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**“Kenosis and Theology of Religious Pluralism:
Relevance of Kenotic Christology in the Background
of Conflict between Inclusivist Pluralism of Jaques
Dupuis and Magisterium of the Church”**

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Preface

I heard of theology of religious pluralism for the first time in relation to the discussions regarding the controversial document *Dominus Jesus*. The multi-religious background of my nation made me interested to understand the attitude of Catholic Church towards other religions during my bachelor course in theology. My pastoral life was enriched with the questions of lay people regarding various dogmatic issues, which evolved from their contact with the people of different religions. Responding to such questions I was realising the complexity of different interpretations of *magisterium* of the Catholic Church.

As I started my Masters, after consulting Prof. Jan-Heiner Tück, I decided to work on the theology of religious pluralism. The book 'Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism' of Dupuis impressed me deeply because of its comprehensive character and systematic presentation. This book and its author were under investigation by the Congregation for Doctrine of Faith and a notification to the book was published. This work deals with the tension between different approaches to other religions mainly focusing on the theology of Jaques Dupuis. As a conclusion of the study I found kenosis of Christ as a model for theology of religious pluralism.

At this moment I would like to thank Uni. -Prof. Dr. Jan-Heiner Tück whole heartedly for his patient listening to me. The time and energy, he spent for my work to read and give suggestions, are of high worthy. I specially remember the help of university library and libraries of theology and philosophy faculties in providing me sufficient books and articles for my study. Thanking to the Almighty God, I present this humble work for reading and evaluation.

General Introduction

Modern globalized world is not only characterized by the globalization of commodity but also by the formation of a global society. This global society has washed away the traditional boundaries of religions and cultures. Naturally, this coming together of religions and cultures caused both positive and negative responses. It enhanced the intercultural and interreligious exchange of ideas. It also caused hate and identity crises. In academic realm, more intercultural and interdisciplinary studies, courses and lectures were introduced. Interreligious dialogue became praxis not only between the scholars and leaders of religions but also among the common people.

Theological discussions on the plurality of religions were, from the beginning, rotated around the possibility of salvation of the people, who belong to other religious traditions and the question that what is the true religion. These discussions are comparatively new in theology and it is now known as “theology of religious pluralism” and as a branch of theology it has began to develop in 1960s.¹ Positive statements about the other religious traditions in Second Vatican Council have ignited such discussions. In explaining the presence of different religions Christian theologians have different conclusions and opinions. These differences are generally classified under three categories; Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism.² Exclusivism claims that no one can be saved unless s/he explicitly confesses the faith in Jesus Christ. This explicit proclamation of faith is expressed through the membership in the Church. Inclusivism does not consider an explicit confession of faith in Jesus Christ as a prerequisite for salvation. It says that every human being attains salvation through Jesus Christ, even though implicitly. According to it, other religions also have positive elements. But they ought to Christ for these positive elements. Pluralism says that every religion has salvific value and the members of a religion are saved through the merit of that religion. Therefore, every religion is true and equal in status. There is also criticism that these categories do not comprise all different trends in the theology of religious pluralism. But in order to easily comprehend the wide range of literature in this field and for its

¹ Cf. VIGIL, Jose M., *Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Wien – Zürich – Berlin - Münster 2008, 17.

² Cf. SCHMIDT-LEUKEL, Perry, *Zur Einteilung religionstheologischer Standpunkte*, in: DEHN, Ulrich/CASPAR-SEEGER, Ulrike/BERNSTORFF, Freya (ed), *Handbuch Theologie der Religionen. Texte zur religiösen Vielfalt und zum interreligiösen Dialog*, Freiburg –Basel –Wien 2017, 252-295.

systematic presentation we have no other way than using these categories. I, in this work, have excessively used these terminologies.

Inclusivism is often considered as the catholic approach. It includes all human beings under the scope of salvation irrespective of their religious traditions. It also appreciates the positive values, contained in other religions, as it is said in the Second Vatican Council. But also within the inclusivist theologians, there are differences in valuing other religions. These differences are spanning between exclusivism, which is reflected in the traditional axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, and pluralism, which considers all religions as equally valuable. I shall explain these different approaches starting from that which seems closer to exclusivism. First of all, some inclusivist theologians consider other religions as the result of human quest towards God. Other religions are valuable because they seek God. Secondly, some theologians positively value other religions because they help Christianity in its self-discovery through dialogue. According to some others other religions are the evidences of God's salvific acts in the history of humanity. Other inclusivist theologians, who stand closely to pluralist theologians, consider plurality of religions as something willed by God and therefore, all religions are intrinsically good.³ Jaques Dupuis belongs to this last group and he named his position as "inclusivist pluralism."

This work is mainly concentrates on Dupuis' theology of religious pluralism and CDFs response to it. Behind these two different theological perspectives there is a basic difference in understanding the ultimate reality, God. While Dupuis understands Trinitarian God primarily as a Mystery, CDF holds that the Mystery of God is completely and fully revealed in Jesus Christ and this fullness of revelation is given to the Catholic Church. Then can we consider Church as the fullness of revelation? If Church is the fullness of revelation, what is the significance of other religions in the world? Are they simply stepping stone to Christianity? If yes, what is the purpose of Dialogue? Is dialogue only to make the conversion to Christianity? If other religions have only a relative validity, Christianity, which is the only true religion with fullness of revelation, has superiority.

