

ARTICLES

Christ and Non-Christian Religions

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Introduction

The main theme of our Seminar is on inculturation in the Salesian theological formation. Since there is a close bond between culture and the religions which people profess, it is necessary to deal with the topic of religion in our discussion on inculturation. This is particularly the case in the context of Asian countries where culture and religion are closely linked together. For example, it would be impossible to separate the Indian culture from Hinduism and would be difficult to understand the Chinese culture without studying Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The topic of this paper is "Christ and Non-Christian Religions", or better, "Christ and the World Religions", for it is better not to define other religions simply by a negative description. This topic has great actuality in today's theological discussions.¹ Interreligious dialogue is

¹For survey see: J.P. Schineller, "Christ and Church. A Spectrum of Views", in *Theological Studies* 37 (1976) pp. 545-566; L. RICHARD, What are they saying about Christ and world religions? (New York, Paulist 1981); A. RACE, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London, SCM 1983); H. COWARD, *Pluralism: Challenge to World Religions* (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis 1985); P. KNITTER, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions* (London, SCM 1985); G. D'COSTA, *Theology and Religious Pluralism. The Challenge of other Religions* (Oxford, Blackwell 1986); J. DUPUIS, *Gesu Cristo incontro alle religioni* (Assisi, Cittadella 1989) pp. 139-149.

important not only for inculturation but it is an integral aspect of the Church's mission.² In many places it is practically the chief way for the Church to carry out her mission of evangelization. Two topics are particularly relevant for contemporary theology: liberation theology of the Latin America and the theology of religions of Asia and Africa. Just as the development of the so-called third Church has great significance for the universal Church so also the third world theology has great impact on the theological reflections of the Church at large.³

The scope of this paper is not concerned with a positive study of the history and phenomenology of religions, nor is it with a comparative study of Christianity with other religions.⁴ Rather, it aims at something more fundamental. It is a theological reflection on the relationship of Christ, the founder of Christianity, to other world religions. It reflects on the place of Jesus Christ in these religions as well as the significance of the latter in the history of salvation. It also deals with the proper attitudes which the Christians should have with regard to other religions in order to guide their dialogue with them. The paper contains the following parts: 1. the teaching of Vatican II and postconciliar documents on the relationships of the Church to the other religions; 2. a spectrum of different views on this topic among contemporary theologians, especially during the second half of the century; 3. an inclusive christocentrism presented as the adequate view together with some related issues. A general conclusion will be presented at the end of the paper.

1. Vatican II and Postconciliar Documents

The attitude of the Church concerning the salvation of non-Christians was hinged upon two basic beliefs: God's universal will to

²Cf. SECRETARIAT FOR NON-CHRISTIANS, *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions. Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*. n. 13; this document together with the address of Pope John Paul II delivered at the conclusion of the Plenary Assembly of the Secretariat in 1984 is published in different languages in *Bulletin Secretariatus pro non Christianis*, n. 56; 19 (1984) 117-241.

³Cf. W. BUHLMANN, *The Coming of the Third Church* (Slough, St. Paul Publications 1976); IDEM, *The Church of the Future* (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis 1986); V. FABELLA-S. TORRES (eds.), *Irruption of the Third World. Challenge to Theology* (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis 1983).

⁴Cf. H. KUNG, *Christianity and the World Religions* (London, Collins/Fount 1987); IDEM et J. CHING, *Christianity and Chinese Religions* (New York, Doubleday 1989).

save mankind and the necessity of the Church for salvation. In the attempt at balancing these two beliefs, the Church had put greater emphasis on the importance of the Church for salvation. Until Vatican II, the standard position of the Catholic church can be expressed by the traditional axiom: "outside the Church, there is no salvation". With its positive attitude and openness Vatican II forms a watershed in the relationship with other religions. This change of attitude with regard to extra-christian religions can be seen especially in the following documents: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* and *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.⁵ After stating that "all men are called to belong to the new People of God", *Lumen Gentium* reaffirms the traditional teaching that "the Church . . . is necessary for salvation".⁶ The Constitution then goes on to give a wider concept of belonging to the Church. Different people are related on various ways to the People of God. Among them there are those "who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience."⁷ The Constitution goes further to include the non-believers: "Nor does divine Providence deny the help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to His grace. Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel."⁸ Thus, in both cases the grace of God is necessary and is actually offered to them: "moved by grace", "thanks to His grace". Moreover, the document does not only envisage the possibility of salvation of the non-Christians, but affirms the existence of "goodness" and "truth" in them as given by God and as a "preparation for the gospel".⁹ In the following number, *Lumen Gentium* reaffirms the necessity of the Church to proclaim the gospel of Christ whom God has established "as the source of salvation for the whole world". At the same time it assures that through the missionary activity,

⁵Cf. especially the following number: LG 16, 17, AG 3,7,9, 11, 15; NA 2; GS 22.

⁶LG 13,14.

⁷*Ibid.*, 16.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Cf. EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 1,2.

"whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse people, is not only saved from destruction but is also healed, ennobled, and perfected . . ."¹⁰ In this paragraph the document does not only recognize the presence of goodness in the individual non-Christians but also in their "religious practices".

In a similar way the *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church* recognizes the positive value of the religious endeavors of the human race. These attempts by which men search for God, "need to be enlightened and purified"; yet "they may sometimes serve as a guidance course towards the true God, or as a preparation for the gospel."¹¹ The Church finds the reason for its missionary activity in the universal salvific will of God (1Tim 2,4-5) and "the necessity of the Church", though admitting that "God in ways known to Himself can lead those inculpably ignorant of the gospel to that faith without which it is impossible to please Him (Heb 11,6)."¹² *Ad Gentes* speaks of the presence of "truth and grace" among the nations "as a sort of secret presence of God", and referring to LG 17, reassures that "whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost", but is healed, ennobled and perfected.¹³ The Decree also enjoins Christians to cultivate esteem and familiarity with the "national and religious traditions" of the people among whom they live, and gladly and reverently to lay bare "the seeds of the Word" which lie hidden in these traditions.¹⁴ This presence of "the seeds of the Word" is to be activated by the "preaching of the gospel" in order to lead people to faith in Christ.¹⁵

In the document which explicitly deals with the relationship of the Church to non-christian religions, the Council expressed even more positively its attitude towards the non-christian religions while affirming Christ as the fulfillment of religious life: "The Catholic Church

¹⁰LG 17.

¹¹AG 3.

¹²*Ibid.*, 7.

¹³*Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 15.

rejects nothing which is *true* and *holy* in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, 'the way, the truth and the life' (Jn 14,6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (cf 2 Cor 5,18-19).¹⁶ The Council admits elements of truth and holiness in other religions which reflect the one Truth enlightening all men and which find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life.

In the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, the Council goes beyond the confine of religions and affirms the working of grace in all men of good will through the Holy Spirit: "all this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way . . . we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery."¹⁷

Postconciliar documents of the Magisterium continue to develop on the same line of thought. Thus in the *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), while emphasizing the duty of the Church to preach Christ who reveals "the ordinary paths of salvation", Pope Paul VI admits that "God can accomplish this salvation in whomsoever he wishes by ways which he alone knows."¹⁸ In his encyclical letter, *Redemptor Hominum* (1979), Pope John Paul II makes a step forward by stating explicitly that the firm belief of the followers of the non-christian religions as "an effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body."¹⁹ The Pope reaffirms the Council's teaching on non-christian religions, especially through the patristic expression "seeds of the Word": The Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, 'seeds of the Word',²⁰

¹⁶NA 2.

¹⁷GS 22.

¹⁸EN 80.

¹⁹RH 6.

²⁰CF. AG 11; LG 17.

attesting that, though the routes taken may be different, there is but one single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit . . ."²¹ Different religions are seen as different routes leading to the one goal of the deepest human aspiration. At the same time the encyclical presents Christ as the fullness of the definitive revelation of God to man: "In Christ and through Christ God has revealed himself fully to mankind and has definitively drawn close to it"; hence, "Jesus Christ is the stable principle and fixed centre of the mission that God himself has entrusted to men."²² In another encyclical letter, *Dominum et vivificantem* (1986), the Pope emphasizes the christological and pneumatological character of grace and salvation. He urges for a broader view on the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the world, both in terms of time and of space: "We need to go further back, to embrace the whole of the action of the Holy Spirit even before Christ - from the beginning, throughout the world, and especially in the economy of the Old Covenant. . . we need to look further and go further afield, . . . The Second Vatican Council, . . . reminds us of the Holy Spirit's activity also 'outside the visible body of the Church.'"²³ This action of the Spirit prior to the coming of Christ is said to be "closely linked with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption."²⁴

To mark the twentieth anniversary of its establishment by Paul VI in 1964, the Secretariat for non-Christians issued a document on *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions*.²⁵ The document reassumes the teachings of Vatican II on the relationship of Christianity to the other religions.²⁶ It is concerned above all with the relationship existing between dialogue and the mission of the Church.²⁷ It clearly indicates dialogue as one of the essential elements of the Church's mission: "There is, as well, the dialogue traditions in order to

²¹RH 11.

