywhere present' (Dupuis 1991:161). In this sense, he sees *Gaudium et Spes* as 'the Magna Carta of the dialogue between Christians and all humankind, believers and others' (:162).

The post-conciliar magisterium, in its reference to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the members of other religious traditions, is more diverse. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), Pope Paul VI is rather reserved in regard to this topic. The aspect of the Spirit's activity in other believers and their religions is generally absent. If there is any reference to the Spirit, it is in the context of the church's mission (EN 75), that is, evangelization of nations (Dupuis 1991:162). Much more open and explicit reference to the active presence of the Spirit in members of other religious traditions can be found in various documents and speeches of Pope John Paul II.[13] The pope writes that the Holy Spirit is active outside the church in several ways. Firstly, the beliefs of members of other religions are the result of the Spirit's presence outside the church (RH 6). Secondly, the church should respect the works of the Holy Spirit which can be found in other believers (RH 12). Thirdly, the practice of interreligious dialogue and especially the prayer, which unites Christians and other believers, is the result of the Spirit's activity and the fruit of Christ's redemption (Gioia 1997:239-240).[14]

Along these lines, references to the active presence of the Spirit in the religious lives of other believers are made by the pope while addressing representatives of world religions in Tokyo (1981),[15] during his speech in Madras (1986),[16] in his speech to Roman Curia (December 22, 1986),[17] and at the World Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi (1986). During the last event, while praying together with representatives of the world religions for peace, the pope mentions that the unity which binds them and allows one to go beyond their differences and divisions is the result of their prayer and is directly influenced by the Spirit who is present in any human being in a mysterious way (Dupuis 1991:164).

Dupuis observes that all these texts express the same idea; that the Holy Spirit is actively present outside the church in the lives of other believers and, in the speech in Tokyo, also in their religious traditions. In addition, the texts indicate that prayer, human goodness and spiritual richness treasured in those religions, together with genuine and true interreligious dialogue, are the diverse fruits of the Spirit of God (Dupuis 1999a:28).

Nevertheless, the most explicit text which refers to the Holy Spirit is in the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986). In this encyclical, Pope John Paul II speaks directly of the universal active presence of the Spirit of God before the event of Christ and beyond the confines of the church.[18] Commenting on the pope's statement, Dupuis writes:

> Before the time of the Christian dispensation, the activity of the Spirit, in virtue of the divine plan of salvation, was ordered to Christ. Outside the church today, it results from the saving event accomplished in him. Thus the pope explains the christological content and pneumatological dimension of the salvation event… (1991:164; 1999a:28).[19]

An important question arises here as to whether this active presence of the third Person of the Holy Trinity occurs through the risen Christ or perhaps goes beyond it. In attempting to answer this question, Dupuis refers again to the biblical data of the New Testament, especially Paul's writings where the Holy Spirit is called both "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9). The phrase "Spirit of Christ" seems to indicate the sending of the Spirit by the glorified Jesus Christ which resembles Jesus' promise of the Spirit to his disciples (Jn 15:26, 16:5-15) and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). In this case, the function of the Spirit is to establish communion or unity between people and Jesus Christ. Dupuis explains:

> In that sense it has been noted that the Spirit is God's "point of insertion" through Christ in people's lives and that its work consists of making them children of the Father in the Son through the risen humanity (2002a:179).

At the same time, Dupuis observes that the Spirit which is communicated or sent is often called the "Spirit of God" (Rom 8:9, 8:11, 8:14; 1Cor 2:11, 2:14, 3:16, 6:11; 2Cor 3:3). This Spirit is placed within the mystery of the triune God as the person proceeding from the God Creator through the Son. Consequently, one can question whether there is any possibility of the saving action of the Spirit after the event of Jesus Christ, in the same way as the saving action of the Spirit takes place before the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Referring to Irenaeus' expression that God saves "with two hands", that is, with the Word and with the Spirit, Dupuis's answer is positive:

> While they are united and inseparable, they are also distinct and complementary in their distinction. The activity of each is different from that of the other; indeed it is the concurrence or "synergy" of the two distinct activities that produces God's saving effect. Neither one nor the other can be reduced to representing a mere "function" of the other; rather both activities

converge in achieving a single economy of salvation. God acts with both God's hands (2002a:179).

Indeed, the economy of the Holy Spirit cannot be reduced to being merely a "function" of Christ because in this way 'the fullness of the personal saving activity of the Spirit would thereby be lost' (:180). At the same time, however, it cannot be made "autonomous" or detached from that of the saving action of the Word. Dupuis explains that there is always a danger of reducing the personal identity and the saving activity of the Spirit in the divine plan of salvation. There are various possible ways of reducing the Spirit to a "function" of the risen Christ. The most common example of such reductionism is identification of the Spirit with the glorified Christ based on an erroneous interpretation of 2Cor 3:17 which reads that "The Lord is the Spirit". Another example which has already been discussed is the position, that the saving action of the Spirit happens entirely through the activity of the risen Lord (:181).

Therefore, for Dupuis it is not clear why the salvific action of the Spirit which was operative in the world and history before the event of Christ, should be limited in anyway to the communication through the risen humanity of Jesus Christ. He adds however that in both cases, that is, before and after the Christ event, the operative presence of the Spirit 'is always in relation to the event in which the expansion of the divine plan of salvation through history reaches its culminating point' (:181). In other words, the Spirit's presence and activity before the incarnation should be interpreted in the context of the Christ event. At the same time, Dupuis rejects any 'saying that after that event no action whatever of the Spirit as such, albeit in relation to that event, may be conceived – in a way similar to what it has been possible to affirm regarding an action of the Word as such…' (:181).

The reason for this lies in the fact that there is only one economy of salvation and not two, although in this single economy both the Word and the Spirit preserve 'their own personal identity' (:181). The conclusion which Dupuis reaches is clear. If it is true that the active presence of the Spirit is universal, anticipates the Christ event and goes beyond the limits of the church, it must be equally true that the same activity of the Spirit takes place after the event and reaches other believers through the mediation of their religions. If so, the religious traditions must play the role of "channels" of salvation towards their own members. This however is the subject of engagement in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to analyze Dupuis's Trinitarian approach to the religious history of humanity. Firstly, the chapter introduced Dupuis's Christology by emphasizing his argument for preserving Jesus' uniqueness and universality as "constitutive" for the salvation of

people. Secondly, the analysis revealed that only the Trinitarian Christology, which Dupuis proposes as the model for a Christian theology of religions, has the potential to distinguish and hold together the saving action of the Word of God, the event of Jesus Christ, and the saving presence of the Spirit. It becomes apparent that while Dupuis argues for preserving the identity of Christ with the eternal Word, he rejects any separation of the two. Yet, he maintains that the action of the eternal Word cannot be limited to its expression through Jesus Christ the human. The action of the Word does not interfere with the human character of Jesus' human actions but transcends them by its very nature. Consequently, the economy of the eternal Word must be broader than the economy of the incarnate Word which is the "sacrament" of the former.

Dupuis's argument also relates to the active presence of the Spirit that cannot be limited to the outpouring of this Spirit upon the world through the risen and glorified humanity of Jesus Christ. Here, however, although Dupuis advocates a distinct action of the Spirit of God, he avoids creating an "autonomous" economy of the Spirit which would be entirely independent of the economy of the incarnate Word. Thus, whether before or after the Christ event, the salvific action of the Spirit is always related to this event. In this sense Dupuis does not speak of two separate economies but one of the Word and Jesus Christ and the Spirit that constitute two "hands" of God in a single plan of salvation of humanity.

The next chapter will show that the Trinitarian model also has the potential to combine the universality of Jesus Christ's saving action with the positive meaning and role of the world religions in the process of salvation. We will therefore engage in the important question of whether it is possible to view Jesus Christ as the constitutive "Saviour" and the "one Mediator" and at the same time view the other religious traditions as "participated mediations". This will require an analysis of the existing relationship between the Reign of God, the Church and the religions.

---

[1] In the shift from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism, the centrality refers to Jesus Christ in connection with the church's role as sacrament of salvation in Jesus Christ. In the shift from Christocentrism to theocentrism, the central place is occupied by the universal and constitutive mediation of Jesus Christ in God's plan of salvation. See Dupuis, J, *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 87.

[2] Dupuis in his earlier work *Jesus Christ at the encounter of the world religions* (1991), does not yet speak of a Trinitarian Christology. In this book, his concept of Trinitarianism is at the initial stage. Instead of "Trinitarian Christology", he uses the term "pneumatological Christology" to explain how the mystery of Christ is at the same time unique and universal. The name "pneumatological Christology" was invented by Walter Kasper in *Jesus the Christ* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 267-268.

[3] In this sense, Ernest Troeltsh speaks of Jesus Christ as 'the purest and most forceful revelation of the [religious] world', in *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the history of religions* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971), 121. Similarly, Schubert Ogden views Jesus Christ as the universal " revealer" of the love of God. See *Christ without myth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961). Eugene TeSelle regards Jesus Christ as the yardstick or genuine criterion of the salvific value of the other revelations. See *Christ in context: Divine purpose and human possibility* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Other theologians such as John Hick and Paul Knitter in *The Myth of Christian uniqueness:*

Toward a pluralistic theology of religions (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), treat the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus as a Christian "pretension" of the past.

[4] It is important, however, to generally distinguish two main positions among the supporters of the theocentric paradigm. The first position states that it is not necessary to reject the claim to uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the New Testament as long as Jesus is seen as the Saviour of the Jewish people. The second position acknowledges the New Testament's assertion to Jesus' uniqueness (Acts 4:12; 1Tim 2:5-6; Jn 14:6; Eph 1:1-13; Col 1:15-20) which, however, needs to be abandoned in the contemporary context of religious diversity. See Knitter, P F, *No other name: A Critical survey of Christian attitudes towards the world religions* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 182-186; also *Jesus and the other names: Christian mission and global responsibility* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 68-69.

[5] The term "revisionist" Christology is used mainly by the inclusivists for describing the pluralist "degree" Christology as opposed to a "high" or ontological Christology which views Jesus Christ as the Son of God. See Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 280-281,284.

[6] For an extensive treatment of some of these Christological issues see Dupuis's earlier Christological work entitled *Who do you say I am? Introduction to Christology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 57-110.

[7] The term "absoluteness" in relation to Christianity has often been used in the history of Christianity. Hegel's idealistic philosophy supported such Christology's claim. Later this claim was relativised by Ernest Troeltsch in his book *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the history of religions* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971). Karl Barth admitted "absoluteness" of Christianity as the incarnation of the saving faith in Jesus Christ but not as a religion. See Bernhardt, R, *Christianity without absolutes* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 83-85. Paul Tillich was against any absolutisation of religions including Christianity. See Bernhardt, R, *Christianity without absolutes* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 113-114. Rahner in his theological investigations used the term "absoluteness" of Christianity and of Jesus Christ but in the sense of both "uniqueness" of Christianity and "uniqueness" of Jesus Christ. See Rahner, K, "Christianity's absolute claim", in *Theological investigations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961-88/21), 171-184; also *Foundation of Christian faith: An introduction to the idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), 193-96, 298-299,318-321.

[8] One needs to distinguish between the "kind" of Spirit Christology, which Dupuis places within the Trinitarian model of "inclusive pluralism", and which does not function independently as a separate way of salvation, and the Spirit Christology proposed by some pluralists. The pluralists, especially Roger Height, while speaking of Sprit Christology make a sharp distinction between Christology and pneumatology as two separate and independent economies of God's involvement with humanity. The former is destined exclusively for Christians and the latter for the other believers.

[9] In Job, Wisdom emerges as 'the personified expression of the divine plan, which transcends the whole of creation'. In Proverbs, Wisdom seems to be 'as a person who calls, making her voice heard, inviting people to listen and learn'. In Sirach, the people Israel are "qualified to perceive the fruit of the action of Wisdom, the illumination of the salvific *exousia*, and the epiphany of the divine communication with men in the cultural and religious heritage of peoples'. In the book of Wisdom, there is a close relationship between Wisdom and the Spirit of God. 'Where there is Wisdom, there also is the Spirit. Conversely, when God sends his Spirit he communicates his Wisdom to humankind' (Odasso, G, *The Bible and religions: Biblical perspective for a theology of religions* [Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1998], 203,206,211,212).

[10] This resembles Teilhard de Chardin's Christology with its emphasis on an historically evolutionary framework for understanding the mystery of Christ who is the bearer and the ultimate goal of the evolutionary movement of the universe towards the final state of complexity and convergence. Christ is therefore the Omega Point towards which not only the universe tends but all of history. Yet, at the same time, Christ is present in the universe giving to the entire cosmic reality a Christic dimension. This intimate connection between Christ and the continuous process of complexification which leads to perfection of the universe has its roots in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John and the Letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians. For detailed analysis of Teilhard's Christology "from above" which was a typical theological approach of his times see Mooney, C, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); also Maloney, G A, *The Cosmic Christ: From Paul to Teilhard* (Sheed & Ward, 1968).

[11] In order to realize fully the salvation work, 'Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the Father to exercise inwardly his saving influence, and to promote the spread of the Church. Without doubt, the Holy Spirit was at work in the world before Christ was glorified. On the day of Pentecost, however, he came down on the disciples that he might remain with them forever (cf. John 14:16)' (AG 4).

[12] 'When the Holy Spirit filled the Lord's disciples on the day of Pentecost, this was not the first exercise of his role but an extension of his bounty, because the patriarchs, priests, and all the [prophets] of the previous ages were nourished by the same sanctifying Spirit…although the measure of the gifts was not the same' (AG 4, footnote 5).

[13] The same evaluation of John Paul II's stand on the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the members of other religious traditions appears in almost all Dupuis's works. The most extensive evaluation of the pope's pneumatological theology takes place in *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 162-164; "The Spirit, basis for interreligious dialogue" (*Theology Digest* 46/1, 1999), 28-29; and his main works.

[14] 'Even when, for certain persons, God is the great Unknown, it ever remains in reality no less the same living God. We can be sure that, every time the human spirit opens in prayer to this unknown God, an echo will be heard of that Spirit

who, knowing the limits and weaknesses of the human person, himself prays within us and for us "in inexpressible groanings" (Rom 8:26). The intercession of the Spirit of God who prays in us and for us is the fruit of the mystery of Christ's redemption, in which the plenary love of the Father has been shown to the world' (John Paul II, "Speech in Manila [1981]", in Gioia, F (ed), *Interreligious dialogue: The Official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)* [Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997], 239-240).

[15] While addressing the representatives of other religions in Tokyo in 1981, John Paul II said that he perceived 'in the virtues of graciousness, goodness, discretion, sweetness, and courage, inculcated by your various traditions, the fruits of that divine Spirit, who according to our faith, is a "friend of man", "fills the entire universe", and "holds all things together" (Wisd 1:6-7)' (John Paul II, "Speech in Tokyo [1981]", in Gioia, F (ed), *Interreligious dialogue: The Official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)* [Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997], 242-243).

[16] In 1986 in Madras, the Pope spoke of the need for mutual interreligious dialogue, referring again to the Spirit of God who 'guides men in freedom only when they meet one another in all honesty and love' (John Paul II, "Speech in Madras [1986]", in Gioia, F (ed), *Interreligious dialogue: The official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)* [Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997], 326).

[17] Gioia, F (ed), *Interreligious dialogue: The Official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997), 365-366.

[18] 'We cannot limit ourselves to the two thousand years that have elapsed since the birth of Christ. We must go back further, to embrace as well all the activity of the Holy Spirit before Christ – from the beginning – throughout the world, and in a special way in the economy of the Old Covenant. This activity, in every place and at all times, indeed in every human being, was wrought in virtue of the eternal design of salvation, in which it is strictly bound up with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption. This mystery had itself exerted its influence on those who believed in the Christ to come…. Thus, grace comports at once a Christological and pneumatological character, which are found especially in those who adhere explicitly to Christ….

But…we must also raise our eyes and advance "toward the deep", knowing that "the Spirit breathes where it will (cf. John 3:8)…. The Second Vatican Council…reminds us that the Holy Spirit also acts outside of the visible body of the Church. It rightly speaks of "all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery" (Gaudium et Spes, no. 22)' (John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem* [*Origins* 16, 1986-1987], 93-94).

[19] Although John Paul II recognizes the presence of the Holy Spirit in other religious traditions and their members, he does not recognize any independent salvific role which those traditions may play towards their own adherents. In this sense, in Dupuis's view John Paul II does not strengthen in any way the theological basis for interreligious dialogue. Some of the pope's statements strictly resemble the "fulfilment" theory embodied especially in official pronouncements of his predecessor Pope Paul VI. It is safe to say that generally Dupuis views John Paul II's careful stand as a return to the theology of "fulfilment". See "The Spirit, basis for interreligious dialogue" (*Theology Digest* 46/1, 1999), 29.

Chapter Six: Religious traditions as "paths" to salvation

Introduction

After examining the central claim of Christian faith that in the historical person of Jesus Christ one finds the "constitutive" Saviour and the unique revelation of God and that God saves "others" through the Logos in union with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, new theological questions still emerge. The main question is no longer whether other believers can be saved but whether the other religious traditions can be in themselves vehicles of salvation for their own adherents. The question is also whether the active presence of the Holy Spirit in those traditions implies the inclusion of others in the church and the Reign of God. If the answer is affirmative, then the inevitable question must be asked concerning the correct understanding of the "necessity" of the church for salvation to which the Second Vatican Council refers in *Lumen Gentium* (14). Does the "necessity" negate the salvific value of the religious traditions? Can Christian and Catholic theology affirm that the religions have in themselves a positive significance as means of salvation and if so what is the role of the church?

These are the questions which the present chapter examines in the light of Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism". It begins by asking more directly in what sense the other religious "paths" can act as "mediations" and lead their members to salvation. It further investigates the relationship between the church, the religions, and the Reign of God.

6.1 The world religions as possible "ways" to salvation
6.1.1 Religious traditions as "participated mediations"[1]

For Dupuis it is apparent that the event of Jesus Christ constitutes God's privileged channel for God's self-communication with humankind. Moreover, this event must be "relational"; in God's plan of salvation there is a relationship between Jesus Christ as the "way" of salvation and the other religious traditions as the various "ways" of salvation for their own members. The religions are therefore "ways" of salvation in the sense that they are willed by God and God uses them to reach their members. For this reason, they cannot be merely human inventions in the search for God (Dupuis 2002a:166; 1997:305). Nevertheless, if this is true, several important questions emerge: How is it possible to reconcile the universal effectiveness of the Christ event and the positive value of the other religions as "paths" to salvation? Are the adherents of those religions saved through Christ outside of Christianity and despite their traditions and their religious practices or are they saved within and through those traditions? And if the latter is the case, how can the various "ways" be incorporated in the single plan of salvation and not compete with Jesus Christ's saving power?

Before engaging in these questions, Dupuis proceeds to clarify a few points. Firstly, talking about "ways" or "paths" of salvation requires the statement that only God saves. Thus, no human being or institution can be a saviour. This is especially apparent in the Old Testament where the term "Saviour" is applied exclusively to God. In the New Testament, it is primarily applied to God and secondly to Jesus Christ (Dupuis 1997:306). In other words, the New Testament theology views only God as the one who saves, Jesus Christ saves conjointly, that is, God God-self saves through the Son (Jn 3:16-17; 2Cor 5:19; 1Tim 2:3-4; 1Tim 4:10). God alone is the primary cause of salvation. Dupuis writes:

> The fact that God is primarily the Saviour, however, does not prevent Jesus Christ himself from being called Saviour, but he is so secondarily, insofar as the Christ event is the efficacious expression of the divine saving will and action. That he is called "constitutive" rather than "absolute" Saviour does not "relativize" the saving work of Christ; that which is "constitutive" belongs to the essence (2002a:167).

In the light of the above, God is the only Saviour, to claim that Christianity or other religions save, would be erroneous (Dupuis 1997:306). It is, however, possible to speak of the religious traditions as "ways" which communicate God's saving grace for those who belong to those traditions (Dupuis 2002a:168).

Secondly, although the concept of salvation differs from one religion to another, it is important to emphasize that all religions view themselves as "paths" to salvation or liberation. Therefore, instead of using exclusively the term "salvation", which might have a different meaning in different religions, Dupuis uses the term "salvation-liberation" for it also includes those traditions which speak of salvation as human liberation (for example Buddhism). This double concept of "salvation-liberation" expresses more profoundly the diversity of traditions. In addition, the term "salvation-liberation" is more universal and neutral and combines complementary aspects, such as 'the spiritual and the temporal, the transcendent and the human, the personal and the social, the eschatological and the historical' (Dupuis 2002a:168; 1997:306).

Thirdly, the term "mediation" is open to different understandings. For instance, in the New Testament both Moses (Acts 7:38; Gal 3:19-20) and Jesus Christ (1Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6, 9:12, 12:24) are presented as mediators. Nevertheless, whereas Moses is presented as the mediator between God and the people of Israel, Jesus Christ is presented as the mediator between God and humankind (Dupuis 1997:307). Moses acts as "intermediary" between God and the chosen people, Jesus Christ acts as "mediator" between God and humanity 'inasmuch as he unites divinity and humanity in his person in such a way that in him the Divinity and humankind have become united in a permanent bond…' (Dupuis 2002a:168).

All this suggests that the theological concept of mediation might differ depending on a particular case. Hence, although Christianity regards Jesus Christ's "mediation" between God and humanity as "unique" (1Tim 2:5), this does not mean that there is no possibility of other "mediations". A possibility of such mediations called "participated mediations" is affirmed by the Catholic Church in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (5). These "participated mediations", however, which refer to the other religions, 'must be seen as essentially connected to the unique mediation of Jesus Christ and as deriving [their] power from it' (Dupuis 2002a:168-169; 1997:307).

The question still remains: in which sense can other religious traditions be viewed as "mediations" of salvation? At this point, one must emphasize that in his perception of the world religions as "paths" of salvation, Dupuis clearly separates himself from the pluralist theology of religions of Mark Haim which recognizes a real multiplicity of different religious salvations (Dupuis 1997:309-313). At the same time, he favours the pluralist axiom that "various paths lead to a common goal" which resembles John Hick's model of "God or Reality-centeredness" (:307-309). But Dupuis believes that the axiom must be understood in the light of 'the Christian conviction that the ultimate goal intended by God for all human life in any historic and religious context is personal union and sharing of life with the God who revealed God-self in Jesus Christ' (Dupuis 2002a:182). He also believes that despite this existing union between God and God's revelation in Jesus Christ, the diverse traditions represent various "paths" which lead to a common goal but in a number of different ways (Dupuis 1997:313).[2]

Traditional Christian theology has been hesitant to regard the other religions as valid "paths" to salvation for their adherents. On the Catholic side, despite acknowledgement of positive values in other religions by the Second Vatican Council, those traditions are not recognized as valid "ways" to salvation. The Council in *Gaudium et Spes* (22), after explaining how other Christians are linked to the Paschal mystery of Christ, proceeds to indicate that others are also associated with the same Christic Paschal mystery. But the Council does not engage in explaining how the other believers can be associated with the paschal mystery.

Still, Dupuis maintains that the Council generally laid a certain 'foundation for the theological opinion according to which Christian salvation reaches the members of other religions in, and in some way by, their mediation' (Dupuis 1991:136-137). By analyzing the conciliar documents, he underlines various statements which refer to the activity of the Word and the Spirit both in the human heart and in some objective practices in the world religions. In this regard, he points to the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (16) which stresses the divine providence which does not deny God's help to anybody in reaching salvation. The elements of "truth and grace" of which the Constitution

speaks serve 'as evangelical preparation and a gift of God, who enlightens every person so he or she may ultimately have life' (Dupuis 1997:137).

Another document, the Decree *Ad Gentes* (3), explains that God's single plan of salvation is carried out not only in individuals but also implicitly by "religious initiatives" through which these individuals find God. While these "religious initiatives" contain errors and are open to correction and guidance, they can be viewed as preparations for the Gospel. The same document speaks of God who can lead people and nations, who do not know the Gospel, to faith in ways known to God alone (AG 7). Elements of "truth and grace" are identified with the "seeds" of the Word which have been sown not only in individual people but also in the religious traditions. These "seeds" however are present in a hidden way and are waiting to be uncovered (AG 11). Finally, the Decree adds that one of the purposes of the missionary activity of the church is to liberate and restore to Christ all the *good* that is present in individuals, nations, and civilizations (AG 9).

Dupuis interprets the "good" mentioned by the Decree as something that 'is not reducible to subjective dispositions of persons, but extends to objective elements of the traditions to which they belong' (1997:137).

Along these lines, *Nostra Aetate* finds a "ray" of Truth present in some objective elements in the religious traditions which enlightens people (NA 2). In connection with this conciliar statement, Dupuis argues that despite there being no clear reference to the Johannine Prologue (John 1:9), which speaks of the "light" and "Truth", 'the emphasis placed on that Truth (*radium illius Veritatis*) clearly indicates that the document is speaking of the divine Word, the source of all Truth, present and active in the other religious traditions' (:138).

Affirmation of the other religious traditions as "channels" in the post-conciliar church teachings is also limited. The only document which cautiously views the religions as "ways" to salvation is the "Dialogue and Proclamation" (29).

The greatest acknowledgment of the various religious traditions comes from the Asian theological context which is, however, regarded as less authoritative than the central church's teaching. This acknowledgment is found mainly in various documents of Asian theological commissions and Bishops' conferences which have been discussed in Chapters 2.2.2 and 4.2.6. In contrast to the above, the International Theological Commission, in its document entitled "Christianity and the world religions", expresses a much more cautious recognition of a possible "saving function" in relation to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the other religions.

This leads Dupuis to write that there is a significant difference in perception of the other religious traditions between the Asian documents and those produced by the central teaching authority. The difference lies in the fact that theologians and bishops from Asia base their perception of the world religions on extensive daily contacts with other believers. Meanwhile, the central authoritative teaching of the Church is rooted in 'a dogmatic a priori approach' (Dupuis 2002a:185). Dupuis observes: 'The documents connected to the central teaching authority find it hard to admit in theory what for others is a lived experience' (:185).

The conciliar pronouncements lead Dupuis to a number of important conclusions. Firstly, people become associated with the mystery of Christ through the offer of the Holy Spirit who is present in the world and opens people towards salvation. Secondly, the Word of God has sown the divine seeds in the world traditions which convey elements of grace and salvation to their adherents. Thirdly, although the Council does not explicitly answer whether one can speak of a positive role and a salvific value in the various religious traditions as "means" or "ways" of salvation, the Council still 'moves in that direction' (Dupuis 1991:138).

Concerning recognition of the other religions as "ways" to salvation in the post-conciliar teaching, Dupuis sees a step forward in the Asian documents. Generally, the texts attempt to grasp the meaning and purpose of religious diversity and the role and function of the religious traditions in conveying salvation to their adherents.[3] The texts state that religious diversity is the result of the richness of creation and God's diverse grace. It should be no surprise therefore that people expressed their awareness of God in many and diverse ways. In addition, the texts acknowledge a positive role which the religions play in the single history of salvation.[4]

6.1.2 God's self-communication in other religions

As a theologian, Dupuis is convinced that the task of theology is to ask difficult questions and, if possible, answer them. Consequently, although the official church's stand on the other religions as "channels" of salvation is very cautious, he still engages in one of the most delicate questions: How does God communicate God's self to the members of other religions using their traditions? Does it happen through the action of Christ's glorified and thus "transhistoric" humanity, or through a certain "mediation" of the religious traditions which become "channels" of God's saving grace and which are the visible, yet incomplete, signs of this saving grace?

Dupuis claims that the latter must be the case. In order to prove that this is so, he turns to the social and historical character of human beings and the theory of the "presence of the mystery of Christ".

Human life is historically conditioned. The human person, which includes the incarnate spirit (soul), is a being that lives in the world, in history, time and space. In other words, the human body is an expression of the above existence, even though the two, body and soul in a person, are so united that they constitute not two separate and independent entities but one.[5] This union between the two is not accidental but essential. People 'are persons only to the extent that as spirits, they are incarnate' (Dupuis 2002a:186; 1991:143; 1997:317). The same principle of "substantial" union of the body and soul, which applies to the life of human beings, applies analogously to their religious life. People's lives are not composed only of 'spiritual states of the soul… [but] must be expressed in religious symbols, rites, and practices' (Dupuis 2002a:187; 1997:317). These religious expressions and practices point to the need for the existence of religious bodies in which the above occur.

In addition, people as religious beings do not function in isolation but in human society. Mutual interpersonal relationships make humans become persons. The same applies to people's religious life; in order to grow and become spiritually transformed, human beings do not operate as individuals but as adherents of a particular historic religious tradition (Dupuis 1991:143; 1997:317). People

> grow and become by sharing the religious life of their respective communities, by entering personally into the respective historical religious tradition in which they are placed, and by taking up its social manifestations, ideas and teaching, moral code and ritual practices (Dupuis 1991:144).

Karl Rahner in his essay "Christianity and the non-Christian religions" states that if the above is true and if the adherents of other religions can experience God authentically, than those religions, in their institutions and social practices, contain signs of their adherents' encounter with God's saving grace (Rahner 1966b:121-130).

In relation to Rahner's argument, Dupuis writes that in reality there is no dichotomy between subjective religion and objective religion, that is, between people's personal religious experience of God and their historico-social religions which include their sacred books, moral codes, and worship practices (Dupuis 1997:318; 2002a:187).[6] In this sense, it cannot be true that people belonging to those religions can obtain salvation through their authentic religious lives, but that their traditions cannot play any role in this process (Dupuis 1991:144). Thus, whereas it is true that there is a distinction between subjective and objective religion, these two cannot be separated.

In order to demonstrate how the various religions may convey salvation to their adherents, Dupuis considers, firstly, the way in which Jesus Christ is present to people. He begins with a statement that in Jesus Christ, God communicates God's self to all human beings, namely, Christians, other believers and non-believers (Dupuis 1991:144-145). The economy of salvation 'consists precisely in

this personal communication of God with the human being, a communication whose concrete realization takes place in Jesus Christ, and whose effective sign is the humanity of Jesus' (Dupuis 2002a:188). In Christianity, it is believed that God's self-communication to people in Christ 'reaches its highest and most complete sacramental visibility through the word revealed in him and the sacraments based on him' (Dupuis 2002a:188; 1991:147). This, however, does not mean that only Christians can reach this complete mediation of salvation as members of the sacrament-church and thus receive from it both the word and the sacramental saving grace. In reality, God in Jesus Christ must also be present is some way to the members of other religions. If this is true, God must be present in them not through the Christian church as sacrament but in the very practice of their own religions. Dupuis writes:

> Their religious practice is indeed what gives expression to their experience of God and of the mystery of Christ. It is the visible element, the sign, the sacrament of that experience. This practice expresses, sustains, supports, and contains – as it were – their encounter with God in Jesus Christ (2002a:188; 1991:147).

The conclusion, therefore, is that the other religions have also to be somehow a "way" and "means" of salvation for their own adherents. Dupuis is aware, however, that it is not so easy to comprehend how the other religions mediate the presence of the mystery of Christ to their own members. For this reason, he distinguishes various modalities of the sacramental presence of the Christic mystery. His main argument here is that the mediation of the mystery happens

> in a variety of ways. While God's grace is certainly one, it is visibly mediated in different ways – differing from one another not only in degree but in nature. This means that the religious practices and sacramental rites of other religions are not on the same level as the Christian sacraments deriving from Jesus Christ; but it does also mean that we must attribute to them a certain mediation of grace. There is only one mystery of salvation in Christ. But this mystery is present to human beings outside the bounds of Christianity. In the church, eschatological community, it is present to them openly and explicitly, in the full visibility of its complete mediation. In the other religious traditions, it is present hiddenly and implicitly, through a modality of incomplete, but no less real, mediation, constituted by such traditions (Dupuis 2002a:188-189; 1991:148).

For Dupuis the mystery of Christ that is present in a "hidden" way in other religious traditions, resembles the concept of "anonymous Christianity". One must state however that while Dupuis welcomes the content of Rahner's theory which he sees as useful in explaining the existing unity but also the real difference between Christianity and the religious traditions, he avoids Rahner's unfortunate expression "anonymous Christianity". In this way he avoids any reduction of the novelty of Christianity to a mere communication of knowledge. In short, Dupuis is careful not to place Christianity at the same level as other religions. This is especially apparent when he writes that while

in other religious traditions the mystery of Christ is imperfectly revealed and Christ's grace is imperfectly mediated, Christianity is the whole "revelation" of the mystery and the perfect mediation of grace (Dupuis 1991:148).

In this sense, there is an essential difference between the word of God spoken to the people through the mediation of sages and the decisive Word of God spoken to people through Jesus Christ. The scriptures of other religions might contain meaningful insights into God's self-disclosure to humanity, yet they remain open to ambiguity and are incomplete. Thus, they are less inclined to lead people to an authentic experience of God. According to Dupuis these sacred scriptures 'have not had the advantage of explicit public revelation as their guide' (:149). He concludes that '[only] the words which Christ speaks directly to the world contain God's decisive revelation to human beings, and nothing can be added to them' (:149).

There is also a difference between experiencing Christ's mystery through religious symbols and practices in other religious traditions, which became visible forms of people's faith response and expressions of their commitment to God and encountering the same mystery through the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ and entrusted to the church (Dupuis 1997:319). Some of the ritual practices in other traditions might contain distortions and do not guarantee that they will be accepted by Christ as ways which convey God's grace to people. Meanwhile the Christian sacraments 'carry the guarantee that they are paths by which the mystery of Christ is directly and infallibly encountered in their signs' (Dupuis 1991:150). Finally, there is a difference between experiencing Christ's mystery unconsciously and living by it in a "hidden" way (2002a:189).

It is apparent therefore that here Dupuis repeats Rahner's distinction between implicit and explicit Christianity (Rahner 1976a:282). This distinction can be seen in his statement that outside of the Christian church

> God encounters human beings in Christ, but the human face of God remains unknown. In Christianity, God encounters women and men in the human face of the human Jesus, who reflects for us the very image of the Father (Dupuis 1991:150).

Undoubtedly the theory of the "inclusive presence of Jesus Christ" is fundamental to Dupuis's proposal for viewing the other religions as "paths" to salvation. This theory is important because it unites two central Christian beliefs which seem to be contradictory, namely, God's universal will to save all and the centrality of the Christic mystery in a single plan of salvation.

For Rahner and Dupuis the implicit presence of the Christic mystery in other religions has important consequences not only for the religions but also for Christianity itself. Firstly, Christians are more likely to approach other believers with respect and openness. Secondly, they can learn from other

believers' experience of God and discover new ways of viewing the mystery of Christ. Thirdly, although Christians believe that only they possess God's authentic and complete revelation through Christ, still through encounter and mutual sharing in their religious experiences, they can further deepen their own understanding of Jesus Christ.

This leads Dupuis to the conclusion that Christianity and the world religions have something in common and that to a certain extent they converge. He adds, however, that not in the sense

> that they are all equal or interchangeable; Christianity belongs to a different order of sacramental realism. Christianity represents the decisive presence of eschatological grace in the world. Other religions are mediators of divine grace if not in the same manner: In them, too, Christ is present. True, the divine grace is less visible there than in Christianity. Still, Christ can be just as personally present – or even more so – to some of their deeply committed members than to less committed Christians (Dupuis 1991:151).

6.1.3 *Agapè* as a "saving value" inscribed in the world religions

The final step in Dupuis's argument on the other religions as "ways" to salvation refers to the process of discerning certain "salvific" values present in them. When Dupuis speaks of convergence between Christianity and the religions, he points to the elements of "truth" and "grace" and some "saving values" inscribed in those religions. Nevertheless, even if one agrees with Dupuis that "saving values" are inscribed in other religious traditions, the question still remains as to how one discerns those other values.

Dupuis writes that from a Christian perspective, a criterion for discerning such values is the practice of the "Christian Spirit", that is, love (*agapè*). The practice of *agapè*, therefore, decides whether a particular religious tradition is true and good (Dupuis 1997:322-323). He suggests here that a distinction must be made between a subjective commitment of an individual to practice the law of love and objective commitment made by a historical religious tradition. Concerning the individual person, a faith-commitment to practice the law of love is a sign that God speaks to a person in the secrecy of his or her heart.

> *Agapè* is the overflow in us of the love by which God loved us first. That is why the practice of love is the sure criterion for recognizing that a person has listened to the word of God and opened his or her heart to it. The practice of *agapè* is the reality of salvation, present and operative in human beings in response to God's self-disclosure and revelation (Dupuis 2002a:191).

It is much more difficult to discern how far the religious traditions themselves inspire the habitual practice of love, which is decisive in one's personal salvation. It is also difficult to discern whether the sacred scriptures of the other religious traditions offer the same or an equivalent law of love as the Christian tradition which is disclosed in the New Testament. Dupuis wonders in the light of the

gospel, what conditions must be fulfilled in order to make the love of one's neighbour the saving *agapè*. Indeed, one of the requirements, in the light of the gospel, is that *agapè* must be disinterested and unconditional, that is, must recognize the personal worth of the other. *Agapè* must also be universal, that is, extended not only to the neighbour but also to the enemy (Mt 5:43-48) (Dupuis 2002a:191; 1997:323).

In the following analysis, Dupuis examines how the sacred scriptures of the world religions fulfil these radical conditions of *agapè*. He refers to the essay by Peggy Starkey on this subject entitled "Agapè: A Christian criterion for truth in the other religions" (1985:443-461). Starkey investigates whether, and to what extent, the commitment to the practice of love is present first in the monotheistic religions, that is, Judaism and Islam, and then in the main Asian religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

In the Jewish tradition, the law of love for one's neighbour is strongly recommended by the Hebrew Scriptures which is rooted in the covenantal love and faithfulness of God towards God's people. There is no doubt that this law extends to human relationships, but it is uncertain whether this law is universal, that is, embraces also one's enemies. Referring to Starkey, Dupuis writes that the contemporary exegetes are in agreement that the second part of the old covenant "love the neighbour" and "hate the enemy" quoted in Mt 5:43-44, should not be interpreted in an exclusive way. The exegetes suggest that it should rather be interpreted in the sense that 'there is less obligation to love one's enemies' (Dupuis 2002a:192). This would allow one to view the Jewish people as being called to be compassionate, charitable, respectful and righteous to all. This would further mean that Judaism fulfils the criterion of *agapè* (Starkey 1985:441; Dupuis 1997:324).

In a similar way, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of *agapè* which should be extended to all people. In the Qur'an especially the law of charity remains central and universal and extends not only to Muslims but also to the whole of humankind (Starkey 1985:441-446; Dupuis 1997:324).

The concept of *agapè* is even more strongly emphasized in Asian traditions. In Hinduism, *agapè* is understood as an act of justice, respect, compassion or selflessness towards human beings. In Buddhism, love (*metta*) is encouraged to be practiced not only towards friends or neighbours but also towards enemies. In Confucianism, love (*jen*) is universal and should influence relationships among people (Starkey 1985:451-461; Dupuis 1997:324).

A question, however, needs to be asked regarding the real intention behind the universal practice of *agapè* in the Asian traditions. Does the practice relate to God's unconditional love towards

humankind? Starkey admits that the reason for practicing *agapè* in the Hindu tradition is different from that of the Western Christian tradition. The universal compassionate act of *agapè* in the *Upanishads* is based on the identity of Brahman-Atman; in the *bhakti* tradition it is rooted in the dignity of people who are in personal relationship with a God. The same relates to other traditions (:324-325). Thus, although the theological basis for Buddhist compassion towards all creatures and the Confucianist concept of love (*jen*) are similar to the Christian theological basis of the law of love, they still differ and are unequal (Dupuis 2002a:192-193). Nevertheless, no matter what limitations the concept of love in Asian traditions or any other religion encounters,

> it remains true that acts of love or *agapè* in action are, from a Christian standpoint, the sign that God has entered into the life of a person in self-disclosure and manifestation – no matter how "anonymously" or secretly, no matter how imperfect the awareness of the God who has thus intervened may remain in the subject (Dupuis 2002a:193; 1997:325).

The analysis of the *agapè* concept in various religious traditions leads Dupuis to several findings. Firstly, the practice of *agapè* indicates that the presence of the mystery of salvation is operative in every human being who is saved. Secondly, the world religions contain elements of God's revelation and saving grace, despite the fact that these elements remain incomplete and are open to God's further self-disclosure. Thirdly, through the practice of *agapè*, these elements lead adherents of other religions towards God's self-communication and ultimately salvation. Dupuis claims that these elements 'do so insofar as in God's providence they anticipate God's fuller disclosure and decisive self-gift in Jesus Christ' (Dupuis 2002a:193; 1997:325-326).

6.2 The relationship between the church and the religious traditions in the Reign of God
6.2.1 The universality of the Reign of God in Jesus' ministry

The view of other religious traditions as "participated mediations" calls for a closer look into the relationship between the Church, those religions, and the Reign of God. The first observation which Dupuis makes in this regard is that the term "Reign of God" in traditional, conciliar, post-conciliar, and recent theologies remains open to ambiguity.

It is unclear whether the Reign of God is limited only to Christianity and the church and thus excludes others from it, or whether other believers are also included into it. If they are members of the Reign of God while being outside of the church, in what way do they belong to the Reign of God: implicitly, invisibly or explicitly, visibly? If it extends beyond the boundaries, what kind of relationship exists between the other believers and the church? Will the "others" equally belong, as Christians belong, to the fulfilled Reign of God in eschatological times beyond history? One may suggest therefore that, Dupuis raises important questions which are still waiting to be answered despite the fact that the theology of the Reign of God is not a novelty but already existed in pre-

conciliar times and was present in the theological reflection of the Second Vatican Council. He proceeds to answer the above questions after investigating the concept of the Reign of God in Jesus' ministry.

Dupuis argues that the centrality of the Reign of God in the theology of religions must be linked to the centrality of the Reign in Jesus' ministry. In reality, Jesus' ministry is the very *locus* of this theme. This centrality is already expressed in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Beatitudes. It is also present in Jesus' parables and is materialized and operative in his miracles. The Gospel's evidence reveals that Jesus regards the Reign of God as a reality that must develop fully. The Reign of God instituted through Jesus' earthly life becomes further established in a special way through the Paschal mystery. This shows that there is a real continuity between Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God and the Christocentric character of proclamation of the Reign of God by the apostolic community (Dupuis 1991:342).

Nevertheless, it is important to know whether the historical Jesus identified the Reign of God with the church or instead made the two distinct. Dupuis is aware of the difficulty of answering this question since Jesus speaks of the church *ekklesia* rather indirectly, except in two places in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 16:18, 18:17). What is without question, however, is Jesus' selection of "the twelve" and his commissioning them to continue his work in the context of the Reign of God. Later through the Paschal mystery and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, the "new movement" called the church would emerge out of "the twelve" and the other followers of Jesus. The problem however remains: did Jesus identify this initial "movement", which later became the church based on the authority of "the twelve", with the Reign of God? One can only speculate that in Jesus' mind the Reign of God was much broader than the future church and that the church was intended to be at its service. One can also point to certain signs in Jesus' ministry which would indicate that this was the case.

Certainly, Jesus' mission was directed mainly to the people of Israel. Nevertheless, one must emphasize that Jesus' miracles of healing and his exorcisms were also extended to "foreigners" and "strangers" and their meaning was identical with the meaning of all Jesus' works. These actions of Jesus reveal that the Reign of God is already at work among people, that it extends to "outsiders" on the basis of their faith and conversion (Mk 1:15). See Chapter 4.2.2.

This shows that the Reign of God could not have been identified by Jesus with the future church. Instead, Jesus was already

putting the Church at the service of the Reign when he commissioned the "twelve", charging them to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom (Mt 10:5-7). The Good News that the Church was to proclaim after the resurrection (see Mk 16:15) is the same as that which Jesus proclaimed during his life on earth, the coming of the Kingdom (Mk 1:15). The Church is destined to proclaim not itself, but the Reign of God (Dupuis 1997:343).

One must also note that the expression "Reign of God", which is characteristic of Jesus' preaching, largely disappears in the theology of the New Testament. Even if an example of this expression might still be found in Paul's reference to the Reign of God in Rome (Acts 28:30-31), generally, it appears 'under a new form, that of the kingship of the risen Christ which continues it' (:344). Christ is seen as the head both of the church and of the entire world. Consequently, the kingship extends beyond the boundaries of the church to the entire world (Col 2:10; Eph 1:10).

The church and the world are therefore not considered separate entities which do not have anything to do with each other but as interconnected and concentrated around their common point which is Jesus Christ (:344). On this basis the universality of the Reign of God consists in the fact that both Christians and other believers experience the same Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, 'even if the mystery reaches them in different ways' (Dupuis 2002a:201).[7]

6.2.2 The concept of the Reign of God in recent church teaching

In the subsequent history of Catholicism, in the first half of the twentieth century, Catholic theology identified the Church of Christ with the Reign of God and exclusively with the Roman Catholic Church. The latter found its endorsement in the encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis* (1943) of Pope Pius XII. In the pre-conciliar era, therefore, the church as the Mystical Body of Christ was identical with the Reign of God and identical with the Roman Catholic Church (ND 847-853). An attempt to follow this identification of the Mystical Body with the Roman Catholic Church can still be seen in the first draft of the "Schema on the Church" prepared by the theological commission responsible for various proposals presented at the Second Vatican Council (Sullivan 1988:24). To the satisfaction of many, the "Schema" was rejected by the conciliar Fathers. The Council distanced itself from the strict identification of the Mystical Body with the Roman Catholic Church by introducing the wording "subsists in" (LG 8).[8] Although the new concept could still be regarded as a weakened version of the strict identification, it allowed one to recognize the presence of "elements of sanctification and of truth" (LG 8) in the other Christian churches and thus the presence of the mystery of the church in them (Dupuis 2002a:197; 1997:334).

Regarding this shift, what still needs to be answered is whether the Council adopted the second identification between the church and the Reign of God proposed by the pre-conciliar traditional

theology, and whether this identification continues to be present in the post-conciliar official church teaching and theology.

Dupuis argues that because of the recent recognition of the Reign of God as an eschatological reality, contemporary eschatology has gradually begun to distinguish between the historical Reign of God instituted through Jesus' words, deeds and especially his Paschal mystery, and the eschatological Reign of God which 'must still keep developing until it reaches the eschatological fullness at the end of time' (Dupuis 2002a:198). The basic distinction is, therefore, between the "already" – historical institution of the Reign and the "not yet" – eschatological fulfilment which will take place at the eschaton. The Council clearly adopts this distinction in *Lumen Gentium* where it states that the Reign of God as the historical reality tends towards its eschatological fulfilment (LG 5,9). Dupuis wonders, whether through the above distinction, the Council positively identified the Reign of God with the church, and finds that indeed it did. The pilgrim church is viewed as the "seed" of the Reign of God. The growth of this "seed" into its final completion is expressed 'in terms of the passage of the Church on earth to the Church in heaven' (Dupuis 1997:335-336). This implies that the completion of the Reign of God coincides with the completion of the pilgrim church. There is no doubt, therefore, that the Council continues to view the Reign of God and the church as identical 'both in their historical realization and in their eschatological fulfilment' (:336).

In the post-conciliar church's teaching, the first document which engages in the relationship between the Reign of God and the church is entitled "Selected Themes of Ecclesiology on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Closing of the Second Vatican Council" published by the International Theological Commission in 1985. Another document which treats the same issue is the encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* of Pope John Paul II (1990).

The first document of the International Theological Commission reaffirms the conciliar distinction between the earthly church and the heavenly church and reiterates after *Lumen Gentium* the teaching of the existing unity between the two (ITC 1989:301). The Commission states that the church and the Reign in history coincide with each other and that this identity will also be preserved in eschatological times. Hence the only contribution of the Commission is that it makes a clear distinction between 'history and eschatology' (Dupuis 1997:338).

The second document, the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, treats the above subject in a new manner (:338). In the second chapter the pope writes that the church is at the service of the Reign of God (RM 12).[9] The same Reign already exists in Jesus Christ, and its proclamation and establishment is the real purpose of his mission (RM 13). Jesus' ministry, therefore, is focused on proclaiming and

building the Reign of God. As the encyclical reveals, this Reign is destined not only for Christians but for all people (RM 14,15).[10] The most significant text on the extension of the Reign to the entire human family reads:

> The Kingdom is the concern of everyone: individuals, society, and the world. Working for the Kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the Kingdom means working for liberation from evil from all its forms. In a word, the Kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness (RM 15).

In addition, the Reign of God is definitively inaugurated, accomplished and proclaimed in the risen Jesus Christ, that is, in the post-resurrection church. The task of the early Christian community therefore is to proclaim Jesus Christ 'with whom the Kingdom of God was identified' (RM 16). With respect to those theologians who disregard this traditional Christocentric character and emphasize a more theocentric view of the Reign of God, thus weakening the relationship between Christ and the Reign of God and between the church and the Reign, the encyclical states: 'This is not the Kingdom as we know it from revelation. The Kingdom cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church' (RM 18).

