

DIALOGUE OR MISSION? CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGIONS IN AN ENDANGERED WORLD pdf

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Christianity and the religions in an endangered world --Pope John Paul II / address of the holy father to the Congregation for the doctrine of faith, together with extracts from that congregation's 'Dominus Jesus': on the unity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: By Terry Muck and Frances S. In an age when dialogue is emphasized in the meeting of religions, this book presents a refreshing and interesting alternative approach. Muck and Adeney, both professors of evangelism in the United States, argue that Christians have no alternative to the practice of mission in the twenty-first century. They argue that central to Christian revelation is the unmerited gift that Christians have received in Christ, and this theme of gift drives their argument, inelegantly named "giftive mission. First, they develop their approach from the Bible, fully recognizing that there are a number of possible trajectories out of the Bible on this issue. This amounts to a kind of open evangelical position: So far, clear and predictable, given the stable out of which our writers come. But the originality of the book is yet to be unleashed. One might recall Aquinas, which they do not at this point of their argument, although they do later, who argued that the greatest gift we can give a friend is sharing that which we value most. For friendship requires that we desire the greatest good for the friend and this means that we would desire the truth of Jesus Christ for our friends. This does not displace an element of competition, if understood as the belief that we can partly argue for the truth and should always do so against rival claims. This does not displace cooperation either. Rather, it is to bring into focus an organizing principle, which is profoundly centered on the nature of revelation as gift. The best feature of this book now emerges as our authors carefully and sensitively tease out aspects of this gift through highlighting certain values as exemplified in the practice of great missionaries of the past. Each person takes up an entire chapter and each is finally contrasted with an antitype, which makes this an immensely helpful resource for students in terms of discussion and engaging stories. Furthermore, the authors provide discussion questions, summaries, and notes in sidebars, little gray boxes that break the text up. Note the balance in denominational types and gender—which is a typical mark of the ecumenical orientation of our authors. Admittedly, they downplay in some of their characters the fierce loyalty to the gospel and the particular church to which they belong You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

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2: Christian mission - Wikipedia

Christianity and the Religions in an Endangered World. Pope John Paul II - Address of the Holy Father to the Congregation or the Doctrine of the Faith, together with extracts from that Congregation's "Dominus Jesus" - On the Unity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church.

Whether a Jewish proselytism existed or not that would have served as a model for the early Christians is unclear, see Circumcision controversy in early Christianity Jewish background for details. Soon, the expansion of the Christian mission beyond Judaism to those who were not Jewish became a contested issue, notably at the Council of Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul was an early proponent of this expansion, and contextualized the Christian message for the Greek and Roman cultures, allowing it to reach beyond its Hebrew and Jewish roots. From Late Antiquity onward, much missionary activity was carried out by members of religious orders. Monasteries followed disciplines and supported missions, libraries, and practical research, all of which were perceived as works to reduce human misery and suffering and glorify the Christian God. St Patrick evangelized many in Ireland. St David was active in Wales. During the Middle Ages , Ramon Llull c. Medieval[edit] During the Middle Ages Christian monasteries and missionaries such as Saint Patrick , and Adalbert of Prague propagated learning and religion beyond the boundaries of the old Roman Empire. In the seventh century Gregory the Great sent missionaries, including Augustine of Canterbury , into England. The Hiberno-Scottish mission began in Their travels took them as far as China in an attempt to convert the advancing Mongols , especially the Great Khans of the Mongol Empire. Catholic missions after [edit] Main article: Catholic missions One of the main goals of the Christopher Columbus expedition financed by Queen Isabella of Spain was to spread Christianity. The most active orders were the Jesuits , Augustinians , Franciscans and Dominicans. The Portuguese sent missions into Africa. These are some of the most well-known missions in history. In both Portugal and Spain, religion was an integral part of the state and evangelization was seen as having both secular and spiritual benefits. Wherever these powers attempted to expand their territories or influence, missionaries would soon follow. By the Treaty of Tordesillas , the two powers divided the world between them into exclusive spheres of influence, trade and colonization. The proselytization of Asia became linked to Portuguese colonial policy. Catholic missions in Asia[edit] Main article: Catholic missions Portuguese trade with Asia rapidly proved profitable from onwards, and as Jesuits arrived in India around , the colonial government in Goa supported the mission with incentives for baptized Christians. Later, the Church sent Jesuits to China onwards and to other countries in Asia. For over a hundred years, occupied by their struggle with the Catholic Church, the early Protestant churches as a body were not strongly focused on missions to "heathen" lands. In North America, missionaries to the Native Americans included Jonathan Edwards â€” , the well-known preacher of the Great Awakening ca â€” , who in his later years retired from the very public life of his early career. He became a missionary to the Housatonic Native Americans and a staunch advocate for them against cultural imperialism. This pattern of grudging acceptance of converts played out again later in Hawaii when missionaries from that same[which? In the course of the Spanish colonization of the Americas , the Catholic missionaries learned the languages of the Amerindians and devised writing systems for them. Then they preached to indigenous people in those languages Quechua , Guarani , Nahuatl instead of Spanish, to keep Indians away from "sinful" whites. An extreme case of segregation occurred in the Guarani Reductions , a theocratic semi-independent region established by the Jesuits in the region of the future Paraguay between the early 17th century and From onwards the Moravian Church began sending out missionaries. His interest grew to a furious sort of "backwards homesickness", inspiring him to obtain Baptist orders, and eventually to write his famous pamphlet, " An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of Heathen ". It inspired a movement that has grown with increasing speed from his day to the present. Protestant missionaries from the Anglican and Lutheran and Presbyterian traditions starting arriving in what was then the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the 19th

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Century. The mainstream of the Baptist denomination, however, supported missionary work. After spending time in the newly formed United States of America strengthening the infant Methodist Church alongside Episcopal colleague Francis Asbury, the British-born Coke left for mission work. During his time in America, Coke worked vigorously to increase Methodist support of Christian missions and of raising up mission workers. Coke died while on a mission trip to India, but his legacy among Methodists – his passion for missions – continues. Missionary preaching in China using *The Wordless Book* A wave of missions, starting in the early 1800s, targeted inland areas, led by Hudson Taylor – with his *China Inland Mission* –. Taylor was later supported by Henry Grattan Guinness – who founded Cliff College, which continues as of [update] to train and equip for local and global mission. The missions inspired by Taylor and Guinness have collectively been called [by whom? Taylor, a thorough-going nativist, offended the missionaries of his era by wearing Chinese clothing and speaking Chinese at home. His books, speaking, and examples led to the formation of numerous inland missions and of the Student Volunteer Movement SVM, founded in 1888, which from 1888 to about 1914 sent nearly 10,000 missionaries to inland areas, often at great personal sacrifice. British Empire[edit] In the 18th century, and even more so in the 19th century, missionaries based in Britain saw the Empire as a fertile field for proselytizing for Christianity. All the main denominations were involved, including the Church of England, the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the Nonconformists. Much of the enthusiasm emerged from the Evangelical revival. Within the Church of England, the Church Mission Society CMS originated in [10] and went on to undertake activity all around the world, including in what became known as "the Middle East". The Methodists, led by George Whitefield, were the most successful and after the revolution an entirely distinct American Methodist denomination emerged that became the largest Protestant denomination in the new United States. Increasingly colonial officials took a neutral position on religious matters, even in those colonies such as Virginia where the Church of England was officially established, but in practice controlled by laymen in the local vestries. After the Americans broke free, British officials decided to enhance the power and wealth of the Church of England in all the settler colonies, especially British North America Canada. Tensions emerged between the missionaries and the colonial officials. The latter feared that missionaries might stir up trouble or encourage the natives to challenge colonial authority. In general, colonial officials were much more comfortable with working with the established local leadership, including the native religions, rather than introducing the divisive force of Christianity. This proved especially troublesome in India, where very few local elites were attracted to Christianity. In Africa, especially, the missionaries made many converts. Of the 21st century there were more Anglicans in Nigeria than in England. They established schools and medical clinics. Christian missionaries played a public role, especially in promoting sanitation and public health. Many were trained as physicians, or took special courses in public health and tropical medicine at Livingstone College, London. The rise of nationalism in the Third World provoked challenges from critics who complained that the missionaries were teaching Western ways, and ignoring the indigenous culture. The Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900 involved very large scale attacks on Christian missions and their converts. The First World War diverted resources, and pulled most Germans out of missionary work when that country lost its empire. The worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s was a major blow to funding mission activities. Mott, an American Methodist layperson, the conference reviewed the state of evangelism, Bible translation, mobilization of church support, and the training of indigenous leadership. The conference not only established greater ecumenical cooperation in missions, but also essentially launched the modern ecumenical movement. The next wave of missions was started by two missionaries, Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran, around 1930. These men realized that although earlier missionaries had reached geographic areas, there were numerous ethnographic groups that were isolated by language, or class from the groups that missionaries had reached. Cameron formed Wycliffe Bible Translators to translate the Bible into native languages. McGavran concentrated on finding bridges to cross the class and cultural barriers in places like India, which has upwards of 4,000 peoples, separated by a combination of language, culture, and caste. Despite democratic reforms, caste and class differences are still fundamental in many cultures. An equally important dimension of missions