²²*Ibid.*

²³DEV 53.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵See note 2 above.

²⁶*Op. cit.*, n. 26; citing OT 16; GS 92; AG 9, 11, 15, 18; NA 2,3.

²⁷*Ibid.*, n. 5.

walk together towards truth and to work together in projects of common concern . . . The totality of christian mission embraces all these elements."²⁸

2. A Spectrum of Views

With the opening and positive attitude of Vatican II, Christianity's relationship to other religions has become an increasingly important topic in theological discussions. Theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, hold different views with regard to the topic. There have been several attempts at classifying the different positions according to some basic paradigms or models. Peter Schineller distinguishes the different views as ecclesiocentric, christocentric and theocentric. Each view is joined to a particular type of christology respectively: exclusive christology, inclusive christology, the last two being related to the theocentric view.²⁹ Hence, according to this classification there are four basic paradigms. More recently, writers have made use of the following three paradigms for their classification: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism.³⁰ I still find the classification of Schineller most helpful. My presentation of a spectrum of different views will adopt the paradigms proposed by him with some modifications. Moreover, I shall present one or two theologians as representatives of each paradigm whereas this is not found in Schineller's article. The following are the main paradigms: a. ecclesiocentric view with an exclusive christology; b. christocentric view with an inclusive christology; c. christocentric view with a normative christology; d. theocentric view with a nonnormative christology.³¹

²⁸*Ibid.*, n. 13. Five elements are enumerated as pertaining to the totality of christian mission: simple presence and living witness; commitment to the service of mankind and activities for social development; liturgical and prayer life; dialogue with other religious traditions; announcement and catechesis.

²⁹J.P. SCHINELLER, *art. cit.*; reprinted in W.J. BUARGHART - M.G. THOMPSON (eds.), *Why the Church?* (New York, Paulist 1977) pp. 1-22.

³⁰Cf. A. RACE, *op. cit.*; H. COWARD, *op. cit.*; G/D'Costa, *op. cit.*; M. AMALADOSS, "The Pluralism of Religions and the Significance of Christ", in *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 53 (1989) 401-420; esp. pp. 402f.

³¹Instead of joining the normative christology to a theocentric universe, as does Schineller, I prefer to place it in a christocentric perspective which may employ either a constitutive or a normative christology.

a. Ecclesiocentric View: Exclusive Christology

This represents the most conservative position regarding the relationship of Christianity to other religions. It holds the axiom "no salvation outside the Church" in vigour. Jesus Christ is understood as the exclusive centre of the universe. There are no other mediators of salvation than Jesus. In order to obtain salvation it is necessary to have an explicit knowledge of and personal commitment to Jesus Christ who is the only one mediator of salvation.

"*No Salvation outside the Church*". This was the standard position of the Catholic Church up to Vatican II. The axiom "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*", formulated by Origen and applied by Cyprian, had become traditional teaching of the Church.³² The Council of Florence (1442) defined this traditional teaching by using the words of Fulgentius of Ruspe.³³ This position was softened by the Council of Trent, with the help of theologians such as Bellarmine and Suárez. Pagans could be saved through desire for baptism (*in voto*) or desire for the Church (*votum ecclesiae*); even an implicit desire would be sufficient, if they followed their conscience and lived accordingly.³⁴ Other theories were also formulated to explain the possibility of salvation of honest people living outside the Church, such as the ideas of a primitive or general revelation and of a death-bed conversion.

Vatican II reiterates this traditional Catholic teaching on the necessity of the Church for salvation.³⁵ But, as has been shown, it has broadened the idea of belonging to the Church. While assigning full membership to the baptized Catholics, belonging to the Church in varying degrees is also attributed to all baptized Christians, Jews, Moslems, believers of other religions and even atheists, in a word, to all people of good will.³⁶ A strict interpretation of the traditional axiom "no salvation outside the Church", and hence, a strict exclusivism, is no longer tenable by Catholics after Vatican II.

³²CF ORIGEN, *In Jesu Nave*, 3,5; CYPRIAN, *De unitate Ecclesiae*, 6.

³³DS 1351; cf. FULGENTIUS OF RUSPE, *De fide, ad Petrum*, 38, 79-39,80.

³⁴DS 1524, 1542.

³⁵LG 14.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

Karl Barth. On the Protestant side K. Barth may be adduced to as chief exponent of an exclusive christology. Rather than an ecclesio-centrism, Barth's is a christomonism, which upholds the unique salvific mediatorship of Jesus Christ to the exclusion of any other mediation of salvation. Hence, there is no truth, no genuine relation to God outside the christian faith. Barth makes a sharp distinction between revelation and religion. Religion is understood as human attempt to reach God. But this is simply impossible inasmuch as, by themselves, human beings know nothing about God. Only God can make God known.³⁷ Revelation is God's outreach to humanity which takes place uniquely in Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the eternal Word.³⁸ Not only are human beings unable to know God, they cannot do anything to help themselves. Only God can save humanity.³⁹ Hence, religion as human effort to know God and attain salvation is condemned as "unbelief" (*Unglaube*), because it attempts to do what only Jesus Christ can do.⁴⁰ There are no "points of contact" between the christian message and religions.⁴¹ The coming of Jesus Christ brings about the abolition of religion.

Even Barth's view of Christianity as true religion is a dialectical affirmation. On the one hand, revelation and salvation are offered only in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Christianity is true religion as a "justified sinner".⁴² The fact that Christianity is justified by Christ has nothing to do with its quality as religion, nothing being altered in this regard by the justification. Barth presents the example of sunlight shining on one part of the earth, illuminating it without changing it really.⁴³

Just as Vatican II has moved beyond a strictly exclusive ecclesio-centrism, the position of Barth regarding religions does not represent

³⁷Cf. *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, p. 301.

³⁸Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁹Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁴⁰Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁴¹Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 295-296.

⁴²Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁴³Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 388.

the mainline Protestant view.⁴⁴ Theologians such as P. Althaus and E. Brunner already made a distinction between revelation and salvation. While maintaining the conviction of salvation only in Christ, they admit the existence of genuine revelation outside Christianity. They call this revelation among the gentiles (Rm 1,18ff, 2,12-16; Ac 14,15ff; 17,27ff; Jn 1) "original revelation" or "creation revelation".⁴⁵ They observe that this is not to be confused with a "natural revelation" or a "natural theology", as if it were something deriving from human discovery. Rather, as the work of God through the Spirit, it is a genuine revelation. When it comes to the question of salvation through other religions, both Althaus and Brunner give an unambiguously negative answer. Some other Protestant theologians, while admitting to a salvific value in the religions, would qualify their admission in such a way that this salvific value apparently can only be in a corrupted or fragmentary form.⁴⁶

b. Christocentric View: Inclusive Christology

The second position moves away from an ecclesiocentric view into a christocentric perspective, and from an exclusive christology into an inclusive one. This position is held by the majority of both Catholic and Protestant theologians nowadays. An inclusive christocentric view holds the necessity and centrality of Christ in the economy of salvation. Christian faith is necessary but it is possible to have implicit faith in Christ. Salvation is only through the grace of Christ, but this grace is actually offered and available to all. There is only one economy of salvation. Jesus Christ is not only the decisive and normative revelation of God, but is also constitutive of salvation. The world "constitutive" is important here. As a constitutive mediator, Christ is indispensable for salvation. He is the efficient cause of saving grace and source of salvation for mankind. Moreover, salvation is constituted not by the eternal Logos as such but by the Logos incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. Without the Christ event, nobody can be saved. While maintaining the traditional teaching of the necessity of the Church for salvation, the

⁴⁴Cf. P. KNITTER, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-119.

⁴⁵Cf. P. ALTHAUS, *Die christliche Wahrheit* (Gutersloher Verl. 1966) pp. 37-94; E. BRUNNER, "Revelation and Religion", in O.c. THOMAS (ed.), *Attitudes toward Other Religions* (London, SCM 1969) pp. 120-122.

⁴⁶Cf. P. KNITTER, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

inclusive christocentric view admits degrees of Church membership, and hence, the presence of saving grace outside the visible boundaries of the Church. The basic scriptural texts of this view are 1 Tim 2,4-6: on the universal salvific will of God and Jesus Christ as the one mediator; and Ac 17,23: on the unknown God worshipped by the Athenians.