Commenting on this last statement, Dupuis agrees with the encyclical, that separating the Reign of God from Christ leads to transforming the Reign into an ideology or human understanding. Similarly, detaching it from the church leads to a significant diminution of the meaning and role of the church and its mission (Dupuis 1997:339). This is another example of Dupuis's uncompromised inclusivist stand on the centrality of Jesus Christ in the theology of religions, and especially in the theology of the Reign of God.

In order to preserve the church's importance in relation to the Reign of God, the encyclical explains that the purpose of the church is to be at the service of the Reign through its proclamation of God's word which calls to conversion. The encyclical further states:

> It is true that the inchoate reality of the Kingdom can also be found beyond the confines of the Church among peoples everywhere, to the extent that they live "Gospel values" and are open to the working of the Spirit who breathes when and where it wills [cf. Jn 3:8]. But it must immediately be added that this temporal dimension of the Kingdom remains incomplete unless it is related to the Kingdom of Christ present in the Church and straining towards eschatological fullness (RM 20).

Undoubtedly, this is in sharp contrast to the stand of the Second Vatican Council. From Dupuis's perspective, all these encyclical texts are important for a Christian theology of religions for a number of reasons. Firstly, they clearly recognize that the Reign of God is not limited to the church but extends beyond it to the entire human family. Secondly, they reaffirm that the historical Reign is

directed towards the fullness of the eschatological Reign. Thirdly, the role of the church in history is to be at the service of the Reign (Dupuis 2002a:199; 1997:340).

6.2.3 Other believers as co-members and co-workers of the Reign of God

If the Reign of God extends beyond the church, the question must be asked as to what manner the other believers participate in this Reign both in the world and in history? Dupuis claims that this takes place by 'opening themselves to the action of the Spirit [and] responding in the sincere practice of their religious tradition to God's call addressed to them' (Dupuis 2005:26). He writes that the latter makes them true and active members of God's Reign, although to a certain extent they remain unconscious of their belonging to it.

In his attempt to make other believers co-members and co-builders of the Reign, Dupuis adopts the Reign-centred model. He immediately adds, however, that he has no intention of opposing the Christocentric perspective. He emphasizes that in reality

> one cannot separate the Reign of God in history from the Jesus of history, in whom it was instituted by God, nor from Christ, whose present kingship is its expression…. Far from being mutually exclusive, the Kingdom-centered and Christocentric perspectives are necessarily interconnected (Dupuis 2002a:201; 1997:345).

This means that the Reign of God which includes other believers is the same Reign instituted by Jesus Christ which continually grows towards its final fulfilment. Thus, despite the other believers' responding to God's call through religious practices in their own traditions, they still share in the mystery of salvation and are true and active members of the Reign of God in history (Dupuis 2002a:202).

The world religions themselves contribute to building the Reign of God in the world. They do so on the basis that religious lives of individual believers cannot be separated from their religious traditions which play the role of helping them to express their faith. This was explained in the previous section. If their answer to God's call is supported by objective elements of the religious traditions such as their scripture and practices, these traditions themselves must possess "supernatural elements of grace" given by God for the spiritual good of their members (Dupuis 1997:346; 2002a:202). In this sense the world religions 'exercise, for their own members, a certain mediation of the Kingdom – doubtless different from that which is operative in the church – even if it is difficult to define this mediation with theological precision' (Dupuis 2002a:202).

One could also reverse the argument and say that the other believers are members of the Reign because they 'share in the same mystery of salvation' (Dupuis 2005:26). Thus mutual belonging of

Christians and the "others" to the Reign of God positively influences their mutual relationship in several ways. Firstly, while belonging to different traditions, they share the same mystery of salvation, even if there is a real difference in mediating it (different levels of the same "sacrament") (:26). At the same time, the unity which exists between them is much more important than the difference in mediation (Dupuis 1997:346). Secondly, dialogue between the various partners becomes a form of mutual sharing through which the Reign of God, destined for all people in Jesus, also becomes more visible. Thus, dialogue becomes a positive response to God's call for building the Reign in history by conversion and by promoting the values of the Gospel (:346). Thirdly, their mutual relationship contributes to building the Reign of God at human and religious levels. At the human level, this building takes place when Christians and other believers engage in mutual efforts to promote human rights through the integral liberation of all people but especially of the marginalized, the poor and the oppressed. At the spiritual level, it takes place through the mutual promotion of religious and spiritual values. These two constitute an integral part of constructing the Reign of God in history (Dupuis 2005:26).

6.2.4 The necessity of the church in the order of salvation

Mutual belonging to the Reign however does not rule out the role of the church in the order of salvation. But this role must be interpreted correctly. Generally, the necessity of the church for salvation is apparent when the Council presents the church as the "universal sacrament of salvation" (LG 48); "sign and instrument" (LG 1); "necessary for salvation" (LG 14); "instrument of the salvation of all" (LG 9); and "the universal help towards salvation" (UR 3). These statements also appear in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (18). Nevertheless, Dupuis argues that despite these affirmative statements, the Council did not 'explain the exact nature of the universal necessity of the Church' and the encyclical 'seems somewhat embarrassed about determining the Church's "specific and necessary role"' (Dupuis 1997:347).

It seems legitimate therefore to ask whether the universality of the church as a sacrament of salvation can be placed at the same level as Jesus Christ the universal Saviour. What is the real understanding of the church as the universal means of salvation? How can one reconcile the "universal mediation" of the church with the unique mediation of Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5)? According to Dupuis in answering these questions one must avoid two possible extremes. Firstly, one must avoid placing the necessity and universality of the church in the order of salvation on the same footing as the universality of Jesus Christ, and thus returning to the exclusivist position *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Secondly, one must avoid reducing the necessity and universality of the church to its saving role for Christians alone. Both extreme positions would result in two separate

and parallel economies of salvation; one for the Christians, the other for members of other religious traditions saved by Jesus Christ outside of the church. Dupuis insists on the possibility of a third middle way which however generates diverse opinions among theologians. Before elaborating on this third way, he proceeds to explain two realities: "belonging" to the church and the church's "mediation".

As seen the Second Vatican Council repeated the pre-conciliar identification of the Reign of God in history with the church. At the same time, the Council clearly said that people who find themselves in different life situations are also in relation to the church. *Lumen Gentium* generally stated that all people are called to belong to the church and in reality they already either "belong" or are "ordained" to it (LG 13). Consequently, only the Catholics are "incorporated" in the church (LG 14); catechumens are "united" (LG 14); other Christians are "joined" (LG 15); other believers and those who do not know the Gospel are "ordained"[11] (LG 16). Dupuis explains that the Council purposefully used the term "ordained" or "oriented" when referring to those who are outside of the church in order to place them in relation to it. At the same time, the Council abandoned the language of "implicit desire"; other believers are offered salvation through Jesus Christ without explicitly or implicitly belonging to the church. Nevertheless, they have to be "oriented" towards the church because the church contains all the necessary means of salvation entrusted by Jesus Christ (Dupuis 1997:349). This is the current official position of the Catholic Church in relation to other believers. It seems that *Redemptoris Missio* also shares this same conciliar view when it states:

> For such people, salvation in Christ is accessible in virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation (RM 10).

Dupuis argues that the encyclical remains intentionally imprecise when it speaks of people who are outside of the church and are saved in Jesus Christ, but who, at the same time, have a "mysterious relationship to the church" (RM 10). It is also not precise when it speaks of the "specific and necessary role" of the church (RM 18) in the process of salvation of all people, because precision is difficult when one speaks simultaneously of a "mysterious relationship" which other believers have with the church, and the church as having a "specific and necessary role" towards them (Dupuis 2002a:202).

In explaining his statement, Dupuis deconstructs the concept of church's "mediation" into its basic components. In principle, the church's salvific mediation consists in proclaiming the word and celebrating sacraments with the Eucharistic celebration as central (:210). In this, Dupuis refers to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC 7).[12] Nevertheless, even if the enouncing of the word of God

and celebrating of the sacraments becomes the true channel of Christ's saving action in the church, this salvific grace does not reach out (in principle) to the other believers who receive God's saving grace directly in Jesus Christ (Dupuis 2002a:210; 1997:350). Dupuis adds:

> It is true, indeed, that the Church fulfils in its eucharistic celebration all the ancient sacrifices. However, the *grace* of the Eucharist which it celebrates is not the salvation of people outside of it but the unity in the Spirit of its own members – as the eucharistic liturgy clearly indicates (1997:350).[13]

Dupuis does not deny here that in celebrating the sacraments and especially in the eucharistic celebration, the church intercedes for the salvation of all people[14] but he asks whether theologically such intercession can be regarded as a true "mediation".

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ's mediation must be considered as "universal" and that Jesus' risen humanity is the privileged channel of transmitting God's grace to all, but certainly the church 'exercises its derived participated mediation in the strict sense through the proclamation of the word and the sacramental economy celebrated in and by the church communities' (Dupuis 2002a:211). This implies that

> the Church prays and intercedes with God for all people that the grace of salvation in Jesus Christ may be granted to them. In this case, it would not seem legitimate to speak of "mediation" in the strict, theological sense. The causality involved [in the case of the Church's intercession] is not of the order of efficiency but of the moral order and of finality (Dupuis 1997:350; 2002a:211).[15]

In this sense, even if the Council speaks of the church as the "universal sacrament of salvation", this does not mean that others, who are saved in Jesus Christ, receive his salvific grace exclusively through the church's universal mediation. In reality they might receive Christ's salvific grace through "substitutive mediations",[16] that is, their own religious traditions (Dupuis 1997:351). Those traditions, therefore, constitute for their own members 'the sacrament of their experience of God and of the mystery of Christ' (Dupuis 2000:216). Similarly, whereas the church is the place of the saving grace and of the presence and work of the Spirit, the activity of the Spirit cannot be limited only to the ministry and institutions of the church in such a way that the Spirit would not be free to act outside the church's boundaries. However, this should not be understood as if the work of the Holy Spirit in the order of saving grace were not oriented towards it (:213). In reality, the church as the place of the Spirit must

> be understood as the point toward which "nonecclesial" grace is tending, of which it is in the world the visible expression. Such orientation toward the Church exists wherever the Spirit is present and working (Dupuis 1997:352).

The necessary mediation or function of the church, therefore, should not be viewed as universal mediation but rather as a "sacramental sign" of God's saving grace which is present in the world. This allows one to view God's grace as being operative everywhere, even outside of the church, but at the same time, the church is the "sacramental sign" of the omnipresent grace (Dupuis 1997:352).

6.2.5 The church as the sacrament of the Reign of God

There is therefore another possible way of viewing the church's role in the process of salvation; the church may be regarded more as the "sacrament of the Reign of God" than the "universal sacrament of salvation". Undoubtedly, this new proposal is in disagreement with the Council's view of the church's role as the "universal sacrament of salvation" (LG 48). Similarly, it is not in agreement with the stand represented by the International Theological Commission. In 1989, the Commission examined this new emerging concept of the church as the "sacrament of the Reign" and evaluated it in negative terms. The result of this examination was reaffirmation of the conciliar stand on this matter and full identification of the church with the Reign. The Commission also added that the former is the "universal sacrament of salvation" (ITC 1989:303-304). As seen in recent church documents such as *Redemptoris Missio* (20) and in "Dialogue and Proclamation" (35), there is a more positive movement to see the Reign of God as a wider reality than the church and to make a distinction between the two.

One factor which is common in these official statements is that the Reign of God is universally present in the world. Because of this affirmation, Dupuis sees the need for asking anew the same question whether and how it is possible for the church to be the "sacrament of the Reign of God". In explaining the relationship between the church in history and the Reign of God in history in order to gain a new insight into it, Dupuis points again to the sacramental theology of Karl Rahner (Rahner, Ernest and Smyth 1968:348). Basing his position on Rahner's thought, he clarifies that the distinction which sacramental theology draws between the sign and the thing signified applies both to the relationship between the church and the Reign in history and to the role which the church plays in relation to the Reign. Dupuis writes:

> The church, in its visible aspect, is the sacrament (*sacramentum tantum*); the reality signified (*res tantum*), which it both contains and confers, is belonging to the Reign of God – that is, the sharing in the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ; the intermediate reality, the *res et sacramentum*, is the relationship established between the members of the ecclesial community and the church, by virtue of which they participate in the reality of the Reign through their belonging to the church as its members (2002a:214).

This does not mean, however, that God is bound by the sacraments. In the case of the Reign of God, it means that people can belong to the Reign of God without belonging to the church and without

turning for help to the church's mediation as the sacrament. Nevertheless, the church continues to be the "efficacious sign" which is desired by God and which signifies the presence of God's Reign in the world and in history. The role of the church is therefore to be a witness for God's Reign and to be at its service (Dupuis 1997:354).

Therefore interpreting the Council's formulations in the new light of sacramental theory allows one to view the church as the "sacrament of the Reign of God" in history. Moreover, from the perspective of sacramental theory, the conciliar statement that the Reign is "already present in mystery" (LG 3) in the church implies 'the mysteric or sacramental (*in mysterio*) presence of the reality of the Reign of God already present in the world and in history' (:354). This means that the church is the locus where God's activity reaches its maximum concentration. The church therefore is the "sign" of the Reign of God established in Jesus Christ in the world and as a "sign" the church gives 'access to the Reign of God through its word and action' (:354).

Nevertheless, the church still remains the sacramental "sign" which means that access to the Reign of God does not take place exclusively through the church and the non-members of the church can be part of the Reign without the necessary mediation of the church. Dupuis does not deny that

> [the] presence of the Reign of God in the church is, nevertheless, a privileged one, for it has received from Christ "the fullness of the benefits and means of salvation" (*Redemptoris Missio* §18). It is the "universal sacrament" (*Lumen Gentium* §48) of this Reign. This is why those who have access to salvation and to the Reign outside of it, though they are not incorporated into it as members, are nevertheless "oriented" (*ordinantur*) to it… (2002a:215).

However, he makes a reservation: the fact that the church is universally present in the world as the "sacrament of the Reign of God" does not imply mediation of God's grace to those who belong to the world religions. They are part of the Reign on the basis of their response to God's invitation through faith and conversion and their own religious traditions play a "mediatory role" towards them. At the same time, not being explicitly members of the church and thus not participating in the church's "mediation", they are still oriented towards the church. In this case the church's 'causality on their behalf is of the order not of efficiency but of finality' (:215).

Therefore, the church as the sacrament must always be seen as being at the service of the Reign of God. Yet, the church's service should be viewed from a Christocentric and regnocentric perspective. Such a view will prevent one from seeing the church's mission as a function of "universal mediation" which is reserved to Christ (1Tim 2:4-5) but rather as witness and as announcing the presence of the Reign of God in the world to all people. Such a view will further serve to "decentre" the church from itself and centre it 'on Jesus Christ and the Reign of God' (Dupuis 2002a:216;

1997:356). This can only be for the benefit of the church which cannot be viewed as an institution which has the monopoly of God's Reign. In reality, the other religions also

> contribute to the building up of the Reign of God not only among their followers but in the world at large. While the Church is in the world the "universal sacrament" of the Reign of God, the other traditions too exercise a certain mediation of the Reign, different, no doubt, but no less real (:356).

Conclusion

This chapter investigated two areas of Dupuis's proposals for the theology of "inclusive pluralism": other religions as "participated mediations" of salvation and other believers as co-members and co-workers in the Reign of God. The first part examined and critiqued Dupuis's argument for a convergence between the religious traditions and the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. These traditions might be viewed as representing various though unequal "paths" to God. They are not "parallel" or "alternative" mediations but essentially "relational" to the one mediation of Jesus Christ and oriented towards it. For Dupuis, therefore, salvation is present everywhere and other religions play an active role in conveying it to their adherents, but this salvation is fully accomplished only in the historical event of Jesus Christ.

The second part of the chapter engaged in probing the existent relationship between the Reign of God, the church and the religions. This relationship must be approached from a Christocentric and regnocentric perspective and thus overcomes an ecclesiocentric perspective that is too narrow. Consequently, the church cannot have a monopoly on the Reign. Members of other religious traditions can also contribute to building up this Reign in the world. Generally, Dupuis's insistence on the regnocentric outlook opens new horizons and gives a much broader perspective for a Christian theology of religions than the ecclesiocentric approach which tends to be church-centred. One thing must however be kept in mind that the Reign of God cannot be separated from the mystery of the church and above all from the person of Jesus Christ. This is an awareness which continually reinforces Dupuis's theological reflection on the relationship between the Reign of God and the church in the economy of salvation.

The next chapter will examine the possibility of the application of Dupuis's proposals to the context of religious pluralism in South Africa. If his proposals are valid at least some of them should remain relevant to a particular situation of religious diversity.

---

[1] The words "participated mediations" do not originate from Dupuis's theology. They come from the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* in which the pope speaks of 'participated forms of mediation of different kinds' (RM 5) which cannot be complementary to Jesus Christ's mediation and which derive their meaning and value from the latter.

[2] Dupuis refers here to Keith Ward who in his work *Religion and revelation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) argues that even the central beliefs of Christianity in the Holy Trinity or the incarnation can be interpreted in a number of distinctive ways. In a sense, these numerous ways constitute diverse doctrines within the same religion. Other religions add their own distinctive understandings of the final common goal for other believers. Thus, despite the differences in theological concepts of the common goal, the goal itself remains the same. See Dupuis, J, *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 182; *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 313-314.

[3] Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Indian Theological Association – December 28-31, 1989, "Towards an Indian Christian theology of religious pluralism", in Pathil, K (ed), *Religious pluralism: An Indian Christian perspective* (Delhi: SPCK, 1991), 338-349.

[4] "Theses on interreligious dialogue" (1987) by the Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), in Gnanapiragasam, J and Wilfred, F (eds), *Being Church in Asia*, vol. 1 (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1994), 7-24.

[5] This argument refers to the Thomistic theory of the "substantial" union of soul and body in the human person.

[6] Dupuis writes: 'The religious traditions of humankind derive from the religious experience of the persons or groups that established them. Their sacred books contain the memory of concrete religious experiences with Truth. Their practices in turn derive from the codification of such experiences. Thus it seems infeasible and theologically unrealistic to hold that while the members of the various religious traditions can attain salvation, their religion does not play any role in that process. Just as there is no purely natural concrete religious life, there is no such thing as a purely natural historic religion' (*Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002], 187); also *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 144; *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 318.

[7] An approach similar to Dupuis's concerning the reality of the Reign of God can be found in Latin American liberation theologies which emphasize the motive of liberation from economic, racial and cultural oppresion and which reinterpret the sources of Christianity in the light of that motive. Its main exponents are, on the Catholic side, Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru and Juan Luis Segundo of Uruguay, and, on th Protestant side, Hugo Assmann of Brazil. They insist that the Word of God is mediated through the crisis of the poor and the oppressed. Consequently theology must be a form of "praxis", that is, it must always be directed towards the changing of the existing social order and thus advancing the Reign of God. The poor, the suffering and the exploited are mainly those who must directly challenge the social injustices and transform the temporary order to further the Reign. In this process, God has sided with the disadvantaged through God's Son Jesus. See Boff, L, *Jesus Christ liberator: A Critical Christology for our time* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978), 280.

[8] The introduction of the word *subsist* to replace the former *exists* led to a fundamental change in Roman Catholic ecclesiology as well. Although the Roman Catholic Church was still considered as the one which is the closest to the Church of Christ, yet it was no longer regarded as being exclusively so and therefore the way was opened for the official recognition of the many other Christian churches as churches belonging to the one true Church of Christ. It also influenced the Roman Catholic involvement in the ecumenical movement in general.

[9] The Reign of God is viewed as 'prepared for in the Old Testament, brought about by Christ and in Christ, and proclaimed to all people by the Church, which works and prays for its perfect and definitive realization' (RM 12).

[10] 'To emphasize this fact, Jesus drew especially near to those on the margins of society, and showed them special favour…. The liberation and salvation brought by the Kingdom of God come to human persons both in their physical and spiritual dimensions. Two gestures are characteristic of Jesus' mission: healing and forgiving' (RM 14). 'The Kingdom aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another…. The Kingdom's nature, therefore, is one of communion among all human beings – with one another and with God' (RM 15).

[11] The term "ordained" (*ordinantur*) is borrowed from the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943) which states that those outside the church are 'oriented towards (it) by a certain unconscious desire and wish' (AAS 35 [1943], 243). Only Catholics are full members of the church. The term "ordained" should not be understood here as an act of ordaining a candidate to the ministerial priesthood but rather as something that is fixed or established especially by God's order or command. In this context it means that Christ has objectively established salvation for all people and all are included in one salvation history, which finds its culmination in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

[12] 'Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister…but especially in the eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings' (SC 7).

[13] In this last part, Dupuis refers to the "epiclesis prayer" of the Eucharistic Prayer III: 'May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit'; also 'Grant that we who are nourished by his body and blood may be filled with his Holy Spirit and become one body, one spirit in Christ'.

[14] Dupuis points here to the "intercessory prayers" of the Eucharistic Prayer III: 'Lord, may this sacrifice, which has made our peace with you, advance the salvation of all the world'.

[15] Dupuis claims that he is not isolated in this opinion; there are other theologians, especially Yves Congar, who share this view. Congar writes that the existing relationship between the church and those outside of it should not be viewed in the light of efficacy but of finality. The others are oriented towards the church. See Congar, Y, *This Church that I love* (Denville, New York: Dimension Books, 1969), 351.

[16] The concept of "substitutive mediations" is elaborated by Congar in *The Wide world my parish* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 133-147.

PART THREE

**RELEVANCE AND POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF DUPUIS'S INCLUSIVIST
THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM TO THE INTERRELIGIOUS SITUATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Chapter Seven: The past and present situation of interreligious dialogue in South Africa and
possible areas of application of Dupuis's inclusivist theology**

Introduction

One of the assumptions of this thesis is that Dupuis's proposals of "inclusive pluralism" relate well
to the South African context where a richly diverse culture exists with people of different world-
views and life-styles. Moreover, because of the numerous religions present here and because of the
people's unique struggle to live in a peaceful and sustainable society, South Africa occupies a
special place among other African countries. Unfortunately, in the past there was little mutual
contact and understanding among members of those religions. In reality, Muslims, Jews, Christians,
Hindus, and African traditionalists have been prevented from knowing and appreciating each other's
spiritual richness. This was the result of the apartheid system which had been legitimized for
decades.

Understanding the phenomenon of religious pluralism in South Africa requires an analysis of its past
history with emphasis on geographical, political, social, and religious factors which influenced the
development of a religiously diverse society. One also needs to present the various stages of
migration of peoples within and to South Africa, and this must be linked with the main contributors
to the religious scene and how these contributors related to each other both during colonial and
apartheid times.

The chapter focuses firstly on the presentation of the diverse religions together with their rich
histories and past relations between them. This includes exclusivist, inclusivist and even pluralist
attempts at mutual relations. Secondly, this chapter examines a historical, social, political and
religious background which constitutes a platform for examining the main shift which took place in
relations among the various religions in the 1990s. Finally, an attempt is made to apply the model of
"inclusive pluralism" to interreligious dialogue in South Africa. In this last phase, therefore, the
intention is to see the relevance of Dupuis's work for the South African context. Here, I will focus
mainly on the existent interreligious relations between Christian churches and Buddhism, Islam,
Hinduism, Judaism and African traditional religions.

7.1 A general background to religious diversity in South Africa

One may only speculate as to whether the first Christian missionaries who came to South Africa from Portugal in the fifteenth century,[1] ever expected to find God in this part of the world. They believed that they had brought God to the "dark continent" as Africa was generally regarded at the time. During those days a Christian attitude towards other religions and believers was considered hostile and the religions were seen as a threat to the Christian faith. This also applied to the African traditional religions which were regarded as "pagan" in contrast to the true faith. Despite this negative attitude, African religion, with its traditional beliefs and convictions, was indeed practiced among the Khoi, the San and other indigenous people (Lubbe 1990:208). Religious plurality was therefore present in South Africa from the very beginning. Later this pluralism was further enriched by Christian settlers and Muslim slaves who arrived in the middle of the seventeenth century. This "religious landscape" became even more colourful when the Hindu believers came to South Africa in the nineteenth century and the East European Jews at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. In time the arrival of other religious groups also contributed to religious diversity. Religious pluralism was further reinforced by plurality within Christianity itself, visible in the various Christian churches and denominations on South African soil (Lubbe 1990:209).

The history of South Africa has always witnessed not one but many religious stories. Over time the entire spectrum of religions developed. Those religions were profoundly diverse at various levels. Some of them, for instance, had a literate membership which resulted in collections of written records and histories. Others had mainly oral traditions which has subsequently made their history difficult to reconstruct. Some of the religions were spread throughout the country while others, such as Judaism or Hinduism, were established only in certain areas. For instance, the religion of the San people was greatly influenced by its geographical background as it is evident from their religious art works found in various caves; these are rich in spiritual symbolism and refer to nature. Meanwhile, Christianity in South Africa was significantly affected by socio-political factors, one of which was merchant capitalism. Regarding Muslims in South Africa, their presence was the result of strictly political and economic processes and not geographical factors. The development of Chinese and Jewish communities like the San community, was influenced by geographical factors such as richness in minerals which led to an increase of work places and rapid urbanization of different areas (Prozesky 1995:3-4).

This rich religious diversity was hardly known or understood during colonial and apartheid times in comparison with other factors of South African society such as politics, economy or sport. Indeed, the politics of the last three hundred years before the transformation in 1994 had made members of

other religions, including the black and coloured Christians, second class citizens. Evidence of this could have been found in the legal and constitutional position of those religions and their access to education or social grants (Prozesky 1995:1).

This suppression led to the situation where, although from the statistical point of view, religious pluralism was well established, there was no awareness of this phenomenon among ordinary South Africans and especially among members of the Christian churches. Limitation of this reality in South Africa to the Christian perspective resulted in many Christians going through life seldom encountering anyone who belonged to another ethnic group or religious tradition (Saayman 1981:114). With time this situation gradually changed and society began to understand that it was a part of the pluralistic world and that religious pluralism entered into various aspects of life in this country.

For the purpose of this analysis, which describes the religious background of South Africa and to apply Dupuis's proposals to its religious context, it is important to introduce the main religions with their histories. Such knowledge is also essential for a critical view and understanding of Christianity itself in this country. Religious diversity in South Africa cannot fully be understood without taking into consideration these various geographical, political, cultural, economic, or historical life situations of particular religions. These various factors had greatly influenced the development of religion in general. One of these especially contributed to this process, namely, the migration of peoples which took place in three stages and resulted in real religious diversity and later in conquest, resistance and final liberation (Prozesky 1995:1).

7.2 The first migration - the Khoisan and the Bantu peoples

The first migration of people took place earlier than 2000 years ago and was linked to the presence of the San (or Bushmen) and the Khoikoi (or Khoi) peoples south of the Limpopo River. The religions of these two peoples were always regarded as the oldest in South Africa. The basic characteristic of the San people was their "hunter-gatherer" style of life with their dependence on a supply of fresh water, fresh fruits, vegetables, and game. Socially, the San lived in small groups with emphasis on equality and sharing. The Khoi on the other hand, had developed their own lifestyle characterized by their dependence on domesticated animals and weaponry made of iron. They occupied mostly the western and southern coasts inhabiting the western interior (Kieran 1995:17). Although both the San and the Khoi probably believed in life after death, they had no clear idea of what such life might have been. There was no well established cult of the dead which would point to the concept of ancestorship, especially since they regarded the influence of the dead as mischievous. Indeed, the San believed in !Kaggan, a supernatural being, the creator of all things who could

assume a variety of forms, reside in the created world but also in the Mantis and could be identified with the forces of nature and unpredictable events. Meanwhile the Khoi believed in a dual spirit: Tsui-Goab and Guanab. Tsui-Goab was responsible for bringing rain and fertility and was favoured with animal sacrifices. Guanab was identified with evil. This duality of spirit helped people to understand the existence of the good and evil, as well as good and bad fortune in the world and in the community (:17-18).

A separate group of indigenous Africans with their distinct religion was the Bantu people who inhabited the southern part of South Africa and the central region beyond the Drakensberg. This group included the Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi, the Sotho, and Tswana, the Venda, the Shona and others. The Bantu people were cattle-herders, cultivators of land, and they produced iron tools for both aggressive and productive purposes. They developed diverse ways of living according to which part of the country they settled in the eastern grasslands or the western areas of the Drakensberg (:19). The Bantu-speaking people's religion played a significant role in African society. Its first function was to uphold moral order; righteous living would results in a good life and evil doing would result in disaster. This moral order was guaranteed and defended by the ancestors who could only be approached by diviners and herbalists. The aim of this collaboration between ancestors and diviners was to encourage people to behave in a way that would uphold mutual harmony and solidarity and help them to relate to their neighbours. A serious deviation from this moral conduct would cause a withdrawal of the ancestors from protection of the people as well as withdrawal of benefits from them (:25).

7.3 The second migration of Europeans
7.3.1 The Dutch and British settlement

The second migration of people began from around 2000 to 350 years ago. Initially, the migration was linked with the arrival of the black Africans from parts close to the subcontinent whose lives were characterized by farming and metal-working skills. In this new context, the lives of the San and the Khoi began to change gradually.

Towards the end of this second stage we have the arrival of the Europeans, first the Dutch (1652), then the British (1795 and 1806) and later other small groups of Europeans. The process of Europeanization constitutes the real context for religious diversity in South Africa after 1488.[2] This was followed by the Dutch coastal traders and then the arrival of the first Dutch settlers whose main priority was independence as farmers from the Dutch East India Company. This required possessing land (Prozesky 1995:4-5). In turn, this led to an unavoidable conflict with the Khoi people who had occupied the southwestern Cape for ages. For the Khoi, a nomadic people, access to pastures and

water was crucial. If to this one adds cultural differences, differing views regarding ownership of land, and the Dutch having access to guns, a conflict became unavoidable. Over time this conflict had escalated and resulted in the subordination of the various indigenous African peoples. In the nineteenth century the situation, which existed only in the Cape, was further exacerbated by the white settlers and the British imperial interests to the entire subcontinent. As a result, the San as people, the Khoi as culture, and the independent African life organizations had gradually disappeared (:5).

There is also another historical factor that contributed to the settlement of the whites in South Africa, namely, the emergence of capitalism in seventeenth-century Europe which was the outcome of the transformation from a feudal to a trade or economic culture. Capitalism was the real force which led to European involvement and later to settlement in South Africa. This was especially the case in a situation when competition among the trading companies forced them to find new markets to sell their products thus creating the ground for a new trade expansion. This further contributed to the development of such cities as the Cape Town and later to the process of European settlement in South Africa (:7).

7.3.2 The process of Christianization

Despite the economic and political factors playing a major role in the process of settlement, it is important not to undervalue the religious aspect of this process. Parallel to the process of Europeanization, the process of Christianization took place because the two were interconnected and separating them was almost impossible. Generally, the Europeans who came to South Africa were neither driven by their religious beliefs nor interested in saving African people. They were mainly concerned with gaining a better life 'African in location but European in culture' (:7). Christian beliefs would remain important and would protect the settlers' Christian identity but it would not ensure their well-being. This explains why the white Europeans in South Africa were able to introduce the politics of racial domination which were entirely opposed to the ethical call directed to them by the Founder of Christianity.[3]

In order to gain insight into the religious character of European Christianity in South Africa, one needs to look at its origins at the time of the Reformation of sixteenth century Europe which was marked by religious intolerance. The Reformation resulted not only in religious disunity but also in political conflicts among different political powers. In time a principle was implemented, the religion of a particular ruler had to be observed in his particular territory. This helps to understand the religious intolerance of the European Reformation and post-Reformation Christianity in South Africa. This also explains all the restrictions which non-Calvinists, including Lutherans, Catholics,

and especially Muslims, had to experience at the Cape. From the very beginning, therefore, hostilities and divisions became characteristic of Christianity in South Africa leading to further separation among Europeans and reinforcing the system of domination rather than equality among themselves (:8).

Another factor which influenced the process of implementation and domination of Christianity in South Africa was linked to the Protestant understanding of the Bible as the central authority in heavenly and earthly matters. Reliance on the Bible as the guide, not only in spiritual matters but also in affairs of state, led to a belief that one's policies had divine approval. This insistence on the authority of the Bible explains the link between political domination mostly, but not exclusively, of members of the Dutch Reformed churches with their strong Christian beliefs and convictions (:8). Calvinist Christianity was therefore the official tradition protected by the Dutch East Indian Company to such an extent that only in 1780 did the Lutheran community and later the Catholic community receive permission to worship and function. Restrictions imposed on other Christian churches show to what extent the occupying authorities discriminated against other religions until 1804 when the reforms of Janssens and de Mist took place (Lubbe 1990:209).

Under the British control of the Cape from 1904, South Africa witnessed an influx of English-speaking Christians divided into many denominations, thus furthering the existing diversity of religion in South Africa. This unavoidably led to religious divisions among black South Africans who began to be affiliated to different denominations and exacerbated the already existing disunity among the African people caused by geographical, linguistic and political factors described previously. Nevertheless this rather negative view of Christianity's impact on black South Africans must be balanced against a positive appreciation of Christianity's liberating forces by many black Christians today. It shows that Christianity in South Africa can be viewed both as important and as controversial (Prozesky 1995:9).

7.3.3 Settlement of the Jewish community

Over time, representatives of other religious groups from Europe, apart from Christians, arrived; among them was the **Jewish** community. The first Jewish settlement in Southern Africa dates back to the beginning of the British occupation of the Cape in 1806. Much later in 1841 the Jews began their liturgical celebrations in Cape Town and built their first synagogue in the Gardens (Meiring 1996:106). Over time, the Jewish community extended its settlement to the Free State and Natal. The greatest number of Jews from England and Central Europe settled first in Kimberly in 1867 because of the discovery of diamonds and in the Transvaal in 1873 because of the gold mines. The next big migration of Jewish people to South Africa (numbered 49,926 by 1911) occurred after 1880

and these were mainly the impoverished Jews from Lithuania. Because of their traditional approach to religion and their idea of Zionism, the Lithuanian Jews had a large impact on the entire Jewish community in South Africa (Meiring 1996:103-104). In 2002, there were 68,085 Jews in South Africa (SA Statistics 2002).

This short analysis of the second migration leads one to conclude that the movements of Europeans to South Africa, as well as political, economic, and religious circumstances, had a profound and far reaching effect on religion in this country.

7.4 The third migration – religions from Asia
7.4.1 The origins of Islam in South Africa

The third migration of people, which is roughly parallel with the settlement of the Europeans in South Africa, is linked to the arrival of people from Asia. The first group which enriched the existing religious diversity at the beginning of the Dutch presence was the **Islamic** people from the territory nowadays called Malaysia.

It was the process of white settlement that transplanted Islam first in the Cape and then in other parts of South Africa. It is uncertain whether there were Muslims slaves[4] in the first group of colonizers led by Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape in 1652. The fact remains that in 1658 the first Muslims from the Moluccan Islands arrived on South African soil. They were called Mardyckers and were employed by the Dutch settlers as their servants and as mercenaries to protect them against the plundering indigenous groups. From the very beginning of the Islamic presence in South Africa, the Muslim population was prohibited from practicing Islam under threat of death. This prohibition had been applied for the first time in 1642 to Muslims in the East Indies which was under Dutch occupation, and later in 1657 it was at the Cape. It prevailed until 1804 when religious liberty was given to all people as a result of the influence of the French Revolution (Moosa 1995:130).

Islam was therefore implanted in South Africa in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when religious freedom of non-Christians, such as Muslims and Chinese, was suppressed. The extent of religious practice was governed by the degree of tolerance of the white Christian authorities. This religious oppression resulted in the specific character of Islam in South Africa with its distinct social formations and religious institutions. Furthermore the growing resistance to Dutch domination in East Asia in the seventeenth century produced a number of political prisoners which were sent to the Cape. Among them there was the first spiritual founder of Islam at the Cape, ´Abidin Tadia Tjoessoep, also known as Shaykh Yusuf[5] of Macassar (1626-99) (Moosa 1995:130). Other important figures who contributed to establishing Islam in South Africa in the eighteenth century

were Shaykh Madura (d. 1754), Tuang Sayyid (d. 1760) and particularly Imam ʿAbd Allah ibn Qadi ʿAbd al-Salam (1712-1807) known as Tuang Guru.[6] In 1860, an Islamic community was established in Natal and the Transvaal. While the majority of the Indian sugar-cane workers were Hindu, 7-10% of them were Muslims. In these two provinces, Islam spread rapidly because of better social and economic conditions, different from the restrictive ones in the Cape (Moosa 1995:139). The first mosques were built respectively in Natal in 1884 and in Pretoria in 1887. In the twentieth century, South African Islam continued to develop. By 1902, there were well-established Muslim centres of religious and political character in the three main Islamic areas: the Cape, the Transvaal and Natal. At present there are 553,585 Muslims in South Africa (SA Statistics 2002).

7.4.2 Arrivals of peoples from India

From 1860 onwards, South Africa witnessed further arrivals of people from India who settled in Natal. The first Indians were mainly workers for sugar-cane plantations. Later, independent migrants arrived, mostly merchants. While the first group which arrived in Natal were **Hindus** from South India, the second group also included Muslims from North India. This shows that the Natal Muslims were culturally different people from the Islamic community in the Cape. Although over the years Hinduism spread throughout the entire country, 80% of Hindus in South Africa remained in Natal. The majority of South African Hindus (63%) came from Southern India and were the descendents of the Dravidian community with the characteristic Hindu practices of that part of India. The remaining minority (37%) descended from Northern and Central India and had originated from the Indo-Aryan community (De Beer 1996:29).[7] Today, there are 537,428 South African Hindus (SA Statistics 2002).

From the Indian population and recently from white South Africans, about 2000 **Buddhists** have emerged (1991 census).[8] Some Buddhists arrived at the Cape directly after the Dutch settled in this country, that is, in the seventeenth century but only for a short visit. These were the Thai monks who were on the Portuguese ships which came to the Cape in 1686. Nevertheless, the real establishment of Buddhism in South Africa took place in the nineteenth century (1860 onwards) thanks to Indian sugar-plantations workers. Initially these Buddhists constituted only 3% of the entire religious population but with time they began to increase. In 1917, the newly emerged Overport Buddhist Society counted 26 families. In 1920, the society grew to 100 families. A year later the Buddhist community already numbered 12472 members (Krüger 1996:83). Unfortunately, over the years this movement deteriorated, later playing no significant role. A separate inflow of Buddhists to South Africa was linked with the 1904 arrival of Chinese gold mine workers on the Witwatersrand. But this inflow was very short-lived. In the twentieth century, Buddhism became popular mainly among

the Europeans.[9] The main contributors to the promotion of Buddhism in South Africa are the Buddhist informal meditation centres.[10]

Other religious groups which have been present on the South African religious scene for many years are the very small **Jain** and **Parsee** communities whose roots were in India. The Jain community[11] in South Africa consists only of only 60 members according to Oosthuizen (1995:217).[12] They come from the Svetambaras ("the white-clad" Jains) who are considered a more liberal group in comparison with the Digambaras ("the naked or sky-clad" Jains). They constitute a wealthy community which entered such segments of public life as banking, merchandising and property, education and industry (:217-218).[13]

The Parsee faith[14] has its origins in the prophet Zoroaster (known in the West as Zarathustra) who lived in ancient Persia (today Iran) in 2500 BCE. The religion is also called Zoroastrianism. The Parsee community in South Africa counts about 100 members. They came from India at the end of the nineteenth century preserving their historical affiliation with the Indian community (:223). Over the years the Parsee community developed to about 200 but because of the colonial and apartheid policies, especially the Immigration Regulation Act of 1913 and later of the 1953 Immigration Regulation Amendment Act,[15] the number has now dropped to under one hundred members (:225-226).

7.4.3 The development of the Chinese community

Finally, one needs to mention the South African **Chinese** community which developed at the end of the nineteenth century and consisted mainly of merchants and mine workers on the Witwatersrand. These were followed by other Chinese immigrants. The Chinese community is rather small but again, in its own way, contributes to religious diversity in South Africa (Prozesky 1995:10-11). At present, the Chinese population in South Africa counts around 26,000 people,[16] half of it came to this country in the 1980s from Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong (Song 1995:207).[17]

This entire section illustrates that in South Africa the religious scene is remarkably rich and diverse. Its diversity is profoundly rooted in the multiplicity of religions, but also in the social, cultural and political situation which has influenced it for ages. A question of interest is whether there has been any evidence or any attempt at dialogue among the diverse religious traditions both in the past and in the present. Answering this question requires the investigation of numerous factors which contributed to mutual relations among the religions during the colonial and apartheid eras. Only then will the real character of religious pluralism and the kind of relations among the religions possibly emerge.

7.5 Relations among religions in South Africa during the colonial and early apartheid years
7.5.1 Initial encounter between Christianity and the other religions

The previous analysis already indicated some of the prevailing attitudes and approaches towards religious "otherness". Just as one distinguishes three broad concepts of religious attitudes (exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism) in the wider religious context, so one notices the same pattern in the history of relations among religions in South Africa. These three concepts were especially noticeable in relations between Christians and other believers from the time of the arrival of the white settlers in the sixteenth century. Generally, therefore, the attitude of Calvinist Christianity towards other religions during the colonial era can be regarded as real exclusivism. Thus, despite the evidence of diverse indigenous religious traditions in South Africa when Europeans arrived, the dominant group, namely Calvinist Christians, had difficulty acknowledging it. One can only regret that the Christian message which came to South Africa was combined

> with deeply destructive political and commercial forces which have succeeded in making two of South Africa's indigenous faiths, those of the Khoikhoi and the San, extinct within [South African] borders, have destroyed all the once-independent polities of the pre-European period and massively exploited all their survivors, and have extensively eroded the ancestral faiths of the Bantu-speaking peoples (Prozesky 1991:39).

By comparison, in South Africa, Muslims and Hindus had from the very beginning had resisted Christian influence and the white government. One needs only to mention the accomplishments of such Muslim and Hindu figures as Schech Yusuf, Tuan Guru, Sheikh Madura, Imam Haron, and Gandhi. Nevertheless, apart from these few prominent figures, believers who belonged to other religions except Christianity were generally forbidden to practice publicly or to propagate their beliefs from 1567 until 1804. As mentioned the best example was the Cape Muslims (Lubbe 1990:209). Breaking this law was punishable by death. Religious freedom was granted to other believers only when they converted to Christianity.

This example indicates how much the government policy influenced the church's attitude towards people who believed differently. This further clarifies why the attitude of the government authorities at the Cape was almost identical to the church's view of other religions. Even though the permission to practice and believe was later granted to other believers (1804), they were still only regarded as potential converts. Any growth in numbers of those religions was viewed as a real threat to the Christian faith (:210). To this one needs to add another factor: at the beginning of the nineteenth century, apart from the white Christians, a small group of Jews, white Muslims, and white Buddhists, all the rest were either black, coloured, or Indian. In addition to the negative attitude of Christians (mainly white Christians) there was also the issue of colour. Although, as pointed out, Calvinist Christianity over the centuries began to accept the "otherness" of people's beliefs, it had

difficulty coming to terms with colour. The challenge which Christianity had to face therefore was both political and religious (Lubbe 1990:210).

These few but concrete examples clearly illustrate that during the colonial era, the most prevalent attitude towards other believers was that of exclusion. The NGK adopted the same attitude towards other religions (during the colonial era and especially after it) and defined them as "false".

7.5.2 Contacts among religions between 1910 and 1960

The real basis for the past and present relations between Christians and other religions were already laid at the beginning of the twentieth century, as seen in numerous developments. In 1910, the year that coincided with the Edinburgh Mission Conference, the Africans decided to form an organization which would unite them and represent their interests, namely, the All African People's Convention (1912) which in 1923 became the African National Congress (ANC) (De Gruchy 1995:87). At that time the main political focus of the ANC was to abolish the Land Act (1913) which forcefully took a great portion of land away from the Africans. Later this ANC's struggle was extended to other discriminatory acts. At the same time, great missionary activities arose aimed at converting Africans and the "others", including Muslims (Haron 2006:427-428). In the 1920s, the issue of racial segregation dominated both in Afrikaner politics and in the church. During a conference organized in Cape Town in 1927 and sponsored by the NGK, most Afrikaner participants supported racial segregation. From this moment onwards the NGK particularly, among other Afrikaans Reformed churches, began to lay theological foundations for the future system of apartheid (De Gruchy 1995:90).

In relation to other religions, the NGK church remained exclusivist. The church's view was that they were "false". The religious exclusivism of the NGK dated back to 1857 when the Synod of the NGK decided to organize separate ecclesial structures for the whites, the coloureds, Indians and Africans (Haron 1999:118). This particular policy gradually influenced the NGK's theology and the government's position towards the groups mentioned. This example alone shows how religion contributed to the future apartheid system and set the NGK on a path of religious exclusivism rooted in the false interpretation of the biblical sources. The church believed that such exclusion was supported by God's plan towards humanity. Because of this false belief and perception, it was forbidden to question this plan and social structure. Those who attempted to challenge it, especially from the mid nineteenth century until the end of the twentieth century (the blacks, communists, Muslims and to lesser extent Roman Catholics)[18] were regarded as the real threat and were successfully opposed.

This spiritual exclusion was further and firmly reinforced by the ideology of apartheid introduced in 1948. In the new political situation, black adherents of African traditional religions, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism were now not only spiritually but also politically marginalized. South Africa therefore became a country of real socio-religious hegemony of Christianity (the NGK) in a relationship with 'racist-capitalist white domination' (Prozesky 1990a:10). Thus, in the context of the growing dominance of the one party and one church in the 1940s, the government and the NGK tried to respond in various possible ways to the "otherness" of the religions at both religious and political levels.[19]

The first visible strategy implemented by the Christian church and the government towards "otherness" and religious diversity was the strategy of exclusion 'based on violent methods of elimination' (Chidester 1987b:13). All other religions, except white Christianity, were isolated as "foreign". A decisive force in supporting this strategy is seen in the ideology of apartheid introduced in 1948 and especially in the promulgation of the Group Areas Act. With the implementation of this act and other related policies, black African traditionalists, Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus were not only spiritually but also physically excluded. In addition, spiritual and physical exclusion linked to the implementation of various apartheid laws also applied to the blacks of the Christian church; they were abandoned and marginalized. Consequently any interaction among religions and any awareness of religious pluralism, was eliminated.

In addition, a second attitude towards religious diversity prevailed in the 1940s and the 1950s; that is, the strategy of hegemony. According to this all other practices or beliefs were explained in the light of the dominating religions majority (Chidester 1987b:13). The strategy of hegemony was clearly implied in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa which emphasized upholding "Christian values and civilized norms" which pointed to the singular system of values of a dominant group. This was stated even more clearly in a sentence from a teacher-training manual written by Kitshoff and van Wyk: 'A child who follows the Christian faith is more likely to behave in a moral way than a non-Christian or an unreligious child' (Kitshoff and van Wyk 1983:4).

In 1953, after a conference on "Christian principles on a multi-racial South Africa" organized by the Federal Mission Council of the NGK, the church established its theology as the state, that is, apartheid theology (Chidester 1992:201). Through its biblical hermeneutics, such theology further contributed to the implementation of apartheid policies by giving moral support to the government and justifying racial acts. In 1955 at Kliptown (Transvaal), the "Freedom Charter"[20] was drafted under the inspiration and guidance of the ANC and other political bodies which were in opposition. This event, however, was entirely disregarded by the government and contributed to the speedy

implementation of various racial acts: the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act, and the Mixed Marriages Act. The only apartheid law which was never passed was the law forbidding multiracial religious services. A person who had a prominent role in the process of stopping the legislation of it was Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI (1915-2004). The above racial acts were maintained as laws until the democratic election in 1994 (Haron 2006:430).

Because of the implementation of racial acts and the domination of the white majority, other believers, whether Muslims, Jews, or Hindus, also blacks, women, humanists and Marxists remained religiously, socially and politically marginalized and neglected (Lubbe 1990:211). In this new political situation a real dialogue (or healthy relations) between Christianity and other religious traditions was impossible. Various factors contributed to this hopeless situation. Firstly, there was no political freedom which would allow such interactions. The concept of mission continued to focus on converting others. For the Christian group experience, theological knowledge and will were prerequisites. The black segment within Christianity, which could engage in dialogue with black believers in other religions, was marginalized. Secondly, besides the attitude of exclusion present in the theological thinking and activity of the NGK, cultural and religious exclusivism was equally present in various ecclesial policies of the other main line Christian churches. Some of the churches[21] had inherited 'separate church organisations for white and black people, in some cases even separate church organisations for each tribal group' (Kistner 1980:98). Other churches, though officially against segregation, had separate parishes, schools and seminaries for blacks and whites. This was the case in the Roman Catholic Church.[22] In addition, exclusivism in the main line Christian churches was seen in their silent acceptance of the system of inequality and withdrawal from any interfaith relations. Finally, real dialogue was not possible on the side of other religions. One must remember that those who dominated South Africa denied other religions and racial groups such rights as access to the media, good quality educational resources, power and public consciousness. All this rightly led to suspicion towards the Christian faith, its beliefs, values and ethics, and questioned whether they could still be regarded as valid both at that time and in the future (Prozesky 1990a:10).