According to Dupuis, Church is still on the way to the Kingdom of God. Church is holy and at the same time contains human errors. She cannot be completely identified

³ MERRIGAN, Terrence, Jaques Dupuis and the Redefinition of Inclusivism, in: FS for J. DUPUIS 61-63.

with the Kingdom of God. She needs dialogue with other religions in her journey towards the Kingdom of God. In this sense the relevance of other religions is emphasised. Then how can we uphold Christianity as the only true religion and call others to Christian faith? While CDF affirms the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the salvation, Dupuis opines that the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is constitutive. What does Dupuis mean by constitutive uniqueness? He opines that even after the Christ-event, the Trinitarian God remains ungraspable to us. If Jesus Christ has revealed the complete mystery of God, how can we further hold that God is still a Mystery? How can we combine the revealed and concealed aspects of revelation? This work is an attempt to answer these complex questions.

Chapter I

Basic Theological Standpoints of Dupuis in Theology of Religious Pluralism

1.0 Introduction

We are living in a society, where different religions co-exist. This co-existence not only demands a peaceful collaboration but also requires an intellectual explanation, which helps the people who belong to one religion to accept and acknowledge the people belonging to other religions. This explanation can be called ‘theology of religions,’ because it is to be based on the theological concepts of a religion in order to be accepted by the people belonging to that religion. This chapter is an attempt to sketch out a theology of religions in Christian point of view. It starts with the context, in which this discussion has a great significance. It continues with a short survey of the various Christian responses to the plurality of religions in order to understand the context of Dupuis’ Theology. Then, theology of religions by Jaques Dupuis will be examined in detail.

1.1 Plurality of religions as a theological concern

1.1.1 Changed Scenario

Christianity in the midst of other religions is not a new phenomenon. From its early days Christian proclamation has taken place in a pluralist situation and in struggle with other religious traditions and thought systems. The change of Christianity from a persecuted community to a free religion by Emperor Constantine⁴ and growth as the official religion of Roman Empire by Emperor Theodosius in 380/381⁵ has changed the situation drastically. It resulted in the acceptance and reception of many Hellenistic elements into Christianity and slowly Christianity became the major religion. By the

⁴ Cf. JEDIN, Hubert, *Kleine Konziliengeschichte. Mit einem Bericht über das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien ⁸1990, 15.

⁵ Cf. GABRIEL, Ingeborg G./ KÖRTNER, Ulrich H.J./PAPADEROS, Alexandros K., *Trilogy of Social Ethics*, Orthodox-Catholic-Protestant 2012, Philadelphia 2012, 171.

middle ages it was the only powerful religion in the Europe. High influence of Christianity not only caused the appropriation of Christian values in the state laws and structures but also the church decrees on faith matters enjoyed a legal status and thus became a binding force. But in the other part of the world the conditions were not so. Christians lived there amidst of other religions.

Traditionally, Christianity proclaimed itself as the only true religion against other “insignificant and false” religions of the world.⁶ Even though the Catholic Church has not explicitly condemned other religions, her missionary works labelled other religions as polytheism or idolatry. The Christian missionary activities were, even though in an unworthy manner, linked with the colonial advancement. This created in other religious people an aversion to Christianity. The collapse of the colonial system decreased the power of missionary activities and caused the empowering of other religions. The influence of Christianity, in a way, caused the renewal of other religious traditions. In the western world itself the supremacy of the Christianity was challenged by deferent secular developments.⁷ Decrease of political power of Christianity along with the acquaintance with and knowledge of other religions as a result of missionary contexts and intercultural studies gave space for new thinking, which is characterized by openness and tolerance.

1.1.2 Second Vatican Council: A Landmark

The attempts to explain the presence of different religions have led to the development of interreligious studies, which in turn influenced the theological reflections too. This situation was fostered also by the positive approach of Second Vatican Council to other religions. The council, as a pivotal point in the history of official teaching of Catholic Church, recognized the positive elements in other religions, but without undermining their limitations (LG 16; AG 3, 11, 18; NA 2). The possibility of salvation outside the church has been recognized by the church long before Second Vatican Council.⁸ But the recognition of positive elements in other religions was a new one. Even though theological discussions on the positive worth of other religions can be found also before

⁶ Cf. VORGRIMMER, Herbert, Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch, Herder - Freiburg 2008, 538.

⁷ Cf. MENSCHING, Gustav, Der Offene Tempel. Die Weltreligionen im Gespräch miteinander, Stuttgart 1974, 12-18.

⁸ Cf. J. DUPUIS, Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, New York 1997, 121 and 159; [hereafter: J. DUPUIS, Toward a Christian Theology].

council, which have strongly influence the council, Second Vatican Council multiplied the amount of discussions in this direction.