Karl Rahner. The teaching of Vatican II clearly manifests this inclusive christocentricism. If Vatican II marks the watershed in the christian attitude towards other religions, K. Rahner is rightly called its "chief engineer".⁴⁷ To substantiate his contribution to Vatican II I shall present Rahner's thinking on this topic through two of his major articles written before or during the Council.⁴⁸ In his article dealing with "anonymous Christians", Rahner considers the possibility of salvation of the non-Christians and their relation to Jesus Christ. In an earlier article entitled *Christianity and the non-Christian Religions*, Rahner reflects on the positive value for salvation of extra-christian religions. Obviously the two articles are closely related to each other.

With regard to the question of the salvation of non-Christians, Rahner thinks that we are faced with two basic principles. On the one hand, there is the necessity of faith in God and in Christ in order to obtain salvation. It is not only a necessity in view of a positive precept but is an absolute necessity based on the very nature of salvation which means God's offer of grace in Christ to be accepted by faith. Consequently, we have to hold the traditional teaching: no salvation outside the Church. On the other hand, there is the universal love of God which intends seriously to save all human beings (1 Tim 2,4). As a result of these apparently conflicting principles Rahner believes it necessary to adopt a wider concept of belonging to the Church by affirming degrees of Church membership which includes the explicitly professed Christians as well as the "anonymous Christians".⁴⁹

⁴⁷Cf. Ibid., p. 125; G. D'COSTA, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴⁸K. RAHNER, "Christianity and the Non-christian Religions", in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 5 (London, DLT 1966) pp. 115-134; the German original of this volume was published in 1962; "Anonymous Christians", in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6 (London, DLT 1969) pp. 390-398; this article was originally a broadcast review of the book by A. ROPER, *Die anonyme Christen* (Mainz 1963) which was put on the air in the summer of 1964 by *Westdeutscher Rundfunk*. Hereafter TI for *Theological Investigations*.

⁴⁹Cf. K. RAHNER, "Anonymous Christians", TI vol. 6, pp.390-391.

The foundation for the "anonymous Christianity" is to be sought in the basic human structure as spiritual being and in the design of God at the beginning of creation. As spirit man is a being of unlimited openness for the limitless being of God.⁵⁰ Rahner considers "transcendence" as the best definition for human beings. What is the most important and original is Rahner's insight that there is an inner unity between human transcendence, God's bestowal of grace and the mystery of the incarnation. From revelation we come to know that right from the beginning of the creation God has decided to communicate himself to man in a radical closeness through the bestowal of grace. In God his intention becomes reality. The offer of grace at the moment of creation, even prior to man's free response, stamps and determines human nature in its deepest being and should rightly be designated as a freely given "supernatural existential".⁵¹ Hence, human being's experience of transcendence is not purely natural experience; rather, it is already experience of supernatural grace.

Moreover, God's graceful self-communication is offered to all but is fulfilled in the highest way in Christ. As "the uniquely supreme case of the actualization of man's nature in general", the incarnation constitutes the goal of creation and human existence.⁵² Hence, in accepting one's own human existence through silent fidelity and constant dedication to the duty of everyday life, man is responding to God's offer of grace and accepting the mystery of Christ even without knowing it explicitly.⁵³ In this way, the christian revelation is to be seen as the explicit statement of the basic revelation of grace which man always experiences implicitly in the depths of his being.⁵⁴ Later on Rahner explains his theory of "anonymous Christians" through the so-called "searching

⁵⁰Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

⁵¹Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁵²*Ibid.*: "Man is accordingly in the most basic definition that which God becomes if he sets out to show himself in the region of the extra-divine. And conversely, formulating it from the point of view of man: man is he who realises himself when he gives himself away into the incomprehensible mystery of God." Cf. also IDEM, "On the Theology of the Incarnation", *TI* vol. 4, pp. 105-120.

⁵³Cf. *Ibid.*, 394.

⁵⁴Cf. *Ibid.*

christology" and the idea of "memoria" which means man's innate expectation for an absolute Saviour to be encountered in history.⁵⁵

So far we have seen the possibility of salvation of the non-Christians through an implicit acceptance of Christ. What about the function of the extra-Christian religions? Are non-Christians saved *in spite of* or *in* and *through* their religions? In his germinal article on this topic, Rahner proceeds by presenting four theses. The first thesis states that Christianity claims to be the absolute religion intended by God for all.⁵⁶ But this absolute religion comes to men in a historical way. Hence Christianity's demand for adherence must be balanced by the difficulty involved in deciding "when the existentially real demand is made by the absolute religion in its historically tangible form."⁵⁷ While the objective obligation for all to embrace the Christian religion started with the apostolic age, this moment may be postponed with regard to a particular people or individual of concrete history and culture, until they are really and seriously confronted by the Christian message.

The second thesis is based on Rahner's view on the possibility of salvation of the non-Christians seen under the social aspect. Man is called to be *homo religiosus* in order to attain salvation, but he is this *homo religiosus* in the concrete religion in which he finds himself.⁵⁸ In other words, as a social being, man should live his relationship to God in a society. Hence, the religions before Christ and even after Christ, until their followers are existentially and seriously confronted by the Christian message, should contain supernatural elements of grace leading to salvation.⁵⁹ In this sense, the extra-Christian religions, in varying degrees, may be considered lawful religions "whose use by man at a certain period can be regarded on the whole as a positive means of gaining the right relationship to God and thus for the attaining of salvation, a means which is therefore positively included in God's plan

⁵⁵For "searching christology" see "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation", TI vol. 16, pp. 220-222. For the Augustinian idea of "memoria" see "Jesus Christ in the Non-Christian Religions", TI vol. 17, pp. 46-49.

⁵⁶Cf. K. RAHNER, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions", TI vol. 5, p. 118.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 119.

⁵⁸Cf. *Ibid.*, 128.

⁵⁹Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 130.

of salvation."⁶⁰ Thus in this second thesis Rahner has made an important step forward by affirming that non-Christians are saved not in spite of but precisely *through* their religions as historically concrete mediations of the saving grace of Christ.

The third thesis considers the member of an extra-christian religion as not merely a non-Christian, but an "anonymous Christian". According to Rahner, an existential revelation is given through the experience of grace as the *a priori* horizon of all man's spiritual acts which accompany his consciousness subjectively, even though it is not known objectively.⁶¹ Christianity is seen as the explicit self-realization of this previously anonymous state through an inner dynamism.⁶² This explicit self-realization of a previously anonymous Christianity is demanded by the incarnational and social structure of grace and of Christianity itself. It is also demanded by the fact that, other things being equal, an explicit Christian has "a still greater chance of salvation" than the anonymous one.⁶³

The fourth thesis then clarifies the idea of mission in this perspective. It means bringing people to explicit consciousness of what already belongs to them as a divine offer or already as a divine gift of grace accepted by man implicitly.⁶⁴ Thus the Church will no longer regard herself as the exclusive community of those who have a claim to salvation, but as the "historically tangible vanguard" and "explicit expression" of what is present as a hidden reality even outside the visible Church.⁶⁵ Non-Christians may regard the designation "anonymous Christian" as presumptuous. But the Christian cannot renounce this presumption, which should actually be the source of humility and should inspire not only tolerance but respect for the presence of saving

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 125. The mixture of what is right and what is false in these religions should not invalidate this thesis, for the same phenomenon is also found in the Old Testament religion (cf. pp. 126f).

⁶¹Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁶²Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 132; "Anonymous Christians", II vol. 6, p. 395; the name itself wants to express this intrinsic tendency towards explicitation.

⁶³*Ibid.*, For the importance of the missionary activity see "Anonymous Christians", II vol. 6, pp. 396-397.

⁶⁴Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, here Rahner anticipates the idea of the Church as sacrament of salvation adopted by Vatican II.

grace in the non-Christians.⁶⁶ To accuse the title "anonymous Christians" as "arrogant" and "patronizing" is to misunderstand the original intention of Rahner. He was speaking to Christians and from a christian context. The title is not meant as an immediate tool for dialogue with other religions. Rather, it is meant to clarify and broaden the then standard outlook of the Catholic Church on the followers of the non-christian religions.⁶⁷ Further reflections on Rahner's teaching on this topic will be dealt with in the third part of the paper.

c. Christocentric View: Normative Christology

Whereas for Schineller this view and the following one both belong to a theocentric universe which may be related to two different types of christology: normative and non normative, I would prefer not to describe this third position as theocentric but as a christocentric view which adopts a normative christology.⁶⁸ I understand a non normative christology as proper to a theocentrism which is intended to be opposed to christocentrism. Hence, both this present view and the preceding one belong to a christocentric perspective. The difference lies in the fact that while the second view considers Christ as constitutive as well as normative of salvation (inclusive christology), this third view sees Christ as not constitutive but only normative of salvation (normative christology).