Generally the period between 1910 and 1960 can be regarded as exclusion in Christian relations with other religions. This was apparent in the NGK's theology and its support of racial segregation as well as in the approach of other main line Christian churches to members of other religions expressed in their passive support of the apartheid policy and in the churches' racial structures. In addition, an attitude of exclusion was theologically supported in some churches. For instance, before

the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church had strongly opposed any possibility of dialogue not only with the religions but also with the other Christian churches.

7.6 Relations among religions in the second half of the twentieth century
7.6.1 Emergence of an inclusivist approach between the Christian church and the religions

In the second half of the twentieth century, new attempts at inclusivist and even pluralist positions emerged both on the Christian and other religions' side. The pluralist approach became more apparent only in the most recent period of South African history. Generally, between the mid 1960s and the 1990s, one could speak of an inclusivist tendency which focused on accommodating people who believed differently and a pluralist tendency which emphasized openness to mutual collaboration. In the 1960s a Christian approach to religious "otherness" could be called a strategy of toleration (not deliberate toleration but rather tolerance). This strategy was based on the principle that 'no single group [was] powerful [enough] to establish hegemony over all others' (Chidester 1987b:13).

An obvious sign of toleration was present in the Constitution which after its emphasis on upholding "Christian values", stressed "the recognition and protection of freedom of faith and worship". Nevertheless, it was questionable whether one could really speak of religious freedom in a situation where one group dominated and others constituted a minority. It is true that all believers were guaranteed freedom of worship and practice, allowed to build their mosques and temples, to gather for religious activities, to instruct their members, and to continue to perform their missionary efforts. In reality, they regarded themselves as being merely tolerated but not free. The reason was that religion and racism in South Africa were interconnected both in theory and practice. Adherents of other religions could not be free religiously while they were enslaved politically and racially. Thus, although in the constitution the state spoke of "freedom of faith and worship", this was regarded rather as religious tolerance but not as freedom (Lubbe 1990:212-213).

The development of mutual toleration and a more open attitude towards "others" had taken place in the context of some political events of the 1960s. One event was especially important, the Cottesloe convention (1960). In the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, the Pan-African Congress (PAC) emerged which broke away from the ANC because of the ANC's seemingly soft stand on the apartheid policies. The PAC took a radical exclusivist philosophical and theological approach expressed in an axiom "Africa for the Africans" (Haron 2006:431). On March 21, 1960, the activity of the PAC was linked to an organized peaceful protest against discrimination; it resulted in a massacre known as the Sharpeville massacre. This in turn led to the Cottesloe meeting between the World Council of Churches and the NGK which aimed at condemning racism and rejecting

apartheid acts. As a result, a statement denouncing apartheid was drawn up which led to the withdrawal of the NGK regarding the Cottesloe outcome thus showing further support to the apartheid government. The only exception was Rev. Dr Beyers Naudé[23] who separated himself from the NGK's position. After the Cottesloe convention, in 1961, the NGK pulled out from the WCC remaining, however, in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. At the same time, the apartheid government lost its seat in the United Nations and South Africa began gradually to be isolated on the international scene (De Gruchy 1995:95-96).

During the 1970s and the 1980s, the real problem for other religions and many Christians (not all though), was not so much a matter of belonging to a particular religion or being saved, or interreligious dialogue at official level but the system of dehumanization itself. Any cooperation among religions had to address this real problem, and any offer of salvation by a particular religion had to aim first at transforming this system of dehumanization with all its structures into a system of humanizing society with equal rights for all (Prozesky 1991:43). Therefore, it was not the abstract or theoretical dialogue among the religions which was most important. The main concern of everyone of good will in South Africa, including religions, was the situation of the oppressed people in the context where a segment of Christianity was still sanctioning the regime. Prozesky in his essay "The Challenge of other religions for Christianity in South Africa" (1991) wrote that there was a "common ground" which united political leaders, Christian theologians, and believers of all religious traditions. This common ground was combating political economy, inequality, injustice, the marginalization of various groups and the exploitation of the blacks, the poor and other disadvantaged groups (:35-36).

During these years, therefore one may speak of an inclusive approach among religions which began to engage in a common struggle for liberation, thus exceeding their doctrinal and cultural differences.

7.6.2 Emergence of the pluralist approach among Christians and other believers

In response to the common quest among religions to combat the system, the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed in 1983. The UDF was an important organization which united youth groups, religious organizations, and other movements in a common struggle against apartheid. Prior to the formation of the UDF, Rev. Dr Allan Boesak who attended the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) conference in 1982 denounced apartheid as "a heresy" and called for expelling the NGK from the WARC. Boesak's firm stand and leadership quality led to his appointment as one of the main supporters and protectors of the UDF (De Gruchy 1995:104-107). Many religious organizations from various traditions supported the UDF initiative and became affiliated to it. This

greater openness and easiness among religions in combating the system led to concrete initiatives in which Christians, Muslims, Hindus, African traditionalists and other believers began to cooperate to an extent that the religious history of South Africa had never witnessed before (Haron 2006:447-448).

In 1984, both Christian groups and progressive young Muslim decided to fight side by side for future transformation under an umbrella of the UDF. Thus, the South African Chapter of the World Council of Religion and Peace (WCRP-SA) was formed; it worked as the supportive group of the UDF program and became a platform which united all progressive members of the various religions in South Africa. Those who belonged to the WCRP-SA were convinced that its foundation and its works undertaken during the 1980s contributed significantly to the final socio-political transformation which ultimately took place in the 1990s. The WRCP-SA became important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it created a space for all religious traditions to express their disapproval of racial injustice and dehumanizing policies. Secondly, it gave to South Africans a sense of religious diversity as the main characteristic of their society. Thirdly, the WRCP-SA viewed itself as a potential 'instrument of reconciliation in situations where there was inter-religions conflict and confrontation' (:448).[24]

During the following decade (1984-1994), the WCRP-SA established close relations with various organizations. It arranged "The Desmond Tutu Peace Lectures" in 1984 which brought together religious leaders, academics and activists from across the religious spectrum. The main purpose of those lectures was to pay tribute to all those who engaged in the struggle for justice, peace, freedom, and harmony – values which were fundamental to all religions in South Africa. Yet indirectly, the lectures gave a new vision of interreligious contacts and cooperation in the future South Africa (:448-449).

Another initiative of the WCRP-SA, in cooperation with the Institute of Contextual Theology, was a conference organized in May 1988 in Soweto which focused on the topic "Believers in the struggle for justice and peace". This became an inspiration for the National Muslim Conference organized in May 1990 (Cape Town) during which Albie Sachs presented 'the idea of a national conference of religious leaders to discuss future religion-state relations' (Haron 2006:449).

Among the numerous initiatives of the WCRP-SA, one needs to mention another crucial event that contributed to public discourse among progressive theologians on the issue of the church and apartheid state relations. This was the publication of the Kairos Document (1985) which defined apartheid as a "heresy" even though it was regarded by many as controversial and incomplete. The

document was strongly criticized by many Christian theologians who could not identify themselves with its content. However it was equally heralded, by another group of Christians, as a powerful symbol of resistance (De Gruchy 1995:108-109). Despite its shortcomings, the Kairos Document was considered across the religious spectrum as an important statement which had the potential to encourage and unite all religions in the people's common struggle.

In 1986, South Africa witnessed another socio-political change linked to mass demonstrations followed by the implementation of the state emergency. During this time a noteworthy happening contributed to the improvement of mutual relations among religions. This was the NGK Synod's declaration that Islam was a "false" religion. This statement was intended to unite the main line Christian churches in a common response to the rapid spread of Islam in South Africa. The response had the opposite effect. The declaration sparked strong condemnation of the Synod's statement not only in the Muslim community, and political organizations, but also from the various Christian churches, religious traditions and such interfaith organizations as the WCRP-SA. In addition, many individual religious leaders such as Boesak or Naudé personally condemned the declaration. What was, however, the most important for interreligious relations in this event was the unanimous stand against the NGK's position and the government's exclusivist view of Islam and, indirectly, of any other religion. This religious exclusivism united the majority of the oppressed (blacks, coloured, and Indian Christians) and the Muslim community. It further led to an important and fruitful public debate (Haron 2006:450-451).

7.6.3 Relations among religions during the time of transition

Because of the above situation where both religious and political factors were interconnected, recognition of religious pluralism in South Africa required political freedom and the abolition of an inhuman and unjust system. Identification and acceptance of religious diversity only became real when political liberation took place. In the 1990s, South Africa underwent a radical change from colonial and racial domination to a democratic society. This change also began to influence the social, cultural, and religious spheres of the country. The main transformation to racial equality which took place was from the white superiority over those who were regarded as second-class citizens (Africans, coloured and Indians). A parallel shift took place from religious exclusivism, which was linked with the Dutch Reformed Church's support of the system based on biblical justification of racism and which privileged Christianity as the only valid religion, to an appreciation of the multiplicity of religions and the granting of religious liberty to all. It was only in the 1990s that the various religions began to witness a real shift in mutual relations. It is noteworthy that in the course of transformation, both stands of inclusivism and pluralism had somehow developed

naturally and placed religions in diverse interactions leading to recognition of the "otherness" at least as a "matter of fact" (Saayman 1995:2).

Indeed many hoped that the presence of other religions in South Africa could challenge Christianity in many positive ways and thus contribute to a transformation of the entire society. Nevertheless, some commentators of the 1990s argued that with regard to recognition and acceptance of religious diversity in this transitional time, a special challenge rested upon Christianity and Christian theology. This was so because Christians constituted an important group in society and not because they were a majority. On the one hand, almost all of those who controlled the wealth, exercised authority, and ruled the police and the army were Christians. In many cases they were driven in their supremacy by Christian religious convictions. On the other hand, a large group of the suppressed and those who sympathized with and supported them in their resistance were also Christians (Prozesky 1991:36).

Other commentators such as Lubbe did not entirely agree with this argument. Although the spiritual responsibility of challenging the unjust system rested on Christianity, such reflection could not be done by white Christianity for a number of reasons. The majority of white Christians still supported the policy of exclusion and hegemony as their way of survival. The whites in South Africa felt psychologically insecure and thus unable to engage in theological reflection which required contacts and dialogue with other believers across the South African religious world. Moreover, a rapid growth of charismatic and evangelical movements within white society instead reinforced fundamentalist religious views and consequently acted against accepting religious pluralism as a fact. Consequently, theological reflection on religious pluralism and engagement in interfaith dialogue, if it was going to happen, was only to take place when a new contribution came from black Christians and theologians. For Lubbe this was because only black Christians lived and shared with the other religious minorities an oppressed and deprived life. Because of this, black Christians understood the cry of religious minorities for freedom of belief, integration and dialogue. In addition, black Christians were from African traditional religious backgrounds. Being familiar with religious diversity in their homes, black Christians possessed the required spirit of tolerance which was essential for interreligious dialogue (Lubbe 1990:214-215).[25]

Indeed, in the time of transition, a clear shift could be observed in theological reflection among black theologians who had both theological knowledge and the openness to reflect on religious diversity in a contextualized manner and to accept it. Many articles have been written on this subject, especially on how religious diversity had the ability to reinforce the process of transformation. Through such reflection, they not only prepared the post-apartheid society for daily

contacts with people from other religions, but also reduced the potential for interreligious conflict (:215-216).

Despite these positive attempts on the Christian side to embrace other believers and prepare a ground for mutual engagement, the transformation which took place in the 1990s was possible because of the equal involvement and goodwill of all religions.

In the 1990s, therefore, there were practical interactions among religions and changes in collaboration from a struggle against the system to social transformation. It seemed that only in the new democracy could religious pluralism, based on freedom and equality among religions, contribute to further mutual enrichment and social reconstruction. Thus, this pluralism could become a dynamic process in which various religions could interact, learn, and come closer to each other. It was also believed that in the new South Africa interreligious dialogue and cooperation among religions needed to be linked with a complex and lengthy process of nation-building which was likely to be successful if all the religions engaged equally in it. Without mutual understanding and collaboration among religions, unity and harmony among people was impossible. Thus, on the one hand, the "new" South Africa had to recognize, accept, and use religious diversity for reconstructing society. On the other hand, the diverse religions were supposed to accompany nation building if they wanted to remain relevant in the new context (Lubbe 1995:160).

To the satisfaction of the entire nation, the different religions began to create a common ground for the program of nation-building and through dialogue and collaboration, worked towards establishing peace, security and unity. Religion in general began to have a positive impact on the transformation of society. The diverse religions and religious institutions started to influence three areas of public space which called for 'comprehensive critical transformation in view of the way religions [affected them at that time]: the constitution, the media, especially TV and radio and education' (Prozesky 1990a:20).

Concrete examples reveal that these were the areas where religions contributed in a meaningful way to reconstructing society and to building a new nation.

7.7 Religious pluralism during the SA democracy
7.7.1 Initial stage of the new democracy

The struggle against apartheid created a place for many religious organizations to work together. These organizations, which were regarded as progressive groups working towards transformation, greatly helped the fall of apartheid and the establishment of the new order in 1994. For this reason they could be regarded as real contributors to the so-called South African "miracle". Over the

previous 14 years, both religions and religious organizations had continued to show interest and to strive towards building a just and humane society. In the new South Africa socio-economic change took place within the arena of religious cooperation. Religion played a special role in the program of transformation in South Africa as it did in the developing countries of the Third world. The role of religion was to 'mobilize and empower people and with its generally accepted moral integrity, religion [was] to be an indispensable partner in the process of nation building as well as in development projects with narrower aims' (Lubbe 1995:168).

In the South African context of religions, such engagement could not have been restricted to a particular religion, namely Christianity, as this would have been regarded with suspicion. On the contrary, it was believed that in South Africa, where religious diversity was a part of social life, the dynamics among the various religions could meaningfully help the transformation. The first democratic elections proved that this common engagement was possible. Religious leaders of different backgrounds successfully engaged in facilitating the elections. This mutual understanding and involvement of religions and their leaders in the process of elections resulted in real confidence among people at the grass-roots level.

Another unique initiative further encouraged interfaith dialogue. As the dominant religion, Christianity finally realized that its main role was to invite others to collaborate in the process of nation-building. Christianity as the dominant religion could have decided on the boundaries of involvement of other religions in this process in a selective and exclusive way. In the meantime such religious leaders as Archbishop Desmont Tutu, Dr Beyers Naudé and Dr Frank Chikane understood the situation very well and called for the equal participation of all religious traditions in building a new democratic society (:168).

Many will agree that at this initial stage of democracy it was Nelson Mandela who significantly contributed to religious tolerance, respect and collaboration among religions. Even before the downfall of apartheid, Mandela was aware of the importance of the role of religions in the struggle. It was not surprising, therefore, that at his inauguration as the first freely elected president of South Africa, he invited representatives of various religions to read a sacred text from their particular traditions and say a prayer of blessing. In 1995, Mandela was one of the initiators of the National Religious Leaders Forum whose aim was to serve his cabinet with expertise and advise when necessary. Nevertheless, despite this close alliance between the state and the religions, Mandela and later Thabo Mbeki remained aware that this mutual engagement in political problems should also include a clear line of separation between religion and the state (Haron 2006:455).

In the post-apartheid South Africa this separation between the two became a reality. All religions came into agreement on the nature of their relationship with the state. This nature was already expressed in the Declaration of Religious Rights and Responsibilities. The document contained essential principles which regulated relations between religion and the state, namely, 'the state [was to] recognize the reality of religious diversity in South African society; there [had to] be separation between religion and the state; and all religions [were to] enjoy equal opportunities' (Lubbe 1995:170). Nevertheless, it was Mandela who looked into the need for securing this mutual relationship but most of all for securing religious freedom for the diverse traditions in the new country, urging the committee responsible for drafting a new constitution to document certain clauses which would guarantee such freedom (Haron 2006:455).

After deliberations with religious leaders and especially with the National Religious Leaders Forum and the WCRP-SA concerning the relevant issues, the committee inserted a clause into the Constitution[26] which granted "religious freedom" to all South Africans. Thus the South African Bill of Rights stated that 'everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion' (Section 15).[27] One of the areas where this religious freedom granted by the constitution was practically implemented, was the media (:456).

7.7.2 The media: radio stations and TV channels as representations of religious diversity

In the new dispensation the various communities were granted permission to establish their own radio stations. This was the result of the initiative of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (former Independent Broadcasting Authority) which acted on behalf of the government. In the meantime the respective religions established their own committees in order to organize and supervise their own religious broadcasting. This was the case of the South African Council of Churches, of the Muslim community, and other religious groups interested in religious broadcasting.

Discussions among the various committees led to the emergence of the Independent Forum for Religious Broadcasting which elected a board of 15 members from different Christian churches and religions. In 1996, a document "Norms for Religious Broadcasting" led to the formal opening of religious stations. They began to broadcast their religious programs in various parts of South Africa.[28] For instance, the Muslim community received temporary licenses and had access to two stations in Cape Town, two in Johannesburg and one in Durban. Later these stations were joined by satellite broadcasting of the Islam International Channel based in Lenasia (Haron 2006:457). Moreover, the SABC agreed to broadcast on Sundays religious programs which would promote

deeper understanding of diverse religious practices and beliefs. In addition to the broadcasting of Christian programs in 2004, a new channel of Islam TV (iTV) was initiated.

This process of greater openness of the South African government for granting licenses to various religious groups for broadcasting their programs was not however without some difficulties. There was an impression that some religions were more privileged than other with respect to getting frequency, airtime, or opening their TV channels. An example of the South African Broadcast Authority's double standards could be seen in the difficulties which a Catholic radio station (Radio Veritas) encountered while applying for a license to broadcast its programs. In Catholic circles this began to be viewed as the government's anti-Catholic bias, not found in cases of dealing with other religions, which was difficult to understand in the new era of South African religious liberty.

Generally, however, this new situation in the media gives concrete proof of the practical implementation of the basic right of religious freedom in democratic South Africa. Broadcasting of specially prepared programs from the diverse religious backgrounds demonstrates South African readiness to recognize 'its peoples' freedom to express themselves without feeling, in the least, threatened by a wave of "religious fundamentalism" as in other states on the African continent' (Haron 2006:457).

7.7.3 The education system

At the time when South Africa tried to secure religious freedom, there were parallel attempts at developing pluralist attitudes in the school system by introducing and implementing a religious education system which aimed at recognizing diverse religious and ethical views in the world.[29] Attempts at drawing up a plan of how religious diversity should influence the education system were made by numerous authors. One such attempt which deserves special treatment was made by Krüger in his essay entitled "From one to many. The Challenge of religious pluralism: The teaching of Christianity in state schools and universities in South Africa". In his analysis, Krüger referred to religion in public school education as an issue which urgently needed to be addressed in a new emerging society (Krüger 1994:10). Religion could provide individuals with a value system based on a particular morality and give a sense of security and belonging. The diverse value systems which functioned in various religious traditions could help in reconstructing society, especially at the level of education of the younger generation. The future educational system needed therefore to reflect the richness of religious diversity in South Africa (:11). Krüger offered various possible options for introducing religion in public education out of which he favoured the "integrated-pluralistic" model which offered education, knowledge, and understanding of all major religious systems or traditions.[30] He favoured this model as the best system in a new society because it promoted

religious tolerance and the mutual understanding of various cultures; it granted equal rights to all religions, treated religious diversity as enrichment, and encouraged equally all religions to contribute to resolving social and ecological problems in society (:14).

In addition, Krüger proposed a new structure of theological education at state universities because the existing educational programs did not reflect the real diversity of religions and lacked a real contextual approach to the religious situation. The existing programs were developed when religious diversity in South Africa was neither fully realized nor recognized as something of value. This called for change. The change was already taking place at the Faculty of Theology at Unisa which in 1993 decided to become the "Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies" and the Institute for Theological Research which was part of that faculty became the Research Institute for Theology and Religion. This was regarded as real progress in comparison to other state universities which continued to remain exclusively Christian, and also to other superficial church institutions whose purpose was to train candidates for ministry in their respective ecclesial communities (:16-17). Over time the transformation which took place at Unisa was also implemented at other universities. At present the various schools of theology and religious studies function as one entity. A shortcoming of this model is that such a system breaks the existing and necessary boundaries and distinctions between Theology and Religious Studies. The advantage of it is that Christian theology is studied in a broader pluralistic context that of Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, African traditional religious doctrines and creates new possibilities for innovative thought and research.

These various interreligious initiatives in the new democratic South Africa demonstrated that through respect for people's freedom it was possible to build a tolerant society which respected religious identities and cultural differences of the diverse groups. The constitution, the media, the educational system, and other practical initiatives became real contributors for securing religious plurality and for mutual collaboration among the religions.

7.8 Application of Dupuis's theology to the religiously diverse South African situation
7.8.1 Connection between Asian and South African religious contexts

After examining the state of relations among the diverse religions during colonial and apartheid eras and later during democracy, the need arises to examine a possible application of Dupuis's proposals to the context described above. A question needs to be asked: Which of his proposals, based on the Asian experience, are also relevant to the South African religious situation?

One must be aware that Dupuis's proposals constitute first of all an intra-dialogue within Roman Catholicism. They are directed to the church authorities and they dialogue with their perceptions on

such issues and beliefs as religious plurality, the saving work of Jesus Christ, the role of the church, or the concept of interreligious dialogue. Only in the second instance are Dupuis's proposals directed to a wider spectrum, that is, Christian theologians who have engaged in the debate on religions. This is apparent from the responses which his works received from other Christian churches. It is however unclear whether Dupuis's intention was to address, through his works, representatives of the religions and engage in dialogue with them.

Indeed, Dupuis's theology is the result of his theological reflection on the Asian religious context and constitutes an internal dialogue within Roman Catholicism. Although Dupuis's theology was based on the Asian situation, the intention of this analysis is to show that some of his ideas and proposals are also applicable to other contexts of religious plurality. One of the tasks of this investigation is therefore to examine to what extent Dupuis's model of "inclusive pluralism" might help the South African debate on religions. Undoubtedly, because of Dupuis's experience in India, the proposals are the most suited to the interreligious situation in Asia. They are based on and refer to that experience and to interfaith relations there. This constant reference is seen in numerous consultations of the different Asian church bodies which speak about the necessity of interreligious dialogue in places where religious diversity is the daily experience of ordinary people who, while belonging to different religions, naturally interact with one another (Dupuis 1991:216).

Dupuis's Asian experience of religious diversity and dialogue in Asia might also be a valuable source of reflection and practical application of his thought to the interfaith situation between the Christian churches and the religious traditions in Africa. Concerning Africa, however, Dupuis writes that on the African continent the main focus is not on conversations with the religions but on "inculturation" of the Christian message. Dupuis generally believes that, more than with any other religion in Africa, interreligious dialogue with Islam is the most apparent and well developed. On the contrary, dialogue with African traditional religions 'is still largely in the making; and positive studies on traditional religions as possible stepping stones for the Christian message seem to be only beginning' (Dupuis 1999b:215). He states, however, that his theology of inclusivist pluralism might be supportive in any context, whether Asian, Latin American, or African where the issue of liberation is still present both in society and in the church.

The issue of liberation is therefore the main link between Asian and African contexts and Dupuis's proposals. Undoubtedly, in South Africa the situation of religions is markedly different from that of the other African countries. Nevertheless, because of the issue of liberation, present during apartheid and still prevailing in the democracy in the religious debate, has now become more focussed on reconstruction and nation-building, the theology of "inclusive pluralism" must also be applicable to

this particular context. Therefore, one must consider which proposals of "inclusive pluralism" and what form of dialogue are the most suitable to the religious scene and mutual relations among religions in South Africa.

7.8.2 Dupuis's doctrinal proposals and possible areas for dialogue with the religions in South Africa

In his works, Dupuis quite often refers to four forms of dialogue: dialogue of life, action, theological exchange, and religious experience. He argues that interreligious dialogue cannot be understood merely in a spirit of respect and friendship but also as a distinct activity which includes sharing a common life, joint effort for justice and peace, intellectual exchange, and sharing a religious experience. As such interreligious dialogue is an intrinsic dimension of evangelization.[31]

In view of this distinction the examination of interfaith relations in South Africa leads one to conclude that official dialogue among the various religions has remained underdeveloped until the present moment. Because of the past political, cultural, social and religious factors there has been no dialogue in its classic form. This means that the least visible and the most difficult form of conversation is that of theological exchange. There are no signs that this kind of encounter really happens. But even if such dialogue does not exist, one may speculate on a possible point of departure for it. Indeed, it is difficult to predict where dialogue at the theological level might begin both in the wider context and in the South African situation. It is equally difficult to create an immediate future agenda for such conversations. It is, however, possible to indicate certain areas for such encounter. In this respect, Dupuis's thought might be valuable.

A critical approach to different proposals of "inclusive pluralism" revealed that the real point of encounter among religions is the universally present and active mystery of Christ which reaches both Christians and other believers although in different ways. Again, this must be regarded as a Christian, and more specifically, Catholic perspective. From this perspective, the starting point for dialogue among religions cannot be any particular doctrine or set of beliefs, even if the doctrines are alike in various religions (for example Christian *Incarnation* and Hindu *avatāra* in the *bhakti* tradition), but in reality differ profoundly. It is not the doctrine, therefore, which constitutes the point of mutual encounter but Jesus Christ (Dupuis 1991:237). Nevertheless, one must remain critical in this regard because although the Christic mystery is a good theological basis for dialogue among religions, this mystery is open to rejection precisely because of its Christian character. From a theological point of view, there is little chance that other believers will agree on it as a suitable "common ground".

One of the other possible areas of departure would be the experience of God's mystery in the Spirit. Dialogue remains fruitful if it is a result of communion in Spirit. Exchange of religious experience takes place in Spirit. Hence the mystery of the Spirit of God could be a basis for mutual conversations. Here again one must consider that the various religious traditions will differ in their understanding of this mystery. According to Dupuis the experience of the divine mystery in the Spirit in various religions differs not only in its expression, which is conditioned by cultural differences but also in its content (:237). An example of it, analyzed by Dupuis, is the Christian experience of God in Jesus Christ and the *advaita* (nonduality) experience of Hindu mysticism. His analysis leads him to conclude that despite the Christian mystery of communion expressed in Jesus Christ and the Hindu mysticism of identity bearing similarities, they are not mutually compatible (:46-66). The same applies to the mystery of the Spirit which is objectively present in any authentic experience of God and is understood differently in each religious tradition. This mystery which might be viewed as a solid basis for dialogue cannot however constitute a point of departure.

"Common ground" that is more accessible refers to such questions as the origin, destiny, and meaning of human existence. This is linked to the question of human transcendence which makes a person respond to the Divine and allows that person to establish friendship and communion with other people. Indeed this "common ground" is not as ambitious as the doctrinal issues but is still valid. Ultimately, dialogue questions which relate to the human being will lead the partners to the questions about the Divine. These questions will therefore constitute 'a secure point of departure for the theological dialogue' (:238). Moreover the movement of the Spirit itself who enlightens and guides the partners to dialogue and leads them to spiritual communion might further point to a new area for conversation. In this case an agenda of theological dialogue must be left open to the guidance of the Spirit.

The difficulty in finding points of departure for theological dialogue among religions leads to the conclusion that Dupuis's proposals which are constructed on central Christian doctrines such as the unified religious history of revelation and salvation, the universally present Christic mystery, the Trinitarian approach to religions, and religious traditions as ways to salvation, will not easily constitute and agenda for dialogue between Christianity and the religious traditions at this stage of debate in South Africa or in a wider context. To answer the question as to what extent theological dialogue between Christianity and the religions is possible in South Africa and which point of departure for an interreligious agenda is the most suitable, would require a separate study. On the basis of the collected data it is possible to make an attempt to characterize the state of interfaith

relations in contemporary South Africa and to see which form of dialogue proposed by Dupuis is present, and could be further developed, in bringing the religions closer.

7.8.3 Formal dialogue among religions in contemporary South Africa
The collected data revealed that the two largest religions in South Africa are Christianity and Islam. The nature of relations and cooperation between the two will be investigated in the next chapter. A case study of the past and present encounter between Islam and Christianity in South Africa will explain areas of applicability of inclusivist pluralism in a particular context.

The analysis also illustrated that the **Jain** and the **Parsee** religions constitute real minorities and that there is no record of formal relations between the two and all other religions. Reading the data leads one to conclude that both the Jains and the Parsees remain religiously "hermetic" groups which do not easily mingle with other believers. Despite all the difficulties which these religions have experienced in South Africa, the Parsee community especially has maintained a very strong cultural and religious identity. Preservation of this identity has to be linked with the core beliefs of the Parsee religion which, in the South African political and economic context, served as a shield against the impact of secularism and other influences as the more philosophical form of Hinduism. Generally, the Parsees uphold a reserved attitude to non-Parsees and reserved approach to other religions. For this reason, there has been no religious contact of the Parsee community with Christianity or Islam (Oosthuizen 1995:226).

Similarly, the **Chinese religions** do not have a great number of followers. In comparison with the Jains or Parsee communities, they have been greatly affected by Christian mission. Because of the influences of Chinese converts to Christianity and because of the impact of Western culture on the younger generation, observance of traditional practices is slowly disappearing. Young people especially began to reject the traditional Chinese beliefs, but equally the elderly and middle-aged Chinese believers are converting increasingly to Christianity.[32] Other factors, which further diminish the role of Chinese religions in South Africa, are the lack of an active priesthood and places of worship, and the absence of an integrated system of teachings (Song 1995:207). No official contacts have been recorded between followers of the Chinese religions and the Christian church.

The **Buddhist** community, however, continues to attract a number of intellectuals and whites in South African society, although there is also an occasional interest in Buddhism among Indians and Africans. In the past, Buddhism made converts mostly from the Indian community. At present, the Indian Buddhists are almost virtually extinct.[33] Louis van Loon, the main propagator of Buddhism in South Africa, writes that 'the decline of Buddhism among Indians coincided with an increase in

interest in the religion among the white population' (1995:213). A general impression is that Buddhism in South Africa is open to, and focused not only on dialogue with other believers but also with the diverse cultures present here. This openness can be seen in the spiritual activity of the main Buddhist meditation centres through which Buddhism reaches those who search for religious experience.[34]

Concerning interfaith dialogue van Loon makes a very important comment that Buddhism in South Africa is neither dogmatic nor focused on missionary activity to gain converts but is rather open and inclusive (van Loon 1995:215). Its inclusiveness can be seen in the diversity of participants who visit the centres or attend meditation retreats. The participants come from a vide spectrum of religions and cultural backgrounds. This also means that Buddhism in South Africa is multi-racial and non-discriminatory. The meditation centres are therefore not focused on converting people but developing "mindfulness" (*Sati*), a state of mind that is calm and clear. The fact that Buddhism in South Africa remains attractive to numerous religious and cultural groups and survived during the time of "trouble" illustrates that it has the ability to help both the transformation and the new social and political order (van Loon 1995:216).

If any form of dialogue exists among the Buddhists, Hindus, or Christians, it is rather on an individual basis through the work of the meditation centres. One would expect a well-established dialogue at least between Buddhism and Hinduism, two traditions that have a lot of common, but the fact that the Indian Buddhists almost disappeared makes one think that this is not the case.[35] The only form of dialogue between Buddhists and believers from other religious traditions is therefore dialogue of life and spiritual experience.

Lack of any formal encounter is also the reality in relations between the **Jewish** community and representatives of other religions. Except in the state of Israel, the Jewish people have always lived in Diaspora as they do in South Africa. The past system of segregation encouraged them, as it did in the case of other cultures, to keep their distinct ethnic identity. This is perhaps one of many factors which led the South African Jews to preserve their separateness, identity and Jewish nationality. The latter resulted mostly from the idea of Zionism.[36] Religiously, the South African Jews have been regarded as conservative with a strong attachment to tradition. These conservatives belong to Orthodox Judaism (85%). The others (10-15%) belong to progressive Jewish congregations. Among the orthodox Jews, one may find emerging groups that represent "ultra-orthodox" or rather *haredi*[37] Judaism. Within the progressive Jewish congregations, there are also some movements which focus on further reform. While the pro-Zionist Litvak-Jews tend to be faithful to tradition, the Anglo-Jewish character is reflected in the area of service and organization of the synagogue and

community life (Shimoni 1988:3-10). Within Judaism, therefore, there are various streams and diverse inter-group relations, with emphasis on interaction between orthodoxy and reform. In the sphere of communal interests, these two stands attempt cooperation with each other but in the realm of religious belief, the rabbinate remains uncompromising and hostile (Hellig 1995:158).[38]

This short exposition shows a real proliferation of the various religious tendencies among Jews which however should not be regarded as something negative but rather as a positive characteristic of the Jewish community with potential for further growth. Challenges which plurality of views and beliefs brings to the established authority and religious order within Judaism combined with greater religious and political freedom in contemporary South Africa might help the Jewish people to break down the old (rather exclusive) structures and positively influence their religious and communal life. These might further contribute to more open contacts and cooperation of the Jewish congregations and groupings in establishing positive relations with other religions.

With respect to dialogue between **Hinduism** and Christianity, such dialogue continues to remain underdeveloped. This is because, on the one hand, the Hindu community as a real minority was suppressed during colonial and apartheid times as were other religious groups, with no possibility for positive interfaith relations. In addition, at that time, Christian churches intensified their mission work among Hindus trying to win new converts. In the 1960s, especially a large segment of Indians in Durban and Pietermaritzburg were resettled in new areas (Chatsworth and Northdale), which were far from their places of worship and work (Oosthuizen and Hofmeyer 1979:241). This forceful disposition has been used by Christian missionaries, mainly Pentecostals, who have remained active in the Hindu communities for years. Consequently, a large number of Hindus have become Christians (Pillay 1985:29).[39] On the other hand, South African Hinduism has always been specific in its character and has not concentrated on formal interreligious contacts. The uniqueness and complexity of Hinduism in South Africa can be seen in its four streams: Sanathanism (traditional and ritualistic Hinduism), Arya Samaj (focused on formless Deity), neo-Vedanta (associated with Ramakrishna Centre and the Divine Life society), and Hare Krishna (linked with International Society for Krishna Consciousness). The three last streams or movements came to South Africa only in the twentieth century and constitute reform Hinduism or neo-Hinduism (Maxwell, Diesel and Naidoo 1995:180-182,191-199).

Although dialogue of life, work, and spirit between Hindus and Christians exists in South Africa mainly through intermarriages and cohabitation in the same areas, it is still very limited. This is due to the complexity of Hinduism. The most inclusive and even pluralistic approach to other religions is represented by neo-Vedanta Hinduism associated with the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa in

Durban and its six ashrams three of which are in Durban and three respectively in Pietermaritzburg (Northdale), at Ladysmith and in Newcastle. Neo-Vedantic universalism and its pluralist approach are seen in its emphasis on the presence of divinity in every human person as a real basis for any spiritual experience. Moreover, all religious traditions are placed at the same level and constitute equal paths which lead to 'God-realization' (:194). Because of this emphasis on religious universalism, the births of Buddha, Mohamed and Jesus are celebrated as well as the festivals of Hindu deities. Moreover, the Ramakrishna Centre organizes a conference in South Africa once a year inviting representatives of other religions. The aim of the conference is to debate and reaffirm the existing unity which binds all religions. The same inclusivist and pluralist approach to religious matters and religions is shared by the Divine Life Society with its headquarters in Durban.[40]

If any formal dialogue were to be established with Hinduism in South Africa, it would be with the neo-Vedantic Hinduism (the Ramakrishna Centre and the Divine Life Society) on the grounds of their universalistic convictions and beliefs. It would also be possible to establish a common bridge between the two neo-Vedantic movements and Christianity or Islam at a practical level, especially since the Centre and the Society have already engaged in education among African people and in numerous charitable activities mainly among the disadvantaged such as school feeding, distribution of clothing and self-help materials, or providing clinics for the poor (:195). Such interfaith tendencies are not found among the Arya Samajists and in the Hare Krishna movement. The latter was established in South Africa in the 1980s near Durban and then extended to other places. Hare Krishna is not only distinct from Arya Samaj but neither can easily be accommodated in Sanathanist nor neo-Vedantic frameworks. Moreover, the Hare Krishna movement is less universalistic and less tolerant towards the view that other religions are equal paths to the Divine. Most of the Hare Krishnas regard their doctrinal beliefs as superior to other Hindu systems of belief (Sooklal 1986:82-84).[41]

This study of various streams of Hinduism in South Africa reveals that, on the one hand, Hinduism is a complex religion; on the other hand, it is an organic and living reality which transcends the diverse categories and distinctions. Looking at the past history of Hinduism in South Africa, one gets the impression that it can flourish and further adapt to the new South Africa and its religious context. Furthermore, although there is generally a lack of common understanding and mutually organized events by Christians and Hindus, which would encourage a more fruitful engagement between the two, this does not mean that there are no theological bases for dialogue. The existing and much stronger developed relationship between Hinduism and Christianity in Asia has proved that such theological bases are real. The Ramakrishna and the Divine Life Society's emphasis on

universalism indicates that establishing a common practical bridge between neo-Hindus and Christians is also possible in South Africa.

Concerning dialogue with **African traditional religions**, serious encounter with them is an essential condition for African Christianity. This is the case especially if the Christian church does not wish to remain outside of African culture as something foreign or alien. In reality, Christianity has coexisted with traditional religions in South Africa for centuries. It must also be acknowledged that many changes relating to the traditional religions occurred after the arrival of Europeans and of Western Christianity in South Africa. It was unfortunate that Christian faith, combined with political and economic processes, almost led to the extinction of the South African indigenous religions (Prozesky 1991:39). Indeed Christianity had a considerable influence, though not always positive, on religion in South Africa but also the Christian message has been deeply affected by African traditional view to such an extent that nowadays one can speak of African Christianity or of the South African Christian church. From this cohabitation of Christianity with traditional religions many new groups (African indigenous churches) have emerged, which adopted both traditional and Christian elements of belief. These two basic characteristics (accommodation and adaptation) of African traditional religions resulted in their positive influence of the Christian message and indigenous belief (Ray 1976:90-95; Crafford 1996:18-20,23-24; Oosthuizen 1986).

With respect to dialogue with traditional religions, special recognition must be given to the legacy of John William Colenso (Guy 1983; Draper 2003a; 2003b) who, as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, upheld the view that the Zulu had an established belief in a Supreme Being even before the arrival of missionaries. However, this example of Zulu belief is only one aspect of a very broad and rich cultural and spiritual reality. In fact, dialogue between Christianity and the traditional religions requires examination of linguistic evidence, the study of oral and historical traditions, the analysis of myths, folk-tales, praise names, and songs as well as religious rituals. It also requires discussion of the fundamental problem of communication between different human symbol-systems and value-systems (Ray 1976). It is evident therefore that dialogue with African religions is based on the comparative approach, with the emphasis placed on structural, cultural, and spiritual similarities and differences between Christianity and the religions. There has been no evidence of any formal dialogue between African traditional religions and Christianity. Practical dialogue is much more accessible approach. Undoubtedly African traditional religions can make a significant contribution to the ongoing transformation. There are numerous ways in which they could contribute to the change and engage in cooperation with other religions.

Firstly, through the spirit of community and solidarity, the traditional religions can contribute to the renewal of communal solidarity among the South African people who are confronted with new kinds of family life in large industrial areas and with fragmenting, which is the result of isolationist interests of various groups including political bodies. Moreover, because African people are continually aware of their relatedness with nature, this could help to address the problem of abusing the eco-system and the exploitation of the natural environment. Secondly, rituals in the African traditional world have always been communally-oriented and offer a valuable means for people's change of status in the community. For instance, through initiation ceremonies children enter the status of adulthood and undertake new responsibilities in society. The same happens with marriage rituals which introduce new behavioural patterns. Such rituals give purpose and meaning to human life and have the potential to renew the moral and social order within a particular community. Thirdly, African cultures and religions are rich in symbolism which expresses beliefs, convictions and values. African symbolism could be enriching in the South African contemporary world in which the old ways of verbal communication often becomes meaningless because words lose their meaning. African symbols might therefore restore the value of communication and become as precious as the cross or a wedding ring in Christian societies. Fourthly, in a context where South Africa faces the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other related diseases, the traditional healers have a significant role to play in addressing this problem which is threatening the population. They do not only treat the obvious physical symptoms of the disease but also approach it in a more integral and holistic way, seeking to point out the underlying moral or spiritual causes of it. In this way, the sick person is not only helped medically but also psychologically in the sense that he/she is empowered to face the crisis in a new and effective way (Thorpe 1992:118-123).

These are only a few examples of possible areas of contribution which African traditional religions can bring to common dialogue among religions in South Africa. These are the areas where the Christian church should begin its conversation with the traditional religions and establish dialogue of action. It is noteworthy that some of the elements, which would constitute a "practical bridge" between Christianity and the religions appear in the Catholic guidelines for dialogue and cooperation with religions in South Africa including traditional religions and African culture. "Fruitful Encounter: Catholic guidelines and theological basis for dialogue and cooperation with other religious traditions" (2007), speaks of (all religions) upholding together human dignity and sanctity, standing against the challenge of a breakdown of basic ethical values and norms which leads to addressing together sexual morality and pandemics especially HIV/AIDS and addressing together the problem of material gain, production and profit (consumerism, exploitation of human life and the earths environment (FE 7).

7.8.4 Mutual encounter between the religions and the Christian churches

The previous sections and the above analysis show that formal interreligious dialogue between the various Christian churches and the religious traditions in South Africa has been inadequately developed in comparison with, for instance, with political or economic transformation and the state of interfaith dialogue within Christianity in general. It was perhaps the disunity within Christianity which prevented the various churches from engaging in formal relations with other religions after the transformation. The fact remains that after the transition many of the Christian churches began to address their own internal problems of fragmentation rather than focus on external relations with other believers.

The post-apartheid era has witnessed a number of ecumenical events which concentrated mostly on the unification of the divided churches within the same ecclesiastical family and not on interreligious dialogue. One of the first events which constituted a move towards unification was the Rustenburg Conference (November 1990) at which one of the leaders of the white Dutch Reformed Church apologised for apartheid.[42] The post apartheid era 'has brought about the formation of the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa – a merger of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa' (Amanze 1999:13). This ecumenical event became a sign both of a rejection of classism and racism in the church and a sign of the healing which was beginning to take place in the various churches (:14). But it did not result in a united church.

The post-apartheid era brought greater church collaboration among Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, and strengthened the already existing ecumenical dialogue between the churches. This collaboration resulted from the consultation of the 'mutual recognition of ordained ministers' on the 17th of March 1992 (:14). But a long series of discussions did not lead to a united church. The Federal Theological Seminary, which was the fruit of the Commission's work, eventually collapsed.

In 1995 the Catholic Church became a full member of the SACC. In the same year the Methodist Church and the SACBC opened an official ecumenical dialogue, but no agenda has been set up since. The Catholic Church took part in the National Religious Leaders Forum (1999) focusing on 'the factors undermining the moral and social values in South Africa' (Hinwood 1999:375). At the local level, in 1994 the Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban was established. It was the outcome of co-operation between the Catholic Archdiocese of Durban and the Natal Council of Churches. The Council focused on 'economic justice and assisting people to improve their economic situation, building peace and AIDS prevention care' (:378). All these ecumenical events, however, have not resulted in closer collaboration between the Catholic and the other Christian churches.

What has been achieved is a kind of 'openness to each other, corporately and individually, and a mutual acceptance, which was not there at the beginning of the fifties' (:383).

In 1996, initiatives were undertaken by the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Reformed Presbyterian Church to unify the churches into one ecclesiastical entity (Amanze 1999:14). A separate ecumenical event took place in the Apostolic Faith Mission. 'Since 1913, this church had been divided along racial lines. Discussions on unity began in 1975, and the reunion which took place in April 1996 brought together black, coloured, Indian, and white groups into one church' (:14). The same was happening in the South African Lutheran Churches which had been divided along racial lines since 1912 and which now tended to become 'a single, inclusive Lutheran body' (:14). But the attempt at unification did not entirely succeed in these churches. Black, coloured and Indian Lutheran missions united in 1975 and formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa (ELCSA). Three white Lutheran churches also united. But there was no unification between black and white Lutheran churches. The above "single, inclusive Lutheran body" was a loose federation of Lutheran churches in the whole of Southern Africa (FELCSA) which was discredited by ELCSA and which has now been followed by the Lutheran Communion in South Africa (LUCSA).

All of the above ecumenical events reveal that in spite of some positive signs of change the South African ecumenical movement is still struggling with transformation and spiritual renewal. After apartheid, as most of the churches withdrew from public life and concentrated more on their own internal problems rather than on ecumenical dialogue, the same happened in the area of interreligious dialogue. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church has only recently issued (2007) the mentioned guidelines for the church's engagement with other religious traditions. "Fruitful Encounter" invites all religions in South Africa to dialogue and collaboration indicating paths where the religions can venture. These include such challenges as the 'advancing materialism and aggressive secularism of society; the erosion and collapse of traditional norms of right and wrong; and the upsurge of belligerent religious extremism' (FE 7). The document further points out practical ways where such a spiritual journey of religions has already taken place or is going to happen in the future. More specifically, the document points to possible areas for interreligious discussion and collaboration between the Roman Catholic Church and other religious traditions which include: praying together, preparation for and celebrations of interfaith marriages, conducting funerals, family celebrations in interfaith homes, sharing witness through interfaith marriages and introducing religion in schools and institutions of learning at equal bases (FE 8.1-8.7).

The fact that such a document has been published recently indicates an urgent need for establishing good relations with African traditional religions and culture, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. These are the main partners to dialogue which the document mentions, but also all other religions in South Africa are invited to common interreligious endeavour (FE 7). Why was the document published only now? The Roman Catholic Church, like the other Christian churches, first attempted to adjust its life and ministry to the changed political and economic situation in South Africa after 1994. It seems that a similar situation exists in other Christian churches that continue to focus on addressing their own internal matters rather than establishing dialogue with representatives of the other religious traditions.

7.8.5 Challenges to interreligious dialogue in South Africa

This section leads to an important conclusion that before engaging in dialogue and cooperation with others, each religion must acknowledge its own plurality or division. In general, there is no religion which would does not face plurality within itself. In this context, Christianity, which unites diverse views and churches under the same founder Jesus Christ, needs first to address its own divisions. Moreover, each religion has to remain open to bring in a common adventure or project its own theological perspective or expertise. In this way each religion can bring constructive criticism to the common program from the perspective of its own tradition (Lubbe 1995:167).

The history of relations among religions in South Africa proved that the limited engagement between Christianity and the other religions was fruitful during the struggle for liberation because those relations were based on a shared social and political commitment. It seems that dialogue among religions in the post-apartheid era has to go in the same direction. It has to be concerned with social questions, such as social justice, religious education, a common effort to defend and rebuild family values, cooperation to promote integral human development, human and gender equality, human liberation, and the use of the earth's resources. Such social and organized interreligious dialogue is possible although it is difficult. It is also apparent that each religious tradition needs to address fear and threat when it is invited to participate with others in the process of nation-building. While in reality such threat might not exist, it is certainly linked with the desire to preserve one's religious laws and doctrinal purity. That is why dialogue among religions should engage in explaining their respective convictions and in sharing their spiritual richness. Such activity will lead to mutual appreciation (:167).

Finally, in the process of nation building which involves cooperation among religions, care is needed concerning the sensitivity of their mission. Although the various religious traditions should not be required to abandon their mission programs, they should not use them to gain converts (:168).

Great sensitivity is needed in such situations and perhaps it would be good, as Lubbe suggests, if all religions agreed on a certain "code of conduct" concerning their mission. This does not mean that the proposed code would be fully obeyed, but at least it might lead to a meaningful and fruitful discussion. It is possible to achieve this objective if religion remains open and transparent concerning its own programs and actions, if religion does not make a particular political system or ideology absolute; if religion avoids any danger of transferring religious conflicts onto the political scene (:170). This is feasible when religions talk with each other and arrive at a common understanding of their role in civil society.