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strategy is the indigenous method of nationals reaching their own people. In Asia this wave of missions was pioneered by men like Dr G. The "two thirds missions movement" as it is referred to, is today a major force in missions. Most modern missionaries and missionary societies have repudiated cultural imperialism, and elected to focus on spreading the gospel and translating the Bible. Often, missionaries provide welfare and health services, as a good deed or to make friends with the locals. Thousands of schools, orphanages, and hospitals have been established by missions. One service provided by missionaries was the Each one, teach one literacy program begun by Dr. Frank Laubach in the Philippines in The program has since spread around the world and brought literacy to the least enabled members of many societies. In some colonies, these mission stations became a focus of settlement of displaced or formerly nomadic people. Particularly in rural Australia, missions have become localities or ghettos on the edges of towns which are home to many Indigenous Australians. The word may be seen as derogatory when used in this context. Additional events can be found at the timeline of Christian missions. Contemporary concepts of mission[edit] Sending and receiving nations[edit] Major nations not only send and fund missionaries abroad, but also receive them from other countries. In , the United States sent out , missionaries, while 32, came to the United States. Brazil was second, sending out 34,, and receiving 20, France sent out 21, and received 10, Britain sent out 15, and received 10, India sent out 10, and received Other major exporters included Spain at 21, sent out, Italy at 20,, South Korea at 20,, Germany at 14,, and Canada at 8, Large recipient nations included Russia, receiving 20,; Congo receiving 15,; South Africa, 12,; Argentina, 10,; and Chile, 8, The largest sending agency in the United States was the Southern Baptist Convention, with 4, missionaries, plus support staff working inside the United States. In recent years, however, the Southern Baptist foreign missionary operation the International Mission Board has operated at a deficit, and it is cutting operations by 15 percent. It is encouraging older missionaries to retire and return to the United States. It regards "mission" as that which is designed "to form a viable indigenous church -planting and world changing movement. This Christian missionary movement seeks to implement churches after the pattern of the first century Apostles. The process of forming disciples is necessarily social. In this view, even those who are already culturally Christian must be "evangelized".

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3: Restoring Eden | Engaged Projects | Christianity | Religion | Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings by John Hick, Brian Hebblethwaite Edited by two prominent names in interfaith dialogue, this is a stimulating introduction to the complex relationships between Christianity and other faiths.

Bring fact-checked results to the top of your browser search. Christianity and world religions The global spread of Christianity through the activity of European and American churches in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries brought it into contact with all other existing religions. Meanwhile, since the beginning of the 19th century, the close connection between Christian world missions and political, economic, technical, and cultural expansion was, at the same time, loosened. Meanwhile, as the study of religion emerged as an academic discipline, scholarship on non-Christian and non-Western religious traditions developed. Philosophers and writers in both Europe and the United States particularly the New England Transcendentalists drew from an increasing body of scholarly and missionary writing on Indian and Chinese traditions, incorporating some Eastern ideas—or at least their interpretations of them—into their own idiosyncratic religious visions of a reformed or reinvigorated Christianity. After World War II the former mission churches were transformed into independent churches in the newly autonomous Asian and African states. The concern for responsible cooperation between the members of Christian minority churches and their non-Christian fellow citizens became more urgent with a renaissance of the Asian higher religions in numerous Asian states. Missionaries of Asian world religions moved into Europe, the Americas, and Australia. Numerous Vedanta centres were established to introduce Hindu teachings within the framework of the Ramakrishna and Vivekananda missions. In the United States the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of dramatically increased the number of legal immigrants from East, Southeast, and South Asia, the vast majority of whom were not Christians. This influence penetrated Europe and North America on several fronts, whether in the form of a spontaneously received flow of religious ideas and methods of meditation through literature and philosophy, through developments in psychology and psychotherapy, or through institutions within which individuals could develop a personal practice of meditation and participate in the life of the sangha community. As a result, Christianity in the latter part of the 20th century found itself forced to enter into a factual discussion with non-Christian religions. There has also been a general transformation of religious consciousness in the West since the middle of the 19th century. Until about, intimate knowledge of non-Western world religions was still the privilege of a few specialists. During the 20th century, however, a wide range of people studied translations of source materials from the non-Christian religions. The dissemination of the religious art of India and East Asia through touring exhibitions and the prominence of the 14th Dalai Lama as a political and religious figure have created a new attitude toward the other religions in the broad public of Europe and North America. In recognition of this fact, numerous Christian institutions for the study of non-Christian religions were founded: The readiness of encounter or even cooperation of Christianity with non-Christian religions is a phenomenon of modern times. Until the 18th century, Christians showed little inclination to engage in a serious study of other religions. He was subsequently arrested, and he and his publisher could be freed only through the intervention of Luther. Christian exposure to Asian religions also was delayed. Although the name Buddha is mentioned for the first time in Christian literature—and there only once—by St. Clement of Alexandria about ce, it did not appear again for some 1, years. Pali, the language of the Theravada Buddhist canon see also Pali literature, remained unknown in the West until the early 19th century, when the modern Western study of Buddhism began. The reasons for such reticence toward contact with foreign religions were twofold: The conclusion of the history of salvation, according to the Christian understanding, was to be a final struggle between Christ and his church on one side and Antichrist and his minions on the other, culminating with the victory of Christ. Conflicting Christian attitudes The history of religion, however, continued even after Christ. During the 3rd and 4th centuries a new world religion appeared in the form of Manichaeism, which asserted itself as a superior form