Many Christian theologians have attempted to explain the presence of other religions in a Christian point of view. Some maintained a negative approach, whereas some others found out many positive elements in other religions. But the difference of opinions was not a sort of black and white differentiation. Some theologians, for example the protestant theologian Karl Barth, maintained strong criticism against other religions. He considered other religious traditions not even as religion.⁹ Others including Jean Danielou, Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar gave a positive value to all religions and at the same time upheld the Uniqueness of Christianity in salvation of the world. Some others like Karl Rahner, Raimon Panikkar, Hans Küng and Gustave Thills had argued that other religious traditions have their own salvific value in an indirect way.¹⁰ Interestingly, theologians differ from each other in the interpretation of the position of Second Vatican Council. Some theologians see Second Vatican Council as a milestone in appreciating other religions for their salvific value. But others argue that the council do not permit such conclusions. But the fact is that the teaching of the council with regard to other religions is ambivalent.¹¹

1.1.3 Globalisation and Global Migration: Changing Contexts of Theologizing

Today the reality of many and different religions is all the more evident and it is the subject of popular discussions as well as philosophical and theological reflections. In particular the so called globalisation of the world contributed much to this reality. Even though the term “globalisation” initially and basically applied to economics, it has a much elaborated meaning now. It has changed drastically the social, religious and political realms. The technological advancement and the modernisation of communication had erased all sort of boundaries. The growing possibility of worldwide travel also had contributed much to the mingling together of different religions especially in the western world.¹² There is an influx of people from around the world

⁹ Here it is to be noted that for Karl Barth Christianity is different from present form of Christian religion. He considers that ‘true Christianity’ as the only true religion.

¹⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 133-157.

¹¹ Cf. DULLES, Avery, *World Religions and the New Millennium. A Catholic Perspective*, in: FS for J. DUPUIS 4f.

¹² Cf. International Theological Commission, *Christianity and the World Religions* 1997, URL: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1997_cristianesimo-religioni_en.html (Stand: 28.02.2017) 1-2.

into different countries. People are living together irrespective of geographical boundaries. In the western world migrants have brought their own traditions and customs as well as their own religions. These religions were once foreign to the western world. Emerging dilemmas in Christian consciousness due to such new situations have naturally to be solved. Some issues are; why there are many religions, if there is only one God? What is the relationship of Christianity with other religions?¹³ The present age, not different from history, is also characterized by conflicts between religions. Then the search for a common ground for a peaceful coexistence is necessary today.

1.1.4 Different Responses in General

The coming together of different religions can ignite different responses. The same variations of responses can be seen in the history of each religion. We can generally classify them into three. Firstly, one can attempt to convert all people to one's own religion or at least treat others as inferior. It is accompanied surely by violent manner. Second option is to withdraw into religiously homogenous enclaves and reduce contact with other believers. Third approach is active engagement in interreligious dialogue as the only possible way in a religiously plural society. It is the only way to peace and in agreement with basic human nature, i.e. communicativeness.¹⁴ These three different responses can be seen in the followers of different religions at different levels. Although different attitudes can be seen in the theology of religions, its general goal is to understand the existence of different religions and to find out the relation of one's own religion to others. In this regard Dupuis says about the possibility of different theologies of religions according to different religious convictions; for example, a Hindu theology of religions, a Muslim theology of religions, etc.¹⁵ Each of them attempts to explain the presence of and relation with different religions in its own perspectives, based on its belief system.

1.2. Christian Response to Pluralism

As Christians, many have individually thought of this reality of pluralism and presented their views and explanations. Catholic Church, as an influential presence in the world,

¹³ Cf. KNITTER, Paul F., *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, New York ¹⁰2010, 1; [*hereafter*: P. F. KNITTER, *Theologies of Religions*].

¹⁴ Cf. GABRIEL, Ingeborg, *Like Rosewater. Reflections on Interreligious Dialogue*, in: *JES [Journal of Ecumenical Studies]* 45:1 (winter 2010) 3f.

¹⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 7.

ignited by surrounding situations has made deeper reflections on this theme. Now we consider some of these reflections.

1.2.1 Official Teaching

Aware of the situation of its time, Second Vatican Council has attempted to find out the relationship of the Church to other religions. “The Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions” (NA 1). Among pre-Vatican documents of the Church we can observe a general negative attitude towards other religions. This was influenced by then situations and particular challenges. Within this general attitude one can pick up certain positive statements. First among them is a letter by pope Gregory VII to Anzir, king of Mauritania in 1076, in which it is stated that “[...] we [Christians and Muslims] believe and confess one God [...] and praise and worship him daily as the creator of all ages and the ruler of this world.”¹⁶ In the allocution *Singulari Quadam* in 1854 Pope Gregory XVI, despite the general trend against religious indifference and the assertion of necessity of Church for the salvation, speaks that the “invincible ignorance” excuses a person from belonging to the Church.¹⁷ Second Vatican Council, understanding the ‘signs of time’ and guided by Holy Spirit, made clear statements that recognize the positive value of other religions. Besides *Nostra Aetate*, which deals directly and solely with the issue, other documents of the council, especially *Lumen Gentium* and *Ad Gentes*, also contain important references to the place of these religions in God’s plan of salvation.