Therefore, although official interreligious dialogue in South Africa might exist here and there, it is still in the early stage of development. One thing is certain that dialogue in the South African context cannot be focused on controversial topics, often with no hope of finding shared ground. Starting with the basic differences in belief makes such theological dialogue very difficult if not impossible. The starting point for interreligious dialogue in South Africa should rather be to establish friendship and trust among people who believe differently and who, because of the past, never had a chance to engage.

7.8.6 Dupuis's dialogue of "praxis" as the most relevant form of interreligious encounter
Despite the fact that dialogue in South Africa in its classic form will still take time to develop, one must agree that the relations between Christianity and the religions and between the religions themselves have developed to varying degrees. In the past, these relations became stronger and closer because the various religious groups engaged in a common goal. Nowadays one can see forms of mutual engagement. One of them is dialogue of life which takes place when different believers mingle with each other on a daily basis and thus establish mutual relations based on respect, openness and concern for each other. This form of engagement, to which is called every Christian is called in his/her daily contacts with other believers, needs to develop much further.

Nevertheless, dialogue cannot stop at daily contacts with other believers. It must go beyond it and lead to common initiatives inspired by the religious beliefs of various people and societies. This mutual engagement finds its expression in commitment to the struggle for justice and human liberation. Such dialogue engages in collaboration to achieve humanitarian, social, economic and political goals (Dupuis 1991:235). The history of the struggle against apartheid proved that this second form of dialogue, that is, of mutual commitment to justice and liberation occupied a unique place in South Africa. Numerous examples indicate that this happens in interfaith encounters at the moment when the religions attempt mutual collaboration to secure the process of liberation. Interreligious dialogue in South Africa or anywhere else must not begin with the data of revelation

and tradition (theological dialogue) but must be rooted in an actual praxis of dialogue with the world religions. Just as, in the Asian phenomenon of massive poverty and religiousness, Dupuis sees the need for interreligious dialogue to go hand in hand with the activity of the liberation of the Asian people (1997:19), so similarly the South African political, economic and social challenges as well as South African religiousness, constitute a call for all religions to engage further in a common liberative action which is presently expressed in terms of transformation, reconstruction, and nation-building.

The analysis illustrated that in post-apartheid South Africa the various religions have mutually taken responsibility for the future of this country, engaged in diverse ways in securing freedom, and worked towards the development of the entire country. For South Africa this is the process of liberation extended in time. Although South African society lives in post-liberation times, this society still addresses such issues as political, cultural, and religious unity, the process of reconstruction and nation building. This is where Dupuis's inclusivist pluralism with its emphasis on liberative praxis as a form of dialogue best connects with the religions and the South African reality of religious diversity. The struggle for securing liberation should be a combined effort of Christianity and other religious traditions. Such common involvement will promote human rights and justice for all people despite their differing religious beliefs. Hopefully, such involvement will lead to the discernment of true liberative elements in a particular religion as those which are discriminatory and oppressive (Dupuis 1997:375).

What will be the possible fruits of this practical engagement of religions in the South African context? It seems that the fruits will be both unique to the particular South African situation of religious pluralism and universal, that is, characteristic to any context and place where partners to dialogue meet to converse or to cooperate.

7.8.7 Fruits of dialogue in South Africa

A unique benefit of mutual engagement of religions in South Africa will be the reinforcement of religious diversity itself. Through dialogue this diversity will prevail and develop. Equally, a common response of the religions to the liberation process will give the religions a sense of being adequate, responsible and necessary in the democratic South Africa. Certainly, there is always the question whether the diverse religions in South African society, which is in the process of building a new national identity, will foster religious consciousness of past divisions or will instead promote moral convergence and mutual collaboration in the process of humanizing what political and religious apartheid has ravaged. There are no indications that religious divisions will be reinforced.

Indeed, the religions will converse with each other to a greater extent on social, cultural, political, and religious questions.

One must believe that in South Africa as in the wider context the praxis of interreligious dialogue will benefit Christian theology of religions creating for it an opportunity for renewal. Such theology will become "dialogical" theology, that is, it will take religious pluralism seriously, accept the existing differences between religious traditions, and focus on mutual interaction and collaboration with others (Dupuis 1997:384; 2002a:234). In addition to these possible unique fruits of mutual religious encounter, there might also be a positive universal result. Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit on all sides, interreligious dialogue is likely to be a real dialogue and not a monologue. This means that Christians, who claim to have the "fullness" of revelation in Jesus Christ, will not only enrich others but also be enriched. Christians, who cannot claim a monopoly on truth, can discover that others, despite not being encountered by God's revelation in Jesus Christ, 'may be deeply submitted to this truth that they yet seek and to the Spirit of Christ that spreads rays of that truth in them (cf. NA 2)' (Dupuis 1997:382).

A genuine dialogue has the potential to enrich Christians in two ways. On the one hand, the witness of faith of the other partners will help Christians to understand better and deeper certain aspects or dimensions of the Divine Mystery which, according to Dupuis, 'have been communicated less clearly by Christian tradition' (1997:382; 2002a:233). On the other hand, mutual interaction will help Christians to purify their own faith by raising new questions, rethinking their own uncontested assumptions and conceptions, and overcoming prejudices. In this sense, mutual encounter and enrichment have value on their own, because they involve 'openness to the other and to God [and] effect a deeper openness to God of each other through the other' (Dupuis 1997:383; 2002a:234).

Finally, in an atmosphere, dialogue will not be focused on "conversion" of the religious partner to one's own faith but on mutual "conversion" to God.

7.9 Evaluation

This chapter showed that religious pluralism in South Africa has been a dynamic force with a long history and strong faith convictions which cannot be found in secularized societies of the Western world. In the entire religious spectrum, Christianity (and within it mainly the NGK) was the only religion which had a privileged position since it was protected by the constitution and enjoyed the greatest following. This was why, during colonialism and early years of apartheid, Christianity did not attempt to establish any meaningful interfaith dialogue. There was no real dialogue either among the other religions because of various policies which did not allow it. Mutual relations among

religions remained therefore underdeveloped or prohibited. Consequently, during this period none of the four types of dialogue distinguished by Dupuis, that is, dialogue of life, action, theological exchange, and religious experience were apparent among religions in South Africa. Indeed, the religions were aware of each other's existence, but this was where their knowledge and mutual contacts ended. This lack of religious interaction can be regarded as mutual exclusivism. Yet, as mentioned, even in this exclusion, there were certain positive tendencies and attempts at dialogue with the religions or rather towards their "otherness".

In the 1970s and the 1980s, the various religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and African traditional religions, had their own place during the conflict, conquest, resistance and liberation. If any form of interfaith relations were present, it was at the level of mutual commitment to the struggle. Dupuis's concept of dialogue of action or "praxis", which involves the issue of liberation, was the most applicable here. This mutual commitment had resulted in a more positive openness among religions. Later, in the 1990s, the process of transition itself became the driving force for a greater interest in interfaith contacts and activities. An examination of the common involvement of religions during the time of transition shows that the various religions decided to collaborate with each other to a greater extent than before. Indeed, religious leaders realized more than ever that they were invited to address a wide range of problems which South African society was facing, but their common engagement in various activities and projects have remained limited. Again, applying Dupuis's types of dialogue to the time of transition, the most visible form of it continued to be dialogue of action ("praxis"). Yet, this period also witnessed a gradual emergence of dialogue of life which could be seen in closer interactions between the various religions and their believers.

In the democratic South Africa, Christianity and the religions attempted to test how far they could trust each other and how far they could engage in dialogue. This mutual probing stemmed from past suspicion of each other and the hegemony of Christianity. If any relationship existed, again it was rather at the practical level (dialogue of action and life). This explains the great need at that time to build relations among the religions based on trust, mutual understanding and openness. Such relations had the potential to build the necessary religious infrastructure in society and enable the religions to remain productive in the process of nation building.

The last part of the chapter clearly revealed that in South Africa among the forms of conversations among religions which were proposed by Dupuis the most common remain the two mentioned. Nevertheless, the religions' continuous mutual engagement is expected to lead to further exchange of religious experiences. Such spiritual exchange (dialogue) might take place, to a lesser or greater extent, in bilateral or multilateral relations among religions in South Africa. The best example that

dialogue at the level of spiritual exchange is possible and can produce a greater unity among religions, was the Parliament of the World's Religions held in Cape Town in 1999 or prayer meetings organized on different occasions during national events. Only at the end can dialogue at the level of spiritual exchange lead to theological dialogue which in South Africa is at the very initial stage. What is more likely to happen in the future is that the three mentioned forms of dialogue recommended by Dupuis's "inclusive pluralism" (of life, action and religious experience) will prevail. One must hope that they will lead to the final stage of relations among religions in this country, that is, dialogue at the theological level.

Although the application of Dupuis's thought and proposals to the South African context is possible to a certain extent, what has been investigated so far in this regard remains superficial. Consequently, the question of application calls for further analysis and more concrete examination of the link between his concept of inclusivist pluralism and the South African debate on religions and practical interaction among them. For making the application more concrete requires a case study between Christianity and one of the religions. I selected the relationship between Christianity and Islam for further investigation to see a possible relevance of Dupuis's thought to the religious scene in South Africa.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the main contributors to religious diversity in South Africa and examined the state of relations among the various religious traditions during the colonial, apartheid and democratic times pointing to various cultural, economic, political, and religious factors. In its final part, the analysis dealt with the establishment of certain areas of application of Dupuis's theology to the South African religious scene. The next chapter will examine the mutual encounter between Islam and Christianity in South Africa, how this encounter was gradually transformed from exclusivism to mutual inclusion and appreciation, and what form of this encounter is the most vital in this country. This final stage will hopefully answer the question of the application of Dupuis's thought to the South African context.

---

[1] Before Dutch settlement, Bartholomew Dias landed at Kwaaihoek on the southern Cape cost in 1488. This is the first known Christian act in South Africa. In 1497, Vasco Da Gama gave a Christian name to the eastern costal area discovered on Christmas Day (Tierra da Natal – "Land of the Nativity"). Later in 1560, Portuguese Jesuits began missions in southwestern and southeastern Africa (Luanda and the Zambezi valley).
[2] For detailed analysis of the process of Christianization after 1488 see Prozesky, M (ed), *Christianity in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1990).

---

[3] An important position that engages in relationship between Christian beliefs and politics during colonial and apartheid times is J A Loubser's book entitled *The Apartheid Bible: A Critical review of racial theology in South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Lognman, 1987).

[4] Whether in the first group of colonizers were Muslims slaves, continues to be disputed.

[5] Shaykh Yusuf was born in Macassar, initially educated in Java, later visited such Islamic places as Makhah and Madinah and intellectual centres such as Damascus and Istambul where he received further Islamic education. Later in the East Indies, he became involved in a guerrilla war against the Dutch authorities. This resulted in the capturing of Shaykh Yusuf by the Dutch, first sentencing him to death and later changing this penalty to exile to Ceylon in 1684 and later, together with his wives, children and attendants, to the Cape in 1694. For more biographical information on Shaykh Yusuf see Moosa, E, "Islam in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 131.

[6] Besides the fact that Tuang Guru was born on Tidore an island in the Moluccan Sea, his further background is unknown. Involved in anti-Dutch resistance he was captured and brought to the Cape in 1780 and imprisoned on Robben Island for about thirteen years. See Moosa, E, "Islam in South Africa" in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 132.

[7] The Indian community in South Africa has experienced three main dispossessions. The first was linked with their arrival in South Africa. The second was caused by their removal from plantation environments and resettlement in cities which caused disorder in the Indian community (Oosthuizen, G C, *Pentecostal penetration into the Indian community in metropolitan Durban, South Africa* (Durban: Human Sciences Research Council, 1975), 4. The third was seen in the uprooting caused by the socio-political apartheid law, when between 1961-1970 half of the Indian population of Durban was removed to other areas far from their working and worship places. See Diesel, A and Maxwell, P, *Hinduism in Natal: a brief guide* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), 3.

[8] The 2001 census does not specify the exact number of Buddhists in South Africa. It is stated that Buddhists together with Hindus and Jews constitute 2,3% of the entire South African population (2002 census).

[9] Surprisingly, Buddhism hardly exists among black South Africans, which according to Krüger, has many points of convergence with the African traditional religion. See Krüger, J S, "Buddhism: religion of emptiness", in Meiring, P (ed), *A world of religions: A South African perspective* (Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, 1996), 82. Genuine indigenous South African Buddhism in the new historical and cultural era would greatly enrich the existing religious diversity.

[10] For the previous two decades, there had been a growing attraction to Buddhism mainly among writers and academics. Nowadays, one may come across Buddhist informal meditation societies mainly in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, including rural areas such as Ixopo and Colesberg. These various centres of meditation represent such diverse Buddhist schools as Theravada, Zen, Nichiren and Tibetan. The largest Buddhist temple in the entire Southern hemisphere was open in 1995 in Bronkhorstspruit. It is the Nan Han Temple, of the Chinese Fo Kuang Shan order. See Krüger, J S, "Buddhism: religion of emptiness", in Meiring, P (ed), *A world of religions: A South African perspective* (Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, 1996), 83.

[11] The Jain religion was initiated by Baghwan Mahavira (original name Natavutta Verdhamana) in the sixth century BC in reaction 'against the Brahmans, the Indian priestly class with its ritualistic approach to religion' (Oosthuizen, G C, "Jains and Parsees in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* [Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995], 217). Jainism together with Buddhism gave answers to the central problems of India at that time, namely, how to be liberated from *karma* and the process of reincarnation which *karma* influenced.

[12] The 2001 census does not specify the number of the Jains and Parsees in South Africa at the moment. They are included into the 2,3% of the "others" together with Hindus, Jews and Buddhists.

[13] South African Jains are vegetarian (as are Jains elsewhere) avoiding intoxicants, tobacco and all kinds of meat. Their main ascetical emphasis is on control of one's acts through one's human will. They believe in the karmic bondage from which the soul must be liberated through good activities. The way to salvation is not through any redemptive work of the deities, who do not exist for the Jains, but through disciplined lifestyle and self-efforts. Although the Jains community in South Africa is very small, they still make an impact on society as a whole through their business, self-discipline, positive approach to other groups and support to hospitals, schools and other charitable organizations. See Oosthuizen, G C, "Jains and Parsees in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 218-221.

[14] The Parsee religion, as their founder Zoroaster, professes strict ethical monotheism with Ahura Mazda as the only deity and Angra Mainyu as its antithesis. Consequently the human soul is a place of continuous struggle between good and evil with final victory of Ahura Mazda. In time (between 226-251 BC) to the religious system of beliefs were added *mantras* to overcome evil and a doctrine of the future life was developed with emphasis 'that one's own moral consciousness determines one's destiny' (Oosthuizen, G C, "Jains and Parsees in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* [Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995], 222).

[15] The Immigration Acts prohibited immigration of people from Asia to South Africa, mainly directed against the growth of the Indian community which also affected the Parsees. Because the Parsee religion does not allow one to marry members of other religions and the Parsee community was small, the young Parsee had to travel to India to find their partners but without a possibility of bringing back Asiatic women born outside of South Africa including children. See Oosthuizen, G C, "Jains and Parsees in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 224-225.

[16] Neither the 2001 census nor the Internet sources give the real number of the Chinese population in South Africa. The Song's source seems to be the only one available.

[17] The central beliefs of this religion are linked to 'the veneration of [Chinese] ancestors, the existence of spirits indwelling nature, and the consequent acceptance of the principle of *feng shui* or geomancy' (Song, A, "Chinese religion in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* [Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995], 203). Their religious system consists of polytheism, that is, the presence of various deities in Buddhist and Taoist traditions. Because the practice of Chinese religions does not directly require temples (each family can be a congregation), traditional Chinese homes contain altars (also called "god-shelf") where the ancestors are venerated and the deities are worshiped. In South Africa the most popular deities are 'Guan Yin (the goddess of mercy), Guan Ti (the god of war) and Choi Sun (the god of wealth)' (Song, A, "Chinese religion in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* [Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995], 204).

[18] For detailed analysis of the suspicion directed towards the Roman Catholic Church see Garth, A, *The Catholic Church and the apartheid: The Response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the first decade of National Party rule 1948-1957* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989), 3f.

[19] See Chidester, D, "Religious studies as political practice" (*Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 58, 1987), 10.

[20] The "Freedom Charter" constituted guidelines for the future of South Africa. See Esack, F, "The Freedom Charter through the eyes of an Islamist", in Polley, J (ed), *The Freedom Charter and the future* (Johannesburg: A D Donker, 1989), 105-110.

[21] W. Kistner in his article "Structuring church unity for the future" names the churches of the Dutch Reformed family and the churches of the Lutheran family. While the black section of the Dutch Reformed Churches and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa had joined the South African Council of Churches, the white section of these churches refused to join the Council because of differences of opinion on the political issues and the struggle for liberation. See "Structuring church unity for the future", in Vorster, W S (ed), *Church unity and diversity in the Southern African context* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1980), 98.

[22] These divisions between whites and blacks in the Catholic Church arose mostly from (a) differences in education in the black and white schools, (b) clerical education held in two separate seminaries, for whites in Waterkloof (1952) and for blacks in Hammanskraal (1963), (c) the appointments of black bishops as heads of dioceses which were opposed by white members, (d) the marginalization of black priests in leadership, (e) the pastoral church structure evident in African missions and white parishes. See Bate, S C, "The Church under apartheid", in Brain, J and Denis, P (eds), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 152-154. Stuart C. Bate, in his essay entitled "The Church under apartheid", wrote that the Catholic Church 'tended to exist as two largely separate entities: a settler church for whites and a mission church for blacks. The settler church reflected the racist attitudes of white people in South Africa…. White people did not want, nor expect, to mingle with black people on any level at all other than in a master servant relationship at work or in home' (Bate, S C, "The Church under apartheid", in Brain, J and Denis, P (eds), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa* [Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999], 151).

[23] Beyers Naudé was one of the leading members in the NGK. His stand against his own church's position and apartheid policy cost him membership in the NGK and was further ostracized by the Afrikaner community. Later he became the founder of the Christian Institute which meaningfully contributed to the struggle against apartheid. For more information on this story consult Villa-Vicencio, C and Niehous, C (eds), *Many cultures, one nation* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1995).

[24] See Kritzinger, K, *Believers in the struggle for justice and peace* (Johannesburg: WCRP-SA 1991), v.

[25] It seems that in a common engagement in the political struggle against injustices, black Christians and other believers would not only discover that they remain political comrades but also understand and accept each other as religiously different. Interfaith relations between Christians and other believers required not only concentrating on the struggle for political rights but also, through mutual encounter, concentrating on introduction of their own beliefs and convictions. Only through such mutual engagement at the religious level, could the various traditions meaningfully contribute to the existing political and social situation. Because black Christians were forced to accept the hegemony of Christianity in South Africa, they bore a special responsibility in the context of religious pluralism to separate themselves from Christian nationalism and reach out to members of other religions. Once again, in this group of black Christians a special responsibility rested upon black theologians. See Lubbe, G, "Religious pluralism and Christianity in South Africa", in Prozesky, M (ed), *Christianity amidst apartheid* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1990), 215.

[26] The South African Constitution was adopted on the 8th of May 1996, "South Africa–Constitution" http://www.unesco. org/most/rr3safr.htm <01 September 2008>

[27] "South African Bill of Rights" http://www.rebirth.co.za/bill_of_rights_S.A.1.htm <01 September 2008>

[28] http://www.ifrb.org.za/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 <01 September 2008>

[29] One needs to mention such important articles on this topic as Kitshoff , C, "The Role of religious education in building a nation in multiethnic South Africa" (*Religious Education* 89/3, 1994), 313-337; Mitchell, G, *The End of tunnel: Religious education for a non-racial South Africa* (Cape Town: ICRSA, 1993); Chidester, D, *Religion in public education* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1994), and *Diversity as ethos: Challenges for inter-religious and intercultural education* (Cape Town: ICRSA, 1999).

[30] For analysis of these various models see Krüger, J S, *From one to many: The Challenge of religious pluralism. The Teaching of Christianity in state schools and universities in South Africa* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre, 1994), 12-15.

[31] In this distinction Dupuis is not innovative but refers to the document published by the Secretariat for Non-Christians entitled "The Attitude of the church towards the followers of other religions" (1984). In this document dialogue is divided into four types: the dialogue of life (nos. 29-30), the dialogue of common commitment to the works of justice and human liberation (nos. 31-32), the intellectual dialogue of scholars (nos. 33-34), and the dialogue of sharing a common religious experience of the Absolute (no. 35). The same order appears in another document "Dialogue and Proclamation" (1991).

[32] An important piece of information and interpretation of the Christian influences on Chinese religions can be found in the thesis written by Song, A, "The Effects of Protestant Christianity on the Chinese cult of the ancestors as practiced in the Johannesburg area", D. Phil. Diss. (University of Durban-Westville, 1989).

[33] A noteworthy essay which discusses the origins and development of the Indian Buddhist community in South Africa including socio-religious attitudes and practices was written by van Loon, L H, "The Indian Buddhist community in South Africa" (*Religion in South Africa* 1/2 July 1980), 3-18.

[34] The first Buddhist Retreat Centre was erected in Ixopo in Southern Natal in 1980. The centre was run by the Buddhist Institute of South Africa and focused on promoting Buddhist philosophy, art, culture and the practice of meditation. Around this time another meditation centre and Buddhist community emerged in Nieu Bethesda, near Graaff-Reinet where mainly seminars and meditation retreats were conducted. It, however, closed after almost nine years. In 1984, the Dharma Centre in Somerset West was founded as the Heldervue Meditation Centre; it focused mainly on the Zen tradition. One needs also to mention a Zen centre linked with the Kwan Um School of Korean Zen in Poplare Grove near Colesberg. These are only a few, among many, Buddhist meditation retreat places established in almost every city in South Africa. The centres are usually attached to Buddhist communities some of which are very small, consisting of a few individuals; others are well developed with a rich history. See van Loon, L H, "Buddhism in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 213-215.

[35] Van Loon explains this phenomenon in his essay entitled "The Indian Buddhist community in South Africa" (*Religion in South Africa* 1/2 July 1980), 3-18.

[36] Politically, during colonial times, the Jews enjoyed all the civil rights reserved for the white segment of society. However, they were at times subjected to one or another form of discrimination. This could be seen in their social position before the introduction of religious tolerance in 1804, then after the arrival of the poor Eastern European Jews (Litvaks), and in the 1930s when various Afrikaner movements developed. These showed Nazi characteristics but were based on Afrikaner philosophy. See Hellig, J, "The Jewish community in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 160-165. During apartheid, the Jewish community was divided in their support of the system. Some sided with what is today called the Democratic Party, others were associated with the National Party, yet others (as Helen Suzman or Franz Auerbach) along with black leaders and members of other religious groups fought for social justice and political freedom. For details of their efforts and social and political involvements see Shimoni, G, "South African Jews and the apartheid crisis", in Singer, D and Seldin, R (eds), *American Jewish Year Book* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988), 6,19-23.

[37] The term *haredi* is applied to "God-fearing Jews" and is generally accepted whereas to the term "ultra-orthodox" may be rejected by those Jews to whom it referred.

[38] One can find a detailed analysis of Judaism in South Africa in Jocelyn Hellig, "The Religious expression", in Arkin, M (ed), *South African Jewry: A Contemporary survey* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1984), 95-116, and the same author "South African Judaism: An Expression of conservative traditionalism" (*Judaism* 35/2, 1986), 233-242.

[39] For a detailed analysis of the missionaries influences on Hindus see Oosthuizen, G C and Hofmeyr, J H, *A Socio-religious survey of Chatsworth* (Durban: Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Durban-Westville, 1979), 241, also Pillay, G J, "Ritualistic Hinduism and popular Pentecostalism: Two world-views in dynamic relation" (*Religion in Southern Africa* 6/1 January 1985), 29.

[40] There are also other neo-Vedantic organizations besides the Ramakrishna Centre and the Divine Life Society in South Africa. The best known are: the Chinmaya Mission established in 1979 in Durban, the Vedanta Mission in Isipingo Hills (Durban), the Adai Shankara Ashram in Johannesburg founded in the 1970s by Swami Shankarananda, the Gita Mandir

in Raisethorpe (Pietermaritzburg), and the Saiva Sithantha Sungum. It is difficult to classify whether the latter belongs to neo-Hinduism or Sanathanism. See Maxwell, P, Diesel, A, and Naidoo, T, "Hinduism in South Africa", in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 196.

[41] Sooklal, A, *A Socio-religious study of the Hare Krishna movement in South Africa* (Durban: Research Unit – New Religious Movements and Independent Churches, University of Zululand, 1986).

[42] At this Conference the Catholic Church was also represented by five bishops and the laity joined the other Christian churches 'in acknowledging its guilt in connection with apartheid' Hinwood, B, "Ecumenism", in Brain, J and Denis, P (eds), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 375.

Chapter Eight: An application of Dupuis's theology to the South African context of religious diversity on the basis of relationship between Christianity and Islam (case study)

Introduction

What has been written so far concerning the application of Dupuis's inclusivist pluralism to the South African context remains general and requires a more concrete consideration of Dupuis's theology. For this reason the present analysis concentrates on dialogue between Christianity and Islam. A long history of contacts between the two religions contains concrete examples which show that their relationship has gradually evolved. I have selected the Christian-Muslim relations as a case study primarily because South Africa has a three hundred year established presence of Islam of more than three hundred years. In its South African form, Islam is entirely a part of the African cultural heritage and thus an African reality. There is little doubt that interreligious dialogue between Christianity and Islam in South Africa should be an integral part of mutual co-existence. Moreover, the assumption of this analysis is that the Christian church in this country can engage in genuine conversations and cooperation with South African Muslims who experience the same challenges at the social, political, and religious levels which has the potential to serve as a model for dialogue with the other religions.

The chapter presents an overview of relations between Islam and Christianity since their arrival in South Africa. It highlights the suppression of Islam during colonial and apartheid times, a limited but real collaboration between the two religions in the struggle for liberation, and their current contribution to the process of nation building. Later, this chapter considers various cases where such practical collaboration in reconstructing society has taken place. These concrete examples of mutual involvement reveal more clearly which of Dupuis's proposals of inclusivist pluralism are relevant and applicable to South Africa.

8.1 Relations between Muslims and Christians in South Africa up to the present moment
8.1.1 Mission work among Muslims during colonial times
The previous chapter touched on various aspects and insights of the entire process which led to transformation in the 1990s, emphasizing social, political, cultural and religious factors. It concentrated on relations between Christians and other believers in a common struggle. The present chapter examines various forms of relations between Muslim and Christian communities within the previously established framework. Despite the existing political segregation and religious exclusivism in South Africa, there have been various contacts between the two religions which have contributed over the years to a gradual change in their mutual attitudes. This transformation in the association between Muslims and Christians intensified principally between the early 1960s and the

beginning of the new millennium. Parallel to the socio-political change, a theological transformation had also taken place both in the Christian church and in the Muslim community. It is essential therefore to point out the major factors and processes which contributed to this parallel shift over more than 50 years.

Prior to the changes in the early 1960s, the contacts between Christian and Muslim communities were mutually exclusive. From the very beginning in South Africa, the past interactions between members of these two religious groups were tense and reserved. Muslims, smaller in numbers, had become vulnerable to the tide of white Christian-oriented conquest and domination. The real source of tension between Muslim and Christian communities at those times was the political and religious situation in which both religions had encountered each other. Throughout South African history, Islam was regarded by the colonizers as a religion of slaves and always linked to the first Muslim slaves who arrived here on colonial ships (Lubbe 1986b:30-31). From 1657 until 1804, those Muslims were prohibited from practicing their religion in public; their first mosque was built only in the nineteenth century (Moosa 1995:132).

Because Islam in South Africa constituted a religious minority in a predominantly Christian country, Muslims always felt that they were marginalized and isolated. Christianity was regarded as the religion of those who were not only economically but also spiritually powerful and was therefore to be found among all races. From the beginning, Christianity was seen to be powerful in South Africa. Even if over years the disadvantaged, mostly the blacks, became members of Christian churches, Christianity as a religion continued to be viewed as religion of those who had real power in their hands, and made and implemented numerous racial policies. This strong spiritual status and the support which Christianity initially gave to the white settlers and afterwards to the system of inequality, decided that not only the political system but also Christianity itself began to be blamed for the isolation and limited contacts between Muslims and Christians (Lubbe 1986b:31).

The vulnerability of Muslims increased as a result of the negative attitude of Christians towards them. This explains why Muslims directed all their efforts at preserving their identity and fight against the colonial authority. This also explains 'a "spirit of resistance" often dormant but ever-present' in the Muslim population (Clohessy 2006b:75). The previous chapter has already mentioned that from the beginning the Muslim community had several religious and political figures who not only established and consolidated Islam in South Africa but also meaningfully resisted the politics of Christian mission which aimed at converting Muslims (Moosa 1995:130-133). The resistance of Muslims and the Christian desire to convert them were the main characteristics of Christian-Muslim encounter during the colonial period. Several examples support this view.

The fact that the Christian mission targeted various Muslim communities was especially apparent in the work of the NGK from 1913 until 1917. During this period, for instance, the NGK sent zealous and educated churchmen such as G. B. A. Gerdener or Samuel Zwemer to work among Muslims and suggest ways in which missionaries could control and diminish the growth of Islam (Zwemer 1914:733-738). In 1919, another missionary A. J. Liebenberg was assigned by the Synod of the NGK to develop a new method to convert Muslims based on 'house to house calls' (Haron 2006:428). These examples show how Muslims were targeted in the 1910s. However the same attitudes to the Muslims had existed prior to those years (Moosa 1995:135-136). Besides proselytism, Christian publications on Islam in the 1910s had produced a distorted image of the religion in South Africa. To maintain a true reflection of Islam, the Muslim community started the *Muslim Outlook* publication in the 1920s in which various essays reported the true developments in the Muslim communities both in South Africa and in the world. Around this time, Zwemer published two articles which gave a more accurate view on Islam in South Africa. They were entitled "A Survey of Islam in South Africa" (1925)[1] and "Islam at Cape Town" (1925).[2] These were complemented by works[3] of A. J. Liebenberg, A. W. Blaxall, Rev. A. R. Hampson and Dr I. du Plessies (Haron 2006:428-429).

In the 1920s the Christian publications on Islam presented its more truthful view, yet they still aimed at converting Muslims. This situation prevailed until the 1940s. This attitude prevented any friendly encounter between the two religious groups. One needs to include the racial policies and attitudes of the 1940s which further increased the existing tension between the two religions. Even if the policies had had a political character and were reinforced by the state, Christianity as the religion of the powerful was inevitably blamed for this discriminatory situation.

8.1.2 Islamic political struggle in the 1950s and the 1960s and the Christian mission
In the 1950s across Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, national independence movements arose. Their aim was to engage in socio-political issues and concerns of human rights. This massive revival also affected South Africa. In 1957, the Muslim Youth movement in District Six in Cape Town was founded and a year later the Claremont Muslim Association (CMA). These were inspired by pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism in association with pan-Islamism (Moosa 1995:147).[4] Meanwhile the various Christian churches persisted in their mission among Muslims. The NGK and the Anglican Mission were especially zealous in this regard. In the 1960s, the Anglican Church carried on its work of preaching and attracting Muslims to Christianity. For this reason the Mission reprinted an old story of *Hadjie Abdoellah* from the late 1870s, which was used for years by the NGK to convert Muslims (Haron 2006:433).

Parallel to the works of these two churches, single Evangelical groups also began to concentrate their mission on Muslims mainly through the publication of pamphlets under a banner "Al-Hidayah: Right Guidance". Haron writes that the fourth pamphlet published in the *Muslim News* analyzed the concept of abrogation relating it to the Bible, the Qur'an and other practices as *qurban*, Sabbath or circumcision (2006:434). The purpose was to show the superiority of Christianity. In reply, the Young Men Muslim Association (YMMA) of Port Elizabeth critically questioned the pamphlet's negative approach towards Muslims. In the same year (1961), Rev. Joost de Blank, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town in one of the articles published in the same *Muslim News* stated that "Islam was a danger to Christianity".[5] Numerous other publications which appeared in the 1960s defended Christianity, challenged Muslim beliefs, and evaluated the mission of the Christian church in relation to Islam in South Africa. In a book entitled *The Shape of power in Africa* by David Nawington and Hubert Phillips, Islam began to be viewed as "the secret weapon of Satan"[6] (:436-437).

In the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, the contacts between the Muslim and Christian communities remained uncompromising. While the missionaries persisted in attracting Muslims and the Christian publications tried to undermine Islam, the Muslim community concentrated on defence, criticized or resisted such attempts.[7]

8.1.3 Deedat's response to the Christian mission

One of the leading critics of the missionaries and the proselytizing works of the NGK and the Anglican Mission was a Muslim, Ahmed Deedat.[8] Aiming at the defence of Islam with the missionaries and church representatives, Deedat familiarized himself with selected biblical texts which directly concerned the Islamic message. He memorized them and engaged in public debates with Christian representatives (Haron 2006:434-436). In those debates, in response to the disrespect of Muslims and their traditions, Deedat adopted a dialogical but, at the same time, very apologetic and critical approach to Christianity (Westerlund 2003).

Deedat's concept and method of doing "Muslim mission" was not entirely supported by fellow Muslims. Even today his writings are criticized for being fundamentalist (Lloyd 2001:214). Deedat's aggressive approach towards Christians was undermining the existing relationship between the coloured Christians, Indian Christians and Muslims who lived next to each other in the Cape, Port Elizabeth, and Johannesburg areas. Deedat's credibility was undermined because these religious communities were closely linked with each other and had already established a peaceful coexistence. Deedat, who lived in the Durban area populated mainly by Indian Christians and Hindus, did not understand this close link. Yet even if he had understood it, he disregarded their

close relationship pursuing his own way of doing "Muslim mission". The result was that the offensive tactics which he employed in his method were disapproved of by many coloured and Indian Christians including individual Muslims (Haron 2006:437). The only region where Deedat remained successful was Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The Islamic Missionary Society in Johannesburg carried on Deedat's mission. The society was led by S. Laher who was more moderate and more open to an intellectual discourse with Christian opponents. Under his leadership the Society initiated *The Muslim Africa* publication which concentrated on Islam and Muslim concerns in Southern Africa. Laher was also the author of *The Position of Muslims and the role of Islam in South Africa* (1963). In this publication, he emphasized the place and role of Muslim tradition in the country (Haron 2006:438). At the same time the Arabic Study Centre (established in 1950) began to promote modernization within the Islamic community (Moosa 1995:148) and entered into dialogue with various religious groups in the Durban area.

With the implementation of the Group Areas Act, when the various religious communities were forcefully moved to new territories and had to start their lives anew, there was also an intensification of the Christian mission among the African coloured, Indian, and Muslim communities. This was also the beginning of the Black consciousness movement with its focus on the political struggle against the system under the leadership of Steve Biko. This period of South African history saw the implementation of many other restrictive policies and any resistance to them was severely punished.

8.1.4 The case of Wrankmore as an example of inclusion in Christian-Muslim relations

Among the Muslims who objected to the discriminatory laws was Imam Abdullah Haron. He was involved in helping the families of those who were arrested, killed or who had gone into exile. Haron was detained in May 1969 and three months later was killed. His story was described in detail by B. Desai and C. Marney in a book entitled *The killing of the Imam* (1978). Haron's death united Muslims, Christians and Jews both abroad and in South Africa.

One of the most positive signs of Muslim-Christians relations, linked with Haron's death, was the case of Rev. Bernard Wrankmore in 1971 who decided to fast for 40 days in response to the killing of Imam to pressurize the Prime Minister B. J. Vorster to reopen Haron's case, which had suddenly been closed for no clear reason.[9] He wanted it to be re-examined in public. Wrankmore chose a Muslim sacred place on Signal Hill. His decision met with the support of some Christian and Muslim communities, but there were also individuals who strongly objected to it. One of those who objected to Wrankmore's decision and organized a protest meeting in one of the cinemas in Cape Town was Imam Omar Gabier (the Muslim Juridical Council's member [MJC]). Gabier questioned

the purpose of such an initiative and challenged Wrankmore's choice of venue which for Muslims was a sacred place. Wrankmore finished his protest after 67 days of fasting (Haron 2006:439-440).

What is important in this story is not the protest itself, and not even Wrankmore's noble intention, but the fact that it showed that there were events in relations between Muslims and Christians which generated hope for the future. This particular incident showed that Muslim-Christian relations were not always characterized by conflict as had been the case in the 1950s and 1960s. The protest indicated that in the 1970s, Christians were adopting a more positive approach to Muslims than in the past. Haron evaluates Wrankmore's initiative and the atmosphere which surrounded it as follows:

> This particular event stood out as one of those rare ones where Christians and Muslims were drawn close to one another because of one man's effort in response to another man's tragic death. The event was tangible evidence of how individuals understood the message contained in the sacred text, and how they interpreted it. Although the purpose of the event was to seek justice regarding one man's death, it was also a clear demonstration of the dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations and thus a subtle response to the Christian missionary activities towards Muslims (:440-441).

8.1.5 Inclusive/exclusive approaches of the 1970s

The year 1970 marked the beginning of another Youth Islamic movement called the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (MYMSA) founded in Natal with the same aspirations as the Arabic Study Circle, that is, to promote 'modernization, self-empowerment in matters of religion, and independence from the *'ulama'* (Moosa 1995:148-149). Because there was no vocal Muslim political discourse in the 1960s and no adequate leadership among Muslim youth after the death of Imam Haron, the MYMSA grew into a powerful national movement which emphasized the importance of self-education in the sphere of religion and knowledge of the history of Islam. Moosa writes that the MYMSA's 'ultimate goal was to prepare for the inauguration of an Islamic state' (:149).

Meanwhile in the 1970s one could identify Christian individuals, who through their theological discourse, continued to advance Christian mission among the Muslims but who also began to build bridges for the future, more open Christian-Muslim contacts through their studies and publications on Islam. During this period the Christian mission became more sophisticated. This was linked to the works of theologians who attempted to learn the foundations of Islam, teach these at universities, and engage in dialogue with Muslims. Among these theologians were Jacobs A. Naudé and Chris Greyling from the NGK (Haron 2006:441).

Naudé was initially involved in Semitic Studies; he then turned to an academic program which eventually led him to study Islam. The most essential aspects of his knowledge of Islam could be

found in his lecture "Islam in Africa and South Africa" given in the South African Institute of International Affairs in 1978. His involvement in the study of Islam led him to establish the Centre for Islamic Studies at the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg in 1979. He also became a director of the *Journal for Islamic Studies* which he initiated in 1981. In his publications, Naudé attempted to be fair and defend Muslims against the NGK, especially when his church pronounced that Islam was a "false" religion. With respect to dialogue, Naudé's main contribution must be seen in his publications and the institution of the Centre. These two factors raised the discourse between Christianity and Islam to a higher theological level (:441-442).

Naudé's unique representation of the Christian church in relations with Muslims was further complemented by the works and activities of Chris Greyling who for many years (during the 1950s and the 1960s) was ministering in the Indian community in the Transvaal. In the 1970s, he lectured in the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Western Cape. His attitude of openness and his focus on building bridges with the Muslim community attracted many coloured Muslim students. The Christian students also relied on his extensive and inclusive knowledge while still preparing for mission ministry (:443).

Besides the inclusive approaches of Naudé and Greyling, there were other theologians who were more reserved towards Islam and who studied the Islamic sources for the purpose of evangelism. Among these were John Gilchrist and Gerhard Nehls who continued the work of Naudé and Greyling unfortunately giving to it an exclusivist flavour. While Nehls continued his mission work in the Western Cape, Gilchrist focused on the Transvaal where he became a founder of the "Jesus to the Muslims" organization. Gilchrist's main work entitled *The challenge of Islam in South Africa* (1977) provided a source of knowledge for his organization. In his book, he gave an overview of beliefs and practices in Islam, and an understanding of Islam and its history in South Africa. He also critically evaluated the Christian approach to Muslims and how Islam constituted a challenge to Christianity. Through his efforts and publications from the 1970s to the 1980s, Gilchrist intended to advance mission work to Muslims and equip many Christians to do so.[10] Nevertheless, his intention to improve and speed up evangelism remained unsuccessful (:443).

In the meantime, Gerhard Nehls centred his efforts on the southern suburbs of the Cape peninsula in Cleremont, an area populated by Muslims, and worked in cooperation with a Christian organization the "Life Challenge" which had originally been established in Wellington (1976).[11] Nehls produced a number of writings which aimed at responding to Muslim arguments against the Christian faith (*Dear Abdullah*) and defending the authority of the Christian Bible (*Christians ask Muslims* and *Christians answer Muslims*).[12] In 1996, he revised a pamphlet on Islam entitled "Islam: As it sees

itself, as other see it, and as it is"[13] and co-authored, with Walter Eric, a textbook "The Islamic-Christian controversy: A Trainers textbook"[14] (Haron 2006:444).

Indeed, both Gilchrist and Nehls represented an exclusivist approach to Islam and other religions in the 1970s and the 1980s. During this period, there were also similar active exclusivists within the Muslim community. One of them was Maulana Sadeg Desai, a conservative Muslim theologian and orthodox interpreter of Islamic sources. His stand regarding Muslim women, involvement in the political struggle or cooperation with non-Muslim organizations and other religions placed him in the group of ultra-conservative Muslim theologians (Esack 1997; Haron 2003:20-25).

Desai condemned all those Muslims who took an active part in the socio-political struggle in the 1980s and was against any form of interfaith collaboration with non-Muslims. The roots of his exclusivist approach could be seen in his religious education based on a narrow and rigid understanding of Islam and a selective interpretation of Islamic sources. For instance, regarding his attitude to non-Muslims he wrote: 'Muslims should not fraternize and socialize with non-Muslims. Kindness to them is permissible and encouraged. Helping them in need is meritorious. But to eat with them is not permissible' (Desai 1995:12). In addition, he never regarded Christians and Jews as "people of the Book", instead he viewed them as *Kafir* and when he referred to the missionaries he called them "fighting cufr" (Desai 1996:1). One of the reasons that Desai did not engage in any Christian-Muslim apologetics in South Africa was his antagonism for the missionaries because of their "diabolique" role in South Asia (Bangladesh). The Muslim communities experienced turmoil in that region for which Desai blamed the West and the missionaries. Thus, his focus was more on helping Asian Islamic countries than on polemics with missionaries such as Gilchrist or Nehls (Haron 2006:446).

Although strong exclusivist stands prevailed on both sides in the 1970s, generally this period witnessed more openness than previously in Muslim-Christian contacts. On the Christian side, while the mission work was targeting Muslim communities and became more sophisticated, there were also signs of serious studies on Islam and Muslims in South Africa, which indirectly attempted a better understanding of Islam and building bridges in relations with the Muslim community. On the Muslim side, the response to these studies was relatively positive.

8.1.6 Social, political and religious changes in the 1980s

At the beginning of the 1980s, South Africa witnessed a new Muslim youth awareness aligned to the Iranian revolution (1979). The revolution provided Muslim communities all over the world (including South Africa) with an important driving force for Islamic political discourse. It also

constituted 'a point of reference for their religious and moral struggle which coincided with the revolutionary zeal' existing among all South African liberation movements at that time (Moosa 1995:150). Muslims began to view themselves no longer in terms of the ethnic affiliation used by the apartheid state but in terms of their Muslim identity, seeing themselves as Muslims from the Cape or Natal and not "Cape Malays" or "Indians". Nonetheless, the main problem which emerged on the Muslim side at that time related to cooperation or alliances with non-Muslims in overturning the system. Many Muslims strongly condemned such a possibility. Yet there were those who supported such alliances including alliances with 'the Pan Africanist Congress and Black Consciousness tradition' (Moosa 1995:150).

In the 1980s any involvement of religious groups in the struggle, including Muslim associations, was strongly supported by the United Democratic Front (UDF). In response to the UDF's help, MYMSA declared its interest in taking part more openly in transformation and saw a possibility of a Muslim contribution to the future of South Africa. However, there were visible differences of opinion in the organization and hesitation as to whether or not to support the political alliance with the UDF. This led to establishing the Call of Islam (COI) (Esack 1987:1-18). The COI represented a more flexible type of Islam that could be identified with the aims of the UDF. The COI drew into its political struggle the MJC emphasizing the centrality of leadership of the clergy in the struggle (Clohessy 2006b:83).

Meanwhile on the Christian side, individual scholars made attempts at critical objective evaluations of Islam in South Africa. One of them was J. N. J. Kutzinger, who in his article entitled "Islam as a rival to the Gospel in Africa", reconstructed the social history of Christianity and Islam in South Africa. He pointed to various approaches of the Muslim missionaries during that history with special reference to recent times when a rapid growth of Islam among the black communities was evident. This growth took place after 1976 and constituted a real challenge to Christianity (Kutzinger 1980:89-104). In 1982, two other scholars Maleho Mosimane ("The silent swing to Islam")[15] and Denis Walker ("Conversions to Islam among Azanians")[16] expressed the same concern. In the same year, the editors of *South African Outlook* (a Cape Christian monthly publication), engaged in issues of ecumenism and racism, and encouraged two Muslim journalists Rafiq Rohan and Farid Sayad from the *Muslim News* to write a number of articles on Islam. In turn the two Muslim journalists invited some Christians to discuss issues on Islam. Haron sees these mutual invitations as 'a wonderful attempt at Christian-Muslim relations at a time when Muslims were deeply involved in the socio-political affairs of the community and one in which the *Muslim News* played a crucial role' (Haron 2006:447).

The 1984 saw the formation of the tri-cameral constitution, the severe repression of P. W. Botha's presidency, and growing political opposition. In response to the call for participation in the legislative system, the Muslim community entirely separated itself from any involvement.[17] Strong condemnation was expressed towards any Muslim who attempted to cooperate with the racist tri-cameral Parliament.[18] Muslims decided to oppose to the system on the basis of the principals of Islam (Lubbe 1986b:27-28). In addition the publication of the Kairos Document (1985) which was regarded by the Muslim community as "one-sided" because Christian theologians and authors, who were involved in composing it, failed to understand the document's universal nature which required the inclusion of views and the participation of representatives from other religious backgrounds. This lack of a broad inclusion was seen by many as the result of a deeply rooted Christian arrogance and indifference towards other religions and their contribution to the document (Esack 1986:2).

Despite this bias on the Christian side, the Muslims' engagement in the struggle against apartheid became as strong as that among Christians to the extent that, supported by their religious beliefs, they were ready to shed their blood for freedom. Generally the Muslim stand concerning the struggle for freedom was clear; every Muslim was called to resistance (Lubbe 1986b:28-29). What is important in this context is that this historic time led to a public discourse within the Islamic community on such issues as liberation, discrimination against women, religious diversity and issues of ecology. The entire debate was something profoundly new in the modern history of Islam. Moreover, during the 1980s one witnessed a gradual shift from Islamic exclusivism to 'Islamic humanism and universalism' (Moosa 1995:151).

A few important conclusions emerge from the above. The socio-political changes of that time led to polarization among Muslim organizations. On the one hand, there were those Muslim associations (mainly the *'ulama* associations of the Transvaal and Natal) which were politically conservative and, on the other hand, there were the socially, culturally, and politically progressive groups involved in resistance, which attempted to establish alliances with the Black Consciousness Movement, the PAC or the Charterists. The repressive atmosphere of apartheid became the historically, culturally, and religiously unifying factor of the many divided communities and religions.[19] Consequently, if any meaningful encounter between Muslims and Christians took place in the 1980s, it has to be seen at the political level where the same goal of liberation united all participants. At the religious level, the situation was much more complex. Within the Christian church there was a segment of white Christians that continually opposed the presence of other religions, including Islam, on the religious scene. The best example of this was the following event which once again revealed that the Muslim community was viewed as a real threat.

8.1.7 The exclusivist position of the NGK on Islam

The event which furthered the struggle and mutual relations among the two religions was the NGK's declaration (at the Church's General Synod in October 1986) of Islam as a "false" religion that constituted a danger to Christianity in South Africa, Africa and in the entire Christian world. Moreover, the Synod directed a call to all the church members to pursue "evangelism" as an antidote to the challenge and spread of Islam in South Africa. The Synod also condemned political apartheid which could no longer be legitimized by the Bible. Nevertheless by its declaration against Islam, the NGK reinforced "spiritual apartheid" which rested on the central Christian belief that Jesus Christ was the only Lord and Saviour (Chidester 1987:83).

The NGK's declaration caused an unprecedented reaction in the Muslim world; among theologians, other Christian churches, and the religious traditions. Some members of the NGK attempted to defend the declaration by clarifying that it should be understood in a particular context; that of the rapid spread of Islam among Africans and that only in this context should it be viewed as a "threat". Moreover, the Synod's view of Islam as a "false" religion should not be regarded as 'an "affront to Muslims" because any religion that does not accept Christ as the only saviour is a false religion' (Chidester 1987:83). This implied that spiritual exclusion represented here by the NGK was also indirectly extended to the other religions in South Africa such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or the Chinese religions which did not accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Others, like the ministers of the NG Sendingkerk and 55 of its members distanced themselves from the statement. In the Muslim community, strong reaction came from the Muslim Youth Movement and other associations, which organized meetings and rallies to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. They were supported by other religions and interfaith organizations such as the WCRP-SA. In addition, many influential Christian figures such as Allen Boesak, Beyers Naudé, and many others condemned the declaration (Haron 2006:450-451).