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of Christianity with a new universal claim of validity. The Christian church never acknowledged the claims of Manichaeism but considered the religion a Christian heresy and opposed it as such. Christianity faced greater challenges when it encountered Islam and the religions of East Asia. When Islam was founded in the 7th century, it considered the revelations of the Prophet Muhammad to be superior to those of the Old and New Testaments. The religious and political competition between Christianity and Islam led to the Crusades, which influenced the self-consciousness of Western Christianity in the Middle Ages and later centuries. In China and Japan, however, missionaries saw themselves forced into an argument with indigenous religions that could be carried on only with intellectual weapons. The Jesuits also sought to adapt indigenous religious traditions to Christian rituals but were forbidden from doing so by the pope during the Chinese Rites Controversy. Philosophical and cultural developments during the Enlightenment brought changes in the understanding of Christianity and other world religions. During the Enlightenment the existence of the plurality of world religions was recognized by the educated in Europe, partly as in the case of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in immediate connection with the theories of natural law of the Jesuit missionaries in China. Only in the philosophy of the Enlightenment was the demand of tolerance, which thus far in Christian Europe had been applied solely to the followers of another Christian denomination, extended to include the followers of different religions. Some missionaries of the late 18th and 19th centuries, however, ignored this knowledge or consciously fought against it. Ernst Wilhelm Benz John Hick The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica Contemporary views The 20th century experienced an explosion of publicly available information concerning the wider religious life of humanity, as a result of which the older Western assumption of the manifest superiority of Christianity ceased to be plausible for many Christians. Early 20th-century thinkers such as Rudolf Otto, who saw religion throughout the world as a response to the Holy or the Sacred, and Ernst Troeltsch, who showed that, socioculturally, Christianity is one of a number of comparable traditions, opened up new ways of regarding the other major religions. During the 20th century most Christians adopted one of three main points of view. According to exclusivism, there is salvation only for Christians. Within Protestant Christianity there is no comparable central authority, but most Protestant theologians, except within the extreme fundamentalist constituencies, have also moved away from the exclusivist position. Since the mid-20th century many Roman Catholics and Protestants have moved toward inclusivism—the view that, although salvation is by definition Christian, brought about by the atoning work of Christ, it is nevertheless available in principle to all human beings, whether Christian or not. The third position, which appealed to a number of individual theologians, was pluralism. According to this view, the great world faiths, including Christianity, are valid spheres of a salvation that takes characteristically different forms within each—though consisting in each case in the transformation of human existence from self-centredness to a new orientation toward the Divine Reality. The other religions are not secondary contexts of Christian redemption but independent paths of salvation. The pluralist position is controversial in Christian theology, because it affects the ways in which the doctrines of the person of Christ, atonement, and the Trinity are formulated. A multitude of interreligious encounters have taken place throughout the world, many initiated by Christian and others by non-Christian individuals and groups.

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4: God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology - Verbum

Christianity and the religions in an endangered world -- Pope John Paul II / address of the holy father to the Congregation for the doctrine of faith, together with extracts from that congregation's 'Dominus Jesus': on the unity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church.

Mario de Franca Miranda, S. General discussion on this theme took place during several meetings of the subcommission and in the plenary sessions of the International Theological Commission held at Rome in , and The present text was approved "in forma specifica" by vote of the commission on 30 September and was submitted to its president, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who has given his approval for its publication. The question of the relations among religions is becoming daily more important. Various factors contribute to the current interest in this problem. There is above all the increasing interdependence among the different parts of the world, which can be seen at various levels: For example, an ever greater number of people in most countries have access to information; migrations are far from being a thing of the past; and modern technology and industry have given rise to exchanges among many countries in a way that was formerly unknown. These factors, of course, affect the various continents and countries differently, but to some extent or other all parts of the world are touched by them. These factors of communication and interdependence among the different peoples and cultures have brought about a greater Consciousness of the plurality of religions on the planet, with the dangers and at the same time the opportunities this implies. Despite secularization, the religious sense of the people of our time has not disappeared. The different phenomena which reflect this religious sense are well known despite the crisis affecting the great religions, each in different measure. The importance of the religious dimension in human life and the increasing encounters among people and cultures make interreligious dialogue necessary. In view of the problems and needs affecting humanity, there is a need to seek enlightenment about the meaning of life and to bring about common action for peace and justice in the world. Christianity does not in fact and cannot remain on the margins of this encounter and consequent dialogue among religions. If the latter have sometimes been and still can be factors of division and conflict among peoples, it is to be desired that in our world they should appear in the eyes of all as elements of peace and unity. Christianity has to contribute toward making this possible. For this dialogue to be fruitful, Christianity, and specifically the Catholic Church, must try to clarify how religions are to be evaluated theologically. On this evaluation will depend to a great extent the relation between Christians and the different religions and their followers, and the subsequent dialogue which will be established with them in different forms. The principal object of the following reflections is to work out some theological principles which may help in this evaluation. In proposing these principles we are clearly aware that many questions are still open and require further investigation and discussion. Before setting out these principles, we believe it is necessary to trace the fundamental lines of the current theological debate. Against this background the proposals which will be subsequently formulated will be better understood. Object, Method and Aim 4. The theology of religions does not yet have a clearly defined epistemological status. This fact constitutes one of the reasons governing the current discussion. In Catholic theology prior to Vatican II one can find two lines of thought relating to the problem of the salvific value of religions. Insofar as they uphold the contents of this covenant, religions have positive values but, as such, they do not have salvific value. In themselves they go from man to God. Only in Christ and in his Church do they reach their final and definitive fulfillment. The other line, represented by Karl Rahner, affirms that the offer of grace in the present order of things reaches all men and that they have a vague, even if not necessarily conscious awareness of its action and its light. Given that man is by nature a social being, religions, insofar as they are social expressions of the relation of man with God, help their followers to receive the grace of Christ *fides implicita* which is necessary for salvation, and to be open in this way to love of neighbor which Jesus identified with the love of God. In this sense they can have salvific value even though they contain elements of

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ignorance, sin and corruption. At the present time the demand for a greater knowledge of each religion is gaining ground; this is necessary before a theology of it can be worked out. Very different elements are involved in the origin and scope of each religious tradition. Hence theological reflection must be limited to a consideration of concrete, well-defined phenomena if sweeping a priori judgments are to be avoided. Thus some advocate a theology of the history of religions; others take into consideration the historical evolution of religions, their respective characteristics which are at times mutually incompatible; others recognize the importance of the phenomenological and historical material that relates to each religion, without however discounting the value of the deductive method; still others refuse to give any blanket positive recognition to religions. In an age which values dialogue, mutual comprehension and tolerance, it is natural that there should appear attempts to work out a theology of religions on the basis of criteria acceptable to all, that is to say, which are not exclusive to any one particular religious tradition. For that reason the conditions for interreligious dialogue and the fundamental presuppositions of a Christian theology of religions are not always clearly distinguished. To avoid dogmatism, external models are sought which are supposed to allow one to evaluate the truth of a religion. Efforts made in this direction are not finally convincing. In this situation, a Christian theology of religions is faced with different tasks. In the first place Christianity will have to try to understand and evaluate itself in the context of a plurality of religions; it will have to think specifically about the truth and the universality to which it lays claim. In the second place it will have to seek the meaning, function and specific value of religions in the overall history of salvation. Finally, Christian theology will have to study and examine religions themselves, with their very specific contents, and confront them with the contents of the Christian faith. For that reason it is necessary to establish criteria which will permit a critical discussion of this material and a hermeneutics for interpreting it.