The council does not provide a detailed theology of religions, but it adopts a new attitude by stressing the commonalities and unity between Christianity and other religions. More than mere human answers to the fundamental problems of life, other religions have a positive value. Some elements of them were recognized as God’s gift to the humanity before the preaching of the gospel. Council recognizes ‘seeds of the Word’ in them and work of Holy Spirit in the world before Christ’s glorification.¹⁸

After the council Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), wrote that the Church is to be engaged in dialogue with all believers (ES 107). Pope John Paul II’s *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) also emphasised the need of interreligious dialogue (RH 6)

¹⁶ NEUNER, Joseph/DUPUIS, Jacques, The Christian Faith. In the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church, 7., rev. and enl. Ed., Bangalore 2004, 419; [hereafter: J.NEUNER/J. DUPUIS, The Christian Faith].

¹⁷ Cf. J.NEUNER/J. DUPUIS, The Christian Faith, 423f.

¹⁸ For a detailed survey cf. NA 1-5, LG 16,17, AG 3,4,10,11,12,15,16,18, GS 12,16,22 OT 16.

and the values contained in other religions (RH 11). Official teaching of the Church does not go further into the details. It expresses Church's positive attitude towards other religions.

1.2.2 Theologians' Contributions

In Christian theology, we can observe different trends regarding the relationship with other religions. These can be in general titled as exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. This differentiation was first suggested by Alan Race.¹⁹ This differentiation by Alan Race has been criticized by Ian Markham and defended by Gavin D'Costa. Dupuis differentiates between two mainline theological perspectives: fulfilment theory and theory of presence of Christ in the religions.²⁰ Paul F. Knitter suggests a 'four point model', i.e. the replacement model, the fulfilment model, the mutuality model and the acceptance model, in his book 'Theologies of Religion'. I take the classification of Alan Race, though it is rigid, for better clarity. Exclusivism, as a dominant trend in the history of Christianity, upholds an ecclesiocentric attitude. It asserts the traditional catholic dogma *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in its rigid sense.²¹ Inclusivism is based on christocentric view. Christ is above all religion and through him all people, in spite of their religion, will be saved. Karl Rahner's famous concept of 'anonymous christianity' is a good example. Pluralism is basically theocentric and its main proponent is John Hick. It emphasises that all religions seek one and the only God and having salvific power. Differences are varying cultural reflections of the same common essence.²² Not all pluralists uphold the position that all religions are equal, which leads to a relativism.²³

1.3. Theocentric Accent of Pluralist Theologians

As it is mentioned earlier the exclusivist attitude towards other religions is already out of the stage in theological circles. Inclusivist models of theology of religions have emerged even before Second Vatican Council. The question whether salvation is

¹⁹ Cf. KNITTER, Paul F., *One Earth Many Religions. Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*, New York 1995, 25; [hereafter: P. F. KNITTER, *One Earth Many Religions*].

²⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 132.

²¹ Cf. HICK, John, *The Rainbow of Faiths. Critical Dialogues on Religious Pluralism*, London 1995, 19; [hereafter: J. HICK, *The Rainbow of Faiths*].

²² Cf. P. F. KNITTER, *One Earth Many Religions*, 31.

²³ For a detailed discussion on this point cf. P. F. KNITTER, *Theologies of Religions*, 117-119.

possible outside the Church is already answered through a christocentric approach. Jaques Dupuis' differentiation between fulfilment theory and theory of presence of the mystery of Christ is to be mentioned here. Both of them are inclusivist models since they "affirmed without qualification the possibility for people outside the Church to be saved in Jesus Christ."²⁴ They differ only when they consider the value of religions. Theory of the presence of the mystery of Christ in other religions holds that other religions have a positive value and God's grace works in them whereas the fulfilment theory sees other religions as a stepping stone for Christianity and with the Christ-event they have lost their significance.²⁵

Pluralist theologians go further to a theocentric view and try to find out the common ground between different religious traditions, i.e. God. John Hick called for a Copernican Revolution in theology in his book 'God and the Universe of Faiths': the religions of the world do not revolve around Christianity, but they revolve around God. According to him even though the inclusivist models brought improvement to ecclesiocentric exclusivist view, they maintain still a particularistic, christocentric view.²⁶ The accent is to be changed from Christ to God. Hick has gone to the extent of demythologizing of Christ. Using the historic-critical method of exegesis he says that Christ as the one and only Saviour was a poetic expression of early Christian experience and therefore it is to be metaphorically, not literally, understood.²⁷ There are many ways, which are equally valid, to the one ultimate reality, God. In order to stress God as the only absolute ultimate reality, pluralists call for a reinterpretation of Christology.

1.3.1 Revisionist Christology

In order to shift the focus to God as the only ultimate reality, pluralist theologians reinterpret traditional orthodox Christology. For this reinterpretation they depend mainly on historic-critical analysis of New Testament writings, *kerygma* of early

²⁴ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 158.

²⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 130-157.

²⁶ Cf. ROSE, Kenneth, *Knowing the Real. John Hick on the Cognitivity of Religions and Religious Pluralism*, New York [et al.] 1996, 68.

²⁷ Cf. HICK, John, *A Christian Theology of Religions. The Rainbow of Faiths*, Kentucky 1995 83-103; HICK, John (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*, London 1977, ix-xi; [hereafter: J. . HICK, *The Myth of God Incarnate*].

Christianity and creed formulations of Nicaea and Chalcedon councils.²⁸ Deconstruction of Christology, which is seen in the famous work edited by John Hick, 'The Myth of God Incarnate', can be well summarized in his own words:

The three themes running through the book are (1) the historical thesis that Jesus did not teach that he was in any sense God incarnate and had no conception of himself as the Second Person of a divine Trinity; (2) that it is possible to trace a development during the decades after Jesus's [*sic*] death from the view of him as a prophet appointed by God in the last days to usher in the Kingdom to the properly incarnational doctrine which was finally established at the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon in the fourth and fifth centuries; and (3) my own special concern, that to see the language of divine incarnation as metaphorical, or mythic, makes it possible for Christians to come to a genuine acceptance of religious pluralism.²⁹

Paul F. Knitter also advocates for a reinterpretation of the traditional Christology. He sees this task as same as the christological development of early Christians and since the uniqueness of Jesus is still open to new understandings, Christology must go further.³⁰ There are also many other theologians in this line of theocentric pluralism. Since our purpose is not to give a detailed account of pluralist theology of religious pluralism, we limit ourselves to the basic ideas of this model.

1.3.2 To What Extent can Christ be Reinterpreted?

Even though all pluralist theologians say about a 'Copernican revolution' or 'Crossing the Rubicon' in Christology, I see a vagueness in their reinterpreted or reformed Christology. According to Hick the proclamation of the early Christianity on uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ and his divine sonship was the expression of their experience in a metaphysical or poetic language and this metaphorical expression was hardened to a metaphysical truth and officially so recognized in Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon.³¹ Almost all the contributors of the book 'The Myth of God Incarnate', use synonymous terminologies such as poetic, metaphorical, story, experience, etc³² or find

²⁸ Cf. KAUFMAN, Gordon D., Religious Diversity, Historical Consciousness, and Christian Theology, in: HICK, John/KNITTER, Paul F. (ed.), The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions, New York ⁴1992, 5-12.

²⁹ HICK, John, Problems of Religious Pluralism, New York 1985, 11-12.

³⁰ Cf. P. F. KNITTER, One Earth Many Religions, 34.

³¹ Cf. HICK, John, Jesus and the World Religions, in: his. (ed.), The Myth of God Incarnate, 176f.

³² Cf. YOUNG, Frances, A Cloud of Witness, in: J. HICK, The Myth of God Incarnate, 35f; WILES, Maurice, Christianity without Incarnation?, in: J. HICK, The Myth of God Incarnate, 9; WILES, Maurice, Myth in Theology, in: J. HICK, The Myth of God Incarnate, 148-166.

parallels to the ‘son of God’ in history³³ in order to disapprove a literal understanding of scripture and dogmas of early councils and thus to deconstruct the traditional Christology, which equals Christ to God.

This reinterpretation of Christology raises questions not only on the dual nature in Jesus Christ, i.e. divine and human, but also on the Trinitarian concept of God. If the incarnation of Jesus is an experiential metaphorical expression and not an absolute truth, then Jesus is not God and thus there is no Second Person in Trinitarian God. Therefore, pluralist Christology is lenient towards nontrinitarian views such as adoptionism, monarchianism, etc. But it is important to note that the pluralist theologians did not specify clearly the status of Jesus. We can read between lines and consider Jesus as a ‘God inspired man’ or a liberator of humanity with a special status among other such liberators. After all the deconstruction and reinterpretations, pluralists say even that Christians can still claim the uniqueness, universality and divinity of Jesus Christ.³⁴ Despite its ambiguous nature in Christology pluralist theology emphasises God as the only ultimate reality and sees all religions as paths to this reality. The reinterpretation of Christology can be viewed as a tool to level the ground for dialogue, even though the pluralists do not accept it. If the uniqueness of Christ can be relativised, Christianity has no uniqueness and special privileges and therefore a dialogue between equals will be possible.

1.4 Characteristics of Dupuis’ Theology

1.4.1 Plurality: A Positive Theological Principle

To start describing Dupuis’ theology of religious pluralism, it is important to note a paradigm shift. Different from hitherto discussions on the plurality of religions, which view this plurality as an unavoidable concrete fact (pluralism *de facto*), Dupuis considers this plurality as a positive principle (pluralism *de jure*), having a *raison d’être* in its own right.³⁵ Therefore a Christian theology of religious pluralism has to enquire firstly after the root cause of this pluralism and then the role of other religious traditions in the salvific plan of God for humanity.

³³ YOUNG, Frances, Two Roots or a Tangled Mass?, in: J. HICK, The Myth of God Incarnate, 104-110.