It is a christocentric view inasmuch as Christ is seen as the fulfillment of human history. He is the decisive and highest revelation of God and of human existence. It presents a normative christology in which Christ is the ideal type, the measure and criterion for judging others. The salvific mediation of Jesus Christ both fulfills and corrects other mediations of the past, present and future. The mediation of Christ is not exclusive nor is it constitutive. Salvation is always possible for the whole mankind, even apart from Christ. This salvation becomes decisively and normatively manifest in Jesus. Hence Christianity is viewed as the summit and completion of all the other religions.

⁶⁶Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁶⁷Cf. G. D'COSTA, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁸Cf. P. SCHINELLER, *art. cit.*, pp. 555f.

Hans Küng. In his book, *On Being a Christian*, Küng deals extensively with the relationship of Christianity to the world religions.⁶⁹ He calls for a more positive attitude towards other religions. At the same time he presents Christ as the norm for all religions. Küng advocates an inductive method based on a historical-critical study of the New Testament sources on the life and message of Jesus. Through such a historical-critical method and a comparative study with other religions, Küng arrives at the statement of the superiority and finality of Jesus and his message.⁷⁰ Jesus Christ is presented as definitive, decisive and normative for our relationship with God, with our neighbors and with society.⁷¹ In his view of Christianity Küng proposes a fulfillment theory: the positive elements in other religions are brought to fulfillment in Christianity.⁷² Hence, Christianity is taken as a "cultural catalyst and crystallization point" for other religions.⁷³ Without Christ's revelation the religions cannot really understand and appropriate the salvation at work within them. For this reason, Jesus Christ must be preached "that God may not remain to them the unknown God."⁷⁴

Küng admits Christ as normative for other religions, but would not admit Christ as constitutive of salvation for the world. This view depends on his christology, especially on his idea of the incarnation. Küng understands talks of the incarnation as originally mythical language. By taking it in its literal meaning and turning it into a central dogma, the Church detracts from the real centre of christian message which is the cross.⁷⁵ This is accomplished through a process of Hellenization with the consequence of the simplistic identification of Jesus with God.⁷⁶ What is in need is a "re-mythologization" of the doctrine of the incarnation. A functional christology from below should replace the ontological christology from above.⁷⁷ A functional interpre-

⁶⁹Cf. H. KUNG, *On Being a Christian* (London, Collins 1976) pp. 89-116.

⁷⁰Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 265.

⁷¹Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁷²Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 447.

⁷⁵Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁷⁶Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

⁷⁷Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 436-450.

tation should also be given to the title "Son of God" which is used to express the disciples' experience of Jesus as the "representative" of God.⁷⁸ Likewise, a functional interpretation of the incarnation would mean that "God himself as man's friend was present, at work, speaking, acting, and definitively revealing himself in Jesus who came among men as God's advocate and deputy, representative and delegate, and was confirmed by God as the crucified raised to life."⁷⁹ Indeed, all the titles formulated by Küng, such as, God's advocate, deputy, delegate, spokesman, plenipotentiary . . . all denote the special function of Jesus, without saying anything about his ontological identity.⁸⁰ The dogmatic formula that Jesus is "truly man and truly God" is interpreted by Küng to mean: "The truer man Jesus of Nazareth is for faith the real revelation of the one true God."⁸¹

By "re-mythologizing" the mystery of the incarnation Küng has at the same time challenged the traditional foundation for the Church's claim to the uniqueness of Christ.⁸² If the incarnation does not imply a pre-existent Logos entering once and for all into the history to transform it from within, but is simply the mythical expression of Jesus as "God's representative", then the question arises inevitably: have not other founders of religions carried out essentially the same role? Are there not other "incarnations" in this sense? With a mythical interpretation of the incarnation one may at most come to the recognition of a difference of degree but cannot claim uniqueness and definitiveness for Jesus. Even this difference of degree cannot be simply claimed but is to be established on the basis of a comparative study. Küng offers a number of arguments for his claim that revelation of God in Jesus surpasses, definitively and normatively, all the other founders of religions. But these arguments are not as convincing as he thinks and are often challenged by other theologians, especially the more liberal ones.⁸³ There is such a close connection between belief in the incarnation and claim to

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 390-391.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 449.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 440, 449.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 444.

⁸²Cf. L. RICHARD, *op. cit.*, p. 41; P. KNITTER, "World Religions and the Finality of Christ: A Critique of Hans Kung's *On Being a Christian*", *Horizons* 5 (1978) 162.

⁸³Cf. P. KNITTER, *art. cit.*, pp. 163-164;

uniqueness, that, if the incarnation is a myth, then the uniqueness of Jesus also becomes a myth.

John Cobb. A normative christology is also held by a number of Process theologians.⁸⁴ They avoid any talk of salvation constituted by Christ. Still, Christ remains the ultimate norm for the process of transformation of history and the world. John Cobb, a major representative of process theologians, holds the incarnation quite seriously. But he makes a clear distinction between Jesus and Christ.⁸⁵ Cobb admits the universal presence of revelation and redemptive grace. The Logos is understood as "the principle of creative transformation", pervading the world. It is "the cosmic principle of order, the ground of meaning and the source of purpose".⁸⁶ Christ is the designation for this Logos inasmuch as it actually incarnates itself in concrete historical forms.⁸⁷ Cobb finds Christ (not Jesus) within all religions.⁸⁸ As the Logos is incarnate in all human beings in varying degrees, Jesus is the "paradigm case of incarnation", the fullest incarnation of the Logos, "because his very selfhood was constituted by the Logos."⁸⁹ Hence is not simply the intensification of the presence of the Logos in all people, but it implies "a distinctive structure of existence in which Jesus' selfhood was co-constituted by the incarnation of the Logos."⁹⁰ In this sense Jesus was Christ, although Christ as the embodiment of the Logos in the world is wider than Jesus. By maintaining the full incarnation of the Logos in Jesus, this Whiteheadian christology is able to defend the unique normativity of Jesus. But its separation of Jesus from the Christ is problematic and will be dealt with in the third part of the article.

⁸⁴Cf. J. COBB, *Christ in a Pluralistic Age* (Philadelphia, Westminster 1975); S. OGDEN, *Christ Without Myth* (New York, Harper & Row 1961); IDEM, *The Reality of God* (New York, Harper & Row 1966); N. PITTENGER, *The Word Incarnate* (New York, Harper & Row 1959).

⁸⁵Cobb is evolving from what he calls a Jesuology to Christology; cf. L. RICHARD, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁸⁶J. COBB, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁸⁷Cf. *Ibid.*

⁸⁸Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

4. Theocentric View: Nonnormative Christology

This fourth view presents nothing less than a radical change of paradigm. The mediation of Jesus Christ is considered neither as constitutive nor as normative for salvation. This new paradigm is theocentric as opposed to christocentric, inasmuch as it holds that salvation ultimately comes from God who has manifested and offered himself in different ways and in different religious traditions. Jesus Christ is simply one among many mediators of salvation. Judgments about claims to uniqueness or normativeness are unverifiable and therefore lacking basis. Negatively, this position betrays an epistemological relativism or skepticism. But in a positive way, it reminds of the incomprehensibility of God in his dealings with humanity. One should avoid judging God and his ways by human standards. Jesus is the historical mediator of a special experience of God which need not be accepted as a universal mediation. Moreover, according to the exponents of this view, there can be an intense loyalty to Jesus Christ without placing him in a unique or normative position.⁹¹

Is this fourth position of a theocentric pluralism a legitimate and tenable christian position? In the Roman Catholic Church's reaction against certain movements of the nineteenth century, it is clearly disallowed.⁹² This view can well explain one of the two basic christian beliefs, namely, the universal salvific will of God. But it can hardly explain the second basic statement that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men.⁹³ Actually these two fundamental articles of christian faith are stated together in one Pauline text: "... God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1Tim 2, 4-5).

John Hick. One of the most distinctive representatives of this religious pluralism is certainly J. Hick. He accuses the recent attempts by theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, to readjust the relation-

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 257.

⁹¹Cf. P. KNITTER, *art. cit.*

⁹²PIUS IX, *Syllabus of Condemned Errors* (1864); cf. P. SCHINELLER, *art. cit.*, p. 561.

⁹³Cf. G. D'COSTA, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

ship of Christianity to other religions as so many "epicycles" added to the Ptolemaic view of universe in order to save it from collapsing. He advocates a "Copernican revolution in theology", namely, a paradigm shift from a Christianity-centred or Jesus-centred to a God-centred model of the universe of faiths. The world religions, including Christianity, are so many different human responses to the one divine Reality.⁹⁴ Religions have grown up in isolation from one another, but there is only one Spirit, one divine Reality behind all the religions. Their different interpretations and expressions are but historical and cultural adaptations.⁹⁵ The basic criterion for evaluating a religious tradition is to be found in its soteriological effectiveness, whether it is capable of offering a better quality of human existence, and a transformation of human experience from self-centredness to Reality-centredness.⁹⁶ In view of this common soteriological structure, differences in religions should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory.