Discussion on the Salvific Value of Religions

8. The fundamental question is this: Do religions mediate salvation to their members? There are those who give a negative reply to this question; even more, some do not even see any sense in raising it. Others give an affirmative response, which in turn gives rise to other questions: Are such mediations of salvation autonomous or do they convey the salvation of Jesus Christ? It is a question therefore of defining the status of Christianity and of religions as sociocultural realities in their relation to human salvation. This question should not be confused with that of the salvation of individuals, Christian or otherwise. Due account has not always been taken of this distinction. Many attempts have been made to classify the different theological positions adopted toward this problem. Let us see some of these classifications: Christ against religions, in religions, above religions, beside religions. An ecclesiocentric universe or exclusive Christology; a Christocentric universe or inclusive Christology; a theocentric universe with a normative Christology; a theocentric universe with a non-normative Christology. Some theologians adopt the tripartite division exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism, which is seen as parallel to another: Given that we have to choose one of these classifications in order to continue our reflection, we will follow the latter, even though we might complement it with the others if necessary. Exclusivist ecclesiocentrism—the fruit of a specific theological system or of a mistaken understanding of the phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*—is no longer defended by Catholic theologians after the clear statements of Pius XII and Vatican Council II on the possibility of salvation for those who do not belong visibly to the Church cf, e. Christocentrism accepts that salvation may occur in religions, but it denies them any autonomy in salvation on account of the uniqueness and universality of the salvation that comes from Jesus Christ. This position is undoubtedly the one most commonly held by Catholic theologians, even though there are differences among them. It attempts to reconcile the universal salvific will of God with the fact that all find their fulfillment as human beings within a cultural tradition that has in the corresponding religion its highest expression and its ultimate foundation. Theocentrism claims to be a way of going beyond Christocentrism, a paradigm shift, a Copernican revolution. This position springs, among other reasons, from a certain bad conscience over the way missionary activity in the past was linked with the politics of colonialism, even though sometimes the heroism that accompanied the work of evangelization is forgotten. It tries to acknowledge the riches of religions and the moral witness of their members, and, as a final concern, it aims at

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facilitating the unity of all religions in order to encourage joint work for peace and justice in the world. We can distinguish a theocentrism in which Jesus Christ, without being constitutive of, is considered normative for salvation, and another theocentrism in which not even this normative value is recognized in Jesus Christ. In the first case, without denying that others may also mediate salvation, Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the mediator who best expresses it; the love of God is revealed most clearly in his person and in his actions, and thus he is the paradigm for the other mediators. But without him we would not remain without salvation, only without its most perfect manifestation. In the second case Jesus Christ is not considered either as constitutive of nor as normative for human salvation. God is transcendent and incomprehensible, so that we cannot judge his intentions with our human modes of understanding. Thus we, can neither evaluate nor compare the different religious systems. Soteriocentrism radicalizes even further the theocentric position, since it is less interested in the question of Jesus Christ orthodoxy than in the actual commitment each religion makes to aid suffering humanity orthopraxis. In this way the value of religions lies in promoting the kingdom, salvation and the well-being of humanity. This position can thus be characterized as pragmatic and immanentist.

The Question of Truth The problem of the truth of religions underlies this whole discussion. Today one can see a tendency to relegate it to a secondary level, separating it from reflection on the salvific value of religions. The question of truth gives rise to serious problems of a theoretical and practical order, since in the past it had negative consequences in interreligious encounters. Hence the tendency to ease or privatize this problem with the assertion that criteria of truth are only valid for each individual religion. Some introduce a more existential notion of truth, taking only the correct moral conduct of the person into consideration and discounting the fact that his or her beliefs may be condemned. A certain confusion is produced between being in salvation and being in the truth. One should take more account of the Christian perspective of salvation as truth and of being in the truth as salvation. The omission of discourse about truth leads to the superficial identification of all religions, emptying them basically of their salvific potential. To assert that all are true is equivalent to declaring that all are false. To sacrifice the question of truth is incompatible with the Christian vision. The epistemological conception underlying the pluralist position uses the Kantian distinction between noumenon and phenomenon. Since God, or ultimate Reality, is transcendent and inaccessible to man, he will only be able to be experienced as a phenomenon expressed by culturally conditioned images and notions; this explains why different representations of the same reality are not a priori necessarily mutually exclusive. The question of truth is relativized still further with the introduction of the concept of mythological truth, which does not imply any correspondence with a reality but simply awakens in the subject a disposition corresponding to what has been enunciated. Nevertheless it must be noted that such contrasting expressions of the noumenon in fact end up dissolving it, obliterating the meaning of the mythological truth. Underlying this whole problematic is also a conception which separates the Transcendent, the Mystery, the Absolute radically from its representations; since the latter are all relative because they are imperfect and inadequate, they cannot make any exclusive claims in the question of truth. A criterion for the truth of a religion which is to be accepted by the other religions must be located outside the religion itself. The search for this criterion is a serious task for theological reflection. Certain theologians avoid Christian terms in speaking of God Eternal One, Ultimate Reality, the Real or in designating correct behavior Reality-centeredness and not self-centeredness. But one can see that such expressions either manifest a dependence on a specific tradition Christian or they become so abstract that they cease to be useful. Recourse to the humanum is not convincing because with it one is dealing with a merely phenomenological criterion, which would make the theology of religions dependent on the anthropology dominant in any particular age. It is also said that one must consider as the true religion that which best succeeds either in reconciling finitude, the provisional and changeable nature of its own self-understanding, with the infinitude to which it points, or in reducing to unity power of integration the plurality of experiences of reality and of religious conceptions. The Question of God

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5: DIALOGUE AND PROCLAMATION:

Christianity - Christianity and world religions: The global spread of Christianity through the activity of European and American churches in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries brought it into contact with all other existing religions.

Heft, in a lecture on "The Necessity of Inter-Faith Diplomacy," spoke about the conflicts among practitioners of the three Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Noting that except for the Convivencia in the 14th and 15th centuries, believers in these religions have either kept their distance or have been in conflict, Heft maintains, "there has been very little genuine dialogue" between them. In the 16th century, the Emperor Akbar encouraged tolerance in Mughal India, a diverse nation with people of various faith backgrounds, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Christianity. The apostate Paulus [Pablo] Christiani proposed to King James I of Aragon that a formal public religious disputation on the fundamentals of faith should be held between him and R. Nahman Nachmanides whom he had already encountered in Gerona. The disputation took place with the support of the ecclesiastical authorities and the generals of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, while the king presided over a number of sessions and took an active part in the disputation. The four sessions of the disputation took place on July 20, 27, 30, and 31, according to another calculation, July 20, 23, 26, and 29. When the ecclesiastics who saw the "not right" turn the disputation was taking, due to Nahmanides persuasive argumentation, they urged that it should be ended as speedily as possible. It was, therefore, never formally concluded, but interrupted. According to the Latin record of the proceedings, the disputation ended because Nahmanides fled prematurely from the city. In fact, however, he stayed on in Barcelona for over a week after the disputation had been suspended in order to be present in the synagogue on the following Sabbath when a conversionist sermon was to be delivered. The king himself attended the synagogue and gave an address, an event without medieval precedent. Nahmanides was permitted to reply on this occasion. In his statement of purpose was revised to include advancing "understanding, dialogue and readiness to learn and promotes sympathy and harmony among the different religious traditions". It has branches and affiliated groups in over 50 countries on every continent. It is "one of the oldest interfaith bodies in the world". It does this by offering opportunities "to meet, explore, challenge and understand different faith traditions through events from small workshops to large conferences, partnership working, on-line conversation, and publications". Evans believed that unified prayer would "bridge theological or structural religious differences," would "open the mind and heart of the prayer to a new understanding of and appreciation for the beliefs and values of those following different spiritual paths," and would "advance interfaith understanding and mutual respect among religious traditions," [21] In 1988, the International Humanist and Ethical Union IHEU was founded in Amsterdam. It serves as "the sole world umbrella organisation embracing Humanist, atheist, rationalist, secularist, skeptic, laique, ethical cultural, freethought and similar organisations world-wide". It implements its vision by seeking "to influence international policy through representation and information, to build the humanist network, and let the world know about the worldview of Humanism". Since then, it "has been at the forefront of promoting the sympathetic study and understanding of world religions. It has supported academic inquiry and international understanding in this field through its residential community," and "its research efforts and funding, and its public programs and publications". Its purpose was "to challenge U. King used its platform for his "Beyond Vietnam" speech. To do this, Pope Paul VI established a special secretariat later a pontifical council for relationships with non-Christians. The papal encyclical Ecclesiam Suam emphasized the importance of positive encounter between Christians and people of other faith traditions. The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* of 1964 spelled out the pastoral dimensions of this relationship. Its work includes "dialogue" that "bears fruit in common concrete action". Through the organization, diverse religious communities discern "deeply held and widely shared" moral concerns, such as, "transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, advancing human development and protecting the earth". In 1993, Minhaj-ul-Quran was founded. Samartha says that the importance