³⁴ Cf. P. F. KNITTER, One Earth Many Religions, 34f.

³⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, Toward a Christian Theology, 11.

1.4.2 One God- One Christ- Convergent Paths³⁶

The axiom ‘one God- one Christ-convergent paths’ explains and summarizes well Dupuis’ theology of religious pluralism. It clarifies that where stands Dupuis among different paradigms of religious pluralism, viz. exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. If the axiom was ‘one God- convergent paths’ he would be a pluralist like Hick, Knitter, etc. If it was ‘one God- one Christ’ his theology would easily lean towards exclusivism, which stresses the possibility of salvation only through the explicit Christian faith in Jesus Christ.³⁷ In this regard Dupuis’ theology can be included in inclusivism. But this classification could be an oversimplification of his theology. After a short discussion it will be clearer. The most important key to understand Dupuis is that he does not demythologize the doctrine of incarnation in order to emphasis God as ultimate reality. Here he differs clearly from pluralists. On the other hand he affirms the possibility of salvation even without Christ. God’s grace through the Spirit is working in whole humanity. In this regard he goes further even beyond inclusivism. But according to Dupuis, theology of religions must transcend strict compartmentalisations such as exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism.³⁸ He finds in Trinity the model to overcome all such rigid classifications and divisions. Basing on this same Trinitarian model he tries to explain the plurality of religions.

1.4.3 Dupuis’ Trinitarian Christology

I find in Dupuis theology a synthetic approach, which beautifully surpasses separatism and strict classifications. It is through Trinitarian Christology Dupuis overcomes the pluralist dilemma between God and Christ. Thinking that emphasis on Christ in Christianity has undermined the ultimate reality, God, pluralists reinterpreted Christology to the extent that Jesus Christ is a divinely inspired human. But Dupuis correctly places Christ in the reality of Triune God. Dupuis’ ‘one God,’ different from that of pluralists, is the absolute mystery of divine, revealed through Jesus Christ, i.e. “Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in the interpersonal communion of the Godhead.”³⁹ All fragmentations of theology such as Christology and Pneumatology, Christology and Jesuology, Christology and Logology, Christocentrism and soteriocentrism,

³⁶ This title is the title of second part of Dupuis book ‘Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism’; Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 203.

³⁷ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 209.

³⁸ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 198-121.

³⁹ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 208.

Christocentrism and regnocentrism, etc are not separated blocks. All are interrelated. Spirit-Christology, which shows the great influence of Holy Spirit in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, also is to be considered. It also connects the action of risen Lord to the economy of Holy Spirit. Christology as well as Pneumatology cannot be understood as two separate economies of God's communication to humanity. Christ and Spirit act interdependently within the Trinitarian rhythm.⁴⁰ Dupuis stresses always the interdependence and interrelation of different branches of theology. A Christology independent of Pneumatology will be Christomonism and a Pneumatology independent of Christology is also one sided. The Triune God, Father, Son and Spirit, for Dupuis, is the cause and goal of religious pluralism.

1.4.3.1 Trinity as the Ultimate Reality

Pluralists, particularly John Hick, hold that the Ultimate Real, God, is always incomprehensible and the 'real' as differently experienced by different religions, including Christianity, is different from the 'Real'. Dupuis disagrees with Hick from a Christian point and says that the Ultimate Real is Christian Trinitarian God. But it does not mean that Christianity possesses truth about this ultimate truth. For Dupuis, even after the Christ-Event God remains beyond our intentional grasp.⁴¹ This Christian Trinitarian monotheistic concept of God is common to other two monotheistic religions. When Jesus says I and my Father are one he refers to Yahweh, the God of Abraham, who revealed himself to Moses, i.e. the God of Israel. Surah 29:46 clearly says that the God of Islam and God of religions of book (Christianity and Judaism) are same.⁴² God's inner life, which is relatedness in love, communicates itself to human and it is the cause for the existence of convergent paths, i.e. different religious traditions. God loves whole mankind and wants no one to lose. The same absolute God draws all paths to himself. Thus the plurality is not a mere fact, it is to be welcomed in principle and its place in God's plan of salvation must be stressed.⁴³ Trinitarian love and interdependence of different persons⁴⁴ gives a model to understand religious plurality and to maintain such relationship between different religions.

⁴⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 204-206.

⁴¹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 257-259.

⁴² Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 259f.

⁴³ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 209.

⁴⁴ The terms 'person' and 'nature', traditionally used to denote the Trinitarian relationship are confusing. But still Dupuis wants to maintain their use since it is difficult to find appropriate terms. Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 265.