As is expected, this Copernican revolution involves a new christology. The christian claim to uniqueness and normativeness is based on the doctrine of the incarnation which, according to Hick, is mythical and needs re-interpretation.⁹⁷ There is a shift of meaning in the title "Son of God" in early christian tradition. In its original Jewish context, the title bears a functional meaning and is often used for the Messiah. When it comes to the Greco-Roman culture, the title generates the idea of incarnation and unique deification.⁹⁸ This process of deification was evident already in John, but especially during the controversies of the early Councils the mythical images of "Son of God" and "incarnation" were ontologized into absolute categories with the result that the metaphorical "Son of God" became "God the Son" in the metaphysical sense. Consequently Jesus became the only Saviour and only final norm for God's salvific actions with men.⁹⁹ Christianity must overcome this

⁹⁴Cf. J. HICK, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London, Collins/Fount 1977) p. 131; IDEM, *God has Many Names* (London, Macmillan 1980) pp. 5-6.

⁹⁵Cf. *God and the Universe*, p. 139; *Many Names*, p. 6.

⁹⁶Cf. J. HICK, "On Grading Religions", *Religious Studies* 17 (1981) 463.

⁹⁷Cf. J. HICK, "Jesus and the World Religions", in IDEM (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London, SCM 1977) p. 167-185.

⁹⁸Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁹⁹Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

"theological fundamentalism". Language of incarnation is not meant to be "factual statement" about "empirical, metaphysical" realities; it "lacks any non-metaphorical meaning". In other words, the real point of "the incarnational doctrine is not indicative but expressive, not to assert a metaphysical fact but to express a valuation and evoke an attitude."¹⁰⁰ The statement that "Jesus was God and Son incarnate" is not literally true. Rather, it is the expression of a "mythical concept" which gives definitive expression to Jesus' efficacy as Saviour from sin and ignorance; it declares that "he is our sufficient model of true humanity in a perfect relationship to God."¹⁰¹ With the title Son of God Christians intend to express their personal adherence to Christ as their Lord and unique Saviour, without claiming his being unique or normative for others.

Both Küng and Hick judge the incarnation as mythical. The difference between them is that, while Küng still maintains the uniqueness and normativeness of Jesus, Hick is more coherent in rejecting any talk about Jesus as being unique or normative. Christ should be considered simply one among many ways if he is reduced to being a mere man. As Amaladoss says, "for those to whom christian uniqueness is a myth, the God-incarnate is also a myth."¹⁰² As has been pointed out above, the reverse of this statement is equally true. Amaladoss thinks the pluralists in general as not taking the religions seriously. The real differences among religions, are played down. The problem is not to find a point of agreement among religions, for they claim to be different ways to the same goal. This specificity of faith commitments is not considered by the pluralist view. By reducing the meaning of religion to the lowest common denominator like liberation, or a common soteriological structure, one may better designate this religious pluralism as soterio-centric, rather than theocentric.¹⁰³

The pluralist position of Hick has met serious critiques from various quarters. J.J. Lipner, among others, accuses Hick of "ingenious

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

¹⁰²Cf. M. AMALADOSS, *art. cit.*, p. 403; as an example the author cites the two books that Hick has edited: J. HICK (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*; IDEM et P. KNITTER (eds.), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis 1987).

¹⁰³Cf. IDEM, *art. cit.*, p. 403.

relativism" and "ahistorical idealism".¹⁰⁴ In spite of Hick's motion for a Copernican revolution, G. D'Costa sees him as a "covert Ptolemaic theologian".¹⁰⁵ D'Costa is of the opinion that Hick's christian theocentrism cannot be severed from christology. If the Copernican revolution requires an all-loving God as its fundamental axiom, the ground for Hick's theocentric claim is actually the christian view of God. His idea and experience of God as all loving is obtained through Jesus Christ who, in a more positive statement of Hick, is the *agape* of God operating in a finite mode: "the eternal divine *agape* made flesh, inhistorized".¹⁰⁶ In this sense Jesus is still "decisive" or "normative" for Hick.¹⁰⁷ For this reason D'Costa comes to the conclusion that "the Copernican revolution looks rather like yet another ingenious Ptolemaic epicycle!"¹⁰⁸ My question is whether it is necessary, or even possible, to make an option between theocentrism and christocentrism? Is not the *either-or* a false dilemma? I agree with J. Dupuis, that christian theology is theocentric inasmuch as it is christocentric, and vice versa.¹⁰⁹ For the christians the only adequate knowledge of God is "God the Father of Jesus Christ".

Raimundo Panikkar. Owing to his evolving positions it is not easy to classify R. Panikkar. In view of his earlier fulfillment theory, D'Costa considers him an inclusivist, while Knitter places him among the theocentric pluralists, on account of his recent development.¹¹⁰ I think they are both right. It depends on how and from where one looks at him. I shall present some salient points from the two editions of his major work *The Unknown Christ and Hinduism*, hoping that it will give an idea of his developing position.¹¹¹ The first edition of the book clearly

¹⁰⁴J.J. LIPNER, "Does Copernicus Help?", in R.W. ROUSSEAU (ed), *Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Scranton, Ridge Row Press 1981) pp. 154-174.

¹⁰⁵G. D'COSTA, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁶J. HICK, *God and the Universe*, pp. 148-158.

¹⁰⁷Cf. IDEM, "Pluralism and the Reality of the Transcendent", *Christian Century* 98 (1981) 46-47.

¹⁰⁸Cf. G. D'COSTA, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁹Cf. J. DUPUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹¹⁰Cf. J. DUPUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹¹¹Cf. R. PANIKKAR, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London, DLT 1964; revised and enlarged edition: *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism. Towards an Ecumenical Christophany* (London, DLT 1981).

represents a fulfillment theory regarding the relationship of Christianity with the other religions, especially with Hinduism. Christianity is presented as the "catholic" or "universal" religion. God's will has so shaped the nature of Christianity that it "prevents us from considering it as *one* religion among others, or even as a *prima inter pares*. Christianity is the fullness of religion and thus the real perfection of every religion."¹¹² While he finds inadequate those analogies which express the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity in terms of falsehood-truth,¹¹³ natural-supernatural,¹¹⁴ he sees Hinduism as a kind of Christianity in potency,¹¹⁵ a vestibule of Christianity,¹¹⁶ inasmuch as there is a dynamism from the former to the latter.¹¹⁷ The christian attitude to other religions is not one of bringing Christ in, but of bringing him forth.¹¹⁸ Whereas the presence of Christ is hidden in all religions, Christianity is "the place where Christ is fully revealed, the end and plenitude of every religion."¹¹⁹ Panikkar also held that a full christian faith is required to accept the identity between Christ and "Jesus the Son of Mary".¹²⁰

However, Panikkar has changed his position in his more recent writings, and especially in the second and completely revised edition of his book *The Unknown Christ*. There not only the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism in terms of polar opposites are found inadequate.¹²¹ Various "fulfillment" theories which present Christianity as the fulfillment of Hinduism are equally unsatisfactory.¹²² In the long introduction to the new edition, Panikkar advocates a universal christology. For him Christ is more than a historical figure. As a universal principle Christ is the most powerful living symbol of the total

¹¹²*The Unknown Christ* (first edition), p. x.

¹¹³Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-50.

¹¹⁴Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-39.

¹¹⁵Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 59.

¹¹⁶Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁷Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹¹⁸Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

¹²¹Cf. *The Unknown Christ* (revised and enlarged edition), pp. 70-80.

¹²²Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-93.

reality which he calls the "Mystery".¹²³ This symbol may assume other names, such as: Rama, Krishna, Isvara . . . etc. Each name expresses the same mystery, each dealing with an unknown dimension of Christ.¹²⁴

Much earlier than this second edition of his major work, Panikkar was formulating this universal christology. There is universal salvation, but the Saviour (Christ) is not an individual, not merely a historical figure.¹²⁵ There are more saviours embodying that saving power which Christians believe to be the Spirit of Jesus. For Panikkar, the universal Christ stands for the cosmotheandric principle which finds concrete expressions or embodiments in various religions, Jesus being the ultimate form for the Christians.¹²⁶ Therefore, the statement "Jesus is Christ" cannot be identical to the statement "Christ is Jesus". Jesus is concrete historical name for the "Supername" - Christ, which can go by many historical names: Rama, Krishna, Isvara . . . etc. Jesus is only one of the names of the cosmotheandric principle (Christ) which finds a historically *sui-generis* epiphany in Jesus of Nazareth.¹²⁷

Thus Panikkar has moved from a christocentric into a theocentric universe making the name Christ to stand for the universal saving power of God. He does not only distinguish between Jesus and Christ but actually separates the two when he affirms that the universal saving principle (Christ) is equally embodied in other religious figures. This universal christology of a Christ without Jesus creates serious problems and will be dealt with in the next part of the article.