The declaration and its condemnation had an interesting impact on interfaith relations in South Africa. Firstly, the entire situation indicated that the NGK had never been interested in real dialogue with Islam in South Africa. Secondly, while the NGK believed that the declaration would unite Christian churches in the fight against Islam, it led instead to the opposite reaction; it divided them even more. Thirdly, the NGK's stand led to a closer relationship between the majority of oppressed Christians and the Muslim community throughout the country. Finally, it raised a fruitful interreligious debate in the media (local newspapers) and in academia (universities and academic papers) (Haron 2006:451-452).

8.1.8 Pluralist stands of Gerrie Lubbe and Farid Esack

In response to the NGK's declaration and the various events in the 1980s, a number of Christian theologians began to demonstrate how to remain faithful Christians and at the same time establish a good relationship with others. One of them, a frequently quoted author in this analysis, was Gerrie Lubbe an academic and an Afrikaner pastor of the black Via Christi Community of the Reformed tradition in Lenasia (Johannesburg). While remaining a faithful Christian, Lubbe, in his pastoral approach and academic career, opted for building bridges between Christians and religious minorities, especially the Muslim community in South Africa. Although he came across some understandable suspicion and opposition in the Muslim community because of past history, he remained firm in his positive approach, in dialogue and cooperation with Muslims. Lubbe produced a number of articles ("Islam in SA – enemy or ally?"[1984], "Christians, Muslims and liberation in South Africa" [1986], "Muslims and Christians in South Africa" [1986]), in which he argued that Christians and Muslims could cooperate in the same struggle against the regime. However, he remained critical of the kind of Islam which envisaged placing the Muslim community in a position of advantage in the future South Africa. Similarly, he was equally critical of Christian exclusivism, calling for an open dialogue and closer collaboration with other religions, especially Islam (Haron 2006:452).

A similar pluralist approach was that of Farid Esack, a progressive Muslim, who had studied theology in Pakistan and who remained an active member of the MYMSA. He had always shown signs of openness and tolerance in his approach to Christians and all those who thought differently in religious matters. Haron writes that for Esack it was apparent that the fact that Muslims were not allowed to accept the different theological views held by Christians did not exclude the possibility of interacting and socializing with them (:453). Nevertheless, it was his Pakistani experience that further shaped his attitude of openness towards other believers. In Pakistan, Esack found the opposite situation to that of South Africa. In South Africa Muslims constituted the real minority and suffered under apartheid as a religious group. In Pakistan, it was the Christians who were discriminated against in the context of the predominantly Muslim society. Through personal contacts with Christians and his experience of apartheid in South Africa, Esack became theologically sensitive to religious intolerance and discrimination. He became one of the Muslim theologians who laid the foundations for a Muslim liberation theology built on the Exodus metaphor in the Qur'an (Clohessy 2006b:81). In a number of articles and unpublished manuscripts,[20] he expressed his basic ideas and advocated Christian-Muslim relations (Esack 1997:38-39,61-70). Generally, Esack should be regarded as a Muslim scholar who promoted a theology of religious pluralism.

8.1.9 A more positive shift in relations between Muslims and Christians in the 1990s

For centuries the relations between Muslims and Christians in South Africa had been characterized by suspicion, intolerance, and exclusion. Even if a positive relationship was established at certain historical moments, it remained limited and still exclusivist as the relationship between the powerful and the powerless, the dominating and the dominated, the majority and the minority.

This unequal relationship between the two religious groups was therefore closely linked to the political scene and further reinforced by many Christians through their support and justification of the discriminatory acts and policies legalized by the constitution. It was true that Muslims were not restricted in their worship and practice. They were allowed to build their places of prayer and to assemble for religious activities. They could also give religious instruction to their adherents and continue their missionary work, yet they were still not free because, as a minority, they saw the situation differently. Muslims in South Africa felt that they were merely tolerated. This feeling was the result of the difference between theory and practice, for in daily life religion and racism were interconnected. This close link between religious and racial issues led to the experience of bias towards Muslims as a religious minority, being 'understood and interpreted as an experience of religious prejudice' (Lubbe 1986b:30). To balance the entire picture, it must also be admitted that Muslims themselves were to be blamed. For many years, both during the colonial and apartheid times, Muslims behaved as a "hermetic group", closed to outsiders, as people 'obsessed with the preservation of their own cultural and ethnic identities and [had] thus prevented outsiders from making meaningful contact' (:33).

In the common struggle, there were moments when relationships between the two religious groups became open and warmer, generating inclusivist and even pluralist approaches to each other. However, this should be seen as a consequence of attitudes and the religious thinking of a limited number of individuals. On the one hand, therefore, centuries of "parallel" existence had scarcely brought Christians and Muslims closer to each other. On the other hand, the socio-political struggle and the unique political situation prepared the ground for change in their relations. Although this began in the 1980s, it only materialized after the transformation in the 1990s when the new challenges engaged Christians and Muslims in the process of improving the lives of many South Africans. The political demise of apartheid laid the foundations for the development of a democratic society. South Africans decided to take their destiny in their own hands and the numerous diverse cultures and religions engaged in reconstructing the nation at many levels. What was positively surprising in this new context was the beginning of a peaceful co-existence of the diverse religions. In a society with equal rights for all, Islam and Christianity had to find their own place. Both groups

began to face the same demands, namely new social openness, religious pluralism and multiculturalism, all of which required special adjustments, while processes like reconstruction and nation-building forced them to adapt further.

In comparison with the past when the Muslim community was marginalized and alienated, this was the first time in history that Muslims had felt included in the above processes as equal partners even if they still needed to discover how they should 'formulate and exercise their right to be treated the same as all other citizens and at the same time insist on their right to be different' (Moosa 1995:152). Christians had to find a much more neutral place and, at the same time, remain supportive of and cooperate with the new government. They also gave the impression of being more inclusive and seeking encounter with other believers in addressing social issues. Indeed, both religions realized that they were called to play a positive role in South African society and that they would be more successful if both religious traditions decided to cooperate more closely.

It would be naïve, however, to think that all exclusivist stands had been eliminated in the 1990s. Indeed, there were still individuals and groups in Muslim and Christian communities which remained exclusive. Attitudes of exclusion were evident in various Christian missionary groups such as the "Life Challenge Africa" (LCA)[21] or the "Christians Concerned for Muslims" (CCM)[22] which focused on the conversion of Muslims. Yet equally, on the Muslim side, such organizations as the Murabitun Movement[23] continually rejected religious pluralism and interfaith cooperation as a valuable way of engaging in reconstruction. On the positive side, the missionary-minded individuals and organized groups began to realize that they were no longer able to hold on to the past ideas of converting others to their communities and to claim monopoly for "absolute truth" in their own religious traditions. They also became aware that similar claims existed in other religions. Mutual collaboration among religions in the struggle allowed those exclusivists to realize that religious diversity was a real undeniable phenomenon in South Africa (Haron 2006:460-461).

In the new millennium, there are still exclusive individuals and groups which have not been entirely marginalized, yet their influence has diminished to such an extent that they cannot disrupt interreligious initiatives. One of the interfaith religious bodies which contributed to these positive developments was the National Religious Leaders' Forum[24] which decided to meet regularly with the South African President and to discuss social, political, and religious issues. This single example points to numerous others which show that after the collapse of the system all parties, that is, the democratic government, the Muslim community, the Christian churches, and the other believers began to see religious pluralism both as a theological challenge and as an advantage to South African society. The shift from the missionary view that all religions apart from one's own were

"false" to a position of acceptance, respect, and tolerance towards others had increasingly begun to take place. This shift was further secured by the Bill of Rights which guaranteed protection of rights of individuals, entire ethnic groups and religious traditions.[25]

At present, it seems that the atmosphere of freedom and the new democratic order further encourages and advances mutual collaboration among religions in the process of transformation. A question remains whether the painful past and the new demands can in any meaningful way lead to a greater understanding and real encounter between Islam and Christianity. Many signs on both sides indicate goodwill and a readiness to cooperate. Mutual understanding, coexistence and informal collaboration have become possible. But there are also signs which indicate that prejudices and suspicion between the Muslim community and the Christian churches remain real and will not easily be overcome. Which of Dupuis's proposals could advance cooperation between Muslims and Christians regarding the same social, political, and religious challenges? Is there any theological basis for mutual encounter of the two religious traditions?

8.2 Possible application of Dupuis's proposals for dialogue with Muslims in South Africa
8.2.1 Theological basis for dialogue – the Second Vatican Council in relation to Islam

Starting from a theological basis, a foundation for dialogue exists in the Christian theology of religions. In the second half of the twentieth century, all the main line Christian churches have moved from an attitude of exclusion to an appreciation of religious diversity. They have attempted to establish good relations with those who believe differently. Nevertheless, an investigation of areas of departure for dialogue with Islam in all Christian churches is too vast and beyond the scope of this project. Therefore an examination of a "common ground" between Islam and Christianity in South Africa has to be limited to the Roman Catholic perspective. As has been pointed out, such a theological basis for dialogue with world religions is apparent both in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents to which Dupuis quite often refers in his proposals. Such a theological basis for dialogue with other religions, including Islam, is also present in the documents of the South African Catholic Church.

In the conciliar documents Islam occupies "first place" among the non-biblical monotheistic religions, that is, those who adore and recognize as their Creator the same God (LG 16). In addition, the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* states that the church looks upon Muslims 'with esteem' (NA 3). This statement is especially significant when one considers all the tensions and conflicts in the history of relations between Christians and Muslims. Other general affirmations of the Declaration should also be applied to Islam. The world religions provide answers for the fundamental questions of human existence (NA 1). The church rejects nothing that is "true" and "holy" in those religions (NA 2). For

this reason Christians (Catholics) are called to engage 'into discussion and collaboration' (NA 2) with other believers (Fitzgerald 2003:182-183; 2006:12).

Moreover, the Council speaks of positive values not only in the religious life of other believers but also in their traditions. In relation to Islam, these values are common adoration of 'the one merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day' (LG 16). This Council's statement that both religions are monotheistic is open to challenge. On the one hand, some Christians refuse to admit that Muslims recognize the same God because Islam rejects the Trinitarian character of God. On the other hand, for the same reasons, some Muslims refuse to recognize Christians as real monotheists. A dialogue between the two requires clarification 'that a different perception of God does not destroy the unity of belief in one God' (Fitzgerald 2003:183).

Furthermore, the Council affirms that Muslims believe in God 'who has spoken to men' (NA 3) without giving any clarification as to how Islam understands God's communication with humanity. The Council also states that Muslims venerate Jesus as a prophet without acknowledging his divinity. They honour the Virgin Mary as his mother. Neither *Nostra Aetate* nor *Lumen Gentium*, nor any other document mentions the role of Muhammad. Muslims regard this "absence" as a disappointment (Siddiqui 1997:35). At present, Christians can only acknowledge Muhammad's ordinary prophetic role while Muslims attribute to Muhammad a definitive role in bringing God's revelation to humanity. According to Fitzgerald, because of this difference in belief, the Council decided to remain silent (Fitzgerald 2003:183; 2006:14-15).

Concerning other values, a special emphasis is placed on a common faith linked with Abraham as a model of upright life. Regarding concrete ways of worshiping God special emphasis is placed on three of the five "pillars" of Islam, namely, prayer, almsgiving and fasting (NA 3). The Council is silent on the first pillar, namely, witness, perhaps because it is linked with the profession of faith in Muhammad as God's Messenger. It is also silent on the fifth pillar: pilgrimage. This is also because of the intimate connection of pilgrimage to Mecca with Muhammad. Indeed, all these areas of belief constitute a working material for dialogue between Christians and Muslims which call for examination of both similarities and differences (Fitzgerald 2003:183).

8.2.2 The post-conciliar church teaching

Since the Second Vatican Council the progress in the official church teaching about Islam has been limited. Nevertheless, the Popes still backed the Council's vision of the need for Christian-Muslim dialogue. Moreover, the Popes gave practical examples that such dialogue should be further encouraged. Pope Paul VI while visiting Uganda in 1969, celebrated Mass in Namugongo where the

Martyrs of Uganda were burned to death. Addressing the Muslim communities of Uganda, the pope referred to 'those confessors of the Muslim faith who were the first to suffer death, in the year 1848, for refusing to transgress the precepts of their religion' (Gioia 1997 no.263). This statement is a sign of the "unity of witness" anticipated in the "unity of martyrdom" to which John Paul II often referred (Fitzgerald 2003:184).

Generally, the teaching of John Paul II on relations with other religions has significantly contributed to establishing the theological basis for interfaith dialogue as an integral part of the church's mission (Dupuis 1997:360; 2002a:223). This can be seen in various moments of papal ministry, such as the pope's address to the people of Asia in 1981 when he emphasized the need for prayer as a unique way to unite Christians and other believers. Prayer is regarded here as the locus of the presence of the Spirit (ND 1040). Christians must therefore commit themselves to dialogue with other believers for the sake of the growth of mutual understanding, collaboration, strengthening of moral values in order to praise God in the whole of creation (ND 1040; 5). The same call is repeated in the pope's speech to the Roman Curia in 1986 (22 December).

One of the most important events concerning dialogue was the World Day of Prayer for Peace, in Assisi, October 27, 1986. It greatly encouraged mutual relations among religions. Although few Muslims attended this event, they responded more openly on subsequent occasions. In this regard, one needs to mention the Prayer for Peace in Europe in the context of the Balkans War (January 1993), and the Day of Prayer for Peace in the world (January 24, 2002). This was regarded by many commentators as a sign of greater openness by Muslims towards Christians and confidence in mutual relations (Fitzgerald 2003:182).

Concerning Islam, John Paul II strongly encouraged dialogue with Muslims by appealing to Christians 'to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite [Christians and Muslims]' (Gioia 1997 no. 339).[26] Similarly John Paul II speaks of "brotherhood" between Christians and Muslims based on common faith in God (Fitzgerald 2003:184). A reference to this idea is seen in the pope's speech to Muslims in the Philippines in February 1981:

> I deliberately address you as brothers; that is certainly what we are, because we are members of the same human family, whose efforts, whether people realize it or not, tend towards God and the truth that comes from him. But we are especially brothers in God who created us and whom we are trying to reach, in our own ways, through faith, prayer and worship, through the keeping of his law and through submission to his designs (Gioia 1997 no. 363).

What is significant in this address is the concept of "brotherhood" which in the early Christian tradition was reserved exclusively for Christians, and even today many Christians would never

acknowledge Muslims as "brothers". Nevertheless, the unity of humanity in origin and destiny is a concept to which the pope referred quite often in his speeches as a real basis for dialogue (Fitzgerald 2003:185; 2006:20). Dupuis draws his proposals for inclusive pluralism from this same concept while speaking of a unified history of revelation and salvation. For both the pope and Dupuis this concept is the true foundation for dialogue.

The only negative statement by John Paul II concerning the Muslim tradition is the following:

> Whoever knows the Old and the New Testaments, and then reads the Koran, clearly sees the process by which it completely reduces Divine Revelation. It is impossible not to note the movement away from what God said about Himself, first in the Old Testament through the Prophets, and then finally in the New Testament through His Son. In Islam all the richness of God's self-revelation, which constitutes the heritage of the Old and the Testaments, has definitively been set aside (John Paul II 1994a:92).

Some commentators write that in this statement, the pope meant 'a radical difference between the Bible and the Qur'an' (Kasimow 1999:15). One must also consider the character of this statement which appeared in one of the pope's books entitled *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994) and therefore cannot be regarded as his official teaching.

Concerning the Founder of Islam, John Paul II indirectly refers to Muhammad when he speaks of the universal action of the Spirit in relation to all the founders of religions during the General Audience on September 9, 1998:

> It must be kept in mind that every quest of the human spirit for truth and goodness, and in the last analysis for God, is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The various religions arose precisely from this primordial human openness to God. At their origins we often find founders who, with the help of God Spirit, achieved a deeper religious experience. Handed on to others, this experience took form in the doctrines, rites and precepts of the various religions (PCID 1999:13).

One needs to examine this statement further in order to establish to what extent it refers to Muhammad.

Finally, John Paul II visited al-Azhar, Cairo, on the 24th of February 2000, where he received a warm reception. This has led to an annual commemoration of that day. Another important visit was that to the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus in the Spring of 2001. Its significance lay in the fact that for the first time ever the Head of the Roman Catholic Church had entered a Muslim place of worship (Fitzgerald 2003:184).

With respect to the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI, he should most certainly be seen as the supporter of dialogue with Islam since this is the direction which the Catholic Church took at the last

Council. In spite of this, during the meeting with the representatives of science at the University of Regensburg, the pope included in his public lecture[27] "anti-Qur'anic citations" which made him the "father" of unrest in Christian-Muslim relations for a while. Later the pope regretted this unfortunate "awkwardness" and apologized to the Muslim community world-wide.[28] This was done as early as September 25, 2006, when Pope Benedict XVI held an audience with Muslim diplomats, ambassadors of Muslim countries and members of the Consulta Islamica.

The meeting was an effort to repair relations with the Muslim community and a sign that dialogue is returning to normal after moments of misunderstanding. During the session, Pope Benedict XVI repeated his conviction that dialogue between Muslims and Christians is 'a vital necessity' for the good of a world marked by relativism which 'excludes the transcendence and universality of reason'.[29] At this meeting, Pope Benedict expressed 'all the esteem and the profound respect [which he has] for Muslim believers'.[30] Among the ambassadors invited were those from Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Morocco and many other nations and Islamic groups.[31]

8.2.3 The church's position on dialogue with Islam in Africa and South Africa

In Africa and South Africa, the official document which addresses the issue of interreligious dialogue is "The Post-Synodal Exhortation on Church in Africa" (*Ecclesia in Africa*) [1995]. The exhortation constitutes general guidelines for the church in Africa and its engagement in relations with the world religions with special attention to Islam and African traditional religions.[32] The document refers to the faith of Abraham and the common belief in the One Living God that unites Christians and Muslims. The purpose of dialogue with Islam is to bear witness to the one God through respect of each other's values and beliefs and through 'working together for human progress and development at all levels' (EA 66). Islamic-Christian dialogue in particular should pay attention to religious freedom and avoiding 'false irrenicism or militant fundamentalism' (EA 66).

In South Africa, interfaith contacts are regulated by the previously mentioned document "Fruitful Encounter" (1997). The document repeats the same theological basis and principles for interreligious dialogue which can be found in the documents of the Council (LG,GS,AG,NA,DH) as well as the documents of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.[33] What is new in "Fruitful Encounter", and relates to the South African context, are two sections which speak of challenges posed to all religions in South Africa and the pastoral application of the guidelines. The document distinguishes between traditional religion and culture in Africa, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism (FE 7). The document does not speak directly of dialogue with Islam but of dialogue with all the religions mentioned. Nevertheless, the church's call to mutual engagement with

religions also includes Muslims. The guidelines should therefore be regarded as a valid basis for encounter with the Muslim community in South Africa as with any other religion.

In addition to the "Fruitful Encounter", there are other initiatives in South Africa which aim at advancing mutual relations and bringing believers of the two religions closer. For example, the Department for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue of the SACBC was established which also functions as a working committee for relations between Christians and Muslims. This Department is responsible for the practical implementation of Islamic-Christian dialogue and for helping the Christian communities to show openness towards Muslims. In addition, the Department created a space for basic information about Islam in the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in South Africa and reserved time (twice a year) for considering interreligious issues. Concerning the Pastoral Plan, one still needs to elaborate on a means of communicating this information without falling into defensive apologetics, as was the case in the past (interview with Archbishop George Daniel).[34] Another positive sign that Muslim-Catholic relations are important for the church is the education program in Catholic institutions, such as major seminaries, which includes an introduction to Islam embodied in the introduction to world religions. This is certainly the case at the St Joseph's Catholic Institute at Cedara and at St Francis Xavier Seminary in the Cape Town (interview with Arch George Daniel).

All this leads to the conclusion that, as numerous church documents indicate, a theological foundation for dialogue with Islam is a reality, both in the wider context and in the South African situation of religious diversity. Despite this, further awareness is needed concerning the dispositions for and obstacles to, such dialogue. This is where some of Dupuis's proposals, which were constructed for conversations with religions in the wider context, can help.

8.2.4 Dispositions for dialogue with Islam

One of the dispositions which Dupuis applies to dialogue with any religion including Islam is a balanced attitude and the need to overcome past prejudices. Concerning Islam, before engaging in any conversations, Christians need to overcome views of Islam as a fatalistic, legalistic, or fanatical religion, always ready to launch a "holy" war; or that all Muslims need to be feared because they are "terrorists" (Borrmans 1990:70-77). Dupuis further insists that one should avoid any ingenuity and dishonesty (Dupuis 2002a:228). Christians regard certain aspects of Islam as incompatible with Christianity. There are beliefs in other religious traditions which correspond with Christian beliefs, can be integrated with Christian faith, and serve mutual enrichment. There are also elements of faith in other traditions, including Islam, which formally contradict Christian faith and cannot be absorbed by it. Concerning Islam, one cannot ignore certain 'radical elements in Muslim societies,

from which Muslims themselves suffer…' (Fitzgerald 2003:188). Yet despite the impossibility of absolute assimilation of beliefs in other religions and Christianity, interreligious dialogue calls for all partners to 'make a positive effort to enter into each other's religious experience and overall vision, insofar as possible' (Dupuis 2005:29).

A further condition for fruitful dialogue which Dupuis's theology emphasizes is religious conviction (Dupuis 2002a:228). Christians engaging in dialogue with Muslims should not compromise their faith, that is, they should have the courage 'to give witness to their faith in Jesus Christ' (Fitzgerald 2003:188). The converse is also true; Muslims in dialogue should preserve their religious convictions and identity. Is it therefore possible to hold on to the claim of Jesus as the "constitutive" Saviour and, at the same time engage in a sincere dialogue with Muslims? Some theologians (Hick or Knitter) argue that the "constitutive" uniqueness of Jesus Christ and inclusivist theology in general cannot form part of a genuine dialogue.[35] Dupuis believes otherwise: that such dialogue is possible although one needs to distinguish and understand its different aspects. These different aspects are, on the one hand, commitment, openness to dialogue, and personal faith and, on the other hand, the experience of the "other" (Dupuis 2005:26-27).

Dupuis disagrees, however, that in dialogue one should suspend one's own faith in order to rediscover the other faith through dialogue alone. He argues that 'honesty and sincerity in the dialogue specifically require that the various partners enter it and commit themselves to it in the integrity of their faith' (Dupuis 2002a:228; 2005:27). Faith is therefore an important element in dialogue which allows one to preserve one's own identity and specific character. It is a gift from God which cannot be compromised or exchanged as an article for sale. In fact, faith is not negotiable in dialogue. Similarly, the integrity of interreligious dialogue does not permit jeopardizing faith as this would result either in "syncretism" (overcoming differences and divisions among religions by reducing the content of faith), or "eclecticism" (combining into one incoherent mixture different elements from different religions for the sake of looking for a common ground). Both of these shortcuts 'would amount to cheating and would actually end by depriving the dialogue of its object' (Dupuis 1997:378). Preserving and respecting differences in dialogue allows the partner to question his/her own faith in the light of the personal beliefs of the other. Dupuis writes: 'It is in this fidelity to personal, non-negotiable convictions, honestly accepted on both sides, that the interreligious dialogue takes place "between equals" – in their difference' (:379). Nevertheless, although a genuine and serious dialogue forbids compromising deep convictions and essential beliefs of their faith, full openness of such dialogue requires that relative elements of one's faith be not absolutized (Dupuis 2002a:229).

The final condition, particularly emphasized by "Dialogue and Proclamation" and reaffirmed by Dupuis, is the search for truth. Because of a strong belief in Jesus Christ as the Son and the only Saviour of humanity, Christians might tend to feel superior. They need to remember that the above Christian belief does not guarantee that individual Christians possess that truth, especially when one considers that 'truth is not a thing [we] can possess, but a person [Jesus Christ] by whom we must allow ourselves to be possessed' (DP 49). Christians regard themselves not as "People of the Book", as Muslims might think, but as followers of a person, Jesus Christ. Muslims are also in danger of thinking that they are superior. This is based on their conviction that the Muslim community exclusively possesses the final revelation. Both sides need to remember that God is much greater that anything people can produce, even if this "product" is in the form of sacred scriptures inspired by God. Both partners need to remember that God alone is the one who is calling us to God-self. For this reason dialogue should be viewed as a common search for truth that is God alone (Fitzgerald 2003:188-189).

What Dupuis writes regarding the dispositions and demands of dialogue for the wider context are also relevant and applicable to relations between Christians and Muslims in South Africa. A question which arises in the South African context is who should initiate these relations, Muslims or Christians? Many years ago, Garrie Lubbe made a valuable point that a special responsibility for establishing a meaningful dialogue rests on both sides, although more openness and inclusion is expected from Christians as the religious majority. He points out that egalitarianism rather than mere tolerance is the real basis for such mutual encounter. Muslims have to be regarded as a creative and dynamic segment of society and its main contributors (Lubbe 1986b:33). Nevertheless, Muslim religious leaders should also overcome fears and complexes which do not allow them to engage in dialogue as equal partners.

8.2.5 Formal and doctrinal dialogue with Islam in South Africa
8.2.5.1 Dialogue at the official level

The above official statements, events and dispositions illustrate that dialogue between Christians and Muslims is possible and that such dialogue on the Christian (Catholic) side can become genuine. The question remains whether such encounter between the two religions in South Africa exists at the official and doctrinal levels, and if not, which of Dupuis's proposals could generate means for establishing it. In the democratic South Africa, both Christians and Muslims live side by side on a daily basis without any major conflict. Indeed, they cannot allow themselves the luxury of excluding each other in the struggle for social reconstruction which demands their combined energies on various levels. Can they, however, create in their respective faiths a space for a new type of co-

existence based on official conversations and acceptance of their differences, and on mutual collaboration which also includes cooperation with the other religious traditions?

This research shows no evidence of any Christian official dialogue with the Muslim community in South Africa. The reason for this is the history of mutual relations between Muslims, Christians and other believers in this country which was discussed previously. It was suggested that the focus of the main line Christian churches in South Africa has been different from the official conversations with other believers including Muslims. Some of the churches are still in the process of addressing their own divisions within their own particular ecclesial communities. Others, such as the Roman Catholic Church, have not yet engaged in official dialogue with Muslims for various reasons.

An interview with Archbishop George Daniel of Pretoria, who is responsible for dialogue with the Christian churches and the world religions on behalf of the SACBC, reveals that one cannot yet speak of any formal interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam in South Africa. Such dialogue, in terms of organized meetings between religious leaders with a view to reaching a closer understanding on the essential tenets of our respective faiths, has not happened. Neither is there evidence of any formal groups on both sides who meet to explain to one another their religious convictions. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the lack of "representativeness" on the Muslim side concerning dialogue "at the top" which would make contacts easier and the meetings official (interview with Archbishop Daniel). Indeed, this is a Christian view and needs explaining. Islam sees itself as a religion without hierarchy and official magisterium (Najran 2006:27-28). The Muslim partner in dialogue generally speaks only in his own name. If he ventures to dialogue with Christians, he does so either because his own personal prestige allows it, and he has no need to be concerned about what anybody thinks, or else he does so as the representative of a community to whom he is entirely answerable and by whom he can subsequently easily be disavowed.

Furthermore, despite the peaceful coexistence of the two faiths in South Africa, mutual prejudices and misrepresentations continue to prevail (interview with Abp Daniel). In this context one of the main obstacles is the socio-political factor (DP 52) which includes for instance majority-minority relations. Dialogue becomes difficult when partners in a minority or even a majority situation adopt a defensive or superior attitude (Fitzgerald 2003:189). The best example of this impediment is the existence of Muslims in colonial and apartheid South Africa and the present situation of Christian communities in some Islamic countries. The socio-political factor also involves burdens of the past, namely, the Crusades, colonialism, sanctioning of apartheid and so forth. These past "memories" still have the potential to rankle Muslims, but equally the practice of slavery by Muslims, which contributed to negative feelings toward Islam especially among many African nations, has the

potential to make Christians uneasy (Abdulaziz 1993:31-46).[36] Indeed, it might be difficult or even impossible to forget the past, but a combined attempt should be made to analyze the past. This would lead to a better understanding and even to "purification" of past relations (Fitzgerald 2003:189).

Dialogue between Christians and Muslims in South Africa requires an awareness of another sensitive issue, that is, their missionary character. Generally Islam and Christianity claim the same God and each has a missionary aim. This explains the tendency which prevails on the Muslim side to think that Christians enter into dialogue with the hidden agenda to convert Muslims to Christianity. The same suspicion is often directed towards the charitable activity of the Christian churches. The opposite is also true, Christians are suspicious that Muslims enter into dialogue only to strengthen the position of Muslim minorities in Christian countries which eventually might lead to domination by Islam. This thinking sometimes derives from a lack of reciprocity. Christians observe that Muslims demand religious freedom in Western countries while the same freedom is not granted to Christians in numerous Islamic states (:189).

On the one hand, the responsibility of every Muslim is to unite in the effort to bring all people to the definitive community (Muslim *umma*) of those who truly witness to God. On the other hand, Christianity, in its Catholic and Protestant expressions, regards itself as the place where God's salvation, through the event of Christ, exists and should be proclaimed to the entire human family. Because this "news of salvation" has been entrusted to the Christian community by Christ, this community feels that it is responsible to live it, celebrate it, and proclaim it to all people and thus contribute to the building of the ultimate society, that is, the Reign of God.

In this light despite the differences in their ultimate aims, both religions are alike in some ways. They seek to gather followers into their respective communities. The possibility exists that in mutual encounter a decision will be made to change religious affiliation. The possibility of conversion from one religion to another remains therefore real and both religions do not easily accept apostasy. For Muslims, not only does apostasy have serious religious consequences but also legal repercussions such as breaking up a marriage, losing inheritance rights or even exposing the convert's life to danger. The Roman Catholic Church also imposes on the apostate the severe canonical sanction of excommunication, (CIC–Canon Law nos. 751 and 1364) the only difference being that this penalty does not have any legal or civil consequences. Indeed, the question of conversion will reappear in mutual relations between Islam and Christianity (Fitzgerald 2003:187).

This question will reappear also in the South African context. Yet in South Africa, both Islam and Christianity must still remember that the religious landscape in this country concerns several other religious traditions. Thus despite their missionary zeal, both religions must remain inclusive and invite the various and numerous religions which coexist on the same soil to cooperation. They must pay special attention to African traditional religion, even if the latter is currently in decline. Islam and Christianity must respect religious pluralism as "a fact". The above differences indicate that official dialogue between Christians and Muslims can be difficult not only because of doctrinal divergence but also because of some real obstacles, including the missionary character of both religions. In initiating dialogue the partners should remain realistic yet not afraid of the mentioned difficulties. Hence these numerous stumbling blocks call first for clarification in conversations. Many of them are the result of a lack of understanding of the true nature and goal of interreligious dialogue and require constant explanation.

At the international level progress in dialogue between Muslims and Christians is evident. On the Muslim side, religious bodies have emerged such as the International Islamic Forum for Dialogue, the Islamic-Catholic Liason Committee, or the Permanent Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue with Monotheistic Religions. They constitute concrete examples that the Muslim community has created its own structure for dialogue. These religious bodies enabled Catholics and Muslims to make joint statements on issues such as the defence of family values during the UN Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994) or the condemnation of terrorism in response to the September 11, 2001 events (Fitzgerald 2003:187,189-190).

In South Africa, because of the past socio-political situation and religious exclusivism, it is important that the principles concerning mutual relations between Christians and Muslims remain clear and accepted by both sides in order to prevent, in day-to-day life, the re-emergence of old prejudices and mistrust. Indeed, upholding mutual suspicion and mistrust, while at the same time ignoring the existing barriers, would lead to missing the opportunity to respond to the transformation which South African society is experiencing at the moment. Both religions would become irrelevant in this new context.

Consequently, it would be equally overoptimistic to say that in South Africa at the present moment both Christians and Muslims debate religious questions on a daily basis; in the office, the village square, or the market place and thus the religious debate is inseparable from the rest of life. Such a dialogue is at the initial stage. Nevertheless, a kind of informal dialogue might exist somewhere which might show what is happening in practice between Christians (Catholics) and Muslims and which goes beyond the level of protocol and the exchange of formal greetings and courtesy. An

example of such practical dialogue could be the contacts with various Muslim communities established by the Damietta project. This will be discussed later. Yet one cannot say that there are official joint initiatives undertaken by the Catholic Church and the Muslim community which directly concentrate on reconstruction and nation-building (interview with Abp Daniel).

8.2.5.2 Dialogue at the doctrinal level

Remaining realistic, an application of Dupuis's doctrinal concepts for dialogue with the religions including Islam, in South Africa remains limited for a number of reasons. Dupuis's proposals constitute an intra-dialogue on religions directed first to the officials of the Roman Catholic Church, theologians and lay Christians. This also means that the language, structure, and content of his proposals are "narrowly" Catholic. Only later, could his proposals possibly be viewed as an intra-Christian dialogue directed to all Christians. It is doubtful whether the other Christian churches would easily accept Dupuis's theological ideas. Moreover, his proposals should not be viewed as directed to representatives of other religions. Dupuis had no intention to suggest that his doctrinal ideas be an agenda for dialogue with Islam or with any other religious tradition.

Furthermore, there are differences between the two religions which constitute a real barrier for mutual engagement at the doctrinal level both in the wider, and in the South African, contexts. An open and positive approach to other religions, including Islam, cannot overlook the contradictions which exist between them and the Christian faith. Applying this to Islam, one would have to point to concepts and beliefs which indicate that Dupuis's doctrinal propositions would be rejected by the Muslim side. These are his proposal of a unified religious history of revelation and salvation, his idea of relational interdependence of Christianity and other religions, his proposal for understanding the Trinitarian character of God's saving action, or the concept of viewing other religions as "participated" ways to salvation.

The difficulty in applying such concepts is even more apparent in the existing tension in the Qur'anic revelation concerning its teachings on the divine plan for humanity which is reserved exclusively for the Muslim community (*umma*) and the plurality of religious paths; on Islam as the only "perfect" and valid religion and other religious traditions having only a temporary character (Q 5:3; 5:48; 9:29). According to the Qur'an all religions except Islam constitute only a type of "God's design" which is to be assimilated into Islam with the help of the *umma*. A similar ambiguous stand on Christianity and other religions exists in the Muslim *hadith* (tradition). This tension concerning the relationship between Islam and religious plurality, and the ambiguous treatment of Christianity and Judaism is explained clearly by Chris Clohessy in his essay entitled "The Project of God: Muhammad the *ahl al-kitab*" (2006a:33-55).

Bearing this in mind, the most difficult among the Christian doctrinal beliefs, concerning official talks with Muslims representatives, will be the Christian belief in the Trinity and the Christological question, that is, Jesus' divinity, his death on the cross, his resurrection and the uniqueness and universality of Christ's redeeming work extended to all of humanity. For example, the normative Islamic exegesis of the Qur'an (4:157-158) denies Jesus' death on the cross, emphasizing that Jesus was substituted at that particular moment by a likeness (*shabah*). In his essay entitled "A Muslim speaks to Christians", Najran attempts to give a more inclusive understanding of Jesus' divinity, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension (2006:30-31,29,25-27). This however should be regarded as an overoptimistic interpretation of the above Christian beliefs in comparison with the normative teaching of the majority of Islamic scholars.

One can still look for a point of departure in Christian-Muslim talks concerning the person of Jesus. Christians can find an inspiration or a new insight in their reflection of the Islamic view of Jesus in the Qur'an, in tradition and in the daily experience of many contemporary Muslims. Although the figure of Jesus is understood and approached differently by Muslims and Christians, this can still lead to dialogue on such issues as the purpose of God's revelation to humanity, the way God communicated God's-self, the human reception of God's word, and Jesus as someone who has a particular relationship with the Word of God in the process of transmission (Shomali 2006:63-64; Najran 2006:29-30). This last issue of Jesus' identity might be especially important because both Muslims and Christians recognize him as the Son of Mary whom the Muslims esteem (Shomali 2006:57-62; Najran 2006:25). Thus Jesus belongs to a common spiritual inheritance and for this reason is acknowledged by Muslims. Consequently respecting the final identity which each group attributes to Christ could lead to mutual enrichment especially since Jesus is viewed as the witness and model of the values of faith, submission, love and sacrifice.

Furthermore, Christians would agree that encounter with Islam might have enriching and purifying effects on them. For instance, the faith of Muslims points more clearly than Christianity does to divine transcendence. The Muslims are less inclined to emphasize the Incarnation as something taken for granted. In addition 'Christians can be challenged by the firmness of faith of Muslims and their readiness to express their faith in public' (Fitzgerald 2003:186). Muslims take fasting more seriously; it is a way of purifying the human spirit which enables a person to establish a better contact with the divine.

In trying to apply Dupuis's theology to dialogue with Muslims one cannot extrapolate from the above differences and similarities in understanding, because dialogue should not be mere ac-

commodation but should also include a critical approach and should still be aware of the existing points of departure.

In South Africa, Catholic-Muslim relations at the doctrinal level remain a possibility. In addition, even if such a possibility of theological conversations did exist, it would require a clarification of historical aspects of mutual relations between the two religions and purification of the past memories. The theological encounter would further require working out a basis for mutual conversations which would be 'different from the classical Islamic interpretation…' of Christian beliefs (Clohessy 2006a:55). Such a foundation can be constructed on concepts and writings of numerous Islamic scholars who represent a more inclusive view of Christianity and religious plurality (:49-54). Finally, even at international level the only agreement which Muslim-Christian dialogue has so far reached is the formal recognition of the common Abrahamic ancestry of the two faiths and hence their historical and theoretical kinship.

8.2.5.3 Dupuis's concept of dialogue as mutual conversion to God

Considering all the above obstacles in implementing Dupuis's doctrinal proposals, one should rather pay attention to practical forms of dialogue between Christians and Muslims in South Africa. The tension which might exist in contacts between these two religious groups could be greatly diminished by Dupuis's inclusive understanding of the relationship between proclamation and dialogue. It seems that neither Christianity nor Islam would easily compromise their missionary aspect. It appears that the most valuable element in Dupuis's concept of interreligious dialogue lies in his emphasis on the Christocentric and regnocentric role of the church which further explores the church's evangelizing mission and its openness to others.

The fact that nowadays dialogue is an integral part of the church's mission is a remarkable step forward in the post-conciliar mission theology. This step forward is apparent mainly in the church documents of the 1980s and in the 1990s. One needs to mention such leading documents as "Dialogue and Mission" (1984), *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), "Dialogue and Proclamation" (1991) and the pope's speeches on various occasions (Dupuis 2005:21). For Dupuis the most important document concerning the new understanding of dialogue is "Dialogue and Proclamation" (DP) which engages in four areas: the theological basis for dialogue, dialogue in the church's mission, its purpose, and relationship between dialogue and proclamation. As indicated in the early part of this study, according to the document, dialogue and proclamation are two means of the church's evangelizing mission but dialogue cannot replace proclamation and constitute the entire church's mission. In reality, it must always remain oriented towards proclamation, give witness to Christian faith, and share the Gospel values (DP 82-84).

What is most valuable in this document for dialogue with Islam, and any other religion is that firstly it does not stress priority of proclamation over dialogue, that is, "preaching" to the other side with the intention of converting. Secondly, it is Christocentric and regnocentric with emphasis on the process of evangelization in general. Thirdly, it recognizes the validity of dialogue on its own (Dupuis 1997:368-369).[37] The purpose of such mutual encounter is 'to meet, to enter into collaboration, and to purify themselves in order to promote truth and life, holiness, justice, love and peace' (DP 80). Yet if dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church and dialogue in any other Christian church, does not mean converting other believers to the Christian flock, what is the purpose of the church's evangelizing mission? Dupuis's concept answers this question clearly: such purpose is mutual conversion of all partners to God.

Undoubtedly, the aim of dialogue cannot mean only mutual understanding and friendly relations, although they remain important for interfaith encounter, especially where Christian-Muslim relations are tense. In this situation, dialogue should attempt to discover the causes of these tensions which often are not religious but rather economic, social or political. Dialogue should go much deeper and should lead to a strengthening of one's religious commitment and should create a basis for a more generous response to God's personal call. This should be regarded as a process of mutual conversion to God. Both partners constitute for one another 'a sign leading to God' (Dupuis 1997:383). For Dupuis this call to "conversion" to God is seen as "mutual evangelization" which leads to a building up 'the universal communion which marks the advent of the Reign of God' (Dupuis 2002a:234). Even within the Islamic tradition there are spiritual writings which emphasize this constant process of conversion to the Divine. This takes place through the elimination of anything which threatens sincere devotion to God.

8.2.6 Dialogue at the practical level

In South Africa, dialogue between Christians and Muslims based on mutual conversion to God occurs in a common involvement in issues of human liberation and development, social justice and the reconstruction of society. It is only in this context that informal encounter between Christians and Muslims happens. It then takes place at the grassroots level which is precisely *the* place where one can discover what is already happening in practice between Christians and Muslims. Among the various forms of dialogue of which Dupuis speaks in his proposals: dialogue of life, dialogue of action, dialogue of theological exchange, and dialogue of religious experience, it is dialogue of action which is the most evident between Muslims and Christians in South Africa.

Dupuis encourages this form of dialogue when he speaks of practical engagement with other believers in addressing social and liberation concerns. A basic characteristic of this approach is that it is a never-ending process which gets its strength from the recognition that God acts in history everywhere. Its strength lies in its commitment to practical engagement which transcends any theological reflection. In various places around the world, the "praxis" approach has been shown to be the most powerful expression of Christianity. While the critique of this approach is positive within the Christians circles, Muslims also see it as an important way of making a contribution to the well-being of humanity. This type of dialogue is the most concrete, widespread, and basic way of conversing with others. It has existed in relations among religions in South Africa since the 1980s and especially since freedom in 1994. This new type of contact is also evident between Muslims and Christians.

In their mutual encounter in South Africa, Muslims and Christians can be allies in securing liberation and justice. There are many opportunities for Christians, Muslims and other believers to unite in seeking greater justice and to combat illness or poverty. Sometimes this common struggle is carried out in new groupings, where the particular faith of each individual is seen as the explicit basis of action. Since the democratic change there have been numerous cases of indirect collaboration between Christians and Muslims which give signs of hopes for a real partnership. The contacts described between Islam and Christianity in the past and the examples below of mutual collaboration at present reveal that a good partnership between the two religions is possible. It also shows that this form of relationship, based on common religious, political, and social involvement, has a real potential and future.

8.3 Concrete examples of dialogue of life and action between Muslims and Christians
8.3.1 A social movement - PAGAD

The first example of mutual engagement between Muslims and Christians after transformation was the formation, on the 9th of December 1995, of an organization called "People Against Gangsterism and Drugs" (PAGAD). Initially it united both Muslims and Christians. Although the majority of PAGAD members were Muslims, the group received the moral support of many grassroots Christian communities, especially because the problem of gangsterism and drugs gravely affected both cultural and religious groups.[38] The formation of PAGAD was a response to the inability of the regional Department of Safety and Security and other civil authorities to address the problem (Clohessy 1996:78).[39] There were even accusations that some members of the police force were directly involved in and supported criminal groups. Initially a small organization, PAGAD grew into a large movement whose extensive membership was evident especially during street marches. At one such march (in the Salt River area), the main leaders of PAGAD were surrounded by the police,

arrested, and accused of killing Rashied Staggie, the leader of a gang known as the "Hard Livings". Although many had disapproved of the manner in which Staggie had been killed, most people silently accepted this act as the only way of removing criminal gangs and stopping the inflow of drugs (Haron 2006:457).

The above unprecedented action undertaken by PAGAD, which at the time was strongly influenced by its growing radical leadership, led to criticism by Christian participants and the gradual withdrawal of Christian supporters. The organization then lost its initial Muslim-Christian character. By losing its interfaith flavour, PAGAD became a purely Muslim organization. Despite valid reservations about PAGAD, its formation was a positive response to social problems which affected various communities at the time. PAGAD's intention was to fight the problem of drugs and gangsterism on all fronts. Unfortunately, the organization later became very militant and its activities were restricted. PAGAD came to its end when the government called various religious leaders to address their own communities and to help to resolve social problems (:458). Whichever way one evaluates the activities of PAGAD, one must agree that the Christian involvement in PAGAD was 'one example of how certain religious groups [Muslim and Christian] forged interreligious connections and fraternities without having to reject their own religious traditions' (:458).[40]

8.3.2 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission[41]

Numerous commentators argue that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-1998) also contributed to interreligious cooperation in addressing the issue of reconciliation of post-apartheid society. The works of the TRC generated interfaith participation in this process. The main author of the commission's interfaith structure was Rev. Desmond Tutu who during apartheid was at the forefront of the struggle. The commission consisted of members from various religious backgrounds. The Muslim community was represented by Faizal Randaree, a committed socio-political activist. The participation of Randaree together with members of other faiths, gave the commission its interreligious flavour which in turn positively influenced the process of reconciliation itself (:459).

A great deal of criticism has been expressed towards the works of TRC and its structures. There were however people who praised the TRC for the way it was organized and conducted. The group which lauded it emphasized that positive results of the TRC were possible precisely because of its interreligious membership. The commissioners were inspired by their diverse religious beliefs and convictions and were united on the universal ethical ground of their search for truth, forgiveness and reconciliation. It remains debatable whether reconciliation was possible solely because of the

religious figures involved in the Commission. Nevertheless, one cannot underestimate the psychological element of this process, that is, a positive impact on the victims, their families and their perpetrators (Haron 2006:459).

Without doubt, the TRC urged various groups from Christian and Muslim communities, and other religious traditions, to respect and respond to the findings of the Commission. Moreover, the initiatives of the TRC encouraged many individuals of various religions and civil movements, one of which was a "civil campaign" movement formed in 1994 with the purpose of supporting the transformation. This took place through 'an interfaith religious response combined with a spiritual approach that would address questions of truth, healing and reconciliation in a local context' (:459). The "civil campaign" functioned parallel to the works of the TRC and continued after the commission dissolved. The "civil campaign" involved even organizations such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace–South Africa. After the works of the TRC ended, the campaign channelled its energies to create the Centre for Ubuntu in Cape Town in 1998 which focused, and still continues to focus, on mutual interreligious collaboration in the process of nation building (Kayser 1999).[42]

8.3.3 Parliament of the World's Religions' (PWR)[43] Conference – a diverse spiritual experience

Another event which created an opportunity for all religions in South Africa including Muslims and Christians to experience each other at the practical level was the seven-day conference organized in December 1999 in Cape Town by the PWR in collaboration with the WCRP-SA. One of the leading figures of this interreligious event was Imam A. Rashied Omar who during the preparatory period wrote an important paper entitled "The 1999 Parliament of the world religions – a Muslim perspective". In that paper, he investigated the origins and works of the organization with special emphasis on the role which the Muslim community played in the history of the PWR and how Muslims could further contribute to the future success of the organization (Haron 2006:460).

The success of the PWR conference in South Africa leads to a few important conclusions. Firstly, conferences of this nature can contribute greatly to interfaith relations because of the mutual cooperation and participation of individuals from diverse religious backgrounds. Secondly, such events can achieve meaningful results without losing or compromising one's own religious identity. Thirdly, it proved that various religious traditions can cooperate with each other in harmony and peace and are capable of reaching concrete goals. Finally, in the case of South Africa, the conference gave all participants the opportunity to recognize the WCRP-SA's contribution to the

collapse of apartheid in the 1980s and its involvement in the process of nation building in the 1990s (:460).