1.4.3.2 Christ's Role in Salvation

While Dupuis stresses the Trinitarian God as ultimate reality he never undermines the role of Christ. But then what is the role of Christ in the salvation of the people? Controversial elements of Dupuis' theology are connected with this question. Pluralists reinterpret Christology based on philosophical, historical-critical exegetical and theological considerations and deny ontological affirmations about Jesus Christ. They differentiate a high Christology- Jesus Christ as the Son of God- from a low Christology- denies such ontological affirmations. But, according to Dupuis, as in the case of different theological views, such differentiation is not acceptable. Both are the integral and interrelated parts of Christology. Dupuis also opines that a well-articulated claim to oneness and universality for Jesus Christ leaves room for an open theology of religious pluralism. It is because, in Trinitarian Christology, there is a proper place to the ongoing presence and activity of Word of God and the Spirit of God.⁴⁵ Both these were and are working in the world. They, along with Christ-event, constitutes God's plan of salvation.

a) Jesus Christ: the Absolute Saviour?

Dupuis, like pluralists, wants to give the attribute 'absoluteness' only to the Ultimate Reality of Infinite Being. For Dupuis it is the Triune God. Absoluteness cannot be attributed to any finite reality, even to the human existence of the Son-of-God-made-man. Along with Karl Rahner and C. F. Braaten, Dupuis also holds that the fact that Jesus Christ is the universal Saviour does not mean that he is the Absolute Saviour.⁴⁶ The reason is, as mentioned above, absoluteness is the attribute only of Ultimate Reality.

b) Constitutive and Relational Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

With regard to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ also Dupuis' position was criticised by many and also by the official Church. Traditionally many expressions such as singularity, universality, normativity, transcendence, absoluteness, etc. were used to distinguish Jesus Christ from other saving figures. These expressions have their own significance and at the same time they have led to many misunderstandings.⁴⁷ With regard to 'Universality' and 'Uniqueness' of Jesus Christ Dupuis avoids both 'absolute',

⁴⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 242-244.

⁴⁶ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 282.

⁴⁷ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 181-182.

which is commonly used by exclusivists and inclusivists and ‘relative’, which is used by pluralists. The universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ are ‘constitutive’ because Jesus Christ holds saving significance for whole of humankind and the Christ-event is cause of salvation. “It is “relational,” [*sic*] insofar as the person and the event insert themselves in an overall design of God for humankind which is multifaceted and whose realization in history is made up of diverse times and moments.”⁴⁸ While with ‘constitutive Uniqueness’ Dupuis tries to defend the basic Christian faith, he maintains the openness to other religions by the term ‘relational Uniqueness’.

c) Logos *asarkos* and Logos *ensarkos*

Dupuis differentiates between the incarnated Logos (Logos *ensarkos*) and nonincarnate Logos (Logos *asarkos*). The Word incarnated in the history, i.e., in the time and space. Dupuis sees this Christ-event as the universal sacrament of God’s will to save humankind. But this does not exclude the saving action of God through the nonincarnate Word. “Trinitarian Christology shows that the particularity of the Christ-event leaves space for the action of the Logos *asarkos* [...]”⁴⁹ But the actions of Logos *asarkos* and Logos *ensarkos* do not represent two different plans of salvation, but they are the manifestations of God’s superabundant graciousness and absolute freedom.⁵⁰ The above differentiation between Logos *asarkos* and Logos *ensarkos* does not mean that the Word of God and Jesus Christ are two separated entities for Dupuis.⁵¹ “It [God’s salvific action] never abstracts from the Christ-event, in which it finds its highest historical density. Yet the action of the Word of God is not bound by his becoming man historically in Jesus Christ.”⁵²

1.4.3.3 Action of Holy Spirit

According to the Trinitarian Christology of Dupuis, a Pneumatological perspective is necessary to avoid narrow Christocentric perspective. Still Christ is the centre of God’s plan of salvation. For Dupuis, Holy Spirit is the point of entry wherever and whenever God reveals and communicates himself to humankind. Whereas the Christ-event is

⁴⁸ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 283.

⁴⁹ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 300.

⁵⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 297-300.

⁵¹ DUPUIS, Jaques, *Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ*, in: KENDALL, Daniel/DAVIS, Stephen T. (ed.), *The Convergence of Theology*, FS for Gerald O’ COLLINS, New York 2001, 335; [*hereafter*: J. DUPUIS, *Universality of the Word*].

⁵² J. DUPUIS, *Universality of the Word* 338.

unavoidably limited by the particularity of history, the work of Spirit have no boundaries of space and time. Holy Spirit is active in history in every generation and his activity is in view of and in relation to the Christ-event in history. Holy Spirit had influenced and continues to influence the humanity and thus is active in other religious traditions.⁵³ Dupuis' Pneumatology stands always in its interrelationship with Christology and vice versa.

1.4.4 Church and the Kingdom of God

Based on his Trinitarian paradigm, Dupuis presents his theology of religious pluralism and the role of the Church in a pluralistic world. According to him the central point of the proclamation of Jesus Christ was the Reign of God and the same is to be the central theme of Church's proclamation. Church is the sacrament of Kingdom of God (LG 1) in this world.⁵⁴ Kingdom of God is broader than the Church. The people who respond to the call of God through other religions are also part of it. So Dupuis presents the mediatory role of other religions also. Since the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is relational Church also is to be in relationship with other religions in order to know the fullness of God's message in Christ.⁵⁵ Dupuis' Kingdom centred model is different from that of Knitter. Whereas Knitter does not relate it to the Christian God and to Jesus Christ, Dupuis emphasises the role of Christ in the Kingdom of God.⁵⁶ The Kingdom of God came in this world through Jesus Christ and it will be fulfilled by his second coming.⁵⁷ Through the authentic witness and such activities like dialogue, human promotion, commitment to justice and peace the church gives witness to the Reign of God.