3. Universal Presence of Christ: Inclusive Christocentrism

The spectrum of views on the relationship of Christianity to other religions shows four basic paradigms: ecclesiocentric view with an exclusive christology; christocentric view either with an inclusive or with a normative christology; theocentric view joined to a nonnormative

¹²³Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 26f.

¹²⁴Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

¹²⁵Cf. R. PANIKKAR, *Salvation in Christ: Concreteness and Universality* (Santa Barbara, privately published 1972) p. 62.

¹²⁶Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹²⁷Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72; IDEM, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis 1973) pp. 53-54.

christology. I consider the second position, namely an inclusive christocentrism, as the adequate paradigm to indicate the universal presence of Christ in the world, and hence in all religions. It is the only paradigm which is sufficient to explain the two basic statements of the christian faith, namely God desires to save all men and that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men (1Tm 2,4-5). In order to establish this inclusive christocentric paradigm, some crucial issues still need to be clarified. The following are the three major issues: a. the relation between finality and causality, or between normative and constitutive significance of the Christ event; b. the relation between the historical Jesus and the transhistorical, cosmic Christ; c. the relation between the universal presence of the Spirit and the particular event of Jesus Christ. The adequacy of the inclusive christocentrism will depend on the outcome of these discussions.

**a. Unity Between "Constitutive" and "Normative":
Sacramental Sign Causality**

Instead of four paradigms in the spectrum of views presented above, some writers distinguish only three major positions: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. D'Costa considers both "constitutive" and "normative" christologies as belonging to a christocentric inclusivism.¹²⁸ Schineller, however, presents the normative christology as a real option between a constitutive christology and a nonnormative christology.¹²⁹ To highlight the difference between constitutive and normative christology he even joins the latter to a theocentric, instead of a christocentric universe. The exponents of a normative christology, as we have seen, admit that Jesus Christ is the norm of religions or the criterion for judging authentic salvation, but they deny that he is also the cause constituting salvation for mankind. However, the central message of the New Testament does not tell us that Jesus has merely come to reveal the meaning and thus to be the norm or ideal type of salvation, but that he is the Saviour who has brought salvation to the world, through his death and resurrection. The frequently repeated "for us" formula of the New Testament has found its way into the creed: "For us men and for our salvation".¹³⁰ My thesis is that if one holds seriously the normative-

¹²⁸cf. G. D'COSTA, *op. cit.*

¹²⁹Cf. P. SCHINELLER, *art. cit.*, p. 556.

¹³⁰Nicene Creed.

ness of Christ, one must also admit Christ's constitutive significance for salvation, for finality implies causality in this case. In other words, a coherent normative christology should merge with a constitutive christology.

Claim to normativeness implies claim to uniqueness and finality. If Jesus were not unique and unsurpassable, he would not be the supreme norm and criterion for religion and salvation. But the ideas of uniqueness and finality already imply the idea of certain causality. To understand this statement it is necessary to explain the kind of causality involved. In relation to the saving will of God, according to K. Rahner, the Christ event is its effect rather than its cause, understood as efficient cause. It would be unchristian to imagine that the cross of Christ has transformed an angry God into a merciful one. On the contrary, it is the merciful love of God which has effected the Christ event.¹³¹ However, one must submit that the Christ event also exercised certain causality on our salvation. The incarnation and cross of Christ should be understood as the "final cause" of God's universal self-communication to the world.¹³² The idea of the finality of Christ means that God's saving will is tending towards a goal and a fulfillment of the whole of salvation history. God's self-communication to humanity is driving towards an irreversible climax with a visible manifestation in history in which the ambivalence of the divine-human encounter, owing to the freedom on both sides, will be resolved by God's eschatological commitment and man's total response.¹³³ This climax takes place in the Christ event. As the final cause of God's self-communication, this goal draws the whole process of salvation history forward with an inner dynamism. In this sense the Christ event is both the effect and the cause of God's offer of salvation to the world.

The normativeness of Christ can also be expressed in terms of sign. He is the supreme model or ideal type of relationship between God and man and as such the sign of salvation. Rahner also designates the causality of the Christ event as a "sacramental sign causality". The cross, together with the resurrection of Jesus, has a "primary sacramen-

¹³¹cf. K. RAHNER, "the One Christ and the Universality of Salvation", TI vol. 16, pp. 204, 211.

¹³²Cf. IDEM, "Jesus Christ in the Non-Christian Religions", TL vol. 17, p. 46

¹³³Cf. IDEM, "Universality of Salvation", TI vol. 16, p. 213.

tal causality" for the salvation of mankind.¹³⁴ Grace is already universally operative in the world and is tending towards a full expression of itself. The cross then is the sign of "its victorious and irreversible activity in the world", or a sign of the definitiveness of God's self-communication through grace. Now a sacramental sign is a real cause of grace: "*Sacramenta causant gratiam, quia et prout significant gratiam.*"¹³⁵ It is the historical and social embodiment of grace, where grace achieves its own fullness of being and becomes a real gift. There is a mutual interdependence between grace and its sign: the sign is produced by grace but at the same time it belongs to the essential actualization of this grace which finds a concrete historical expression in its sign.¹³⁶ Rahner explains the mutual relationship between grace and its sign in terms of "real symbol". The signified reality (grace) produces its "real symbol" (sacramental sign) in order to achieve its own realization in it. Similarly, the Christ event is both effect and cause of God's salvific will inasmuch as it is effected by God's offer of grace as its "real symbol" so that this grace may become a concrete reality and is fully realized in it.¹³⁷

As a sacramental sign of salvation the Christ event has universal significance for all humanity. This is based on Rahner's view of the unity and solidarity of mankind and his distinction between objective and subjective redemption. Through his death and resurrection Christ has accomplished a real situation of salvation for all, in terms of proper relationship with God. This can be called the objective redemption. Each individual man is called to appropriate freely this objective state of salvation so that it may become his own subjective redemption.¹³⁸ Rahner is of the opinion that the non-christian religions have a positive role in mediating the objective redemption of Christ to the followers of these religions.¹³⁹

The idea of sign causality also manifests the unity of revelation and salvation. To claim that Jesus is the final norm or ideal type of salvation

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹³⁶*Cf. Ibid.*,

¹³⁷*Cf. Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

¹³⁸*Cf. Ibid.*, p. 207.

¹³⁹*Cf. IDEM*, "Jesus Christ", TI vol. 17, p. 41.

for the world means to say that he is the definitive revelation of God's salvific relationship with mankind. But, how can Jesus Christ be the definitive revelation of God's offer of grace to the world if this definitive offer of grace did not really take place in the Christ event? A revelation without the corresponding salvific reality being offered would be the manifestation through an empty sign, but not a sacramental sign. If God's offer for grace to the world did not become a reality in Jesus, neither could he be the universal norm of salvation for all generations. Hence, under the idea of sacramental sign, revelation and salvation, sign and reality, norm and constituting cause all become one in Jesus Christ. Christ is the universal norm of salvation precisely because he is the constitutive cause of it, and vice versa. Moreover, the dichotomy between theocentric and christocentric is a false dilemma. If God's salvific love finds its sacramental sign precisely in the Christ event in which this love is fully given and manifested to the world, then theocentric and christocentric views finally coincide with each other. Then universal theocentric structure of salvation becomes christocentric according to the design of God and in its concrete realization in history.

b. Unity between the Historical Jesus and the Cosmic Christ

The old debate on the relationship between Jesus of history and Christ of faith entered into a new phase with the famous lecture of E. Kasemann pronounced in the fall of 1953.¹⁴⁰ Since then, the basic continuity between the pre-easter Jesus and the glorified Christ has been affirmed by majority of exegetes and theologians. Recently, the discussion has reappeared with a change of perspective on the relationship between the historical Jesus and the cosmic Christ. As has been shown, J. Cobb, the process theologian, designates the Logos as transforming principle and Christ as its concrete incarnation in the world, with Jesus as the highest paradigm of incarnation. From a different approach, Panikkar presents Christ as the "cosmotheandric principle" or symbol of the "Myster". This universal Christ is embodied in different religions under different names and has found a *sui-generis* expression in Jesus of Nazareth. For Panikkar, Jesus is the Christ, but Christ is

¹⁴⁰E. KASEMANN, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus", *Theologie und Kirche* 51 (1954) 125-153.

more than Jesus. In this section of the paper I shall enter into dialogue with this "universal christology" of Panikkar and attempt to clarify the relationship between Jesus and Christ.¹⁴¹

Let us begin by examining the different connotations of the title Christ as based on the New Testament writings. It is first of all the title given to the historical Jesus who is called the Christ. Then the title cosmic Christ may indicate the risen Christ in his transhistorical existence. The cosmic Christ is also a Pauline title for the pre-existent Christ who has been active since the beginning of creation. Hence, the ideal cosmic Christ can mean the Logos, second Person of the Trinity, prior to the incarnation or the resurrected, transhistorical Christ. In both cases, as will be shown, the title is inseparably connected with the historical Jesus.