8.3.4 "Gift of the Givers" – Muslim NGO as a way of crossing religious boundaries
8.3.4.1 The nature and areas of the foundation's involvement

In the 1990s, many Muslims, particularly in places with a large Muslim majority, began to work in various charitable and social organizations. One such organization is the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation based in Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal. The project was initiated by the Muslim community with the aim of giving humanitarian aid to people all over the world including South Africa. It has been supplemented by a host of secular and religious bodies and run by a group of Muslim professional development workers who have at their disposal a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The foundation was started by Dr Imtiaz Sooliman on the 1st of August 1992. Over time, the "Gift of the Givers" project became a widely recognized non-governmental, humanitarian, and disaster relief organization of African origin. Being humanitarian, the project has focused on social service to humanity with no political involvement (interview with Dr Sooliman).[44]

The significance of any NGO, including the "Gift of the Givers", has to be seen in the context of a growing tendency within various governments to channel aid through independent agencies rather than through institutions of underdeveloped states which have often proved far from accountable. Over a period of more than 15 years, the "Gift of the Givers" organization has cooperated with the South African government and governments of other countries, especially when national disasters have occurred. The foundation's concrete help (material or otherwise) is delivered directly to people without any mediation of official government agents. Over time, the foundation has gained worldwide recognition for its many achievements not only in South Africa but also in the entire world. During the 16 years of its activity, the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation has delivered more than 200 million rand in aid to 21 countries including South Africa.[45] Other significant activities are disaster relief, primary health care clinics, counselling services, a drug rehab centre, and HIV and AIDS programs.[46] Several projects run by the foundation have received support from the government and have been carried out in cooperation with it.[47] Moreover, many Christian churches have supported the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation not only spiritually and morally but also financially. One of them is the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference which helped to found the organization which has become multi-religious.

8.3.4.2 Relationship between the foundation and the religions

The question of interest is the foundation's contribution to interfaith relations. Does the "Gift of the Givers" project establish any form of dialogue with the various religions in the course of its activity?

Does it contribute in any meaningful way to bringing the various believers closer? There is no evidence that the "Gift of the Givers" project engages in any direct collaboration with other religions or pursues an agenda centred on religious or moral questions. It is neither structured on multi-religious participation nor does it directly cooperate with any other religion, including the Christian church, at official or grassroots levels. Yet, the foundation responds to the needs and problems of other religions or Christian churches. If for example concrete help (such as medical help, material goods, etc.) is required as a result of a disaster and a particular community, church, or religious group asks for it, then the organization will help. Generally the foundation and its initiatives have received positive recognition from various religions. One can even recognize a spirit of genuine cooperation between the "Gift of the Givers" project and the religions. This became apparent especially in non-Muslim countries where the organization provided humanitarian help (interview with Dr Sooliman).

Any involvement of members of other religions supporting the foundation is certainly not at a religious level. Representatives of other religions, who cooperate with the foundation, serve as experts and professionals in a particular field or area. They do it on humanitarian grounds. Such support is therefore neutral with respect to religious affiliation. The foundation creates for them a platform[48] for a participation which crosses cultural, political, ethnic, social and religious boundaries (interview with Dr Sooliman).

8.3.4.3 The foundation's humanitarian activities as a "locus" for interreligious cooperation

The question still remains: In which way can the project contribute to dialogue among religions even if it is not directly focused on interreligious dialogue? In answering one needs to point to the foundation's status. One of the purposes of the "Gift of the Givers" project is to 'build bridges between people of different cultures and religions engendering goodwill, harmonious coexistence, tolerance and mutual respect…'.[49] The organization certainly goes beyond religious differences, and invites all people of diverse cultures, races, or religious affiliations to contribute to the well being of humanity. In this sense, the foundation is an example of the practical dimension of dialogue with diverse cultures and religions. By concentrating on humanitarian and not on religious issues, and by solving social problems, the foundation indirectly helps to solve religious conflicts and to overcome prejudice and suspicion. This allows it to establish a "common ground" for cooperation among nations, cultures and religions. Although the "Gift of the Givers" project is not strictly a religious organization, it constitutes a positive sign of the Muslim community's involvement in the struggle for the better future of humanity and for South African society.

It is interesting to note that the work of the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation proves once again that interfaith relations, including Muslim-Christian relations, in South Africa cannot be programmed at the table but are the result of a positive response to the real challenges which society faces. Dialogue in this country, therefore, can happen at the level of praxis and not of doctrine. Dialogue on theological similarities and differences becomes of secondary importance (interview with Dr Sooliman). What counts is the day-to-day contact and practical engagement where Muslims, Christians and other believers begin to interact with each other, to help and cooperate, irrespective of who initiates such cooperation. Hence, if there is any connection between the work of the foundation and Dupuis's proposals, it has to be seen in the area of "praxis". The "Gift of the Givers" Foundation creates a basis or a "common ground" for practical dialogue among religions through its humanitarian involvement which crosses all barriers and allows people of different religious affiliation to help the human family.

8.3.5 The Damietta Initiative – Catholic-Muslim collaboration in addressing social issues
8.3.5.1 Historical background

A second example of mutual relationship and collaboration between Christians and Muslims is a project run by the Catholic religious order of the Franciscan Capuchins[50] known as the Damietta[51] Initiative. The project was officially endorsed by the Franciscan Family in Rome on the 18th of December 2005. The project is international and focuses on direct dialogue with Muslim communities at grassroots level, on building peace and introducing non-violence across the entire African continent, including South Africa.

According to historical events, during the time of the Crusades, Saint Francis and his brothers wanted to establish contacts with Muslims and live among them as peace makers. This goal, supported by the early friars, found strong opposition in the ecclesiastical circles which were far from understanding his intention. During the political and religious conflict between Islam and Christendom (the 5th Crusade), Francis went to Egypt, to the city Damietta where (in 1219) he entered the besieged camp of the Sultan, Malik-il-Kamil, a nephew of Saladin the Great and dialogued with him about God. His initiative sent a clear message to his fellow Christians that only dialogue and non-violence could preserve lives and establish peace and justice in the world. Without compromising his own faith or the common Christian inheritance, Francis was able to emphasize values which both Muslims and Christians share together: that there is one God, that human life is sacred, and that the violence of the Crusaders was fruitless. As an antithesis to the Crusaders' support for war and violence, Francis' initiative became a practical form of dialogue with Muslims. This form emphasized nonviolence, a wish to shared life, and common efforts for establishing peace. During his life, Francis sent his followers to Africa for the same reason, not to engage in any

form of dispute or argument with the Muslim world but to engage in common work for the better future of humanity.[52]

8.3.5.2 The Damietta Initiative as a positive response to the present situation in the Muslim-Christian world

The above historical event became an inspiration to the Franciscan family to re-establish positive relations with the Muslim communities and together address emerging challenges. It was unfortunate that in the past both Christianity and Islam had often turned to violence while claiming to be religions of peace. It is also unfortunate that nowadays the world continues to be troubled by endless conflicts, including terrorism or Western interference in some Muslim societies, which increases Muslim-Christian tensions.[53] Because of this, the great majority of Muslims experience prejudice on all continents including Africa. Religious intolerance in many African countries, plus other serious social ills fuel mutual unrest and mistrust. The aim of the Damietta Initiative is therefore to respond in a practical way to the above challenges. The project aims to reach out to Muslims, to establish friendship, to show appreciation for the active presence of God in the human family, and together to promote dialogue for life. Supporters of the project believe that one of the ways of channelling all energies in bringing about the changes to these problems, is by creating a peaceful environment at the grassroots level. They also believe that the Damietta Initiative has all the "ingredients" for building respect and values which can support the process of social reconstruction in numerous African countries.[54]

There is little doubt that transformation is particularly required at grassroots level and this is where it must begin. Any African renaissance, reconstruction or nation-building programs should include this call. This is also why the Initiative organized the Pan-African Conciliation Teams (PACTs) at the grassroots level.[55] The PACTs are formed of local people of diverse gender, ethnic and religious background who receive professional training. Education courses include learning the skills of mediation, arbitration and conciliation, the theory and practice of social analyses and ways of caring for creation. Concerning expertise and resources, the project draws upon the national and international help of both religious and secular organizations such as IFOR, Pax Christi and Caritas International. It uses its expertise and resources to create and maintain long-term programs for conflict avoidance and resolution, reconciliation in case of any divisions and general care for the created world. The PACTs therefore serve as the practical entities to monitor tensions in neighbourhoods or other areas and to intervene where conflicts arise which could lead to further violence.[56] Through the presence and work of the PACTs in local neighbourhoods, the project shows that ethnic and religious disagreements can be overcome, that mutual peaceful cohabitation is possible, and that such cohabitation is important for the process of social change.

8.3.5.3 Challenges to the project

Despite these ambitious and well-constructed plans, the project faces real problems. Difficulties which still need to be addressed are staff shortages, planning, and infrastructural issues which include lack of clarity concerning job descriptions and governance of the project. Another challenge is linked to creating the PACTs which involve cooperation between Christian and Muslim communities. Establishing such groups at grassroots level is time consuming. That is why the PACTs remain fragile and need constant support, shaping and re-shaping. Hence the Damietta Initiative constantly evaluates the progress of establishing and developing the PACTs to discover ways to strengthen and accelerate them.[57] The main centres where the PACTs have already been established and remained active are Cape Town (Parow), Johannesburg, and Pretoria (Soshanguve, Lady Selbourne, Mamelodi).[58]

Another difficulty is the interaction with the Muslim community in South Africa which can generally be characterized as not conflictual, although certain tensions have occurred in the Western Cape in this regard. These tensions had their roots in the wider context. The international events which also resonate in South Africa always create a potential threat of eruption of confrontation. Activities of Christian, Judaic or Muslim fundamentalists are always of concern for people who value mutual peace and respect. To prevent any danger of conflict, the Initiative is continually trying to build good relations and to dialogue with Muslim groups in South Africa regarding this as the essential aim of its entire program.[59]

8.3.5.4 Signs of overcoming barriers in mutual relations

In this regard, one needs to mention various activities of the Damietta project which have secured and advanced a positive relationship between Christian and Muslim communities. For instance, Fr. Donal O'Machony responded to the repercussions which Pope Benedict XVI's academic discourse in Germany had in the Muslim community. The interfaith activities of the project, in cooperation with Muslims, have been continued through such events as the organized Heroes of Peace Conference in March 2007. This Conference was organized in cooperation with other bodies as the Interfaith Forum of South Africa, the Rumi Student Association of the University of Johannesburg, and the Interfaith Dialogue Student Association of WITS University. The main aim of this conference was to touch the lives of thousands of young people and to build a basis to reach millions of others through the support of numerous universities and the participation of various student organizations.[60]

Furthermore, the Damietta Initiative hosted an "Iftar" (evening meal during Ramadan) in the Capuchins Peace Centre on October 16th 2006. This meal was prepared by the Muslims and

preceded by common prayer by the PACTs members, both the Franciscans and the Muslims. It is also praiseworthy that one of the young members of the project was invited to Sudan to live and share her experiences with the Muslim community for two months (February-March) in 2007. Other initiatives were mainly workshops in educating members of the project in Christian Muslim relations in the Transvaal, Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal areas.[61] Material help in the form of food, education, and clothing was also given to 3000 AIDS orphans in Mpumalanga, regarded as victims of violence.[62]

At the international level, the General Office of Damietta was invited by the AWQAF, a Muslim agency, for an international symposium held from the 1st to the 3rd of September 2006 at the University of Johannesburg where various academic papers were presented.

8.3.5.5 Cooperation with state and church officials

Through mediation of the South African Minister in the Office of the President, the project has established cooperation with representatives of the New Economic Policy for Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU). Furthermore, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Sue van der Merwe met representatives of the project and indicated the state's 'interest in principle' in the project, especially since its goals and aspirations meet those of the government.[63] The Damietta program was welcomed by the South African Catholic Bishops Conference which assigned Abp George Daniel as its official supporter.[64] Constructive relations have also been established with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) which is the arm of the US Catholic Bishops Conference; also the Irish Trocaire, the German Misereor, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Milford/Lipton Trust, Missio, and the Missionszentralle der Franziskaner. However, it is regrettable that the above institutions have made only limited commitment to grants.[65]

The Damietta Initiative constitutes an example of dialogue of life and practical cooperation between Christians and Muslims in South Africa which is the result of its response to challenges which the democratic society has faced since transformation. It also indicates that a positive approach and collaboration among religions is possible and might be fruitful if this collaboration is focused not on what divides the religious groups but on the common goal which is the peaceful coexistence of religious groups within the same society. The Damietta project offers, therefore, a real chance for practical dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities and a chance to create mutual understanding and peace in society. This is the direction all religions in South Africa should follow.

8.4 Evaluation

8.4.1 Christian-Muslim relations up to the present moment

The first part of this chapter described the relationship between Christians and Muslims since their arrival in South Africa. The analysis showed that, generally, the relations between them from the seventeenth century until the end of the nineteenth century, were characterized by an attitude of exclusion and proselytism on the Christian part and exclusion and resistance on the Muslim side. During apartheid time, which was most of the second half of the twentieth century, South Africans were divided along racial lines. This inevitably had a negative impact on their daily living. Any contacts of Muslims with Christians from the white and African communities were restricted by the apartheid Acts to interaction and socialization mainly in places of work. Generally, in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, the relationship between the Christian and Muslim communities remained unfriendly.

The mid 1980s began to witness a gradual transformation or a shift in Christian-Muslim relations from exclusion to acceptance of religious diversity and this reached its climax at the end of the twentieth century. Political and religious groups and numerous individuals began to realize the need for putting aside their exclusivist religious views and for adopting more inclusivist (if not pluralist) perspectives which could advance cooperation in the common struggle and consequently a better understanding among the diverse religious communities. Nevertheless, the main reason for this new movement, from an attitude of confrontation to that of dialogue and cooperation in different spheres, must be linked to the socio-political changes of the 1980s and the 1990s which ultimately led to the new democratic dispensation in 1994.

Since then in the context of nation building, social reconstruction and awareness of religious diversity, new opportunities and new kinds of relations between the ethnic and religious groups have begun to emerge at all levels. The democratic order allowed Muslims, Christians, other believers and the diverse ethnic groups of whites, blacks and coloureds to mingle with each other. This was especially visible in towns and big cities where the diverse groups began to share the same living areas. Consequently, they were faced with the new socio-religious challenges that were created. It seems that the newly emerged socio-religious dynamic contributed to more positive interreligious relationships which, during apartheid, were either restricted or impossible. The fact that the diverse religions had to acknowledge each other's presence and existence was constructive. The government also played an important role in creating opportunities for interreligious cooperation and it established important channels for dialogue. Examples of interfaith initiatives between Christian and Muslims and other believers, such as the formation of PAGAD, the TRC, or the WPR Conference advanced the process of social and religious reconstruction.

8.4.2 Application of Dupuis's proposals

The second part of the chapter examined a possible application of Dupuis's thought to the South African context of religious pluralism with reference to relations between Islam and Christianity. This analysis investigated which of Dupuis's theological ideas were valid for South Africa's particular situation of religious plurality and pointed to prevailing forms of dialogue between Christian and Muslims. The outcome is that the least visible form of dialogue as yet has been the one of beliefs, theological doctrines and philosophical ideas. Undoubtedly such dialogue should be regarded as vitally important for Muslims and Christians in South Africa, especially since it engages the minds and hearts of believers of both traditions in their common search for truth. The value of such a search at the theological level resides in its capacity to lead Muslims and Christians to mutual acceptance of the legitimacy and authenticity of their respective traditions as divinely inspired faiths. Unfortunately this dialogue has not yet been encouraged in South Africa.

In the course of this investigation it became apparent that in the democratic dispensation, the cool relations between Christians and Muslims which existed in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries changed to a closer and warmer relationship with a fair mutual understanding. Yet despite this positive change in Muslim-Christian interactions already initiated in the 1980s and the 1990s, both religious groups remained religiously separated to some extent. This separation still exists. One of its causes is the practice of religious indifference, if not exclusion. An attitude of exclusion prevails especially in various missionary circles (i.e. the Life Challenge Africa, the Christians Concerned for Muslims) and an attitude of resistance to interfaith cooperation and distrust in some Muslim organizations (i.e. the Murabitun movement). This explains the limited contacts at official level between Christians, Muslims and other believers. This further means that the relationship between Muslims and Christians in South Africa can be still characterized by exclusion and inclusion. There is also an emerging pluralist approach. These perspectives still influence interfaith contacts in South African towns and cities. It is safe to say therefore that the theological dialogue between Christians and Muslims in South Africa continues to remain an ideal.

Consequently, the application of Dupuis's doctrinal proposals remains theoretical and limited. However, these proposals can still make people aware that the main obstacle on both sides is their unwillingness truly to admit that God's love and providence extend equally to all human beings, regardless of their religious identity. Denying it is equivalent to denying that God could and in fact did, reveal God's word in every sacred language of the world. If dialogue between Christians and Muslims in South Africa is to progress beyond mere formal courtesy or polite indifference, much more is needed than this basic recognition which apparently constitutes a positive step forward in

dialogue. The application of Dupuis's doctrinal proposals, therefore, to the South African context of religious diversity, should be viewed as a long-term goal.

8.4.3 Practical dimension of Christian-Muslim dialogue

Mutual Christian-Muslim efforts should rather tend towards more promising and fruitful day-to-day social and spiritual forms of relationship. The grassroots level, therefore, where people address social problems and face the same challenges is the *locus* where the various religious communities, including Muslims and Christians, should meet and develop their relationship. Several examples, such as PAGAD and the Damietta project, prove that this has already been the case.

While this direction seems to be the right one, Muslims and Christians must first accept each other as friends and partners in their quest for social and political transformation, and for harmony and spiritual progress on the journey to their ultimate goal, that is God. Dupuis's concept of dialogue might be very helpful in this noble effort which demands a genuine and sincere respect for the faith of the "other". The analysis revealed that this basic principle of mutual interaction has already been implemented in the most widely spread form of dialogue in South Africa, namely, dialogue of action. Such dialogue in this country is not a choice which should be made by a particular religion but it is the result of socio-political, cultural and religious factors which play a significant role in mutual relations among religions. The case study revealed that Muslim-Christian relations, which nowadays concentrate on common social and religious involvement, can be the model for relations among all the religious traditions in South Africa.

The two cases of the "Gift of the Givers" project and of the Damietta Initiative show that collaboration among religions is possible and can go beyond their doctrinal differences. Cooperation in addressing the most urgent issues can bring religions and their adherents closer. Both the approaches of the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation and the Damietta Initiative seem especially relevant to the South African context where Muslims and Christians share neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, hospital wards and even burial grounds. Here the common Abrahamic prophetic moral and spiritual heritage can support Muslims and Christians in facing together problems of the modern South African world.

With regard to the future, it remains imperative that each of these two great religions respond equally to the South African process of transformation with its successes and challenges. Each religion must define its response in terms of the spiritual message it brings to society. The future of the two religions will depend on Muslim and Christian responses to religious diversity and transformation. The way in which Islam and Christianity integrate or reject this call of South

African society will decide whether there can be a further meeting and collaboration between the two, or whether tension and even confrontation will prevail.

Conclusion

The state of relations between Islam and Christianity reflects the interfaith situation among all other religious traditions in contemporary South Africa. To a greater or lesser extent they struggle with a similar set of opportunities and challenges. This particular case study revealed that the best and most fruitful form of dialogue among religions in South Africa can be dialogue of life and "praxis". These types of encounter not only strengthen interreligious contacts but also meaningfully benefit the entire society.

The next chapter will attempt a holistic evaluation of Dupuis's contribution to a Christian theology for religious pluralism. It will point out "forbidden areas" in the traditional Catholic theology of religions in which inclusivist pluralism ventures and will indicate new routes in contemporary inclusivist theology. Furthermore, the analysis will show that Dupuis's inclusivist pluralism constitutes a comprehensive theory which replaces the old idea of Christianity's absoluteness and establishes, on Christian grounds, an autonomic and divine voice of the world religions in dialogue. The chapter will close with a final evaluation of the possibility of applying Dupuis's proposals to the South African interreligious dialogue.

---

[1] *International Review of Missions* (14, 1925), 560-57.

[2] *The Muslim World* (15/4, 1925), 327-333.

[3] Liebenberg, A J, "Mohammedanisme in Zuid-Afrika" (*Het Zoeklicht* 3 October 1925), 310-314; Blaxall, A W, *An Outpost of Islam* (A letter in circulation in 1927); Hampson, A R, "The Mission of Moslems in Cape Town" (*The Moslem World* 24/3, 1934), 271-277; and du Plessies, I, *Die Bydraes van die Kaapse Maleier tot die Afrikaanse volklied* (Nasionale Pers at the Cape, 1935), *Die Maleise samelving aan die Kaap* (Nasionale Pers at the Cape, 1939), *The Cape Malays* (Maskew Miller in Cape Town, 1944).

[4] Both of these organizations called for more social concerns in the preaching and the teaching of the *'ulama* (the group of men with religious education in the Koran, the Sunna and Sharia and religiously related professions who have the authority to teach the true content of Islam) during the time of repressive policies implemented by the apartheid government. Because the *'ulama* and their leadership were not able to face the social and political reality in South Africa in the 1950s, numerous study groups and associations of a younger generation of Muslims were formed in the main Islamic centres like Cape Town, Natal and Transvaal. These associations encouraged the laity to reflect on the Qur'an, using the English translations. This diminished the clergy's influence and unfortunately led to serious tension between the *'ulama* and the associations. The *'ulama* especially opposed the Arabic Study Circle founded in Durban (1950) which consisted of young Muslim businessmen and professionals who devoted themselves to study the Qur'an directly. Later the attempts of the Study Circles led to efforts to the study of Islam at university level. This further contributed to Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Durban-Westville. See Moosa, E, "Islam in South Africa" in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 148.

[5] See *Muslim News* of the 4th of August 1961.

[6] These publications were: *Cross or the Crescent*, a pamphlet issued by the Anglican Diocese in 1964; "Die Kerk and die Islam in Afrika" issued by Ben J Marais in *Koers* (33/3, 1965), 173-185; and "The Shape of power in Africa" by Newington, D and Phillips, H C, in *Muslim News* (10 September 1965).

[7] A valuable piece of information is that during the 1950s and especially the 1960s, the Muslim community itself was facing an internal religious conflict rooted in the activities of two Islamic groups in South Africa, the Ahmedis, who

adopted a very aggressive approach to the white missionaries and the moderate Bahais. See Haron, M, "The Muslim News (1960-1986): An expression of an Islamic Identity in South Africa", in Brenner, L (ed), *Muslim identity and social change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: C Hurst & Company, 1993), 210-225.

Although most Muslims agreed and sympathized with the Ahmedis against the Christians, they disagreed with them on the grounds of their religious beliefs because they viewed their founder (Mirza Ghulam Ahmed) as a prophet. By 1964, the Ahmedis were marginalized and rejected from all mosques. See Haron, M, "The Dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations in South Africa (circa 1960-2000): From exclusivism to pluralism" (*The Muslim World* 96/3, 2006), 436. Various articles and reports on the Muslims' stand against the Bahais and the Ahmedis can be found in the *Muslim News* between 1962 and 1965.

[8] See Westerlund, D, "Ahmed Deedat's Theology of Religion: Apologetics through Polemics" (*Journal of Religion in Africa* 33/3, 2003), 263-278; also Islamic Propagation Centre International – "Our Founder" http://www.ahmed-deedat.co.za/frameset.asp <1 May 2008>

[9] The official finding of the Cape Magistrate was that Haron's death 'was caused by an accidental fall down a flight of stone stairs' (Sayed, F A, "Tribute to a Martyr" [*South African Outlook* 12/1336, 1982], 165.

[10] It is interesting to note however that Gilchrist was one of the first Christian theologians who used the web as another way of introducing ideas and works to the wider group of recipients. One of his publications entitled *The Christian witness to the Muslim* can be found at http://www.answering-islam.org/Gilchrist/Vol2/ <7 March 2008>. Another work entitled *Facing the Muslim challenge: A Handbook of Christian-Muslim apologetics* appeared at http://www.answering-islam.org/Gilchrist/Challenge/index.html <7 March 2008>. Gilchrist's most extensive work and result of his studies of Islam since the 1970s is *Jam' al-Qur'an - The codification of the Qur'an text: A comprehensive study of the original collection of the Qur'an text and the early surviving Qur'an manuscripts* (MERCSA 1989) which had the purpose of challenging the authority and the divine character of Qur'an and thus the Muslim authoritative interpretation of it.

[11] Life Challenge Africa "About us" http://www.lca.org.za <15 March 2008>

[12] http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/index.html <15 March 2008>

[13] http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/tt1/content.html <15 March 2008>

[14] http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/tt2/index.html <15 March 2008>

[15] *Pace* (5/9, 1982), 33-35,37.

[16] *Insight* (4/1, 1989), 19-21.

[17] Esack, F, "Muslims reject President's Council" (*Muslim News* 20/19, 1980), 1.

[18] See Davids, E, "Un-Islamic to take part in racist elections" (*Muslim News* 24/4, 1984), 1; also Meer, F, "Islam and Apartheid" (*Reality* 2/5, 1970), 12.

[19] Moosa writes: "During the period 1984-9, the main features of civil rights activities were protest marches, political rallies and funeral services of victims of political brutality. At these funerals, a new inter-faith ecumenism of Muslim, Christians, Jews, Hindus and secularists surfaced, establishing unprecedented common moral foundations from which to oppose the apartheid system. The Islamic organizations at the forefront of this new ecumenism were the COI, the MSA, the MJC, MYMSA and Qiblah. At mass meetings and funerals, Islamic symbols were highly visible in Muslim areas. Youths donning Palestinian headgear (*kaffiyehs*), frenzied with revolutionary zeal, raised the war-cry of "One solution – Islamic revolution"' Moosa, E, "Islam in South Africa" in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company 1995), 150-151.

[20] Among these numerous works the most innovative was his unpublished manuscript *Side-by-side with non-Muslims* (the late 1980s) which presented the idea of non-Muslims-Muslims relations. In *Qur'an liberation and pluralism: An Islamic perspective of interreligious solidarity against oppression* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997 [1998]) and in *On being Muslim: Finding a religious path in the world today* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), Esack had exposed his hermeneutical approach to Qur'an and his understanding of those verses which referred to relations with non-Muslims.

[21] Life Challenge Africa (LCA) – Your helper in Muslim evangelism – "About us" http://www.lca.org.za <30 April 2008>

[22] "Introducing CCM – Christians Concerned for Muslim" http://www.lca.org.za/CCM/index.html <30 April 2008>

[23] The Murabitun is a worldwide Islamic movement, socially and religiously exclusive, founded by Shaykh Dr Abdalqadir as-Sufi, with communities in around 20 different countries including South Africa. "Murabitun Worldwide Movement" http://www.geocities.com/athens/delphi/6588/mundial.html <10 April 2008>. See also Omar, K N and Haddad, S G, "Defense against slander and takfir coming from the 'Murabitun'-Movement" http://www.livingislam.org/o/dstm_e.html <10 April 2008>

[24] Peter G Just "NRLF (National Religious Leaders' Forum)" http://www.nanhua.co.za/nanhua/Column/Peter%20Just/NRLF%20(National%20Religious%20Leaders'%20Forum).htm <20 March 2008>

[25] "Bill of Rights" http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm <12 March 2008>

[26] "Address to the Catholic Community of Ankara" (November 29, 1979) in Gioia, F (ed), *Interreligious dialogue: The Official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997), no. 339.

[27] See Pope Benedict XVI "Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections" (12 September 2006) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html <23 April 2008>

[28] See "Le parole del Papa alla recita dell'Angelus" http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/18817.php?index=18817&lang=en <2 May 2008>

[29] "Pope: dialogue between Muslims and Christians 'a vital necessity'" http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7309 <3 September 2008>

[30] "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the ambassadors of countries with a Muslim majority and to the representatives of Muslim communities in Italy" http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060925_ambasciatori-paesi-arabi_en.html <3 September 2008>

[31] "Pope: 'Total and profound respect for Muslims'" http://www.edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/09/25/pope.muslims/index.html <3 September 2008>

[32] It is noteworthy that the exhortation mentions in the second place dialogue with the African traditional religions. Yet the Synod speaks of such dialogue in terms of the fulfilment theory. Its purpose is, on the one hand, to 'protect Catholics from negative influences which condition the way of life of many of them and, on the other hand, to foster the assimilation of positive values such as belief in a Supreme Being who is Eternal, Creator, Provident and Just Judge, values which are readily harmonized with the content of faith' (EA 67).
This is as far as the exhortation goes in recognizing the African traditional religions. The next part states that the African traditional religions can be seen only as '*a preparation* for *the Gospel*' (EA 67) because of the *semina Verbi* which they contain. Ultimately, however, the religions should lead their adherents to the fulfilment of revelation in Jesus Christ (EA 67). The document states that the African traditional religions should be treated with respect. There is no call however to any practical dialogue with the religions either at the theological or the "praxis" levels.

[33] The documents include: "The attitude of the church towards followers of other religions" (10 May 1984); "Dialogue and Proclamation" (19 May 1991); "Reflections on inter-religious marriage" (A Joint Study Document in PRO DIALOGO 96, 1997); and "Journeying Together: The Catholic Church in dialogue with the religious traditions of the world" (Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1999).

[34] An interview with Archbishop George Daniel of Pretoria held on the 15th of January 2008 in Pretoria.

[35] Dupuis disagrees with Paul Knitter's direct identification of mission with interreligious dialogue from which proclamation simply disappears. See Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 372-373; *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 226-227; "The Church's evangelizing mission in the context of religious pluralism (*Pastoral Review* 1/1, 2005), 23. In Knitter's interpretation dialogue is mission and mission is dialogue. The church's evangelizing mission therefore is reduced to interreligious dialogue but without the integral element of proclamation. Consequently, proclamation is not linked with the gospel values but with witness and one's personal faith. See Knitter *Jesus and the other names: Christian mission and global responsibility* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 142-143.

[36] Slavery, in various forms, existed in Africa long before Islam. But in many places and varying degrees, depending on the circumstances, it was the Muslim traders who quite naturally made slaves into one of the most sought-after commodities of the trans-Saharan or costal trade. Indeed the search for slaves sometime became the principal reason for their journeys and for their presence in Black Africa. Thus, right from the appearance of the first traders of the shores of the Niger or the coast of East Africa, the presence of the Muslim, especially of the fairer-skinned type, remains indelibly linked to the memory of slavery and the slave trade. This painful memory, with its powerful emotive overtones of racial conflict, is far from having been erased. To this day it is a major psychological obstacle which prevents the African Muslims, fair-skinned and black, from uniting under the one banner of Islam. For details see Mohamed H Abdulaziz, "History of the spread of Islam on the East African Coast", in *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara* (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Sankt Augustine, 1993), 31-46.

[37] Nevertheless, Dupuis regrets that although the document is more open in comparison with other documents especially its view of the relationship between dialogue and proclamation, it still contains certain ambiguities, which could have been avoided, in such areas as the universality of the Reign of God (DP 35) and the role of other religious traditions as paths to the salvation for their own members (DP 29). Dupuis expresses his criticism, especially towards the document "Dialogue and Proclamation" in his essay entitled "A Theological commentary: Dialogue and Proclamation", in Burrows, W R (ed), *Redemption and dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 119-158. In that essay, Dupuis writes that the Commission which was composing the text, of which he was also a co-author, had to make certain unfortunate changes which generated tension between different views, introduced ambiguity, especially in the relationship between dialogue and proclamation, and consequently led to the loss of its original force (1993:154). Still, in comparison to the Second Vatican Council, which placed interreligious dialogue outside the church's evangelizing mission, it constitutes 'a step forward in the church's doctrine on evangelization, dialogue, and proclamation' (Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1997], 370).

[38] Two leading figures in PAGAD were Abdus-Salam Ebrahim (a Muslim) and Chris Clohessy (a Catholic priest). While Ebrahim was implicated in eliminating Staggie, Clohessy left PAGAD for further studies on Islam and the world religions in Rome. See Haron, M, "The Dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations in South Africa (circa 1960-2000): From exclusivism to pluralism" (*The Muslim World* 96/3, 2006), 458.

[39] The formation of PAGAD was the community's response to frustration with regard to powerlessness in addressing the issue of gangsterism and drug trafficking. According to Chris Clohessy the community realized that 'a non-confrontational approach to this particular problem [was] no longer a viable route — and that those who [were]

empowered by law to confront these social evils [were] simply not able to function in a way that bears real fruit. There is no doubt; therefore, that Pagad arose with an agenda that included both confrontation and force. In itself, force can be classified as extreme pressure, and is not necessarily violent' (Clohessy, C, "Thoughts on Pagad" in Galant, R and Gamieldien, F (ed), *Drugs, gangs, people's power: Exploring the Pagad phenomenon* [Claremont Main Road Masjid, 1996], 78).

[40] It is interesting to note that Chris Clohessy does not regard PAGAD as an interreligious group which intended to address crime and drug matters. In fact, he explains that in PAGAD there were only two non-Muslims, himself and another priest. The rest were mainly Muslims. Haron has a different opinion, that there were also other non-Musim participants from other religious traditions. See Haron, M, "The Dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations in South Africa (circa 1960-2000): From exclusivism to pluralism" (*The Muslim World* 96/3, 2006), 458.

[41] For elaborations on the work of the TRC see James Cochrane and John De Gruchy's edited work *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the TRC* (Cape Town: David Phillips, 1999), also Audrey Chapman and Bernard Spongs' edited publication *Religion and Reconciliation in South Africa* (Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2003).

[42] Kayser, U, *What do we tell our children? The Work of the centre for Ubuntu in Cape Town* (Johannesburg: CSVR, 1999).

[43] The PWR was formed in 1893 with its headquarters in Chicago and since then it has been led by individuals who belong to the diverse religious traditions. See "About the Parliament" http://www.parliamentofreligions2009.org/whatisparliament.php <8 May 2008>

[44] An interview with Dr Imtiaz Sooliman organized on the 21st of May 2007 in Pietermaritzburg.

[45] "Achievements" http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

[46] "Projects" http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

[47] Because of this wide-range of contributions, the South African government has expressed its appreciation towards the foundation's activities through numerous awards from South African Presidents. The organization received the President's Order of the State of South Africa. See "Achievements" http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>. Recently, special appreciation for the humanitarian contributions of the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation was expressed by the Department of Foreign Affairs for the assistance provided to the neighbouring countries and nations suffering disasters. A separate recognition was given for its humanitarian flights to Darfur (Sudan), where innocent civilians have been suffering from severe hardships. See "Foreign Affairs" http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

[48] A good example of this "locus" is the contribution made by many medical doctors from across the religious spectrum. Medical personnel is one group, but not the only one, which is involved in the foundation's works (interview with Dr Sooliman).

[49] "About Us" http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

[50] The Franciscan Order is numerically the largest religious entity in the Roman Catholic Church founded by St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) and St Clare of Assisi (1194-1253). The Franciscan Order can be found all over the world in almost every country of the world. The various Franciscan Orders include the Friars Minor (OFM), Friars Minor Capuchins (OFM Cap), Friars Minor Conventual (OFM Conv), the Poor Clares, the Third Order Regular (TOR) and the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO). See "Frequently asked questions" http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/page.php?p_id=142 <14 May 2007>

[51] Damietta was a city of great strategic importance in ancient Egypt; its real name was "Tamiatti". Because of the influence of the Coptic language, "Tamiatti" was changed to "Damietta". Over time Damietta became less important following the development of Alexandria after 322 BC. During the time of Crusades, Damietta was often attacked and stayed in the hands of the crusaders between 1219-21 and 1245-50. After a siege of 15 months it was taken by the crusaders in 1219. During this event 67000 inhabitants of this city lost their lives. Today it is again a prosperous place. See "Frequently asked questions" http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/page.php?p_id=142 <14 May 2007>

[52] "History and Resume" http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/page.php?p_id=137 <10 April 2008>

[53] "6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>

[54] On the African continent, the Damietta Initiative is present in Congo (Kinshasa) and Kenya (Nairobi). In South Africa the Project is run by its Director Fr. Donal O'Mahony (OFM Cap) in cooperation with Fr. Matt Gormley (OFM Cap.) and Sr. Lillian Curaming, (FMM). Fr. O'Mahony provided the Project with the leadership and necessary framework. See "6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>

[55] Forming the PACTs has been possible because of the so called "Franciscan bridge", that is, 12,000 Franciscans who live in towns and villages in 40 countries in Africa.

[56] "4th and 5th Quarterly Report" - 24 August 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=117 <1 May 2008>

[57] "6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>

[58] "Pact meetings in Soshanguve and Mamelodi"– 6 March 2008 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php? a_id=214 <14 May 2008>; "9th Quarterly Report July-September 2007" – 15 October 2007 http://www.damietta

peace.org.za/article.php?a_id=203 <14 May 2007>; and "11th Quarterly Progress Report January-March 2008" – 12 May 2008 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=224 <12 May 2008>

[59] "6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>

[60] "6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>

[61] "3rd Quarterly Report September 2005 - January 2006" - 10 March 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=89 <14 May 2007>

[62] For the range of various activities of the Project and its extensive work see Annexure 1 in "6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>

[63] "4th and 5th Quarterly Report" - 24 August 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=117 <1 May 2008>; "1st Quarterly Report January-April 2005" – 10 March 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=87 <14 May 2007>

[64] "1st Quarterly Report January-April 2005" – 10 March 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=87 <14 May 2007>

[65] "3rd Quarterly Report September 2005-January 2006" - 10 March 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=89 <14 May 2007>; "4th and 5th Quarterly Report" - 24 August 2006 http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=117 <1 May 2008>

Chapter Nine: Dupuis's contribution to a Christian theology of religious pluralism

Introduction

The research has explored different aspects and areas of Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism". It is against this background that the final evaluation of his main proposals must be situated. The aim of this chapter is to point out the contribution which the model of "inclusive pluralism" has made to the current theological debate on religions. It further attempts to answer whether the "novelty" of Dupuis's thought is still fresh, and valid or antiquated and destined to be forgotten.

The chapter compares fundamental principles, which guided Dupuis in constructing his model, with the views of Catholic theology, the church teaching and the various approaches to religious pluralism. This contraposition reveals more clearly those elements which enable Dupuis's theology to advance beyond the limits of traditional inclusivist perspectives. The analysis also examines whether the theology of "inclusive pluralism" can advance dialogue with religions. The central proposals which call for evaluation here are Trinitarian Christology, a single plan of salvation, religions as "substitutive mediations" and religious pluralism "in principle".

9.1 Exposition of "boundary questions" to further evolution in traditional Catholic theology of religions

Generally, it has been the practice of the church that any exploration of new horizons and directions in theology or construction of groundbreaking proposals with potential to advance the church's understanding of itself, is open to discussion, examination and assessment. This is also the case with the theology of "inclusive pluralism". It was predictable that when faced with innovative interpretations theologians and church officials would not remain mere observers but would engage in meaningful debate especially in the area of theology of religions and interreligious dialogue. Some theologians argued that Dupuis's model seemed to transgress the limits of Catholic church doctrine and needed to be scrutinized. Others saw Dupuis's thought as courageous but still defined it as Christocentric. Yet others regarded the theology of "inclusive pluralism" as a real advancement of inclusivism and a point of reference in the contemporary debate on religions. It is important therefore to examine the various components of Dupuis's model against the church's stand on the central Christian beliefs and against the different approaches to religious diversity, to establish their innovation and validity.

Concerning the area of relationship between Christianity and religions, the church's current position is identical with the stand of the conciliar doctrine, the pronouncements of various popes and the official documents published by church organizations for dialogue. To this one needs to add the "controversial" declaration of *Dominus Iesus* (2000) published by the Congregation for the Doctrine

of the Faith. All these documents contain reaffirmation of essential Christian beliefs and practices with respect to relations with the religions. They also constitute a point of reference for this analysis. One of the findings of this research is that Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism" exposes "boundary questions" in the Catholic theology of religions, thus intensifying and advancing the current debate on religious pluralism. To understand this exposition one needs to compare and contrast Dupuis's proposals with the above sources. At this stage it is worth defining those beliefs which the Catholic Church considers safeguarded. The most relevant source which singles them out is the CDF's notification on the book *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*. They include: the universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ, the unity and completeness of revelation in Jesus Christ, the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit, the role of the church as a sign and instrument of salvation for all people and the value and salvific function of religious traditions.

9.1.1 Universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ

Catholic theology states that only Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, is the universal mediator of salvation for the entire human family (GS 10; LG 8,14,28,49,60; RM 5). Any separation between the Word of God and Jesus Christ, between the salvific activity of the Word of God and Jesus, or even maintaining that there is an independent action of the Word of God as such, apart from the action of Jesus Christ the Word incarnate, is contrary to the church teaching (RM 6, DI 10).

Is Dupuis guilty of such separation? Research reveals that Dupuis always argues for the salvific economy which achieves the culmination of God's self-communication to humanity in the incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ. Two processes are used in the model of "inclusive pluralism" which preserve the unity between the eternal Word of God and Jesus Christ. One is rejection of the pluralist position which argues against the centrality of Jesus Christ. This serves the defence of "high" Christology (Dupuis 2002a:89). The other is acceptance of the Trinitarian approach to religions with the event of Christ in the centre (1997:205,207,222-223). It is clear therefore that Dupuis's stand on the universal mediation of Christ represents an inclusivist approach. What is however new in this claim for Christ-centeredness in comparison with the traditional theology is its emphasis on a more dialogical understanding of Jesus Christ. This can be seen in the distinction, which Dupuis makes, between the activity of the eternal Word of God and the activity of the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ. Such recognition between the Logos *ensarkos* and the Logos *asarkos* is central to all his proposals and the real cause of dissention with the Vatican. For Dupuis it is possible and justifiable to regard the economy of the incarnate Word (Jesus Christ) as the "sacrament" of the economy of the eternal Word (the Second Person of the Trinity) which is broader and 'coincides with the religious history of humankind' (1997:379).

Should this view not be identified with the pluralist perspective called Logocentrism? The answer has to be negative because in the pluralist view Logocentrism is always combined with pneumatocentrism and in both approaches the action of the Word of God and the action of the Spirit tend to be separated from the event of Jesus Christ. They are viewed as autonomous and independent agents that transcend the historical and the particular and become two separate economies which are alternatives to the economy of salvation in Jesus Christ. In pneumatocentrism, it is the Spirit who saves independently of Christ. In Logocentrism it is the eternal Word of God who saves and not the Word incarnate (Jesus Christ). With respect to Dupuis's position, while the action of the Word of God is not limited to the historical Jesus, in the same way the active presence of the Spirit cannot be 'limited to its outpouring from the risen and exalted Christ' (2002a:186), God's saving grace finds its highest point in the event of Christ. In Dupuis's theology the two activities are always linked to Jesus Christ. In this way the model of "inclusive pluralism" recognizes personal relations between the Word and the Spirit and acknowledges a specific function of the two in the Trinitarian way of God's self-communication with people but never separate from the event of Christ. The latter links the eternal Word and the Spirit with the Word incarnate.

Despite the above distinction, which some might regard as illegitimate, Dupuis's position remains traditionally inclusivist, especially when he writes that Christianity 'cannot stand without claiming for Jesus Christ a constitutive uniqueness' (1997:304). Uniqueness of this kind implies that Jesus is the *only* one who 'opens access to God' for all people (:387). For Dupuis this is the real essence of the Christian faith which continues to prevail from the very beginning of the Christian movement (:286,295,350). The reason why Jesus alone is constitutive and leads all human beings to God is his personal identity with the Second Person of the Trinity (2002a:174-176). That is why Christians believe that in Jesus Christ, God revealed God's self completely and Christianity possesses the fullness of revelation. Dupuis therefore regards the event of Christ as the supreme way of God's self-communication to people and the most intimate expression of union with humanity (1997:320-321). Thus, the unity between the eternal Word and the Word incarnate, as well as the inclusivist character of his stand, are beyond doubt.

However, in contrast to his inclusivist predecessors such as Danielou, de Lubac, von Balthasar, or Rahner, Dupuis insists on the "constitutive" and not on the "absolute" character of this Christic event. The term "constitutive" implies Jesus Christ's universal "significance" (1997:305), his universal mediation in the process of salvation and a privileged and obligatory "path" of God's salvific grace (2002a:211). The universal mediation of Christ is only possible because of the hypostatic union (1997:297,280-281). It is apparent therefore that Dupuis neither regards Jesus as

"absolute" nor as "normative" as do most of the pluralists for whom Jesus' saving work is limited only to Christians. Equally he views the event of Christ as "decisive" but not "definitive". Only God is "necessary", "unlimited" and consequently "absolute" (:387-388).

The emphasis on the "absoluteness" of God should not be seen as Dupuis's reduction of Christ to one among many religious saviours. Rather, he remains sensitive to the limits of the historical incarnation of the Word of God, the created character of the humanity which Jesus Christ assumed, and the particular character of Christ's redemptive and human actions. The single statement therefore which exposes the "forbidden" area is the term "constitutive". By using this Dupuis seeks to go beyond Christocentrism but without stepping into a theocentric paradigm. His reluctance to cross the boundary with pluralism but equally his courage to push the limits of inclusivism are evident in the following statement:

> As the "human face" or "icon" of God, Jesus Christ gives to Christianity its specific and singular character. But, while he is constitutive of salvation for all, he neither includes nor excludes other saving figures or traditions. If he brings salvation history to a climax, it is by way not of substitution or supersession but of confirmation and accomplishment (:388).

Hence, despite the link of the eternal plan of salvation to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, Christ's mediation of salvation does not exclude other possible mediations. The religions can also be "ways" if one regards them as derived from the mediation of Jesus Christ (RM 5). For Dupuis such an operation reconciles the view of Jesus Christ as "constitutive" while regarding other religions as *participated* ways of salvation for their adherents.

In conclusion, the real difficulty in understanding Dupuis's position lies in discerning what being "constitutive of salvation" means. If we take literally Dupuis's statement that Jesus Christ as the universal Saviour does not exclude other saving figures or religions, then one must attribute to Dupuis a radical movement beyond inclusivism and a break of the boundaries of the threefold typology. This would be the case if one argued that Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism" changes the meaning "constitutive" to such an extent that his view no longer fits in the category of inclusivism. Yet there is no evidence of this radical change. Moreover, taking Dupuis's model in its totality one sees that despite the fact that he challenges the "forbidden" area (the universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ), by willingly using the term "constitutive", he cannot position his model in pluralism because the category "constitutive" still privileges the event of Christ. Therefore the most the term "constitutive" can do is to place the model on the border of inclusivism against pluralism.

9.1.2 Unity and completeness of the revelation of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the only mediator in whom one finds the fulfilment and completeness of revelation (DV 2,4; *Fides et Ratio* 14,15,92; DI 5). Any claim therefore that the historical revelation in Jesus is limited, incomplete, imperfect or that it does not offer all the necessary means for salvation of people and needs completion by other religions is erroneous (DI 6; CCC 65-66). Along these lines, although it is permissible to view the seeds of truth and goodness present in other religions as a certain participation in truth rooted in the Christ's revelation (LG 17; AG 11; NA 2), it is not permissible to claim that these seeds do not derive from the only mediation of Jesus Christ (LG 16; RM 10).

If Dupuis attempts to go beyond the inclusivist stand on Jesus' uniqueness and his role in the economy of salvation, he does so in the area of unity and completeness of revelation in Jesus Christ. He understands this essential role of Jesus in a new fashion which does not diminish the other religious traditions and which allows Christianity to engage in a genuine dialogue. The statement which echoes the pluralist approach is that the "fullness of God's truth" in Jesus is "relative" ("relational"), that is, limited. Yet here "relative" means that what God desires to reveal to people is intensified but not exhausted in Jesus. On various occasions Dupuis speaks of certain limits involved in God's revelation in incarnation, that this revelation is limited by the 'historical particularity of Jesus' (Dupuis 2002a:176). Consequently, the fullness of God's revelation in Jesus must be "qualitative" and not "quantitative". Dupuis explains: '[It] is of a singular intensity, but it does not "exhaust" the mystery' (:131). This implies that in Jesus "the fullness of truth" does not give the entire picture of "God's truth" but it intensifies the truth so much that one knows what God's truth is about without giving any further explanation of it. The complete picture of revelation is the result of combining what Christians have in Jesus with the work of the Spirit in other religious traditions (:132). The channel which allows Christians to achieve this picture is through dialogue with religions.

Closely linked with the theme of fullness is recognition of the "spiritual and moral goods" in the religions. This also places Dupuis's model at the frontiers of inclusivism but remains still insufficient to satisfy the pluralist requirements. Catholic theology views the "spiritual and moral goods" in the world religions as fragments of revelation disclosed by God in Jesus Christ. The church's position suggests that, on the one hand, these traces or fragments have only a "preparatory" value, either in leading to God or in preparing people for the gospel (AG 3). On the other hand, the "spiritual and moral elements" might be regarded as divinely willed; whatever represents 'truth and grace…among peoples' (including the religious traditions), this points to 'a sacred presence of God',

so to speak (AG 9).[1]   This position is also shared by Pope John Paul II in his numerous pronouncements which Dupuis analyzes in *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*[2] and in *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue* (2002).