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of that day of prayer for "interreligious relationships cannot be overestimated" and gives "several reasons" for its importance: For the prayers Christians were taken to one place and people of other faiths to another place. Eck launched the Pluralism Project by teaching a course on "World Religions in New England," in which students explored the "diverse religious communities in the Boston area". This project was expanded to charting "the development of interfaith efforts throughout the United States" and then the world. The Pluralism Project posts the information on the Pluralism Project website. Its conference decided to hold meetings every two years. As of , the Interfaith Alliance has , members across the country made up of 75 faith traditions as well as those of no faith tradition. The Interfaith Alliance works to 1 "respect the inherent rights of all individuals" as well as their differences", 2 "promote policies that protect vital boundaries between religion and government", and 3 "unite diverse voices to challenge extremism and build common ground". The Center is a San Francisco Bay Area "interfaith friendship-building" that welcomes "people of all faiths". The Center is committed to "healing and peacemaking within, between, and among religious and spiritual traditions". ICNY works with hundreds of grassroots and immigrant religious leaders from fifteen different faith and ethnic traditions. Its "long-term goal is to help New York City become a nationally and internationally-recognized model for mutual understanding and cooperation among faith traditions". The purpose was to bring the Muslim and Christian communities together to defeat "terrorism and extremism". In particular, the Forum is interested in "pluralism, peace building and conflict resolution, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, social harmony and justice, civil rights and community cohesion". Its impetus dates from the late s in Israel when a group of visionaries which included Martin Buber recognised the need for interfaith dialogue. IEA is dedicated to promoting "coexistence in the Middle East through cross-cultural study and inter-religious dialogue". It forms and maintains "on-going interfaith encounter groups, or centers, that bring together neighboring communities across the country. Each center is led by an interfaith coordinating team with one person for each community in the area. The organisation comprises "people belonging to various religions and faiths" who "strive to bring about widespread divine love and global peace". It is "an independent body" that brings religious resources to support the work of the United Nations and its agencies around the world, nation states and other international organizations, in the "quest for peace". It offers "the collective wisdom and resources of the faith traditions toward the resolution of critical global problems". The IYYC was started to bring students of different religions "together not just to talk, but to work together to feed the hungry, tutor children or build housing". It "focuses on grassroots interfaith dialogue and coexistence". JICRC provides "advice to government and non-government organizations and individual decision makers regarding questions of inter-religious understanding" and "participates in interfaith efforts on the local, regional, and international levels". In A Common Word Between Us and You , Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals unanimously came together for the first time since the days of the Prophet[s] to declare the common ground between Christianity and Islam. The Festival invites "participants from all faith backgrounds" as a way contributing "to understanding, respect and community cohesion". The center was founded to "begin a theological dialogue" between Jews and Christians with the belief that in dialogue the two faiths will "find far more which unites" them than divides them. Its mission is "to promote dialogue, understanding and grassroots, congregational and academic partnerships among the oldest and the newest of the Abrahamic faiths while generating a contemporary understanding in this understudied area and creating new tools for interfaith communities locally, nationally and beyond. The conference was attended by religious leaders of different faiths such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism , Hinduism, and Taoism and was hosted by King Juan Carlos of Spain in Madrid. This conference explored ways and means to deal with the discord among major religions, according to Morari Bapu. Peshtan Hormazadiar Mirza on Zoroastrianism. The Centre "models dialogical, constructive, and innovative research, learning and social engagement". The Centre operates under the leadership of Principal and Dean, Dr. Wendy Fletcher, and Director, Rabbi Dr. She made a wish that the TED community would "help create, launch, and propagate a Charter for Compassion". After the contribution of thousands of people the Charter was compiled and presented. Charter for Compassion International serves as

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"an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide" by "concrete, practical actions". Working in pairs, the volunteers were paired up and given a Flip Video camera to record the interviews. The interviewees were asked three questions: Project Interfaith terminated in Its work is bringing together "faith groups, religious leaders, and teachers to promote peace and sustainability". The goals of the Challenge included maximizing "the education contributions of community-based organizations, including faith and interfaith organizations". By , more than institutions of higher education had responded to the Challenge. The board of directors included Jews, Christians, and Muslims. A rabbi on the board said that "the prime purpose is to empower the active work of those in the field, whether in the field of dialogue, of social activism or of conflict resolution". A Muslim member of the board said that "the aim is to promote acceptance of other cultures, moderation and tolerance". She defines interfaith spirituality as, "We respect and love all religions. What we want is to believe and respect interfaith religion, inclusive of all faith traditions. In our community spiritual practices, we invoke our prayers to the Divine, rather than invoking any particular name or form of God to the exclusion of others. The United States Institute of Peace published works on interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding [78] [79] including a Special Report on Evaluating Interfaith Dialogue [80] Religious intolerance persists The above section recounts a "long history of interfaith dialogue". However, a article in The Huffington Post said that "religious intolerance is still a concern that threatens to undermine the hard work of devoted activists over the decades". Nevertheless, the article expressed hope that continuing "interfaith dialogue can change this". As of , the thesis says that this has not been done. Sri Dhammananda has stated: In the history of the world, there is no evidence to show that Buddhists have interfered or done any damage to any other religion in any part of the world for the purpose of introducing their religion. Buddhists do not regard the existence of other religions as a hindrance to worldly progress and peace. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. He believes that the "common aim of all religions, an aim that everyone must try to find, is to foster tolerance, altruism and love". During , he met in Dharamsala with a delegation of Jewish teachers for an extensive interfaith dialogue. He has also met the late Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. In , the Dalai Lama was joined by Rev. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. April Learn how and when to remove this template message Traditional Christian doctrine is Christocentric , meaning that Christ is held to be the sole full and true revelation of the will of God for humanity. In a Christocentric view, the elements of truth in other religions are understood in relation to the fullness of truth found in Christ. God is nevertheless understood to be free of human constructions. Many theologians, pastors, and lay people from these traditions do not hold to uniquely Christocentric understandings of how God was in Christ.

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6: Christianity and Other Religions : John Hick :

Christians issued a text entitled "Dialogue and Mission" which recognized that dialogue, in the search for truth, is an aspect of "positive and constructive interreligious relations which are directed at mutual understanding."