When the title is applied to the pre-existing Christ at work during the creation, it indicates the Son of God inasmuch as he is destined to be incarnate and become Christ.¹⁴² The title may also indicate the seeds of the Word" (*Logoi spermatikoi*) present and active in the world prior to the coming of Christ. Again these are seeds of the Word which is destined to become incarnate and be called Jesus Christ.¹⁴³ Hence, this cosmic Christ prior to the incarnation is distinct from but inseparably connected with the historical Jesus. The cosmic Christ actually receives this name from the Christ event in concrete history without which Paul could not possibly call this pre-existent person Christ. The connection between this pre-incarnational Christ and the historical Jesus can be expressed in terms of "final causality" which, according to Rahner, is to be taken seriously. As the final goal of God's self-communication to the world, Jesus Christ is present from the beginning in the mind of God. And as the hidden entelechy, this goal activates and draws the whole process of God's self-bestowal in its forward movement with an inner magnetism.¹⁴⁴ One may say that all the activities of the cosmic Christ prior to the incarnation are directed towards and are modelled after the event of Jesus Christ. For this reason the activity of the pre-christian

¹⁴¹Hopefully the difficulty with J. Cobb will also be dealt with indirectly.

¹⁴²Cf. P. LAMARCHE, *Christ vivant. Essai sur la christologie du Nouveau Testament* (Paris, Cerf. 1966) pp. 60-61; see also, J. DUPUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

¹⁴³Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

¹⁴⁴Cf. K. RAHNER, "Universality of Salvation", TI vol. 16, pp. 205-206.

cosmic Christ or the "seeds of the Word", is related to and fulfilled in Jesus Christ as its goal.¹⁴⁵

If this title is applied to the cosmic Christ in his risen, glorified state, this cosmic Christ is precisely the risen Jesus who, through the resurrection, has entered into a pneumatic existence. In his resurrection, the last Adam was endowed with a "spiritual body" (*Pneuma zoopoion*) (cf 1Cor 15, 44-45). This pneumatic existence is a transhistorical and pancosmic existence which renders the risen Jesus present and active everywhere in the world, through his Spirit.¹⁴⁶ Hence, while the pre-existent and pre-incarnational Christ is joined to Jesus Christ through a final causality, the glorified cosmic Christ is identical with the risen Jesus who has entered into this glorious state. In both cases, the title Christ is inseparable from the event of Christ in history.¹⁴⁷

In an attempt to dialogue with Hinduism, Panikkar is challenged by its ahistorical world-view. As he himself confesses, India is not ready to believe a divine reality situated in space and time.¹⁴⁸ We may add that, not only in India, but in Asia in general, religions and doctrines of salvation are based on timeless universal truths rather than on any particular historical event. The ultimate scandal of Christianity is not so much the cross as the scandal of its particularity and, above all, the scandal of the incarnation. It is not utterly surprising that a man should sacrifice his life for his fellowmen but it is wholly behind our comprehension that God should become man and die for us. The incarnation shows the total commitment of God by entering fully into human history. Through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, the in itself ambivalent encounter between God and humanity finally reaches its definitive, irreversible summit. Hence, the incarnation has an once and for all character and is at the same time significant for all humanity for their relationship with God.

¹⁴⁵Cf. R. SMET, *Essai sur la pensée de Raimundo Panikkar. Une contribution indienne à la théologie des religions et à la christologie* (Louvain-Neuve, Centre d'histoire des religions 1981) pp. 46-47; while admitting the presence of the Word outside Christianity, the author does not think that he acts in exactly the same way. Cf. also J. DUPUIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-263.

¹⁴⁶The relationship between Jesus and the Spirit will be discussed in the following sub-section.

¹⁴⁷Cf. M. AMALADOSS, *art. cit.*

¹⁴⁸Cf. R. SMET, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

By relaxing the indissoluble tie between the universal Christ and the particular historical Jesus, Panikkar risks turning the christian message into a kind of gnosis. As a consequence, observes J. Dupuis, one does not only arrive at the "Jesus myth", but is led inevitably to a "Christ myth" as well, for a universal Christ when detached from the historical Jesus can only be a myth. Hence, between the "myth of history" and the "Jesus myth" christian faith has no choice.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps it is precisely here that Christianity should make a contribution in its dialogue with Asian religions. The Judeo-christian linear view of history makes an advance on the cyclic view of history as endless time. If in their effort to introduce the christian message into the Greek culture the early Fathers have enriched the latter, among other things, with the concept of person, can christian theologians today not make a similar contribution to Asian religious culture through this linear concept of history?

Reflecting on the eternal significance of the humanity of Jesus, Rahner says that man has the tendency to love the absolute and distrust what is particular, relative and contingent. But he should be reminded that "this conditioned reality is what is loved unconditionally by the Unconditioned."¹⁵⁰ Rahner firmly holds that the particular created reality of the humanity of Jesus has eternal significance of mediation between God and mankind, even in the final stage of consummation. The humanity of Jesus is the permanent openness and gateway to any genuine encounter with God: he who sees me sees the Father. Without the particular humanity of Jesus one may perhaps encounter the "impersonal absolute," but not the personal God: "we may speak about the *impersonal Absolute* without the non-absolute flesh of the Son, but the *personal Absolute* can be truly *found* only in him, in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead in the earthly vessel of his humanity."¹⁵¹

C. Mediation between Particularity and Universality: Spirit of Christ

Now we come to the difficult question of the relationship between a particular historical event and its claim to universal significance. The solution to this delicate problem, as proposed by W. Kasper advocates a

¹⁴⁹Cf. J. DUPUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

¹⁵⁰K. RAHNER, "The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Christ." *TI* vol. 3, p. 40.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 43.

Spirit oriented christology: "a pneumatologically defined christology can in fact best convey the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and his universal significance."¹⁵² After the Christ event has taken place, it is the special task of the Spirit to interiorize and universalize the mystery of Christ in the world and in history. It belongs to the working of the Holy Spirit to give Christ a universal presence in the hearts of men.¹⁵³ The Spirit bears a universal character. He is the creative and vivifying presence of God in the world and in history. Jesus Christ is at once the goal of the presence and activity of the Spirit of God in the world and also the starting point for the eschatological mission of the Spirit. In Christ the Spirit has definitely reached his goal, namely a new humanity and new creation. Now his function is to integrate the whole reality into the reality of Christ, or in other words, to universalize the event of Christ.¹⁵⁴

In his reflection on the presence of Jesus Christ in non-christian religions, Rahner holds the necessity of supernatural faith in the non-Christians in order to achieve salvation. This faith is made possible by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this faith must be related to Christ, even if in an implicit way. Rahner comes to the conclusion that "Christ is present and efficacious in the non-christian believer (therefore in the non-christian religions) through his Spirit."¹⁵⁵ To demonstrate that the Spirit is from the outset the Spirit of Christ even prior to the coming of Christ, Rahner thinks that the traditional formula "*intuitu meritorum Christi*" needs new interpretation. That the universal imparting of the Spirit is in view of Christ should be explained, again, in terms of "final causality."¹⁵⁶ Based on the unity between the economic and immanent Trinity, Rahner presents the two basic modes of God's self-communication in the history of salvation, through the Word and the Spirit.¹⁵⁷ God communicates himself as offer and truth through the Word. In order that this self-communication may find response in man,

¹⁵²W. KASPER, *Jesus the Christ* (London, Paulist 1977) p. 252; cf. J. O'DONNELL, "In Him and Over Him: The Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus," *Gregorianum* 70 (1989) 45.

¹⁵³Cf. IDEM, *The God of Jesus Christ* (London, SCM 1983) P. 283.

¹⁵⁴Cf. IDEM, *Jesus the Christ*, pp. 361f.

¹⁵⁵K. RAHNER, "Jesus Christ," TI vol. 17, p. 43.

¹⁵⁶Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁷Cf. IDEM, *The Trinity* (London, Burns & Oates 1970) pp.; Y. CONGAR, *The World and the Spirit* (London, Chapman 1986).