For Dupuis the "spiritual and moral goods" in the religions form a way of gaining a new insight into the inexhaustible richness of the Trinitarian God who is Mystery. The theme of "mystery" is characteristic of the pluralist theologians even if they do not directly identify the Trinity as the "ultimate goal".[3] It is this element, therefore, which unites Dupuis with the pluralists. He suggests that the religions might give a new insight into the mystery of God which has not yet been highlighted within Christianity. In this regard, he speaks of them 'as representing in their own right distinct facets of the self-disclosure of the Absolute-Mystery' and that one may determine 'in other saving figures and traditions, truth and grace not brought out with the same vigour and clarity in God's revelation and manifestation in Jesus Christ' (Dupuis 1997:210). This indicates that Dupuis is convinced that certain elements of God's revelation to humanity can be better expressed by practices and sacred scriptures other than Christian ones. Such a possibility exists but only in the sense that Christians who engage in dialogue might become enriched spiritually by something which is not so vividly expressed in their own tradition.

Some theologians have attempted to justify the unfortunate language of "relativeness". One of them is Gerald O'Collins who argues that Dupuis is correct in saying that human knowledge of God's revelation in Christ is limited and cannot be regarded as "absolute" or "definitive" (O'Collins 2003c:24). This is implied in the language of revelation of the New Testament inclined towards the future which finds support in *Dei Verbum*. The Constitution states that although God's self-revelation to humanity was completed by Jesus' resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit, one should not emphasize the "fullness" of this revelation to such an extent that the glorious manifestation of Christ in the future will be ignored (DV 4). In *Fides et Ratio* the pope speaks of "the fullness of truth which will appear with the final revelation of God" (2). Therefore, Dupuis is right to refer to God's revelation in Jesus Christ as "decisive" and not as "definitive", otherwise the latter would suggest that there is nothing to come in the future. It is true that he avoids using such words as "absolute" or "definitive" in his proposals concerning revelation in Christ but nowhere does he speak of God's historical self-communication in Christ as needing completion, nor does he reduce Christ to other saviours or religious figures. On the contrary, on various occasions, Dupuis repeats that among all other religious founders Jesus is 'the deepest and most decisive engagement of God with humankind' (Dupuis 1997:388). Furthermore: 'No revelation…either before or after

Christ can either surpass or equal the one vouchsafed in Jesus Christ, the divine Son incarnate' (:249-250,204).

The conclusion is that Dupuis never proposes that God's revelation in Christ and his uniqueness is "relative" in the sense that it is not "constitutive" or universal. The "relativeness" of which he speaks cannot be identical with the "relativeness" of the pluralists when they reject the "constitutive" character of Jesus Christ and they also speak of other religious figures as real "saviours" equal to Jesus Christ. This further suggests that certain expressions which contain the so called "pluralist emphases" (relative, relational, relativeness, constitutive, mystery) must be read against the background of Dupuis's entire approach to religions and their religious figures. Viewed against this background, the most striking element is the continual insistence on the universal character of revelation in Christ. Can the model of inclusive pluralism therefore allow for more recognition of the other religious figures and their traditions? The answer is no because Dupuis, in his view of religions and their spiritual figures does not dissociate himself from the essential inclusivist framework (the Trinitarian and Christic character of the single economy of salvation).

9.1.3 The salvific action of the Holy Spirit
Following the Trinitarian pattern Dupuis also introduces in his model the activity of the Holy Spirit before and after the event of Christ. Next to the continued action of the eternal Word of God, a dominant role in the theology of "inclusive pluralism" is occupied by the Holy Spirit. This serves as a basis for moving beyond the concept of "fulfilment", advancing the inclusivist approach, and constructing a truly dialogical theology of religions. Dupuis is, therefore, the advocate of what in theology is called a Spirit-based theology of religions. This insistence in his proposals on the active presence of the Spirit is not entirely innovative. He follows in it Pope John Paul II and other theologians who emphasize that the Spirit is active throughout human history, and therefore includes the religions. Yet Dupuis adds something in his proposal that is quite innovative and unique. He claims that what the Spirit does in other religious traditions might be different (although not contradictory) from what one finds in the Word of God incarnated in Jesus.

Recognition of the active presence of the Spirit in other cultures and religions leads Dupuis to claim that because of this presence, God might have more to say to the human family than what God has said in Jesus. Dupuis expresses this conviction when he writes that 'in the entire history of God's revelations with humankind, there is more truth and grace than available and discoverable in the Christian tradition alone' (Dupuis 2002a:256). Certainly for many Catholic traditional inclusivists such as Inos Biffi or Giuseppe Rosa (the main critics of Dupuis's model) such a Spirit-based conclusion seems to find little acceptance. See Chapter 2.4.1. As indicated, Dupuis reaches this

conclusion by using the Trinitarian framework. In Trinitarian theology there is insistence on real distinctions between the three persons of the Trinity where one person cannot be subordinated to the other. Consequently if there is "differentiation" between the Word of God incarnate in Jesus and the Spirit of God in other religions, those religions can have something "different" to say to Christianity, and the converse would also be true (1997:206,197-198). This implies that Christianity cannot have 'a monopoly of truth' (:382).

At the same time, Dupuis links the cosmic action of the Spirit with the universal mediation of Jesus Christ. In this he is in agreement with the church doctrine according to which the salvific action of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' resurrection has always to be seen in unity with the universal action of the Word Incarnate and does not go beyond the economy of the latter (RM 5; *Ecclesia in Asia* 15-16; DI 12). Thus, the Holy Spirit is always the Spirit of Christ sent by God to work both in Christians and in other believers (GS 22; RM 28-29). The same is true for Dupuis; it is Christ the risen and glorified which is 'at the centre as the way of God' and not the Spirit (Dupuis 1997:197). This serves to emphasize that the action of the Spirit and the action of the risen Christ are interconnected and complementary within one plan of salvation and can in no way be seen as two separate economies (Dupuis 2002a:83). In short, whatever is revealed by God through the Spirit in other religions must be understood in the light of Christ. The Spirit does not replace Christ.

The conclusion is apparent; although Dupuis does not want to treat the other religions as "stepping stones" to Christianity by emphasizing the real presence and action of the Spirit in them, at the same time he attempts to preserve the central place for Jesus Christ in God's dealing with humankind.

9.1.4 The role of the church in the economy of salvation

Concerning the function of the church in the process of salvation, church documents distinguish three elements which are non-negotiable. Firstly, the church is the sign and instrument of God's salvation directed to all people (LG 9,14,17,48; RM 11; DI 16). Secondly, all other believers are oriented to the church and are called to become its part (LG 13,16; AG 7; DH 1; RM 10; DI 20-22). Finally, the various religions cannot be considered as ways of salvation which complement the church (RM 36; DI 21-22).

Generally, Dupuis agrees with the first statement that the fullness of the means of salvation is in the church, but in relation to other believers who do not belong explicitly to the church, the role of the church is different. The other believers do not have to belong explicitly or implicitly to the church in order to be saved. If this were the case the Second Vatican Council would repeat the old terminology of "implicit desire" to belong to the church or "implicit baptism of desire" as the

essential condition for being saved. This however would move the church back to the time when the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* was still valid. Instead the Council used another term that the unbaptized are "oriented" to the church (LG 13-16).

Concerning the role of the church in the process of salvation of other believers, even the post-conciliar magisterum has been less certain how exactly this role should be interpreted (RM 9-10). Instead, the decisive point concerning salvation of all people and the point of reference in this regard must be seen in the Reign of God. The Church exists and functions for the Reign, not vice versa. It is true that the church mediates God's grace to its own members through the proclaimed word, sacraments and particularly the celebration of the Eucharist, but in the case of other believers the church's role is not to mediate but to intercede for them. This is the distinction one encounters in the Eucharistic prayers in the Roman Missal (Dupuis 2002a:210-211).

One can say, therefore, that while Dupuis emphasizes the centrality of the event of Christ, he calls for abandoning the idea of church-centeredness which exaggerates the necessary role of the church in the economy of salvation of all people. Such an emphasis on the church diminishes the value of other religions. Consequently Dupuis criticizes 'the narrow ecclesiocentric perspective of *Redemptoris Missio…*' (1997:371), something which very few theologians would dare to do. It is Jesus Christ and not the church who leads to the *centre*, that is, God and God's Reign (2002a:88).

9.1.5 Religious traditions as ways to salvation

In this regard, the Catholic doctrine stresses that the fruits of the activity of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, history, cultures and religions must be seen as preparation for the Gospel (RM 29). It is permissible therefore to regard the elements of truth and goodness in other religions as means through which the activity of the Holy Spirit accomplishes salvation in members of the religions, but it is illegitimate to treat those religions as ways of salvation (LG 16; NA 2; AG 9; EN 53; RM 55; DI 8). Consequently the sacred texts of those religious traditions cannot be placed at the same level as the Old Testament which prepares for the Christ's event (DI 8).

First of all Dupuis disputes the above statement that the religious traditions have a purely preparatory character. In this sense, he is clearly testing the limits of the classical inclusivist theology represented by the official church and numerous theologians. Dupuis's experience of religious diversity in Asia and the world at large is one of the main factors which encourages him to argue that the diverse religious traditions exist not merely as a "matter of fact" but "in principle". Religious pluralism is accorded a place in God's plan of salvation. The social expressions are distinct ways in which God communicates God's self to humans and entire nations (Dupuis

1997:212), linked to the various covenants which God established with people at different stages of history (2002a:103-113). As such they possess "abiding meaning" and might be regarded as 'true interventions and authentic manifestations of God in the history of people; they form integral parts of one history of salvation that culminates in the Jesus-Christ-event' (1997:303). That is why their existence must be seen as included in God's plan of salvation for humanity (:201). But Dupuis also adds that the religions

> contain elements of divine revelation and moments of divine grace, even though they remain incomplete and open to a fuller self-gift and disclosure on the part of God. The gracious moments enshrined in the religious traditions of humankind open their followers – through faith and *agapè* – to God's grace and salvation. They do so insofar as in God's providence they anticipate God's fuller disclosure and decisive self-gift in Jesus Christ (:325).

This statement is the most comprehensive commentary on the positive role of the religious traditions in the process of salvation and, at the same time, this commentary is the most inclusivist. Consequently, if one looks for anything new in Dupuis's stand on religious pluralism, it has to be seen in the fact that, as an inclusive pluralist, he argues for pluralism "in principle" which is generally ascribed to the pluralist school of thought. On the one hand, therefore, Dupuis's interpretation of religious pluralism as *de iure* goes beyond the inclusivist view on religions. On the other hand, his interpretation cannot be fully identified with pluralism because by using terminology such as Jesus the "constitutive" Saviour, he strongly holds to the inclusivist position. This will be elaborated in the section on the contribution which Dupuis's interpretation of religious pluralism makes for the theology of religions.

Undoubtedly, the theme which seems to stand out the most in the theology of "inclusive pluralism" in comparison with the official doctrine is Dupuis's perspective on religions as "paths" or "mediations" of salvation to their members. There are echoes of pluralism in such formulations as the "positive value" of religions, their "saving significance", "saving power" (1997:305,306) "substitutive mediations" (:351), "channels to salvation" (:316,317), "paths to salvation" (:306). Dupuis even speaks of the religions as distinct expressions of God's self-disclosure in the single process of salvation (:210). The religions can further be viewed as "diverse" paths leading people to God (:299,316) and their founders as "other saving figures in history" (:282,373,388). But placing all these formulations against the Trinitarian perspective used in the entire model does not enable one to regard the religions as independent "mediations" or "ways" of salvation. Being aware of it, Dupuis uses another term for the religions which is more accurate, namely, "participated"[4] mediations. This is as far as he can go in attributing to them a genuinely mediatory role that is nevertheless essentially related to Christ's redemptive work.

Inclusivism is even more evident in other statements. For instance Dupuis describes the religious traditions as "incomplete modes of salvation" in which the paschal mystery is present implicitly, whereas only in Christianity is this salvific mystery present 'overtly and explicitly' (:319). And in relation to God's revelation in those traditions, he writes that '[no] revelation…either before or after Christ can either surpass or equal the one vouchsafed in Jesus Christ, the divine Son incarnate' (:250). The conclusion is clear; Dupuis is prepared to acknowledge the other religions as "legitimate paths" which guide their adherents to salvation but only in the context of their essential relatedness to the Trinitarian and Christic mystery (1991:98). And in the light of this mystery, there is no place for other "independent" religious "paths" to salvation. Logically, the other religious figures can only be viewed in terms of being "pointers to salvation" for their own followers (2002a:176).

A new development cannot be found in Dupuis's recognition of the sacred texts in the religions. The main argument is that the founders of other religions were enlightened and inspired by the universal active presence of God's Word and Spirit (1997:385). Dupuis struggles with the question of how the sacred scriptures, practices and rites convey the action of the Spirit or uphold in other believers their personal experiences of God. Can Christian theology attribute divine revelation to other sacred canons and, if so, to what degree? What would this mean for the classic Christian doctrine of divine inspiration? In response, he develops a pneumatology of the sacred canons of other religions in an essay entitled "The Cosmic economy of the Spirit and the sacred scriptures of religious traditions" (1975).[5] There, he argues that the Spirit is present in the economy of salvation everywhere and mediates all genuine religious experiences of God. Such mediation reaches other believers through channels available to the Spirit, that is, the sacred scriptures, religious practices and rites. Dupuis's argument resembles what the early Fathers and the Second Vatican Council expressed as "seeds of the Word" (AG 11). But he also adds that even if the sacred scriptures of the other traditions are acknowledged as God's word, these scriptures are still of relative character in comparison with the decisive word of God spoken to humanity in Jesus Christ and officially recorded in the Christian scriptures (Dupuis 1977b:224). The implication is that nothing can be added to the revelation of God in Christ.

The value therefore of this pneumatic approach to the religions has to be seen in its affirmation of the sacredness of other scriptures but only as God's initial revelation which proceeds and prepares for the decisive word of God in Jesus Christ (:224). Moreover, Dupuis is cautious about readily accepting all the sacred scriptures of other religions as God's revelation. This is apparent in the traditional terms which he uses in his discussion, that revelation is "differentiated" and "progressive". These terms mean that there were various degrees to which the human authors

comprehended and communicated God's word and to various degree they were under God's inspiration. Hence it is difficult to discern which words are of divine character and which are merely human. Undoubtedly Dupuis must be praised for his focus on the doctrine of sacred scriptures. Yet it is clear that he regards the sacred books of the world religions as only relative in comparison with God's word spoken in Christ. This explains his traditional distinction concerning God's revelation to humanity, that is, the cosmic, the Israelite, and the Christian types of revelation linked with the covenants which God established with people throughout salvation history with its culmination in the decisive covenant in Christ.

To summarize this section, it is apparent that while Dupuis enters certain "boundary" areas, explores new territories of inclusivist theology of religions, and even uses terms which echo pluralism, he has not constructed an entirely new and independent model of religious pluralism within the threefold typology of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Instead what he did was to choose a position on the boundary between inclusivism and pluralism. The name of his model "inclusive pluralism" depicts this position quite accurately. For many the theology of inclusive pluralism represents the limits to which one can go, that is an attempt to push the centrality of Jesus beyond the boundaries of the inclusivist perspective represented by the official church teaching and still remain within the limits of orthodoxy.

The inevitable question emerges as to the value of Dupuis's theology of "inclusive pluralism". In seeking to explore the "boundary" questions Dupuis is able to break "new" ground and take "new" routes in contemporary inclusivist theology. His proposals also suggest certain actions which require the church carefully to reconsider its attitude to religious pluralism. The following analysis will point to the advancement which the model of "inclusive pluralism" makes in numerous areas such as Trinitarian Christology, the question of religious pluralism, dialogue vis-à-vis the church's evangelizing mission, and the role of Christianity as a historic religion in relation to other religions in the single plan of salvation.

9.2 A new attempt to indicate new routes in contemporary inclusivist theology
9.2.1 Movement beyond Jesusology, Christomonism and ecclesiocentrism

One of the first constructs which allows Dupuis to advance the theology of religions and move towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism is his Trinitarian Christology. As shown in Chapter Five such Christology joins the essential unity of the salvific economy with the existence of a multiplicity of religions, which in a "participated" mode, mediate salvation. This operation of "holding" together the two is possible because the mystery of the Trinity itself contains both plurality and personal identity in the Trinitarian relationships; God is equally diversity and also a

communion of persons based on love. The diversity and communion in Godhead helps to understand the plurality of God's interrelated self-manifestations in history and the world (1997:208). In addition, the Trinitarian approach makes it clear that God is not only a source of religious diversity but also a goal to which everything including the entire human history tends, as a result of the immanent communion in the Godhead. In this sense the diverse religions must also be convergent paths. They come from the absolute mystery of God and lead to the absolute mystery which is their final goal (:312).

In this interpretation of the relationship between the Trinity and the religions one can see the real difference between the pluralist approach and that of Dupuis. In disagreeing with the pluralists, Dupuis writes that if all religions tend towards the Ultimate Reality, this Reality is not just any God but the Triune God (:237). This implies that, for Dupuis, Trinitarianism is not just a Christian construct, but is essentially how God is; that Trinitarian relations belong to the very nature of God. And even if the other believers speak of the Real or the Divine, wherever they experience God in their life situations they experience the Triune God. Hence in every religious experience which is authentic 'the Triune God of Christian revelation is present and operative' (:277). This explains why Dupuis searches for "traces" of the Triune God in the extra-biblical religions and in the lives of individual believers (:227-228). Dupuis carries out this search above all in relation to Hinduism (1991:55-66; 1997:268-279).

There is another purpose for using the Trinitarian approach (unity of Trinitarian relations) in the theology of "inclusive pluralism". It allows the model to move beyond Jesusology and Christomonism and, in its later stage, beyond ecclesiocentrism. Movement beyond Jesusology has to be seen in the model's emphasis on the lasting role of the eternal Word of God before and after incarnation. The model is prevented from focussing exclusively on Jesus by two factors: on the one hand the "limitedness" or "rationality" of revelation in Jesus and his redemptive work and, on the other hand, the lasting role of the eternal Word. It transfers the emphasis from Jesus of Nazareth as the only Saviour, and places it instead on the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ who saves in unity with the eternal Word to be incarnate.

Christians often tend to avoid this human aspect of Jesus Christ and to see in him only the divine element as if the divine in Jesus suppressed the human. This implies a lack of recognition of Jesus' true humanity as historical and cultural, including the human conditions freely chosen by Jesus, in which the Word of God decided to incarnate and function. Dupuis agrees that the personal identity between Jesus and Christ must be recognized as the personal identity between the eternal Word and the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ. He disagrees that it is impossible and forbidden to make a

distinction between the action of the eternal Word and the action of the Word incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth the human, who lived in Palestine, proclaimed the Good News, died on the cross and rose. He differs in opinion because the action of the eternal, infinite Son of God before and after the incarnation cannot be limited to the action of the Word incarnate in the historic finite Jesus of Nazareth (Dupuis 2002a:140). Hence Dupuis argues that the historical event of Jesus Christ is, in its essence, a reality which is partial and which is limited by time and space. Moreover, even if Jesus' resurrection introduces a qualitative and radical change which means that the historic salvific event transcends the limitations imposed by history, thus becoming coextensive with all times and all histories, this event still does not and cannot exhaust the divine Mystery in its totality and the revealing and saving power of the Word of God. For Dupuis, Jesus Christ is true God but also truly human with all its limitations. God's fullness of revelation cannot therefore be expressed in a complete and perfect manner either in Jesus of Nazareth, true God and true but finite human, or in Christianity or in any other historic religion (:129-130).

Indeed Christology of this kind goes beyond Jesusology and calls for the recognition that all religious traditions, including Christianity, are merely responses to God's self-revelation and cannot be seen as absolute. The difference between Christianity and the religions is that in them this revelation happened not through Jesus of Nazareth but through the eternal Word of God. Hence, it is possible to say that a certain "dimension" of the action of the eternal Word, which cannot be contained in the action of the Word in the historical Jesus, can be manifested in other religions.

Trinitarian Christology also moves the model of inclusive pluralism beyond Christomonism and the older theory of "fulfilment" which regards other religious traditions as "stepping-stones". Dupuis agrees that at the Pentecost the Holy Spirit became the source of life for the church in spreading to the entire world the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, that the Holy Spirit continues to work through the risen glorified Christ both in the church and in the world. Nevertheless, he adds another component, not often heard of in the traditional theology of religions, that the activity of the Holy Spirit cannot be limited merely to the risen humanity of Christ. While it is true that the Holy Spirit acted in a salvific way before the incarnation of the Word (AG 4) and has been working in total communion with the risen Christ since the resurrection and Pentecost, the action of the Spirit has still remained universal both before and after the event of Christ. To limit the Spirit's saving and revelatory function to its mediation through the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ would be nothing less than Christomonism. If the incarnation of the Word of God does not suppress the divine powers of the Word so the action of the Spirit before and after incarnation cannot be suppressed by the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ. Despite the existing communion between the two, the activity of

the Spirit must remain distinct and reach members of the religions through their religious life and practices. Those believers obtain salvation through following the ways proposed to them by their own religious traditions. It is possible that on the basis of the action of the Spirit the religions exercise a certain salvific role for their own members.

Trinitarianism and especially recognition of the universal and active presence of the Holy Spirit in cultures and religions radically advances the theology of "inclusive pluralism" beyond ecclesiocentrism. The emphasis on the universality of the Reign of God in Dupuis's approach is distinct from Christomonism and Knitter's regnocentrism from which Dupuis dissociates himself. Knitter's regnocentrism is regarded as a modified form of theocentrism which places God and God's future Reign at the centre of the religious universe. On the contrary, Dupuis links the Reign of God with the historical Jesus and the event of Christ. In contrast to Knitter, Dupuis argues that it is through the action of the risen Christ that other believers share in the Reign of God in history, and tend towards the eschatological dimension of this Reign. His "inclusive pluralism" therefore directly links "regnocentrism" to Christocentrism, regarding the two as inseparable aspects of the same reality. But it also emphasizes that Jesus' ministry was at the service of the Reign and for this reason the church must be at the service of the Reign as well.

The Reign is the eschatological dimension of the rule of God which began to be fully realized with Jesus. This realization must continue until the end of times when it will reach its fulfilment. The task of Christianity is to incarnate in history this fullness of God's salvation. In this sense the church is and must be the real sacrament of the Reign of God in the world. Yet the church is not isolated in building the Reign, and it gets help from other religions and people who act in their own distinctive way although still in union with Christ. They can and should contribute to the growth of this Reign among all people and all nations. The church and the Reign are therefore not identical; the Reign extends beyond the boundaries of the church because the Spirit of Christ remains present and active outside its boundaries. That is why other religions are also destined to be visible signs of the presence of the Reign in the world.

One can conclude that, while Dupuis acknowledges the unique role of Christianity and the church in building the Reign, he omits and rejects terms which would suggest Christianity's or the church's exclusion of others in this process. Instead he emphasizes that the destiny of each religion is equally unique because each, in its own way, can contribute to the realization of the Reign in the world and the isolation of any religion would not serve this purpose. All religions, including Christianity, should journey together to the eschatological fullness of the Reign. Dialogue among religions is therefore inscribed in their nature and is required by the Reign. The fewer the signs of dialogue and

the more unnecessary limitations, the slower will be the process of building the Reign. Such mutual journeying can lead to the enrichment, purification and revision of Christianity's absolute claims: and the converse is also true; in dialogue Christianity too can make an impact on the other religions.

9.2.2 A new interpretation of the question of religious pluralism for official Catholic theology

Examination of Dupuis's stand on other religions as "ways" to salvation showed that Dupuis appreciates the religions and recognizes them as "participated" mediations. This recognition is based on the active presence of the Holy Spirit in unity with the redemptive work of Christ. As mentioned, the central position of Christ makes Dupuis's proposals fall short of the pluralist claim despite formulations such as "other saviours", "channels" or "paths" to salvation. Nevertheless, recognition of the religious traditions as "participated" mediations implies that existence "in principle" is attributed to them. The question is in what sense does this recognition, which is characteristic of the pluralists but kept within Trinitarian Christology, constitute a new interpretation of religious diversity.

To appreciate the progress of Dupuis's position one needs to assess this recognition against the diverse responses, throughout the history of Catholic doctrine, to the question of the role which the religions could play in the salvation of their own adherents. Chapter Three pointed out that, at the time of Cyprian, the religions had no value at all as expressed in the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. The voyages to the "New World" in the Western Hemisphere challenged the ancient conviction that the Gospel had been spread to the entire world and questioned the necessity of explicit faith in Jesus Christ to belong to the Catholic Church and be saved. A new theological response to the concern of salvation of non-Christians was developed through the concept of "implicit faith". With time theologians such as Danielou, de Lubac and Balthasar constructed the theory of "fulfilment", which was for the first time, truly inclusivist but still had limitations. It continued to echo the idea of "implicit faith" and to reduce the religions to a "preparatory" role for Christianity. A genuine appreciation of the other religions was endorsed by the conciliar documents without, however, recognizing them as "ways" to salvation. While God's grace could operate in the hearts of those who belonged to them, they were human constructs. Their existence was the fruit of the religious nature of humanity, that is, people's orientation towards the transcendent reality. No intrinsic theological value could be attached to them (AG 3).[6] Similar thinking was repeated in the post-conciliar magisterial documents of Paul VI (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* - 1974) and John Paul II (*Redemptoris Missio* - 1990).[7] A modest recognition of the value of other religions could be seen in "Dialogue and Proclamation" and the documents of the Theological Advisory Commission of the FABC.

A clear step away from the "fulfilment" theory was apparent in Rahner's view that God's salvific will found its expression in the social forms to which other believers belong. The religions were to be regarded as a "medium" through which God conveyed God's grace to their members and as a concrete "manifestation" of God's search for humanity and of the human response to it. Consequently religious pluralism was the result of humankind's historical nature and evidence of God's continual self-communication with humankind throughout history. Christianity, the only true religion, could be fully realized gradually but in the meantime God used the other religions as instruments to realize God's salvific will in history. Thus while the religions played a certain role in conveying salvation to their members, religious diversity could not be viewed as willed by God but as something provisional which ultimately had to be overcome by Christianity.[8]

These different views (apart from the *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* approach) which consider religious pluralism as *de facto* can be categorized as Christocentrism (inclusivism) and identified with the theology of religions and the official church position. Does Dupuis's stand on religious pluralism advance the above inclusivist perspectives and, if so, to what extent?

Certainly, Dupuis's view on religious diversity goes beyond both the "fulfilment" theory represented by De Lubac and Danielou and its modified form of Rahner's "anonymous Christianity". For Dupuis, both perspectives are unsatisfactory even if they recognize a certain positive role of the religious traditions in the divine economy of salvation. Nevertheless, both theories will always devalue the other religions by saying that no matter how many elements of "truth and grace" can be found in them, ultimately they will have to be superseded by Christianity. Consequently, they can function only as preparations for something which is better. That is why Dupuis postulates movement beyond inclusivism in the form of "fulfilment" which sees the other religious traditions as only "stepping stones" or "seeds" or a "preparation" for accepting the Christian faith (Dupuis 1997:204,383). He postulates a Christian theology of religious pluralism which allows God to function freely in the religious world, which recognizes the validity of the religious traditions on their own, and which accepts a genuine dialogue with them. This particular theology alone will make the Christian message credible.

Consequently Dupuis formulates a proposal which claims that the world religions must have 'a lasting role and a specific meaning in the overall mystery' (2002a:96) of God's relationship with the human family. The religions do not exist only as "a fact" or as a matter of course in history but "in principle" because their existence is willed by God. They are designated by God and as such they will continue to exist (1997:201). This implies that God does not plan that all people will belong to the Christian church and that the various religions will prevail. After all, of concern is not what role

Christianity can attribute to those religions, but rather what their significance is in God's plan of salvation for humanity. And if they exist "in principle", then despite the differences among religions, their mutual convergence and 'mutual enrichment' (1997:11) must be possible. What Dupuis proposes here is one of the more controversial constructs in his theology because it stands out in comparison with the inclusivist view. But does his proposals locate his model in theocentrism?

Dupuis's position seems very close to theocentrism but it is not identical. In the light of the pluralist demand, religious diversity is willed by God (exists "in principle") and possesses a lasting role in the plan of salvation. In addition to this it questions 'the unique mediation…and…[relativizes] Christian revelation as [the] complete and definitive revelation' (Geffré 2003:48). Therefore what separates Dupuis's position from the pluralist approach is his conviction, that although other religious traditions have a meaningful, valid and lasting role to play in the economy of salvation, their validity and their role are rooted in God's revelation in Jesus Christ. It is Christ who is the universal saviour and mediator. Thus while Dupuis's stand is close to theocentrism and recognizes the almost "intrinsic" value or good of the other religious traditions, it does not attribute an independent role or validity to them. If they play any positive role and possess any value, it is always linked to Jesus Christ.[9]

Is Dupuis's proposal for viewing religious diversity *de iure* coherent? Can one argue for religious pluralism "in principle" and still hold to the centrality of Christ? Indeed, it is difficult to answer this question. The solution would be to make Dupuis guilty of paradox. One thing is certain: that without claiming to know all the reasons for the numerous ways to God, Dupuis is seeking to interpret religious diversity in the light of God's universal will to save all people. That is why he argues logically that this pluralism cannot be the result of human blindness or of Christianity failing in its mission over the centuries, but of something that corresponds with God's mysterious design. Consequently, even if Dupuis's proposal falls short of the pluralist claim, his effort to recognize religious diversity as a "matter of principle" within the inclusivist approach places him at the limit of it and represents a new interpretation of God's mysterious design which requires one to abandon the notion that the other religious traditions are only accidental.

9.2.3 Dialogue as an integral element of the church's evangelizing mission

The view that the religions have a lasting place in the economy of salvation inevitably influences the concept of the church's evangelizing mission. It questions its purpose and its relation to dialogue. There are three essential aspects in the theology of "inclusive pluralism" which indicate a new direction and a fresh look at the relationship between mission and dialogue. Dupuis's theology

approaches the church's evangelizing mission differently from traditional theology. While in the traditional theology of religions God acts and reveals God-self first in the church and only later through the church in the world (God-church-world), the opposite is true in "inclusive pluralism". God acts and reveals God-self first in the world and only afterwards in the church (God-world-church). While in the traditional theology of religions the purpose of the evangelizing mission is to implant the church in a particular context, in the model of "inclusive pluralism" such a purpose is linked with building the Reign of God which is a more extensive reality than the church. This building of the Reign here on earth must be done in cooperation with the religions which, like the church, are God's instruments of salvation.

In the traditional theology of religions represented, for instance, by *Dominus Iesus*, dialogue with other religions happens outside the mission and plays a preparatory role. Thus dialogue becomes subordinated to proclamation (DI 22). In this situation, the main purpose of the evangelizing mission is to proclaim Jesus Christ as the only Saviour with the intention of converting others. The real problem with this approach is that conversion becomes one-sided. Christians proclaim the necessity of conversion and others must convert. Such a view of the purpose of mission seems to overlook the post-conciliar teaching about the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit and the eternal Logos in other religions, and to overlook the post-conciliar church's experience of interreligious dialogue. In contrast, in the model of "inclusive pluralism" dialogue becomes an intrinsic dimension of any church mission. Witness and dialogue become central to evangelization and not direct proclamation of the Gospel to other believers, with the intention of conversion.

Dupuis is definitely aware that there can be no authentic evangelization without proclaiming Jesus Christ the "constitutive" Saviour, but he is equally aware that in such contexts as the church in Asia, Africa or Latin America there can be no profound evangelization and inculturation of Christ's message without dialogue with religions and cultures. Hence in the model of "inclusive pluralism", with its emphasis on the Reign of God, the church's evangelizing mission receives a new form and gains a new perspective. This new perspective, based on the conviction that God is present in cultures and religions, encourages one to be with people, to respond with sensitivity to their needs and to bear witness to the values of the Reign of God through solidarity and participation in human life. In this situation, mission means dialogue with the poor of Asia, Africa or Latin America including their cultures and traditional religions. In the theology of "inclusive pluralism", with its emphasis on Christocentrism, pneumatocentrism and regnocentrism, the aims of mission and dialogue converge because both activities tend towards the same goal, namely, building the Reign of God.

There is one more dimension to the church's evangelizing mission from the perspective of the theology of "inclusive pluralism" based on Trinitarianism. Mission is mostly the mission of God who intended to share with people the fullness of life in God's eternal Son and the Holy Spirit (AG 2). From the Spirit-based perspective, the church, in doing mission, goes to places where the Spirit is already present. From the Christological perspective Jesus Christ had already been present in those places where Christians established their mission. In such a situation, the purpose of the church's mission should be above all a support given to the mission of God. Thus it is not only the proclamation of Christ (the Holy Spirit) but also the discovery and encounter of the presence of Christ (the Holy Spirit) in places of mission, in other believers and in their religions. In this context, an interreligious dialogue that is correctly understood can be a valuable means for evangelization. It can contribute to the shift in focus from conversion of non-Christians into Christianity (and vice versa), to recognition of the active presence of the Holy Spirit who leads both sides to conversion to God. In such an atmosphere Christians should not only hope for conversion of the "other" but they themselves should remain open to experience personal transformation and remain attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit which might come from other believers and their religious traditions. In dialogue, ultimately the most imperative is mutual conversion to God characterized by an authentic change of heart rather than a change of religious affiliation.

Is this not a relativization of Christian truth and an undermining of the evangelizing mission of the church? From the perspective of *Dominus Iesus* this is certainly so; but it is less so from the perspective of *Redemptoris Missio* and "Dialogue and Proclamation" which recognize the religions as "participated" mediations; and from the perspective of "inclusive pluralism" which regards the religions as existing *de iure* and which lead their believers to the same God, it is not so at all. In this respect Dupuis's model of "inclusive pluralism", with its concept of close relationship between mission and dialogue, advances the theology of religions and adds another valuable component for constructing a Christian theology of religious pluralism.

9.2.4 Construction of a comprehensive theory which replaces the old idea of Christianity's absoluteness

The recognition of the salvific activity of the Word and the Spirit of God in other religions, the attribution to them of existence "in principle" and a lasting role in the economy of salvation as "participated" mediations, and the linking of the church's mission with dialogue which leads not to change of religious affiliation, but to mutual conversion to God, moves towards the transformation of the concept of Christianity's absoluteness as a historic religion. The examination of various proposals of "inclusive pluralism" revealed that the difficulty in establishing interreligious dialogue

lies not only in the real diversity of religions but also in "absolute" claims by religions. These make conversations among them difficult and limit any "common ground" for mutual encounter.

The claim for "absoluteness" concerning people's salvation has been evident in the Christian churches including Roman Catholicism for centuries. To a certain degree it continues to prevail in Christian theological reflection or church teaching even nowadays. For this reason Dupuis needs to be commended for constructing a comprehensive theological system which redirects attention from the indispensable role which Christianity as a historic religion plays in conveying God's grace to people, to Jesus Christ the universal mediator of salvation. Indeed, the various proposals clearly depart from the old belief that Christianity is the *only* true religion and all other religious traditions have a preparatory value. The research shows that many factors contribute to this apparent shift. One such factor is the variety of theologies upon which the model is constructed. This includes the theology of the Logos of the early inclusivists such as Justin, Ireneaus, and Clement, but also Rahner's "anonymous Christianity", the teaching of the Council, and the theology of Pope John Paul II. All of them, to varying degrees, soften the position that only Christianity (the church) as a historic religion conveys salvation to people, and they recognize a new function of the other religions in the economy of salvation. They play an essential role in shifting from the importance of Christianity, which is the sacrament of Christ, to Jesus Christ who is the universal mediator and the sacrament of salvation.

The main objection, which comes from various theological schools, especially from theocentrism to the above theological positions taken by Rahner, the Council and John Paul II, is seen in their insistence on the universality of Christ's saving presence closely aligned with Christianity as a historic religion, even where this presence is not recognized and where religious lives are attributed to other sources. Many regard this insistence as unacceptable, which makes a genuine and meaningful interreligious dialogue impossible. In recent years, in the name of countering any form of relativism, this idea was further reinforced by the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*. One can observe a sense of absolutism of Christianity in the declaration's tendency to place the universality of the mystery of Christ at the same level as that of the church or Christianity.

The theology of "inclusive pluralism" addresses the above tension and the difficulty of placing Christianity at the same level with Christ's universality by viewing the religions as "participated" mediations or "substitutive" paths of salvation, and at the same time attributing a special but not "absolute" role to Christianity (the church) in the divine plan of salvation. Such an operation is possible on the basis of a single history of salvation and revelation which embraces the entire universe and includes all people (Dupuis 1997:371). The second factor, therefore, which tempers

Christianity's superiority is the history of salvation divided into three stages: cosmic (general), special Jewish, and special Christian. These stages imply differentiation and the progression of God's revelation in history with the history of Israel and the church of Christ as something that serves to understand God's cosmic revelation (:233,235).

Dupuis maintains therefore that God's saving grace in the single plan is both one and is expressed in a variety of ways. While there is one plan of salvation there are a multiplicity of God's self-communications to the entire human family regardless of the historical situations or circumstances in which people find themselves. Thus, God's plan is realized in diverse ways and concrete forms which find expression in various communities called religious traditions (2002a:96). For Dupuis it is neither contradictory nor unorthodox to claim that God in the Trinitarian mystery could have created a number of diverse and valid ways of salvation. Each of these ways might contain a unique richness of God's revelation, different but never contradictory to God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Some aspects of this unique richness can be shared in other religious traditions, yet other aspects may belong exclusively to a particular religion and thus be unavailable for someone committed to another faith. In this sense, Christianity might not be uniquely privileged; that is, other religions might also receive God's self-communication of which Christians might not be aware and perhaps cannot be aware before the eschatological times.

What does this mean for the relationship between those religious traditions and Christianity? Dupuis insists that this relationship cannot be seen in such a way that Christianity is the only valid (true) religion and the others are only potentialities. This relationship should rather be viewed 'in terms of the relational interdependence, within the organic whole of universal reality between diverse modalities of encounter of the human existence with the Divine Mystery' (Dupuis 1997:204). Although Christianity will continue to claim the fullness of God's manifestation and revelation in Jesus Christ and in the sacraments, the spiritual realities in Christianity and the religions must still be seen as interconnected and interrelated. Only in this way can the human divine relationships result in 'the complete whole' (:204).

One may conclude therefore that the universality of Christ as the Word incarnate cannot be confused with the universality of Christianity as a historic religion. The universality of Christ is coextensive with all history while Christianity as a religion is relative and limited. Equally, just as one should insist on the complete and definitive character of the Christian revelation, so should one maintain Christianity's historical and relative character in the sense that Christianity as a religion does not exhaust the fullness and richness of the mystery of Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed and evaluated Dupuis's proposals for a Christian theology of "inclusive pluralism". More specifically its aim was to answer the question: Does the model of "inclusive pluralism" merely do justice to traditional theology, church doctrine, and the current state of religious pluralism, or does it do more? The analysis in its various sections indicated the value, innovation and originality of the theology of "inclusive pluralism". The next concluding chapter will evaluate the entire research on the theology of "inclusive pluralism" and its application to the South African context of religious diversity.

---

[1] Sullivan, F, *Salvation outside the church? Tracing the history of the Catholic response* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 164-168.

[2] See Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 173-179, 360-362; Griffiths, P, *Problems of religious diversity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 61; D'Costa, G, *The Meeting of religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 105-109.

[3] See Merrigan, T, "Religious knowledge in the pluralist theology of religions", *Theological Studies* 58 (1977), 693-698.

[4] In one the previous analyses (Chapter 6.1.1), it was emphasized that this term "participated mediations" is not Dupuis's construct but comes from John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (10). For Dupuis, the real contribution of the pope lies in his focus on the role of the Spirit which he uses in his own proposals. In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II when he describes the religious traditions as a place for the activity of the Spirit, provides Dupuis with another avenue for approaching these traditions as genuine mediators. Thus, on the basis of John Paul II's reference to the active presence of the Spirit in human history, Dupuis can write that 'throughout human history, in the religious traditions as well as in individual persons, the Spirit has been present and active' (Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* [Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997], 222). The same conviction is expressed in two documents: the ecumenical consultation held in Baar (1990) and "Dialogue and Proclamation" (1991).

[5] This essay appeared in Amalorpavadass, D S (ed), *Research Seminar on non-biblical scriptures* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1975), 117-135; it is reprinted in Dupuis, J, *Jesus Christ and his Spirit: Theological approaches* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1977).

[6] Dupuis discusses these commentators in *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 165-168.

[7] Concerning the theology of Pope John Paul II, there was a certain positive development in viewing religious diversity. This position is especially emphasized in *Redemptoris Missio* (1990). For a detailed defence of the encyclical stand see D'Costa, G, *The Meeting of religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 101-109. For a more critical analysis of *Redemptoris Missio* see Pieris, A, *Fire and water: Basic issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 67,76,84,155. The pope's theology saw religious pluralism as a basis for better and deeper understanding of the truth present in Christianity in and through dialogue with the religions. The idea behind this approach was that the Spirit of God is working outside the limits of the Judeo-Christian tradition. This implied that dialogue with other religions was able to create an opportunity for better understanding of God's self-revelation to humankind which in a special way takes place in Jesus Christ and is entrusted to Christ's church. This way of thinking is present in D'Costa, G, *The meeting of religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2000), 114.

[8] Rahner, K, "Christianity and the non Christian religions", *Theological Investigations*, vol. 5 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 115-134; "Anonymous Christians", *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969), 390-398. For a detailed analysis of this concept see Dupuis, J, *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1997), 143-149.

[9] For Dupuis's reaffirmation of a very close link between the role other religions might play and the universal mediation of Jesus Christ, see "The Truth will make you free". The Theology of religious pluralism revisited (*Louvain Studies* 24/3, 1999), 228.

APPENDIX 1

Interview with Dr Imtiaz Sooliman
(Founder and chairman of the "Gift of the Givers" Foundation)
21 May 2007

1. When was the foundation established?

The "Gift of the Givers" was founded on the 1st of August 1992.

2. What is the nature (character) of the foundation?

The character of the "Gift of the Givers" is strictly humanitarian with the main focus on social service to humanity. There is no political involvement of the foundation in any way.

3. Is the foundation structured on multi-religious participation?

The "Gift of the Givers" is a foundation initiated by the Muslim community (see the Web) but it is open towards any religion or Christian church. This implies that the entire foundation with its works and humanitarian activities is run by Muslims. Moreover, people who are directly involved in the project including administration are Muslims.

4. Is the foundation directly cooperating with other religions or Christian churches in bringing help to people?

The foundation responds to the needs indicated by other religions or Christian churches but it does not engage in collaboration with the church authorities or representatives of the world religions at the official level. Rather individual church or religious communities ask for concrete help, for instance, when a need arises for supplying blankets for the needy people during the winter, then the foundation provides such articles.

5. Are members of other religious traditions, including Christians, involved in supporting or collaborating with the foundation?

Such support exists, although members of other religions cooperate with us not so much as representatives of a particular religious tradition but rather professionals or experts in a particular field. For instance, many medical doctors express their wish to contribute to the foundation's initiatives by using their skills in helping others. The medical personnel, from across the religious spectrum, is therefore the most involved in disaster relief programs but not only.

6. Does the foundation cooperate with the South African government?

Such cooperation takes place not only with the South African but also governments of other countries when a concrete help is required. Nevertheless, a concrete material aid is always directly distributed to people and never through government structures.

7. How does the foundation find relationship with other religions while helping diverse cultural and religious groups?

The relationship with other religions has always been very good with positive response to the work of the foundation. One may emphasize that there is a spirit of mutual cooperation between the religions and the foundation. There has been no record of any hostility or resentment towards initiatives undertaken by the "Gift of the Givers" from the religious traditions. It is enough to see the foundation's involvement in many countries other than Muslim when the humanitarian needs arise.

8. From the perspective of the foundation's work, can one speak of dialogue between Islam and Christianity in South Africa?

If there is any form of dialogue between the two religious communities, it is rooted in their daily contacts at the informal level when Muslims, Christians and other believers engage with each other. An official dialogue on differences is rather of secondary importance?

APPENDIX   2

Interview with Archbishop George Daniel of Pretoria
(the Roman Catholic Church representative for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue)
15 January 2008. Pretoria

Questions: Dialogue between Christianity (the Catholic Church) and Islam in SA

Can one speak of formal interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam in South Africa in terms of organized meetings between religious leaders with a view to reaching a closer understanding on the essential tenets of our respective faiths? Are there any formal groups on both sides which meet to explain to one another their faith convictions?

       Not yet.

Is there "representativeness" on the Muslim side concerning dialogue "at the top" which would make contacts easier and the meetings official?

       Not yet.

Has the Catholic Church in South Africa issued any official document concerning the encounter with Islam or other religions?

       Yes, enclosed "Fruitful Encounter".

Would it be true to say that in South Africa both Christians and Muslims debate religious questions all day, in the office, the village square, the market place, etc., because the religious debate is inseparable from the rest of life? Is it not that the Muslim-Christian encounter is above all a living day to day dialogue?

       I doubt whether this is true.

Is there any informal dialogue which shows what is happening in practice between Christians (Catholics) and Muslims that goes beyond the level of protocol and the exchange of formal greetings and courtesies?

       There may be, but I am not aware of this.

Are there any places or occasions where Christians (Catholics) and Muslims unite to seek greater justice and combat sickness or poverty? What are the charitable and social organizations initiated by the Christians churches (the Catholic Church) which collaborate with Muslim communities?

> There is the Forum of Religious Leaders which meets the South African President from time to time. We are represented by Cardinal Napier, OFM.

Has there been established any working committee for relations between Christians and Muslims, charged with considering the practical implementation of Islamic-Christian dialogue and with helping the Christian communities to show openness towards Muslims?

> Yes, we do have the SACBC Department for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue.

Are you aware of any common initiatives undertaken by Catholics and Muslims which would contribute to the process of reconstruction and nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa?

> No, I am not aware of such initiatives.

Is there a space and time for basic information about Islam in the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in South Africa? Where and how should this information be given without ever falling into defensive apologetics, as it did in the past?

> Yes, through the Department which meets twice a year.

Are you aware of any prejudices and misrepresentations current among Muslims with regard to Christianity and among Christians with regard to Islam?

> Yes, there are prejudices on both sides.

Does the education program in Catholic institutions such as major seminaries include an introduction to Islam (introduction to other religious traditions) or a regular course in Islamology?

> The Rector of the Cape Town Seminary has a degree in Islamology, and he has such a programme in his seminary.

What are the main challenges which the Catholic Church in South Africa might face in the future regarding encounter with Islam (for example mixed marriages)?

> Many of our members are attracted to Islam through being offered financial assistance. We must charge fees for our pre-schools, but they are free of charge in Islamic institutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOK SOURCES

Abdulaziz, M H 1993. History of the spread of Islam on the East Africa Coast, in *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara*. Kondrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Sankt Augustin, 31-46.

Ahlstrand, K 1997. What's so special about Jesus? in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 19-24.

Aleaz, K P 2005. Pluralism calls for pluralistic inclusivism: An Indian-Christian experience, in Knitter, P F (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith exploration of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 162-175.

Alphonso, H 2003. Authentic spiritual experience: A Vehicle of God's Spirit for interreligious dialogue, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 117-132.

Amaladoss, M 1992. Liberation as an interreligious project, in Wilfred, F (ed), *Leave the temple: Indian paths to human liberation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 158-174.

_____1997. A Simple solution, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 25-29.

Amalorpavadass, D S (ed) 1975. *Research seminar on non-biblical scriptures*. Bangalore: NBCLC.

Amanze, J N 1999. 100 years of the ecumenical movement in Africa: A Historical appraisal of its successes and failures in the twentieth century. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 105, 1-15.

Balthasar, H U 1978. Catholicism and the religions. *Communio* 5, 6-14.

Barnes, M 2003. On being theological: A Christian encounter with Buddhism, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 33-44.

Barrett, C K 1978. *The Gospel according to John*. London: SPCK.

Barth, K 1965. *Church dogmatics*, vol. 1,2. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Bate, S C 1999. The Church under apartheid, in Brain, J and Denis, P (eds), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 151-186.

Baum, G 1968. Baptism of desire, in Rahner, K, Ernest, C and Smyth, K (eds), *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopaedia of theology*. London: Burns & Oates.

Berling, A J 2004. *Understanding other religious worlds: A Guide for interreligious education*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Bernhardt, R 1994. *Christianity without absolutes*. London: SCM Press.

_____2005. The *Real* and the Trinitarian God, in Knitter, P F (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith exploration of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 194-207.

Berry, T 1988. *The Dream of the earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Billot, L 1919-23. La Providence de Dieu et le nombre infini d'hommes hors de la voie normale du salut. *Etudes*, 161-176.

Blaxall, A W 1927. *An Outpost of Islam*. A letter in circulation.