The document stressed the importance of interreligious dialogue. At the same time, it recalled that the Church is in duty bound to proclaim without fail Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, in whom all people find their fulfillment cf. Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission. Proclamation and dialogue are thus both viewed, each in its own place, as component elements and authentic forms of the one evangelizing mission of the Church. They are both oriented towards the communication of salvific truth. Dialogue and proclamation The present document gives further consideration to these two elements. It first puts forward the characteristics of each, and then studies their mutual relationship. If dialogue is treated first, this is not because it has any priority over proclamation. It is simply due to the fact that dialogue is the primary concern of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue which initiated the preparation of the document. The document in fact was first discussed during the Plenary Assembly of the Secretariat in The observations made then, together with further consultation, have led to this text, which was finalized and adopted at the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Both dicasteries are offering these reflections to the universal Church. Current affairs Among the reasons which make the relationship between dialogue and proclamation a relevant theme for study, the following may be mentioned: Religions do not merely exist, or simply survive. In some cases, they give clear evidence of a revival. They continue to inspire and influence the lives of millions of their adherents. In the present context of religious plurality, the important role played by religious traditions cannot be overlooked. Its practice remains hesitant in some places. The situation differs from country to country. It can depend on the size of the Christian community, on which other religious traditions are present, and on various other cultural, social and political factors. A further examination of the question may help to stimulate dialogue. At the other extreme, some fail to see the value of interreligious dialogue. Yet others are perplexed and ask: Has the effort to bring people into the community of the Church become secondary or even superfluous? There is a need therefore for doctrinal and pastoral guidance to which this document wishes to contribute, without pretending to answer fully the many and complex questions which arise in this connection. As this text was in its final stages of preparation for publication, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, offered to the Church his Encyclical Redemptoris Missio in which he addressed these questions and many more. The present document spells out in greater detail the teaching of the Encyclical on dialogue and its relationship to proclamation cf. It is therefore to be read in the light of this Encyclical. Both on the day itself and after, especially in his address to the Cardinals and to the Roman Curia in December, , the Holy Father explained the meaning of the Assisi celebration. He underlined the fundamental unity of the human race, in its origin and its destiny, and the role of the Church as an effective sign of this unity. There can be no question of choosing one and ignoring or rejecting the other. Further stimuli to tackle the issue This document is addressed to all Catholics, particularly to all who have a leadership role in the community or are engaged in formation work. It is offered as well for the consideration of Christians belonging to other Churches or Ecclesial Communities who themselves have been reflecting on the questions it raises 5. It is hoped that it will receive attention also from the followers of other religious traditions. Before proceeding it will be useful to clarify the terms being used in this document. Evangelization Evangelizing mission, or more simply evangelization, refers to the mission of the Church in its totality. In the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi the term evangelization is taken in different ways. It means "to bring the Good News into all areas of humanity, and through its impact, to transform that humanity from within, making it new" EN Thus, through evangelization the Church "seeks to convert solely through the divine power of the Message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, their ways of life, and the actual milieux in which they live" EN The Church

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accomplishes her evangelizing mission through a variety of activities. Hence there is a broad concept of evangelization. Yet in the same document, evangelization is also taken more specifically to mean "the clear and unambiguous proclamation of the Lord Jesus" EN The Exhortation states that "this proclamation - kerygma, preaching or catechesis - occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization" EN In this document the term evangelizing mission is used for evangelization in its broad sense, while the more specific understanding is expressed by the term proclamation. Dialogue Dialogue can be understood in different ways. Firstly, at the purely human level, it means reciprocal communication, leading to a common goal or, at a deeper level, to interpersonal communion. Secondly, dialogue can be taken as an attitude of respect and friendship, which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the Church. This can appropriately be called "the spirit of dialogue". Thirdly, in the context of religious plurality, dialogue means "all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment" 6 , in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions. Proclamation Proclamation is the communication of the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God for all in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit. It is an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church. This proclamation can be solemn and public, as for instance on the day of Pentecost cf. It leads naturally to catechesis which aims at deepening this faith. Proclamation is the foundation, centre, and summit of evangelization cf. More specifically, conversion may refer to a change of religious adherence, and particularly to embracing the Christian faith. When the term conversion is used in this document, the context will show which sense is intended. Religions and religious traditions The terms religions or religious traditions are used here in a generic and analogical sense. They cover those religions which, with Christianity, are wont to refer back to the faith of Abraham 8 , as well as the religious traditions of Asia, Africa and elsewhere. New religious movements Interreligious dialogue ought to extend to all religions and their followers. This document, however, will not treat of dialogue with the followers of "New Religious Movements" due to the diversity of situations which these movements present and the need for discernment on the human and religious values which each contains 9. Positive evaluation of religious traditions A just appraisal of other religious traditions normally presupposes close contact with them. This implies, besides theoretical knowledge, practical experience of interreligious dialogue with the followers of these traditions. Nevertheless, it is also true that a correct theological evaluation of these traditions, at least in general terms, is a necessary presupposition for interreligious dialogue. These traditions are to be approached with great sensitivity, on account of the spiritual and human values enshrined in them. They command our respect because over the centuries they have borne witness to the efforts to find answers "to those profound mysteries of the human condition" NA 1 and have given expression to the religious experience and they continue to do so today. The exact meaning of what the Council affirms needs to be carefully and accurately ascertained. The Council reaffirms the traditional doctrine according to which salvation in Jesus Christ is, in a mysterious way, a reality open to all persons of good will. The Council teaches that Christ, the New Adam, through the mystery of his incarnation, death and resurrection, is at work in each human person to bring about interior renewal. For since Christ died for all, and since all are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the Paschal mystery" GS The effects of divine Grace The Council proceeds further. Making its own the vision and the terminology of some early Church Fathers, *Nostra Aetate* speaks of the presence in these traditions of "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all" NA 2. *Ad Gentes* recognizes the presence of "seeds of the word", and points to "the riches which a generous God has distributed among the nations" AG Again, *Lumen Gentium* refers to the good which is "found sown" not only "in minds and hearts", but also "in the rites and customs of peoples" LG The action of the Holy Spirit These few references suffice to show that the Council has openly acknowledged the presence of positive values not only in the religious life of

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individual believers of other religious traditions, but also in the religious traditions to which they belong. It attributed these values to the active presence of God through his Word, pointing also to the universal action of the Spirit: From this it can be seen that these elements, as a preparation for the Gospel cf. LG 16 , have played and do still play a providential role in the divine economy of salvation. This recognition impels the Church to enter into "dialogue and collaboration" NA 2; cf. The Council states very clearly: And so, 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. More than that, it is healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God, the same of the demon, and the bliss of men" AG 9. This shows that there is but one history of salvation for the whole of humankind. The Covenant with Noah, the man who "walked with God" Gn 6: Non-Israelite figures of the Old Testament are seen in the New Testament as belonging to this history of salvation. Abel, Enoch and Noah are proposed as models of faith cf. It is this history of salvation which sees its final fulfillment in Jesus Christ in whom is established the new and definitive Covenant for all peoples. This election, accompanied by a process of formation and continuous exhortations to preserve the purity of monotheism, constitutes a mission. The prophets continually insist on loyalty and fidelity to the One True God and speak about the promised Messiah. Thus Isaiah foretells that in the final days the nations will stream to the house of the Lord, and they will say: In the Wisdom literature also, which bears witness to cultural exchanges between Israel and its neighbours, the action of God in the whole universe is clearly affirmed. It goes beyond the boundaries of the Chosen People to touch both the history of nations and the lives of individuals. The universal mission of Jesus Turning to the New Testament, we see that Jesus professes to have come to gather the lost sheep of Israel cf. He nevertheless displays an open attitude towards men and women who do not belong to the chosen people of Israel. He enters into dialogue with them and recognizes the good that is in them. He performs miracles of healing for "foreigners" cf. He converses with the Samaritan woman and speaks to her of a time when worship will not be restricted to any one particular place, but when true worshippers will "worship the Father in spirit and truth" Jn 4: Jesus is thus opening up a new horizon, beyond the purely local, to a universality which is both Christological and Pneumatological in character. For the new sanctuary is now the body of the Lord Jesus cf.