God simultaneously bestows the Spirit as acceptance and love. These are the two inseparable basic modes of the one self-communication of God in history. This self-communication through offer and acceptance is always carried out by means of historical mediation. Owing to the freedom of the two partners in dialogue, this history, may go on without ever reaching a definitive climax. From the christian revelation we come to know that in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, the history of God's self-communication has definitively reached an irreversible and historically tangible summit. In the Christ event the highest self-communication of God through the Word has been perfectly accepted by man through the Spirit.¹⁵⁸ Thus the Christ event can be viewed as the goal of the working of the Spirit, and, for this reason, this Spirit can be called the Spirit of Christ from the beginning of salvation history: "Since the universal efficacy of the Spirit is directed from the very beginning to the zenith of its historical mediation, which is the **Christ event** (or in other words the final cause of the mediation of the Spirit to the world), it can be truly said that this Spirit is everywhere and from the very beginning the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the incarnate divine Logos."¹⁵⁹

If the Spirit is always the Spirit of Christ even prior to the incarnation, with greater reason he can be called by this title after the glorification of Jesus. During his earthly life Jesus was endowed with the Spirit and led by him. In the resurrection, Jesus became a "life-giving Spirit", or giver of the Spirit.¹⁶⁰ One may say that while during his earthly life Jesus was determined by the Spirit, this relationship was inverted through the resurrection and Jesus became the determination of the Spirit. From now on the title "Spirit of Christ" acquires its full meaning which implies two things: on the one hand the action of the risen Christ is carried out in terms of the Holy Spirit; on the other, the Spirit of God as now acquired an inalienable christological character, standing at the complete disposal of the risen Christ.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸Cf. IDEM, "Jesus Christ", TI vol. 17, p. 46; W. KASPER, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 379; H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Theologie*, III, pp. 180-185.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰Cf. J.D.G. DUNN, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London, SCM 1975) p. 325.

¹⁶¹Cf. R. PENNA, *Lo Spirito di Cristo* (Brescia, Paideia 1976) pp. 292f.

Hence the title "Spirit of Christ" expresses the presence and activity of the risen Jesus in the world, both within and beyond the visible confines of Christianity.¹⁶² Through his Spirit, the risen Christ is present and active everywhere even when he is not explicitly acknowledged. Some have fear that by identifying the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ one seeks to reduce the action of the Spirit to that of Christ, making him a mere function of the risen Jesus.¹⁶³ To clarify this doubt, one must bear in mind the mutual dependence between the Spirit and the Christ event. The latter is both the goal and the effect of the activity of the Spirit in the world. The Holy Spirit prepares for and effects the mystery of the incarnation and the paschal mystery as the definitive outcome of his working in the world.¹⁶⁴ What remains now for the Spirit to do is to lead the whole world into the mystery of Christ, and through him, to the Father. Far from being reduced to a function of Christ, the Spirit is continuing his own activity as responsive love in the world, an activity which was started by him from the beginning, reached a definitive climax in the Christ event, and is moving towards its eschatological fulfillment at the end time.

Conclusion

In this paper I have started with the teaching of Vatican II on the relationship of Christianity with other religions. Then in the spectrum of views four different paradigms together with their respective exponents are dealt with. The third section of the paper presents an inclusive christocentrism as the valid paradigm for the universal presence of Jesus Christ in the world religions. This inclusive christocentrism understands Christ as both normative and constitutive for salvation. Whereas in the spectrum of views four paradigms are dealt with, it is argued in the third section that the second and the third paradigms, namely a christocentrism presenting Christ as constitutive or only normative for salvation, should be combined into one. Although they represent different positions, a normative christology, if it is really coherent, should merge with a christology which holds Christ as constitutive as well as normative for salvation.

¹⁶²Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Jesus Christ and His Spirit* (Bangalore, Theological Publications in India 1977) pp.

¹⁶³Cf. M. AMALADOSS, *art. cit.*, p. 413.

¹⁶⁴Cf. K. RAHNER, "Jesus Christ", *TI* vol. 17, p. 46.

While an exclusive ecclesiocentrism and a pluralist theocentrism can well explain one of the two basic beliefs of christian faith, namely, the universal salvific will of God and the necessary mediation of Jesus Christ (1Tm 2,4-5), only the inclusive christocentrism is able to explain both central statements of Christianity. Moreover, whereas the exclusive view is hardly in keeping with the teaching of Vatican II, the pluralist view does not give due consideration to the historical event of Christ. The attempts at dissolving the link between the "universal Christ" and the historical Jesus, calling this latter "Jesus myth", or at separating Jesus Christ from his spirit, are not justified. There is a basic unity between the cosmic Christ and the historical Jesus. Through the resurrection this same Jesus Christ enters into a pneumatic existence and becomes the transhistorical and pancosmic Christ. Again the Spirit of God is from the beginning of salvation history the Spirit of Christ inasmuch as the Christ event is the goal of the Spirit's activity in the World. This Spirit becomes even more fully Spirit of Christ when, through the resurrection, Christ becomes a life-giving Spirit, or the principle and sender of the Spirit to the world. From now on the risen Jesus Christ is present and active everywhere in the world through his Spirit who mediates between the particularity of the Christ event and is universal saving significance.

There is a further difficulty with the pluralist theocentric view presented as opposing to a christocentric view. It is true that the saving design of God is the ultimate source of salvation. But God's self-communication to the world is carried out through two inseparable basic modes of mediation in the history of salvation: through the Word and the Spirit. The Christ event is the definitive sacramental sign, both as realization and manifestation, of the salvific love of God to the world. Salvation is at one and the same time theocentric as well christocentric. Hence, the question "theocentric *or* christocentric" is a false dilemma. The two actually coincide. Thus christian theology is theocentric inasmuch as it is christocentric, and vice versa.

As has been said in the introduction, this paper presents a theological reflection on the relationship of Christ to the world religions. Another paper is probably needed to apply this inclusive christocentric paradigm to a real dialogue with the other religions. Here in the conclusion only some basic ideas can be given. From the perspective of an inclusive christocentric view, what would be the relationship between the mission of Christ, of the Spirit and of the Church? Their

relationship may be understood as follows: Jesus has accomplished God's salvation for humanity, the Spirit renders it present and actual in the world, and the witness of the Church offers it a privileged visibility.¹⁶⁵ In this case evangelization means announcing the good news that in Jesus Christ God has reconciled all things to himself and that this mystery is present to all men through the Spirit of Christ. Reflecting on the words of AG 15: "The Holy Spirit, who calls all men to Christ by the seeds of the Word and by the preaching of the gospel, stirs up in their hearts the obedience of faith," Dupuis comments, while the Word has sown his seeds in the religious traditions of mankind, it is the task of the Spirit to make these seeds bear fruit through a call to the faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁶ Seen under this light, the proclamation of the christian message must be understood in terms of "**educere**". This means, in the first place, to make emerge to the explicit consciousness of a reality which is already present in man. Then "**educere**" also means to "**lead from**" one regime or mediation of salvation to another regime or mediation.¹⁶⁷

Together with announcing the good news of Christ, dialogue with other religions should be understood as an integral element of evangelization.¹⁶⁸ Interreligious dialogue must be based on mutual esteem and love, but it should be based on personal conviction and commitment to one's own faith. One should bear in mind that the dialogue partner wishes to know exactly what the other partner holds and not just a compromised position. The hope is that both parties may be enlightened and enriched by a sincere exchange of views and may come to a deeper understanding not only of the other's religion but also of one's own faith.

Finally I would like to end with the words of Pope John Paul II in his address at the conclusion of the plenary assembly of the Secretariat for non-Christians, March 1984: "Dialogue finds its place within the Church's salvific mission; . . . In this ecclesial activity it is also necessary to avoid *exclusivism* and *dichotomies*. Authentic dialogue becomes

¹⁶⁵Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Jesus Christ and His Spirit*, pp. 249-250.

¹⁶⁶Cf. IDEM, *Gesu Cristo*, p. 219.

¹⁶⁷Cf. IDEM, *Jesus Christ and His Spirit*, p. 257.

¹⁶⁸Cf. SECRETARIAT FOR NON-CHRISTIANS, *op. cit.*, n. 13.

witness and true evangelization is accomplished by respecting and listening to one another (RH 12)."¹⁶⁹ In this case, "dichotomy" means everything that would break the link between interreligious dialogue and evangelization, while "exclusivism" means reducing evangelization only to proclamation or to interreligious dialogue. Dialogue and proclamation should go hand in hand, wherever possible.

¹⁶⁹JOHN PAUL II, *Address at the Conclusion of the Plenary Assembly of the Secretariat for Non-Christians* (1984), n. 5; italics mine.