Boff, L 1978. *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for our time*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Bonino, J M 1997. The Uniqueness of Christ and the plurality of humankind, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 107-110.

Borrmans, M 1990. *Guidelines for dialogue between Christians and Muslims*. New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press.

Braaten, C 1992. *No other Gospel: Christianity among the world's religions*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Brain, J 1997. Moving from the margins to the mainstream: The Roman Catholic Church, in Elphick, R and Davenport, R (eds), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, social and cultural history*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 195-210.

Bronk, A 2000. Pluralizm religijny i prawdziwość religii, in Zimoń, H (ed), *Religia w świecie współczesnym: Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*. Lublin: TNKUL, 605-631.

Brown, R E 1994. *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*. New York: Paulist Press.

Brown, R M 1967. *The Ecumenical revolution. An Interpretation of the Catholic-Protestant dialogue*. New York: Doubleday & Company.

Brück von, M 1997. Identifying constructively our interreligious moment, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 35-43.

Brunner, E 1980. Revelation and religion, in Hick, J and Hebblethwaite, B (eds), *Christianity and other religions*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Bühlmann, W 1979. *All have the same God*. Meddlegreen: St. Paul Publishers.

_____1986. *The Church of the future*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Buijs, G 1980. The Role of the mother-goddess Mariamma in Natal. *Religion in Southern Africa* 1/1, 1-8.

Burrows, W R (ed) 1993. *Redemption and dialogue*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2003. Creating space to rethink the mission of Christians: The Contribution of Jacques Dupuis, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 211-221.

Camps, A 1983. *Partners in dialogue: Christianity and other world religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Capéran, L 1934. *Le Problème du salut des infidels*: 1. *Essai historique*; 2. *Essai théologique*. Toulouse: Grand Séminaire.

Chapman, A and Spongs, B (eds) 2003. *Religion and reconciliation in South Africa*. Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press.

Chidester, D 1987a. Review article: Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and others. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 60, 81-86.

_____1987b. Religious studies as political practice. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 58, 4-17.

_____1992. *Religions of South Africa*. London: Routledge.

_____1994. *Religion in public education*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

_____1999. *Diversity as ethos: Challenges for inter-religious and intercultural education*. Cape Town: ICRSA.

Clohessy, C 1996. Thoughts on Pagad, in Galant, R and Gamieldien, F (eds), *Drugs, gangs, people's power: Exploring the Pagad phenomenon*. Cape Town: Claremont Main Road Masjid, 69-75.

_____2006a. The Project of God: Muhammad the ahl al-kitâb. *Grace and Truth* 23/2, 33-55.

_____2006b. Islam in South Africa. *Grace and Truth* 23/2, 71-90.

Clooney, F X 1990.	Vedanta, theology, and modernity: Theology's new conversation with the world's religions. *Theological Studies* 51/2, 268-285.

_____2007.	Learning to listen: Benedict XVI and interreligious dialogue. *Commonweal* January 12, 11-15.

Cobb, J B 1997.	Toward transformation, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 50-54.

Cochrane, J and De Gruchy, J (eds) 1999. *Facing the Truth: South African faith communities and the TRC*. Cape Town: David Phillips.

Coleman, J 2001.	The Truth in the other. *The Tablet*, 27 October, 1526-1527.

Commission for Dialogue and Ecumenism, 1989. *Guidelines for interreligious dialogue*. New Delhi: CBCI Centre.

Congar, Y 1960.	*The Mystery of the Church*. Translated by Littledale, A V Baltimore: Helicon Press.

_____1961.	*The Wide world my parish*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

_____1969.	*This Church that I love*. Denville, New York: Dimension Books.

_____2000.	*Journal d'un théologien 1946-1956*. Paris: Fouilloux.

Cox, H 1997.	Jesus and Pentecostals, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 55-60.

Crafford, D 1996.	African traditional religions, in Meiring, P (ed), *A World of religions: A South African perspective*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, 1-26.

Cumpsty, J S 1980.	A Model of religious change in socio-cultural disturbance. *Religion in Southern Africa* 1/2, 59-70.

Curaming, L 2006.	The Damietta Initiative: A Christian-Muslim peace-keeping programme. *Grace and Truth* 23/2, 93-94.

Dalton, W J 1989.	*Christ's proclaimation to the spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*. 2nd ed. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Danielou, J 1958.	*The Lord of history: Reflections on the inner meaning of history*. London: Longmans, Green & Company.

_____1962a.	*The Advent of salvation*. New York: Paulist Press.

_____1962b.	*The Salvation of the nations*. South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.

Davids, E 1984.	"Un-Islamic to take part in racist elections". *Muslim News* 24/4, 1.

Davis, C 1970.	*Christ and the world religions*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

D'Costa, G 1986.	*Theology and religious pluralism: The Challenge of other religions*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

_____1998.	A book review of J. Dupuis *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism*. *Journal of Theological Studies* 49/2, 910-914.

_____1990a.	Christ, the Trinity, and religious plurality, in D'Costa, G (ed), *Christian Uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 16-29.

_____1990b.	One covenant or many covenants? Toward a theology of Christian-Jewish relations. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 27/3, 441-452.

_____1990c.	Taking other religions seriously: Some ironies in the current debate on the theology of religions. *Thomist* 54, 519-529.

_____1990d.	The Reign of God and a Trinitarian ecclesiology: An Analysis of soteriocentrism, in Mojzes, P and Swidler, L (eds), *Christian mission and interreligious dialogue*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mallen Press.

_____2000.	*The Meeting of religions and the Trinity*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2007.	Engaging with a "clash civilization". *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 17/1, 31-45.

De Beer, P J P 1996. Hinduism: One of the oldest religions in the world, in Meiring, P (ed), *A World of religions: A South African perspective*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, 27-66.

De Blank, Joost 1961. *Muslim News* of the 4th of August.

De Gruchy, J 1995. Christianity in the twentieth-century South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 83-115.

Demarest, B 1992. General and special revelation: Epistemological foundations of religious pluralism, in Clarke, E D and Winter, B W (eds), *One God, one Lord: Christianity in a word of religious pluralism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House.

Dermont, A L 1999. Vatican II, Christology and the World Religions. *Louvain Studies* 24, 147-170.

Desai, S 1995. *The Majlis* 11/9, 12.

_____1996. *The Majlis* 12/2, 1.

Dickson, K A 1991. *Uncompleted mission: Christianity and exclusivism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Diesel, A and Maxwell, P 1993. *Hinduism in Natal: A Brief guide*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

DiNoia, J A 1990. Pluralist theology of religions: Pluralistic or non-pluralistic, in D'Costa, G (ed), *Christian Uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 119-134.

_____1992. *The Diversity of religions: A Christian perspective*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.

Dominus Iesus 2000. Declaration on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

Donnelly, D 2003. On relationship as a key to interreligious dialogue, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 133-145.

Doré, J 1998. Du nouveau sur les religions. *Etudes*, Novembre, 562-563.

Draper, J A (ed) 2003a. *The Eye of the storm: Bishop John William Colenso and the crisis of biblical interpretation*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

_____ (ed) 2003b. *Commentary on Romans by Bishop John Colenso*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

D'Souza, H 2003. Foreword, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, ix-x.

Dulles, A 1992. *Models of revelation*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, New York: Crossroads.

_____2003. World religions and the new Millennium: A Catholic perspective, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 3-13.

Du Plessis, I 1935. *Die Bydraes van die Kaapse Maleier tot die Afrikaanse volklied*. Nasionale Pers at the Cape.

_____1939. *Die Maleise samelewing aan die Kaap*. Cape Town: Nasionale Pers.

_____1944. *The Cape Malays*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller.

Dupuis, J 1973. Cosmic influence of the Holy Spirit and the gospel message, in Gispert-Sauch, G (ed), *God's Word among men*. Vidyajyoti: Delhi.

_____1975. Synod of Bishops 1974. *Doctrine and Life* 25/5, 323-348.

_____1977a. Conscience du Christ et expérience de l'Advaita. *Revue théologique de Louvain* 8, 448-460.

_____1977b. *Jesus Christ and his Spirit: Theological approaches*. Bangalore: Theological Publications in India.

_____1991. *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1994. *Who do you say I am? Introduction to Christology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1997. *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1999a. The Spirit, basis for interreligious dialogue. *Theology Digest* 46/1, 27-31.

_____1999b. "The Truth will make you free": The Theology of religious pluralism revisited. *Louvain Studies* 24/3, 211-263.

_____2000. One God, one Christ, convergent ways. *Theology Digest* 47/3, 211-218.

_____2001. Christianity and other religions: From confrontation to encounter. *The Tablet,* 20 October, 1484-1485; 27 October, 1520-1521; 3 October, 1560-1561.

_____2002a. *Christianity and the religions: From confrontation to dialogue*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2002b. From religious confrontation to encounter. *Theology Digest* 49/2, 103-108.

_____2005. The Church's evangelizing mission in the context of religious pluralism. *The Pastoral Review* 1/1, 21-31.

Egan, H D 1998. *Karl Rahner: The Mystic of everyday life*. New York: Crossroad.

Elders, L 1998. "Les Théories nouvelles de la signification de religions non-chrétiennes". *Nova et Vetera* 3, 105-109.

Erickson, M J 1996. *How they shall be saved? The Destiny of those who do not hear of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House.

Esack, F 1980. Muslims reject President's Council. *Muslim News* 20/19, 1.

_____1986. A Muslim perspective on the Kairos Document. Newsletter World Conference on Religion and Peace. *South African Chapter* 3/1, 1-9.

_____1987. Muslims in South Africa: The Quest for justice. *Bulletin on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa* 5/2, 1-18.

_____1989. The Freedom Charter through the eyes of an Islamist, in Polley, J (ed), *The Freedom Charter and the future*. Johannesburg: AD Donker, 105-110.

_____1997. *Qur'an liberation and pluralism: An Islamic perspective of interreligious solidarity against oppression*. Oxford: Oneworld.

_____1999. *On being Muslim: Finding a religious path in the world today*. Oxford: Oneworld.

Fackre, G 1983. Evangelical, Evangelism, in Alan Richardson and John Bowden (eds), *A New dictionary of Christian theology*. London: SCM Press,191.

Fitzgerald, M L 1999. Pope John Paul II and interreligious dialogue: A Catholic assessment, in Sherwin, B L and Kasimow, H (eds), *John Paul II and interreligious dialogue*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 207-220.

_____2003. "Dialogue and Proclamation": A Reading in the perspective of Christian-Muslim relations, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 181-193.

_____2006. From heresy to religion: Islam since Vatican II. *Grace and Truth* 23/2, 4-21.

Flannery, A (ed) 1975. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and post-conciliar documents*. Bandra, Bombay: St. Paul Publications.

Frederics, J L 1999. *Faith among faiths: Christian theology and non-Christian religions*. New York: Paulist Press.

Fulgentius of Ruspa *De fide liber ad Petrum*, in Neuner, J and Dupuis, J (eds) 1996, *The Christian faith in the doctrinal documents of the Catholic Church*. New York: Alba House, no. 1005.

Garth, A 1989.   *The Catholic Church and apartheid: The Response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the first decade of National Party rule 1948-1957*. Johannesburg: Ravan.

Geffré, C 1987.   *The Risk of interpretation: On being faithful to the Christian tradition in a non-Christian age*. New York: Paulist Press.

_____1998.   Le Pluralisme religieux comme question théologique. *La Vie spirituelle* 4, 580-586.

_____2003.   From the theology of religious pluralism to an interreligious theology, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 45-59.

Gilkey, L 1987.   Plurality and its theological implications, in Hick, J and Knitter, P F (eds), *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 37-50.

Gioia, F (ed) 1997.   *Interreligious dialogue: The Official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media.

Gispert-Sauch, G 2003. Jacques Dupuis and Swami Abhishiktananda, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 146-157.

Gnanapiragasam, J and Wilfred, F 1994. *Being Church in Asia*, vol. 1. Quezon City: Claretian Publications.

Grenz, S J 1994.   Toward an evangelical theology of the religions. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 31/1-2, 49-65.

Greyling, C 1980.   Scheck Yusuf, the founder of Islam in South Africa. *Religion in Southern Africa* 1/1, 9-22.

Griffiths, P 1976.   *Return to the center*. London: Collins.

_____1998.   Book review of *Towards a Christian theology of religious pluralism* of Jacques Dupuis. *The Thomist* 62/2, 316-319.

_____2001.   *Problems of religious diversity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Grodź, S 2005.   *Chrystologia Afrykańska w rodzimym kontekście kulturowym*. Lublin: TNKUL.

Gruchy, J and Prozesky M (eds) 1991. *A Southern African Guide to world religions*. Cape Town: David Philip, Creda Press.

Gutierrez, G 1973.   *A Theology of liberation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Guy, J 1983.   *The Heretic: A Study of the life of John William Colenso*. Pietermaritzburg.

Haight, R 1997.   Review symposium on Paul Knitter's *Jesus and the other names: Christian mission and global responsibility*. *Horizons* 24, 267-274.

_____1999.   *Jesus symbol of God*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2005.   Pluralist Christology as orthodox, in Knitter, P F (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith exploration of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 151-161.

Hampson, A R 1934. The Mission of Moslems in Cape Town. *The Moslem World* 24/3 July, 271-277.

Haron, M 1993.   The Muslim News (1960-1986): An Expression of an Islamic Identity in South Africa, in Brenner, L (ed), *Muslim identity and social change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. London: C. Hurst & Company, 210-225.

_____1999.   Three centuries of the NGK mission amongst Cape Muslims. *JIMMA* 19/1, 118.

_____2003.   Maulana Ahmad Sadeq Desai and his *The Majlis*: An Ultra conservative voice in the Eastern Cape Wilderness. *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa* 6, 20-25.

_____2006.   The Dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations in South Africa (circa 1960-2000): From exclusivism to pluralism. *The Muslim World* 96/3, 423-468.

_____2007.   Christian-Muslim relations in South Africa (circa 1986-2004): Charting out a pluralist path. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18/2, 257-273.

Harrington, D 1998.   Is the New Testament anti-Jewish: The Need to develop a sense of history. *Irish Theological Quarterly* 63, 123-132.

Harrison, P 1986.   Karl Barth and the non-Christian religions. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23/2, 207-224.

Heim, M 1995.   *Salvations: Truth and difference in religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2001.   *The Depth of riches: A Trinitarian theology of religious ends*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Hellig, J 1984.   The Religious expression, in Arkin, M (ed), *South African Jewry: A Contemporary survey*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 95-116.

_____1986.   South African Judaism: An Expression of conservative traditionalism. *Judaism* 35/2, 233-242.

_____1995.   The Jewish community in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 155-176.

Hellwig, M K 1990.   Christology in the wider ecumenism, in D'Costa, G (ed), *Christian Uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll: New York: Orbis Books, 107-116.

_____1997.   Rethinking uniqueness, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), T*he Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 74-78.

Hick, J 1968.   *Christianity at the center*. London: Macmillan.

_____1973.   *God and the universe of faiths: Essays in the philosophy of religion.* London: Macmillan.

_____(ed) 1977.   *The Myth of God incarnate*. London: SCM Press.

_____1980.   *God has many names: Britain's new religious pluralism*. London: Macmillan.

_____1981.   General introduction: Christology in an age of religious pluralism. *Journal of theology for Southern Africa* 35, 4-9.

_____1985.   *Problems of religious pluralism*. London: Macmillan.

_____1989.   *An Interpretation of religion: Human responses to the transcendent*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____1995.   *A Christian theology of religions: The Rainbow of faiths*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.

_____1997.   Five misgivings, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P. Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 79-84.

_____2005.   The Next step beyond dialogue, in Knitter, P F (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith exploration of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 3-12.

Hick, J and Knitter, P F (eds) 1987. *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Hillman, E 1989.   Many paths: A Catholic approach to religious pluralism. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Hinwood, B 1999.   Ecumenism, in Brain, J and Denis, P (eds), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 349-385.

Hodgson, P C 2005.   The Spirit and religious pluralism, in Knitter, PF (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith explorations of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 135-150.

Huang, D P 1997.   Christ, the one Saviour of the world: Reflections on our emerging Christological question. *East Asian Pastoral Review* 34/3, 187-209.

Hughes, P 1977.   *A Short history of the Catholic Church*. London: Burns & Oates.

ITC, 1989.   International Theological Commission, in Sharkey, M (ed), *Texts and documents 1965-1985*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

John Paul II 1979.   *Redemtor Hominis*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

_____1980.   *Dives in Misericordia*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

_____1985.   *Ut Unum Sint*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

_____1986.   *Dominum et Vivificantem*. *Origins* 16/4/1986-1987, 77-102.

_____1990.   *Redemptoris Missio*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

_____1994a.   *Crossing the threshold of hope*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

_____1994b.   *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

_____1998.   *Fides et Ratio*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

Jones, M S 1999.   Evangelical Christianity and the philosophy of interreligious dialogue. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 36/2-4, 378-396.

Kaiser, R B 2003.   Dupuis profile, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 222-229.

Kamstra, J 1972.   Changes in the idea of God in non-Western religions and cultures. *Concilium* 6/8, 123-133.

Kasimow, H 1999.   John Paul II and interreligious dialogue: An Overview, in Sherwin, B L and Kasimow, H (eds), *John Paul II and interreligious dialogue*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1-23.

Kasper, W 1976.   *Jesus the Christ*. London: Burns & Oates.

Kayser, U 1999.   *What do we tell our children? The Work of the Center for Ubuntu in Cape Town*. Johannesburg: CSVR.

Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds) 2003. *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Kieran, J 1995.   African traditional religions in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 15-27.

Kistner, W 1980.   Structuring church unity for the future, in Vorster, W S (ed), *Church unity and diversity in the Southern African context*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 82-105.

Kitshoff , M C 1994. The Role of religious education in building a nation in multiethnic South Africa. *Religious Education* 89/3, 313-337.

Kitshoff, M C and van Wyk, W B 1983. *Method of religious education and Biblical studies*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Knitter, P F 1974.   *Towards a Protestant theology of religions*. Marburg: N.G. Elwert.

_____1985.   *No other name: A Critical survey of Christian attitudes towards the world religions*. London: SCM Press.

_____1986.   Catholic theology of religions at the crossroads. *Concilium* 183/1, 99-107.

_____1987a.   Hans Küng's theological Rubicon, in Swidler, L (ed), *Toward a universal theology of religion*, New York: Orbis Books, 224-230.

_____1987b.   Toward a liberationist theology of religions, in Hick, J and Knitter, P F (eds), *The Myth of Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 178-200.

_____1995.   *One earth many religions: Multifaith dialogue and global responsibility*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1996.   *Jesus and the other names: Christian mission and global responsibility*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1997a. Five theses on The Uniqueness of Jesus, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 3-13.

_____1997b. Can our "one and only" also be a "one among many"? in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 145-182.

_____1999. Catholics and other religions: Bridging the gap between dialogue and theology. *Louvain Studies* 24, 319-354.

_____2002. *Introducing theologies of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2005. Is the pluralist model a Western imposition? A response in five voices, in Knitter, P F (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith exploration of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 28-42.

König, F 1999. In defense of Father Dupuis. *The Tablet*, 16 January, 76-77.

_____2001. Let the Spirit breathe. *The Tablet*, 7 April, 483-484.

_____2003. Let the Spirit breathe, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 14-17.

Kraemer, H 1947. *The Christian message in a non-Christian world*. London: Edinburgh House.

_____1962. *Why Christianity of all religions?* London: Lutterworth.

Kritzinger, K 1991. *Believers in the struggle for justice and peace*. Johannesburg: WCRP-SA.

Krüger, J S 1994. *From one to many: The Challenge of religious pluralism. The Teaching of Christianity in state schools and universities in South Africa*. Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre.

_____1996. Buddhism: religion of emptiness, in Meiring, P (ed), *A World of religions: A South African perspective*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, 67-95.

Küng, H 1968. *The Church*. Translated by R and R Ockenden. London: Burns & Oates.

_____1977. *On being a Christian*. Translated by Quinn, E. London: Collins.

_____1985. *Christianity and the world religions*. London: Collins.

_____1991. *Global responsibility: In search of a new world ethics*. New York: Crossroad.

Kunnumpuram, K 1971. *Ways of salvation: The Salvific meaning of non-Christian religions according to the teaching of Vatican II*. Poona, India: Pontifical Athenaeum.

Kuschel, K-J 1997. "Faithful" to the New Testament?" Questions in response to Paul Knitter, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 85-93.

Kuschel, K-J and Mieth, D 2001. In search of universal values. *Concilium* 4, 7-153.

Kutzinger, J N J 1980. Islam as a rival to the Gospel in Africa. *Missionalia* 8/3, 89-104.

Lane, D 1991. *Christ at the center: Selected issues in Christology*. New York: Paulist Press.

_____1999. Vatican II, Christology and the world religions. *Louvain Studies* 24, 147-170.

Ledwoń, I S 2000. Wyjątkowy charakter chrześcijaństwa, in Zimoń, H (ed), *Religia w świecie współczesnym: Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*. Lublin: TNKUL, 511-530.

Lee, D 2003. Transfiguration and the gospel of John, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 158-169.

Lehmann, K and Raffelt, A (eds) 1993. *Karl Rahner – The concept of faith: The best of Karl Rahner's theological writings*. Translation edited by Egan, H D. New York: Crossroad.

Liebenberg, A J 1925. "Mohammedanisme in Zuid-Afrika". *Het Zoeklicht*, 3 October, 310-314.

Lindbeck, G 1984. *The Nature of doctrine: Religion and theology in a post liberal age*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Lloyd, V J 2001. *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lohfink, N 1991.   *The Covenant never revoked: Biblical reflections on Christian-Jewish dialogue*. New York: Paulist Press.

Loon von, L H 1980. The Indian Buddhist community in South Africa: Its historical origins and socio-religious attitudes and practices. *Religion in Southern Africa* 1/2, 3-18.

_____1995.   Buddhism in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 209-216.

Loubser, J A 1987.   *The Apartheid Bible: A Critical review of racial theology in South Africa*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Lubac de, H 1946.   *Le Fondement théologique des missions*. Paris: Seuil.

_____1969.   *The Church: Paradox and mystery*. New York: Alba House.

Lubbe, G 1986a.   The Study of religion and inter-faith. *Religion in Southern Africa* 7/2, 27-49.

_____1986b.   Christians, Muslims and liberation in South Africa. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 56, 24-33.

_____1990.   Religious pluralism and Christianity in South Africa, in Prozesky, M (ed), *Christianity amidst apartheid*. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 208-216.

_____1995.   The Role of religion in the process of nation-building: from plurality to pluralism. *Religion and Theology* 2/2, 159-170.

Macquarrie, J 1997.   Revisiting the Christological dimensions of uniqueness, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 94-99.

Maloney, G A 1968.   *The Cosmic Christ: From Paul to Teilhard*. Sheed & Ward.

Marais, J 1965.   Die Kerk and die Islam in Afrika. *Koers* 33/3, 173-185.

Martin, S 2000.   Religion, liberation and transformation through the South African experience: Report on seminar series at the Parliament of the World's Religions, Cape Town, December 1999. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 106, 61-83.

Matus, T 2004.   *Bede Griffiths: essential writings*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Maxwell, P, Diesel, A and Naidoo, T 1995. Hinduism in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 177-202.

McBrien, R P 1969.   *Do we need the church?* New York: Harper & Row.

_____1981.   *Catholicism*. Study edition. Minneapolis: Winston Press.

_____(ed) 1995.   *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers.

McCool, G (ed) 1975. *A Rahner reader*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

Meer, F 1970.   Islam and Apartheid. *Reality* 2/5, 12.

Meiring, P 1996.   Judaism: The Lord our God, the Lord is one, in Meiring, P (ed), *A World of religions: A South African perspective*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, 96-127.

Melloni, A 2002.   Recent notifications on the works of Reinhard Messner, Jacques Dupuis and Marciano Vidal. *Concilium* 38/5, 115-136.

Merrigan, T 1977.   Religious knowledge in the pluralist theology of religions. *Theological Studies* 58, 687-707.

_____1998.   Exploring the frontiers: Jacques Dupuis and the movement "Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism". *Louvain Studies* 23, 338-359.

_____2003.   Jacques Dupuis and the redefinition of inclusivism, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 60-71.

Milbank, J 1990.   The End of dialogue, in D'Costa, G (ed), *Christian uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 174-191.

Mitchell, G 1993.   *The End of tunnel: Religious education for a non-racial South Africa*. Cape Town: ICRSA.

Mooney, C 1965.   *Teilhard de Chardin and the mystery of Christ*. New York: Harper & Row.

Moosa E, 1995.   Islam in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 129-154.

Mosimane, M 1982.   The Silent swing to Islam. *Pace* 5/9, 33-37.

Nadvi, S 1982.   Real causes of the spread of Islam. *Religion in Southern Africa* 3/1, 31-39.

Najran 2006.   A Muslim speaks to Christians. *Grace and Truth* 23/2, 22-32 (First published in Encounter, no. 297, September 2003).

Neuner, J and Dupuis, J 1996. *The Christian faith in the doctrinal documents of the Catholic Church*. New York: Alba House.

Netland, H A 1991.   *Dissonant voices: Religious pluralism and the question of truth*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

_____1995.   Application: Mission in a pluralistic world, in Rommen, E and Netland, H (eds), *Christianity and the religions*. Pasadena: William Carey Library.

Newington, D and Phillips, H C 1965. The Shape of power in Africa. *Muslim News* of the 10th of September.

Nichall, D 1991.   Other religions (*Nostra aetate*), in Hastings, A (ed), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and after*. London: SPCK, 126-134.

O'Collins, G 1998a.   Paths to God. *The Tablet*, 24 January, 110-111.

_____1998b.   In defense of Fr. Dupuis. *The Tablet*, 12 December, 1650.

_____2003a.   Christ and the religions. *Gregorianum* 84/2, 347-362.

_____2003b.   Jacques Dupuis's contributions to interreligious dialogue. *Theological Studies* 64, 388-397.

_____2003c.   Jacques Dupuis: His person and work, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 18-29.

O'Connell 2005.   Jesuit theologian dies at 81. *The Southern Cross*, 5-11 January, 4.

Odasso, G 1998.   *The Bible and religions: Biblical perspective for a theology of religions*. Rome: Urbaniana University Press.

Ogden, S 1961.   *Christ without myth*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Okholm, D L and Philips, T R (eds) 1995. *More than one way? Four views of salvation in a pluralistic world*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.

Oosthuizen, G C 1975. *Pentecostal penetration into the Indian community in metropolitan Durban, South Africa*. Durban: Human Sciences Research Council.

_____1980.   The Meaning of religious commitment. *Religion in Southern Africa* 1/1, 23-40.

_____ (ed) 1986.   *Religion Alive: Studies in new movements and indigenous churches in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg, Hodder and Stoughton.

_____1995.   Jains and Parsees in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 215-228.

Oosthuizen, G C and Hofmeyer, J H 1979. *A Socio-religious survey of Chatsworth*. Durban: Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Durban-Westville.

Panikkar, R 1978.   *The Interreligious dialogue*. New York: Paulist Press.

_____1981.   *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1987a.   The Invisible harmony: A Universal theory of religion or a cosmic confidence in Reality? in Swidler, L (ed), *Towards a universal theology of religion*. Maryknoll: New York: Orbis Book, 118-153.

_____1987b.   The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges: Three Kairological moments of Christic self-consciousness, in Hick, J and Knitter, P F (eds), *The Myth of*

Christian uniqueness: Toward a pluralistic theology of religions. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 89-116.

_____1993. *The Cosmotheandric experience: Emerging religious consciousness*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1997. Whose uniqueness? in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 111-105.

_____1999. *The Intra-religious dialogue*. New Jersey: Paulist Press.

Pannenberg, W (ed) 1968. *Revelation as history*. London: Macmillan.

_____1971. *Basic questions in theology*, vol. 2. London: SCM Press Ltd.

_____1973. *The Idea of God and human freedom*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

_____1990. Religious pluralism and conflicting truth claims, in D'Costa, G (ed), *Christian uniqueness reconsidered: The Myth of a pluralistic theology of religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Pathil, K (ed) 1991. *Religious pluralism: An Indian Christian perspective*. Delhi: ISPCK.

Paul VI, Pope 1964. *Ecclesiam Suam*. Acta Apostolicae Sedis 56.

_____1965. *Dignitatis Humanae*, in Flannery, A (ed), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and post-conciliar documents*. Bandra, Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 703-714.

_____1975. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Acta Apostolicae Sedis 68 (1976).

Phan, P C 1990. Are there other "saviours" for other peoples? A Discussion of the universal significance and uniqueness of Jesus the Christ, in Phan, P (ed), *Christianity and the wider ecumenism*, New York: Paragon House, 163-168.

_____2003. Jacques Dupuis and Asian theologies of religious pluralism, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 72-85.

_____2004a. Cultures, religions, and power: Proclaiming Christ in the United States today. *Theological Studies* 65, 714-740.

_____2004b. *Being religious interreligiously: Asian perspective on interfaith dialogue*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2007. Praying to the Buddha: Living amid religious pluralism. *Commonweal* 26 January, 10-13.

Philips, G W 1992. Evangelicals and pluralism: Current options, in Clark, D K (ed), *The Challenge of religious pluralism: An Evangelical analysis and response*. Wheaton, Illinois: Wheaton Theology Conference.

Pieris, A 1980. Towards an Asian theology of liberation: Some religio-cultural guidelines, in Fabella, V (ed), *In Asia's struggle for full humanity*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 75-95.

_____1983. The Place of non-Christian religions and cultures in the evolution of Third World theology, in Fabella, V and Torres, S (eds), *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to theology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 113-139.

_____1988a. *An Asian theology of liberation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1988b. *Love meets wisdom*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1996. *Fire and water: Basic issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2000. Christ beyond dogma: Doing Christology in the context of the religions and the poor. *Louvain Studies* 25, 187-231.

Pillay, G J 1985. Ritualistic Hinduism and popular Pentecostalism: Two religious world-views in dynamic relations. *Religion in Southern Africa* 6/1, 29-45.

Pinnock, C 1995. An Inclusivist view, in Okholm, D L and Phillips, T R (eds), *More than one way? Four views of salvation in a pluralistic world*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: 95-123.

Piryns, E D 1985.   Current Roman Catholic views of other religions. *Missionalia* 13/2, 55-61.

Pius XII, Pope 1955.   *The Church teaches*. Comp. by the Jesuits of St. Mary's College. St. Luis: B. Harder, 274-275.

Plata, P 2006.   Jacques Dupuis and a Christian theology of religious pluralism. *Louvain Studies* 31, 52-78.

Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue 1999. Journeying together: The Catholic Church in dialogue with the religious traditions of the world, in *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Popkin, R H and Stroll, A 1973. *Philosophy*. London: W. H. Allen & Company.

Prozesky, M 1990a.   South Africa's contribution to religious studies. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 70, 9-20.

_____(ed) 1990b.   *Christianity in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.

_____1991.   The Challenge of other religions for Christianity in South Africa. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 74, 35-45.

_____1995.   Introduction, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 1-14.

Puthiadam, I 1980.   Christian faith and life in world religious pluralism. *Concilium* 135/5, 90-112.

Race, A 1983.   *Christianity and religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Rahner, K 1961.   Concerning the relationship between nature and grace, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 1, *God, Christ, Mary and grace*. Translated by Cornelius, E. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 297-317.

_____1964.   *Nature and grace: Dilemma in the modern Church*. Translated by Wharton, D. London: Burns & Oates.

_____1966a.   History of the world and salvation history, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 5, *Later writings*. Translated by Kruger, K-H. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 97-114.

_____1966b.   Christianity and the non-Christian religions, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 5, *Later writings*. Translated by Kruger, K-H. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 115-134.

_____1969a.   *Grace in freedom.* Translated by Graef, H. London: Burns & Oates.

_____1969b.   Anonymous Christians, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 6, *Concerning Vatican Council II*. Translated by Kruger, K-H. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 390-398.

_____1976a.   Observations on the problem of the "anonymous Christian", in *Theological investigations*, vol. 14, *Ecclesiology, questions in the Church, the Church in the world*. Translated by Bourke, D. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 280-294.

_____1976b.   The Church's commission to bring salvation and the humanisation of the world, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 14, *Ecclesiology, questions in the Church, the Church in the world*. Translated by Bourke, D. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 295-313.

_____1978.   *Foundations of Christian faith: An Introduction to the idea of Christianity*. Translated by Dych, W V. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

_____1981.   Jesus Christ in the non-Christian religions, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 17. Translated by Morland, D. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 39-50.

_____1984.   On the importance of the non-Christian religions for salvation, in *Theological investigations*, vol. 18, *God and revelation*. Translated by Quinn, E. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 288-295.

Rahner, K, Ernest, C and Smyth, K (eds) 1968. *Sacramentum mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology.* London: Burns & Oates.

Rakoczy, S 1992.   Unity, diversity, and uniqueness: Foundations of cross-cultural spiritual direction, in Rakoczy, S (ed), *Common journey, different paths: Spiritual direction in cross-cultural perspective*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 9-23.

_____1997.   African Christology, in Jonnson, E with Rakoczy, S, *Who do you say I am?: Introducing contemporary Christology*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 79-85.

Ratzinger, J 1996.   Relativism: The Central problem of faith today. *Origins*, 26 October, 310-317.

_____1999.   Cardinal Ratzinger replies. *The Tablet*, 13 March, 385.

Ray, B C 1976.   *African religions: Symbols, rituals and community*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Rayan, S 2003.   Many strings, a single melody, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 170-177.

Redington, J D 1983. The Hindu-Christian dialogue and the interior dialogue. *Theological Studies* 44/4, 587-603.

Religions of the world 1995. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Richard, L 1981.   *What are they saying about Christ and world religions?* New York: Paulist Press.

Riesenhuber, K 1965. Rahner's "anonymous Christians". *Theology Digest* 13, 163-171.

Rizzi, A 1992.   Rapporto teologico tra alleanza ebraica e alleanza cristiana. Lecture given at the SIDIC Center of Rome (7 November 1992), in Dupuis, J *Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997.

Rosales, G and Arévaldo, C G (eds) 1992. *For all the peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences Documents from 1970-1991*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992.

Rudin, J and Wilson, M (eds) 1987. *A Time to speak: The Evangelical-Jewish encounter*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Rusecki, M 2000.   Elementy zbawcze w religiach pozachrześcijańskich, in Zimoń, H (ed), *Religia w świecie współczesnym: Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*. Lublin: TNKUL, 531-562.

Rusecki, M and Kaucha, K 2000. Chrześcijaństwo, in Zimoń, H (ed), *Religia w świecie współczesnym: Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*. Lublin: TNKUL, 489-510.

Saayman, W 1981.   Religious pluralism in South Africa, in Vorster, W S (ed), *Christianity among the religions*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 113-123.

_____1995.   Towards a tripolar approach to the relationship between the religions. *Religion and Theology* 2/1, 2-13.

SACBC 2007.   "Fruitful Encounter": Catholic guidelines and theological basis for dialogue and cooperation with other religious traditions (document published by the Department for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue). Pretoria.

Sakowicz, E 2006a.   Islam, in Sakowicz, E (ed), *Jan Paweł II: Encyclopedia dialogu i ekumenizmu*. Radom: Polwen, 239-272.

_____2006b.   Dialog międzyreligijny, in Sakowicz, E (ed), *Jan Paweł II: Encyclopedia dialogu i ekumenizmu*. Radom: Polwen, 129-162.

Sanders, J 1992.   *No other name: An Investigation into the destiny of the unevangelized*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

_____1997.   Idolater indeed! in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 121-125.

Sartori, L 2003.   "Subsist in": Criterion of "Truth and history" in interreligious dialogue, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 86-100.

Sayed, F A 1982.   Tribute to a Martyr. *South African Outlook* 12/1336, 165.

Schillebeeckx, E 1965. The Church and mankind. *Concilium* 1/1, 34-50.

_____1990.   *Church: The Human story of God*. London: SCM Press.

Schmidt-Leukel, P 2005. Exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism: The Tripolar typology – clarified and reaffirmed, in Knitter, P F (ed), *The Myth of religious superiority: A Multifaith exploration of religious pluralism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 13-27.

Scott, W A 1971.   *Historical Protestantism: An Historical introduction to Protestant theology*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Senior, D and Stuhlmueller, C 1983. *The Biblical foundations for mission*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Shafer, I 1997.   The Incarnation as Koran or the unique universal ultimate, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 126-136.

Shenk, C E 1996.   *Who do you say that I am*? Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press.

Sherwin, B L and Kasimow, H 1999. John Paul II on interreligious dialogue: In his own words, in Sherwin, B L and Kasimow, H (eds), *John Paul II and interreligious dialogue*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 27-51.

Shimoni, G 1988.   "South African Jews and the apartheid crisis", in Singer, D and Seldin, R (eds), *American Jewish Year Book*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1-23.

Shomali, M A 2006.   Mary, Jesus and Christianity: An Islamic perspective. *Grace and Truth*, vol. 23/2, 56-70 (First published in O'Mahoney, A and Peterbus, W (eds), *Catholics and Shia in dialogue*. London: Melisende, 2004).

Siddiqui, A 1997.   *Christian-Muslim dialogue in the twentieth century*. London: Macmillan Press, New York: St. Martin's Press.

Simpson, T 1987.   Christianity, religion and other religions. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 60, 3-11.

Smith, W C 1979.   *Faith and belief. Princeton*, New York: Princeton University Press.

_____1981.   *Towards a world theology*. London: Macmillan.

_____1982.   *Religious diversity*. New York: Crossroad.

Sobrino, J 1987.   *Jesus in Latin America.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1988.   *Spirituality of liberation: Toward a political holiness*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1994.   *Jesus the Liberator: An Historical-theological reading of Jesus of Nazareth*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____2001.   *Christ the Liberator: A View from the victims*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Song, A 1982.   Chinese religion: The Chinese community in Southern Africa. *Religion in Southern Africa* 3/1, 19-30.

_____1989.   The Effects of Protestant Christianity on the Chinese cult of the ancestors as practiced in the Johannesburg area (D. Phil. Diss.). Westville: University of Durban-Westville.

_____1995.   Chinese religion in South Africa, in Prozesky, M and De Gruchy, J (eds), *Living faiths in South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, New York: St. Martin's Press, London: Hurst & Company, 201-216.

Song, C S 1982a.   *Third-eye theology: Theology in formation in Asian settings*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1982b.   *The Compassionate God*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1984.   *Tell us our names: Story theology from an Asian perspective*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1986.   *Theology from the womb of Asia*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1990.   *Jesus the crucified people*. New York: Crossroad.

_____1993.   *Jesus and the Reign of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

_____1994.   *Jesus in the Power of the Spirit*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

_____1999.   *The Believing heart: An Invitation to story theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Sooklal, A 1986.   *A Socio-religious study of the Hare Krishna movement in South Africa*. Durban: Research Unit - New Religious Movements and Independent Churches, University of Zululand.

_____1987.   The Hare Krishna movement in South Africa. *Religion in Southern Africa* 8/2, 19-39.

South African Statistics 2002. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Starkey, P 1985.   Agapè: A Christian criterion for truth in the other religions. *International Review of Mission* 74, 425-463.

Stassen, P 1968.   The Anonymous Christians. *Christ to the World* 13, 246-247.

Stoeckle, B 1967.   Die Ausserbiblische Menschheit und die Weltreligionen, in Feiner, J and Löhrer, M (eds), *Mysterium Salutis*. Einsiedeln: Benziger 2, 1049-1075.

Straelen van, H 1998. *The Church and the non-Christian religions at the threshold of the 21st century*. London: Avon Books.

Sullivan, F A 1992. *Salvation outside the church? Tracing the history of the Catholic response*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.

_____2003.   Clement of Alexandria on justification through philosophy, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 101-113.

Swidler, L 1990.   *After the absolute: The Dialogical future of religious reflection*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds) 1997. *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

TeSalle, E. 1975.   *Christ in Context: Divine purpose and human possibility*. Philadelphia Fortress Press.

The Attitude of the Church towards the followers of the other religions: Reflections and orientations on dialogue and mission. *Acta Apostolice Sedis* 76/1984, 816-824.

The Church teaches 1955. Comp. by the Jesuits of St. Mary's College. St. Luis: B. Harder.

The New Jerusalem Bible 1985. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland: Doubleday.

Theological Advisory Commission (FABC) 1987. Theses on interreligious dialogue. FABC *Papers* 48. Hong Kong; also in Gnanapiragasam, J and Wilfred, F (eds), *Being Church in Asia*. Quezon City: Claretian Publications, vol. 1/1994, 7-24.

The Pope Speaks 2001a. Religious pluralism and the uniqueness of Christ: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's notification on the book 'Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism' (January 21, 2001). The Church Documents Bimonthly 46/5, 273-276.

_____2001b.   Commentary of the notification: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's commentary which accompanied the notification on 'Toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism,' by Father Jacques Dupuis, S.J. The Church Documents Bimonthly 46/5, 277-282.

_____2001c.   Christ and his church: Unique and necessary for salvation. Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church (August 6, 2000). The Church Documents Bimonthly 46/5, 33-52.

The Tablet 1998. Another theologian under investigation. 21 November, 1550.

Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Indian Theological Association (28 to 31 of December 1989), in Pathil, K (ed), *Religious pluralism: An Indian Christian perspective*. Delhi: SPCK, 1991, 338-349.

Thorpe, S A 1992. *African traditional religions*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Tilley, T W 1995. *Postmodern theologies: The Challenge of religious diversity*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

_____1999. Christianity and the world religions: A Recent Vatican document. *Theological Studies* 60, 318-337.

Tillich, P 1952. *The Courage to be*. London: Collins, the Fontana Library.

_____1968. *Systematic theology*, combined vol. 1-3. London: James Nisbet & Company.

Tracy, D 1990. *Dialogue with the other: The New pluralism in theology*. Louvain: Peeters Press.

Troeltsh, E 1971. *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the history of religions*. Richmond: John Knox Press.

Universality and uniqueness in the context of religious pluralism 1989. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26/1, 1-216.

Urban, J 2000. Dialog chrześcijaństwa z religiami pozachrześcijańskimi, in Zimoń, H (ed), *Religia w świecie współczesnym: Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*. Lublin: TNKUL, 583-603.

Valkenberg, P 2002. Jacques Dupuis as a theologian with a reversed mission. Some remarks on his controversial theology of religious pluralism, in Wijsen, F and Nissen, P (eds), *"Mission is a must": Incultural theology and the mission of the Church*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 147-158.

Villa-Vicencio, C and Niehaus, C (eds) 1995. *Many cultures, one nation*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

Vorgrimler, H 1965. *Karl Rahner: His life, thought and works*. Translated by Quinn, E. London: Burns & Oates.

Waldenfels, H 2003. Ecclesia in Asia, in Kendall, D and O'Collins, G (eds), *In Many and diverse ways: In honor of Jacques Dupuis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 194-208.

Walker, D 1989. Conversions to Islam among Azanians. *Insight* 4/1, 19-21.

Ward, K 1994. *Religion and revelation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Westerlund, David 2003, Ahmed Deedat's Theology of Religion: Apologetics through polemics. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33/3, 263-278.

Williams, T S M 1995. Review of Towards a Trinitarian theology of religions. *Theological Studies* 46, 421-423.

Wong, J H 1994. Anonymous Christianity: Karl Rahner's pneumato-christocentrism and the East-West dialogue. *Theological Studies* 55, 609-637.

Woodhall, R 1968. *The Theology of incarnation*. Halles Corners: Clergy Book Service.

Wright, J H 1992. Roger Haight's spirit Christology. *Theological Studies* 53, 729-735.

Yagi, S 1997. Plurality of the treasure in earthen vessels, in Swidler, L and Mojzes, P (eds), *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with P Knitter*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 137-144.

Yong, A 1998. The Turn to pneumatology in Christian theology of religions: Conduit or detour? *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 35/3-4, 437-454.

Zimoń, H 2000. Religie ludów pierwotnych, in Zimoń, H (ed), *Religia w świecie współczesnym: Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*. Lublin: TNKUL, 207-244.

Zwemer, S 1914. The Moslem menace in South Africa. *Missionary Review of the World*, October 37, 733-738.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

"About Us"

> http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

"Achievements"

> http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

"Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the ambassadors of countries with a Muslim majority and to the representatives of Muslim communities in Italy"

> http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents /hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060925_ambasciatori-paesi-arabi_en.html <3 September 2008>

"Bill of Rights"

> http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm <12 March 2008>

"Books by Gerhard Nehls"

> http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/index.html <15 March 2008>

"Defense against slander and takfir **c**oming from the 'Murabitun'-Movement" by Omar, K N and Haddad, S G

> http://www.livingislam.org/o/dstm_e.html <10 April 2008>

Facing the Muslim challenge: A handbook of Christian-Muslim apologetics

> http://www.answering-islam.org/Gilchrist/Challenge/index.html <7 March 2008>

"Foreign Affairs"

> http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>

"Frequently asked questions"

> http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/page.php?p_id=142 <14 May 2007>

"History and Resume"

> http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/page.php?p_id=137 <10 April 2008>

Independent Forum for Religious Broadcasting

> http://www.ifrb.org.za/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 <01 September 2008>

"Introducing CCM – Christians Concerned for Muslim"

> http://www.lca.org.za/CCM/index.html <30 April 2008>

"Islam: As it sees itself, as other see it, and as it is"

> http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/tt1/content.html <15 March 2008>

Islamic Propagation Center International – "Our Founder"

> http://www.ahmed-deedat.co.za/frameset.asp <1 May 2008>

"Le parole del Papa alla recita dell'Angelus"

> http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/18817.php?index=18817&lang=en <2 May 2008>

Life Challenge Africa "About us"

> http://www.lca.org.za <15 March 2008>

Life Challenge Africa (LCA) – Your helper in Muslim evangelism – "About us"

> http://www.lca.org.za <30 April 2008>

"Murabitun Worldwide Movement"

> http://www.geocities.com/athens/delphi/6588/mundial.html <10 April 2008>

"NRLF (National Religious Leaders' Forum)" by Just, P G

> http://www.nanhua.co.za/nanhua/Column/Peter%20Just/NRLF%20(National%20Religious%20Leaders'%20Forum).htm <20 March 2008>

"Pact meetings in Soshanguve and Mamelodi"– 6 March 2008

> http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=214 <14 May 2008>

Pope Benedict XVI "Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections"

> http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents /hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html <23 April 2008>

"Pope: dialogue between Muslims and Christians 'a vital necessity'"
    http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7309 <3 September 2008>
"Pope: 'Total and profound respect for Muslims'"
    http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/09/25/pope.muslims/index.html
    <3 September 2008>
"Projects"
    http://giftofthegivers.org/index.php <14 May 2007>
"South Africa–Constitution"
    http://www.unesco.org/most/rr3safr.htm <01 September 2008>
"South African Bill of Rights"
    http://www.rebirth.co.za/bill_of_rights_S.A.1.htm <01 September 2008>
The Christian witness to the Muslim
    http://www.answering-islam.org/Gilchrist/Vol2/ <7 March 2008>
The Islamic-Christian Controversy
    http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/tt2/index.html <15 March 2008>
"PWR (Parliament of the World's Religions)", "About the Parliament"
    http://www.parliamentofreligions2009.org/whatisparliament.php <8 May 2008>
———————

"1st Quarterly Report January-April 2005" – 10 March 2006
    http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=87 <14 May 2007>
"3rd Quarterly Report September 2005 - January 2006" - 10 March 2006
    http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=89 <14 May 2007>
"4th and 5th Quarterly Report" - 24 August 2006
    http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=117 <1 May 2008>
"6th Quarterly Report September-November 2006" - 9 January 2007
    http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=145 <14 May 2007>
"9th Quarterly Report July-September 2007" – 15 October 2007
    http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=203 <14 May 2007>
"11th Quarterly Progress Report January-March 2008" – 12 May 2008
    http://www.damiettapeace.org.za/article.php?a_id=224 <12 May 2008>

MICROSOFT SOURCES

Advaita. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Microsoft Edition, 2002.
Avatara. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Microsoft Edition, 2002.
Brahmanism. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Microsoft Edition, 2002.
Jansenism. *Encyclopedia Encarta*. Microsoft Edition, 1996.
Pelagianism. *Encyclopedia Encarta*. Microsoft Edition, 1996.
Sadhus. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Microsoft Edition, 2002.
Sannyasi. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Microsoft Edition, 2002.
Ramana Maharsh. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Microsoft Edition, 2002.
Upanishads. *Encyclopedia Encarta*. Microsoft Edition, 1996.

INTERVIEWS

Archbishop George Daniel of Pretoria, 15 January 2008. Pretoria.
Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, the Founder of the Gift of the Givers Foundation,
    21 May 2007. Pietermaritzburg.