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7: Introducing World Religions | Baker Publishing Group

Gordon Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions states that there are more than 1, religious groups in America, and over of these are non-Christian. 1 Most of these non-Christian groups are new religions and cults. 2 A Gallup poll claims that nearly 10 percent of the population, or over million Americans, claim.

It explains theories of religion in accessible language, describes the practices and beliefs of major religions, includes numerous photos and charts to hold student interest, and exhibits a fine balance between detail and overview. Charles Farhadian has written an excellent introduction to world religions for the undergraduate Christian perspective. It will remain a textbook of choice for years to come. Exemplifying how to be both grounded and open, Charles Farhadian wants us to learn about the religions so that we can learn from them and with them as well. Not only that, he also realizes that learning without a location--a perspective from nowhere in particular--is an impossibility. This is an indispensable text for college and other courses related to introducing world religions not only in the West but also in the East. We have spirits that long for meaning, for justice, for relationships. In this clearly organized book, Charles Farhadian shows how each of the great religions offers paths for our quests. Like a conversation with a well-traveled friend, the style makes complex topics accessible and the photos help us visualize believers across the globe. Charles Farhadian has given us a religion text for the twenty-first century: It now has a permanent place on my bookshelf. While setting up the conversation about world religions without fear and without apology from a Christian perspective, the author seeks to create a dialogue in which members of all religions would feel welcomed and fairly represented. The text is masterfully interdisciplinary, illustrating the pervasiveness of religion in human experience throughout history and the relevance of religion to every field of study. The lucid prose, wide-ranging illustrations, study helps, and use of sacred texts make the work inviting and useful for an introductory class in either an academic or church context. This text is truly matched to the challenge of religion in the twenty-first-century global context. The result is a text that will be useful far beyond church-related universities and seminaries. His introduction is a masterful multidimensional account of how contemporary approaches to religious studies have come about and how these continue to inform the understanding of religion. He then systematically addresses these concerns in the context of each religion, providing a clear framework that is particularly useful for nonexpert readers and students. Reviews Named an Outstanding Mission Book of , International Bulletin of Mission Research "Farhadian succeeds in providing a digestible overview of world religions from an ecumenical Christian perspective, avoiding any value judgments, a point of view that distinguishes the book from other reference offerings on the subject. A worthy addition for such collections supporting undergraduate studies in religion or theology. The thick-paged, full-colored volume boasts a plethora of pedagogical tools. Teachers using the text will find little trouble integrating primary source readers into a world religions course. Introducing World Religions successfully strikes every balance one might desire: This book is an ideal volume to help us along in this journey. This volume contains a wealth of information about religious belief and the major religions in the world today. The volume is well illustrated with pertinent photographs and the material is clearly laid out. Perhaps what is most impressive about the book is that it is easy to find answers to the broad questions that readers might be asking. Equally important and impressive is the sensitivity with which Farhadian looks at each religion from a Christian point of view. This volume is a mine of good information. It contains an extensive glossary and wide-ranging bibliography. This volume will be a first port of call for those who are exploring the diverse world of religions. It is a reference work that ought to be readily available in every theological and community library. Farhadian writes from a perspective that is winsomely, yet unapologetically, Christian, and has written this textbook for a broadly Christian readership. Farhadian has not only mastered the primary material and secondary scholarship on world religions, he is a gifted and committed teacher who writes with clarity, simplicity, and a sensitivity to many of the prejudices and concerns that Christian students may have as they approach the study of religion. Along with the images, maps, charts, and

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sidebars that encourage comparison and dialogue with other religions, *Introducing World Religions* offers additional features to professors who choose the book as a class text. Such excellent features should help give *Introducing World Religions* the wide exposure and classroom use it deserves.

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8: Project MUSE - Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue (review)

That was the origin of Christianity and the Religions, a story Fr. Dupuis related to me when I visited him at Gregorian University in early February It was meant to be an easier-to-read version of Religious Pluralism, something for students who do not need abundant references to authors and historical developments.

Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Chicago Kimball, Charles A. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com>: Since the second half of the twentieth century, organized dialogue meetings have proliferated at the local, regional, and international levels. The meetings vary significantly in their organization, focus, and venue, as well as in the composition of participants. Several motives have propelled the contemporary dialogue movement. These include desires to foster understanding, to stimulate communication, to correct stereotypes, to work on specific problems of mutual concern, to explore similarities and differences, and to facilitate means of witness and cooperation. Their historic relationships as well as their major theological, social, and political concerns vary markedly. Contemporary initiatives in Muslim-Christian dialogue can be understood best in the larger context which can be established by a brief overview of dominant themes in Muslim-Christian encounter. Muslim-Christian dialogue dates back to the rise of Islam in the seventh century. Rooted as both traditions are in the monotheism of the patriarch Abraham, Muslims and Christians share a common heritage. For more than fourteen centuries these communities of faith have been linked by their theological understandings and by geographical proximity. The history of Muslim-Christian interaction includes periods of great tension, hostility, and open war as well as times of uneasy toleration, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation. Islamic self-understanding incorporates an awareness of and direct link with the biblical tradition. Diversity among the communities provides a test for people of faith: Peaceful coexistence is affirmed. Christians, in particular, are chided for having distorted the revelation of God. Traditional Christian doctrines of the divinity of Jesus and the Trinity are depicted as compromising the unity and transcendence of God. Circumstances and relationships between Muslims and Christians in Egypt, for example, cannot be equated casually with those in Lebanon over the same centuries. Relationships in Egypt, a religious and intellectual center of the Islamic world, were subject to distinctive dynamics not found elsewhere. As an Oriental Orthodox church, the Copts have been completely independent of both the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Greek, Russian, and Serbian Orthodox churches since the middle of the fifth century. As minority communities threatened by Christian crusaders or Muslim conquerors or more recent colonial powers, inhabitants of Lebanon have coexisted, cooperated and clashed, in many ways. Even in the best of circumstances, however, it was difficult for Christians and Muslims to engage one another as equals in dialogue. With few exceptions, Islamic literature that is focused on Christianity has been polemical. On the Christian side, the advent of Islam in the seventh century presented major challenges. In the short space of a century, Islam transformed the character and culture of many lands from northern India to Spain, disrupted the unity of the Mediterranean world, and displaced the axis of Christendom to the north. Islam challenged Christian assumptions. Not only were the Muslims successful in their military and political expansion, but their religion presented a puzzling and threatening new intellectual position. John of Damascus in the eighth century provided the first coherent treatment of Islam. His encounter with Muslims in the Umayyad administrative and military center of Damascus led him to regard Islam not as an alien tradition but as a Christian heresy. Subsequent Christian writers, particularly those not living among Muslims, were even harsher. This trend is especially evident in Europe following the Crusades. The Crusades, launched in 1095, cast a long shadow over many centuries. In the midst of their stories of chivalry and fighting for holy causes, medieval writers painted a picture of Islam as a vile religion inspired by the devil or Antichrist. Francis of Assisi's deep animosity toward Islam was pervasive, however. Luther held the long-standing view that Islam as a post-Christian religion was false by definition. Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Several developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries set the stage for contemporary Muslim-Christian dialogue. First, constantly improving transportation

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and communication facilitated international commerce and unprecedented levels of migration. Second, scholars gathered a wealth of information on diverse religious practices and belief systems. Although Western studies of Islam were often far from objective, significant changes have occurred. Similarly, the scope and reliability of information on Christianity has broadened the horizons of many Muslim scholars during the past century. A third major factor contributing to the new context arose from the modern missionary movement among Western Christians. The experience of personal contact with Muslims and other people of faith led many missionaries to reassess their presuppositions. Participants in the three twentieth-century world missionary conferences Edinburgh in 1910, Jerusalem in 1920, and Tambaram [India] in 1938 wrestled with questions of witness and service in the midst of religious diversity. These conferences stimulated debate and paved the way for ecumenical efforts at interfaith understanding under the auspices of the World Council of Churches WCC, founded in 1948. The dialogue movement began during the 1950s when the WCC and the Vatican organized a number of meetings between Christian leaders and representatives of other religious traditions. These initial efforts resulted in the formation of new institutions. In 1964, toward the end of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican Vatican II, Pope Paul VI established a Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions to study religious traditions, provide resources, and promote interreligious dialogue through education and by facilitating local efforts by Catholics. Several major documents adopted at Vatican II "focused on interfaith relations. The most visible Christian leader during the last quarter of the twentieth century, Pope John Paul II, was a strong advocate for the new approach to interfaith relations. During his papacy, John Paul II traveled to 109 countries. He often met with leaders from various religions, on his travels and in Rome. He was the first pope to visit a mosque in Damascus in 1981. The spirit of his approach to Islam is evident in a speech delivered to over 80,000 Muslims at a soccer stadium in Casablanca: Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is today more urgent than ever. It flows from fidelity to God. Too often in the past, we have opposed each other in polemics and wars. I believe that today God invites us to change old practices. We must respect each other and we must stimulate each other in good works on the path to righteousness. Muslim-Christian relations were a primary focus from the outset. In cooperation with more than three hundred WCC member churches, the DFI concentrated on organizing large international and smaller regional meetings and on providing educational materials. By the 1970s and 1980s, other international organizations developed formal and informal programs for Muslim-Christian dialogue. At the local level, hundreds of interfaith organizations have facilitated dialogue programs. These programs are difficult to characterize because they vary substantially. Detailed information and analyses of activities in specific countries and organizations is accessible through the periodicals listed in the bibliography; the following examples illustrate the breadth of activity. In India and the Philippines, Christian institutions have studied Islam and pursued dialogue programs for decades. These academic programs stimulated particular initiatives by churches and Muslim organizations. The Muslim community in Great Britain numbers well over two million. The large influx of Muslims since 1945 has spawned numerous local and national Islamic organizations, many of which are engaged with Christian counterparts in local churches or through programs of the British Council of Churches. Their concerns range from education and health care to the resolution of Middle East conflicts. In addition to numerous dialogue programs organized by local interfaith organizations or state councils of churches, two major academic centers in the U.S. For over fifty years, Hartford Seminary in Connecticut has specialized in the study of Islam and Muslim-Christian relations through degree programs, continuing education, and publications. Through research, publications, academic and community programs, the center seeks to improve relations between the Muslim world and the West as well as enhance understanding of Muslims in the West. While the nature of the encounter differs from place to place and over time, most organized efforts adhere to a particular type of dialogue. As the interfaith dialogue movement emerged, organizers and participants developed several distinctive, yet interrelated modes. Such gatherings became more frequent in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries under the auspices of multifaith organizations such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace and the World Congress of Faiths. These sessions tend to focus on better cooperation among religious groups and the challenges of peace

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for people of faith. In addition to the immediate focus, this approach also seeks to establish and nurture communication between institutional representatives of religious organizations. Institutional dialogue encompasses much of the work carried out through the Vatican and the WCC, with numerous variations at the local level. Muslims and Christians, for example, may concentrate on understandings of God, Jesus, revelation, human responsibility in society, and so forth. Here, as with most other types of dialogue involving several participants, the dialogue occurs both between Muslims and Christians and within those groups. This type of dialogue is often designed to encourage common action. Another important function of dialogue in community is difficult to measure: Here too there is considerable latitude for exploration. The least threatening approach might include observing the worship of others or sharing perspectives on the meaning of fasting or prayer. A more ambitious initiative might include participation in joint worship experiences. The organized dialogue movement represents a new chapter in the long history between Muslims and Christians. Intentional efforts to understand and cooperate are hopeful signs, particularly for religious communities with a history of mutual antipathy. Muslims and Christians who advocate and engage in dialogue still face many obstacles. Many Muslims are wary of the entire enterprise because of the long history of enmity and the more recent experiences of colonialism. Contemporary political machinations involving the United States or other major Western powers also create problems for many would-be Muslim participants. Still other Muslims suspect that dialogue is a new guise for Christian missionary activity. Although the primary impetus for organized dialogue originated largely with Christians and church-related bodies, many conceptual and theological obstacles remain. Some Christians argue that dialogue weakens or undermines Christian mission and witness. For many, the perception of Islam as inherently threatening is deeply ingrained; they are unwilling or unable to move beyond stereotypes or to distinguish between sympathetic and hostile counterparts in the other community. These and many subsequent developments in the U. Courses on Islam and interfaith relations increased dramatically in colleges and universities throughout North America.

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9: Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue - Wikipedia

world religions are finally human creations, with enormous wisdom and truth to be found, but, finally, Christianity is the only true disclosure of God's self revelation. So far, clear and predictable, given the stable out of which our writers come.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: John Borelli Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue. By Jacques Dupuis, SJ. Father Dupuis reminds us in the introduction to Christianity that he has actually written three books on the same subjectâ€”Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions Orbis, being the firstâ€”but he reaffirms the central importance of Religious Pluralism. After publication of this second work, his editors wanted another volume on the same topic, "less ponderous, more accessible, and aimed at an audience broader than the circle of specialists and the academy. Dupuis related to me when I visited him at Gregorian University in early February It was meant to be an easier-to-read version of Religious Pluralism, something for students who do not need abundant references to authors and historical developments. Circumstances, however, added another dimension to the need for yet another volume. Dupuis used the opportunity of a more accessible version of the book in question to address squarely the charges raised against him. He writes in the introduction to Christianity and the Religions: He chose to quote an earlier text by Cardinal Ratzinger on the page following the dedication: Jacques Dupuis died of an apparent stroke on 28 December at age Although the investigation had brought him increased attention and invitations to speak, he was in Rome, his home since , at the time of his death. When I visited him in and again heard him speak at the Catholic University of America just twenty-four days before his death, it was clear how much the case and accompanying suspicion had hurt him. Dupuis was principally a theologian who had considered it his good fortune to have lived and taught in India for thirty-six years. He also had taught theology for nearly fifteen years at Gregorian University, the premier university of his religious order. Many viewed the outcome of the investigation as a vindication of his work because he did not have to change a single sentence in Religious Pluralism for it to remain in publication, but the success of his defense came at a great price. The shadow of suspicion never left him. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

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