1.5 Inclusivist Pluralism and Trinitarian Mystery in Dupuis' Theology

In this chapter we have seen shortly the 'fact', preferably 'principle', of plurality of religions in the world. Explaining this plurality without harming monotheistic belief in Ultimate Reality, God, was the challenge of theologians. There cannot be many 'ultimate' realities corresponding to many religions. Therefore, the options are very limited:

⁵³ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 196f; Paul F. Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, 92.

⁵⁴ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 353.

⁵⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 388; Paul F. Knitter, *Theologies of Religion*, 92.

⁵⁶ KÄRKKÄINEN, Veli-Matti, *Trinity and Religious Pluralism. The Doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Theology of Religions*, Hampshire 2004, 60; [*hereafter*: V.-M. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Trinity and Religious Pluralism*].

⁵⁷ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 334, 342.

- 1) There is only one Ultimate Reality. Only one religion is the way to this reality and therefore all others are searching false gods. It is exclusivism.
- 2) There is only one Ultimate Reality. All the religions are searching for this reality and no one of them possesses the full knowledge of the reality. It is pluralism.

These two positions are applicable to any religions. But in a Christian perspective, characterized by unique figure Jesus Christ, divine and human, the problem becomes more complex. The first position appears better because our religion can be viewed as the only real one since it possesses the Ultimate Truth, communicated through Jesus Christ. The second position has to diminish Christ's role as the mediator of the Ultimate Truth and only then, all religions can be perceived as equal. In this context the other possibility, called inclusivism, is relevant. It tries to perceive other religions as equals but at the same time upholds the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. While the above two options are black and white clear solutions, the new task is uneasy and naturally leads to ambiguity. Since the Unique Jesus Christ is present only in Christianity, when we assert this uniqueness, it will conclude, at least in a slight manner, in the superiority of Christianity. It is because of this complexity, the inclusivism differs from author to author. A general classification of inclusivism is done by Dupuis in his fifth chapter, viz. Fulfilment theory and the theory of presence of Christ in other religions. While the Fulfilment theory considers other religions as the 'stepping stone' of or 'preparation' for Christianity⁵⁸ the second one sees the members of other religions as 'anonymous' or 'potential' Christians⁵⁹. Anyhow, both of them give Christianity a better position.

In this context Dupuis tries to find equality between different religions while asserting the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Dupuis describes his own Theology as 'inclusivist pluralism' "[...] that holds together the constitutive and universal character of the Christ-event in the order of human salvation and the salvific significance of religious traditions in a *de jure* plurality of religious traditions within the one manifold plan of God for humankind."⁶⁰ We have already seen his theology in short. He sees the doctrine of Trinity as the hermeneutical key to interpret the experience of the Ultimate

⁵⁸ Cf. P. F. KNITTER, *Theologies of Religions*, 90.

⁵⁹ Cf. P. F. KNITTER, *One Earth Many Religions*, 28.

⁶⁰ DUPUIS, Jaques, *Trinitarian Christology as a Model for a Theology of Religious Pluralism*, in: MERRIGAN, T./HAERS, J. (ed.), *The Myriad Christ. Plurality and The Quest for Unity in Contemporary Christology*, Leuven – Paris – Sterling 2000, 97; [hereafter: J. DUPUIS, *Trinitarian Christology as a Model for a Theology of Religious Pluralism*].

Reality, which is testified by other religious traditions.⁶¹ According to Dupuis, God wants the salvation of whole humanity and therefore, he communicates to mankind in the history. Trinitarian paradigm of Dupuis suggests that whenever God communicates to humankind it is the God of Jesus Christ in self revelation, i.e. the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Word of God and Spirit of God were and are active in the world and their activity is not a different economy of salvation. Therefore, God's self-revelation in other religions also becomes part of the universal salvific will of God and they are complementary ways.⁶² Trinitarian relationality is the key to understand the plurality of religions.

The notion of God, who is simultaneously one and three, was sometimes viewed unconceivable and irrational. This paradoxical concept of God stands against the modern trends of classification, distinction and rationalization. Modern theologians, influenced by these same trends, conceive God's threeness as the subdividing of God into constituent parts. This was accelerated by the translation of Latin word *persona* into English word person. More than unity of three the distinct functions were emphasized. "[...] the Father created the world, then retired; the Son came along, fixed the world's problems, and exited the scene; and the Spirit was then left behind to provide long-term maintenance."⁶³ This view is against the ancient claim that God's external works are undivided. God's acts are done by God and not only by one or another Trinitarian person working in relative isolation from the other two. Postmodern theologians emphasize an interdependent approach.⁶⁴ This interrelated Trinitarian concept is well used by Dupuis and it simultaneously explains the multifaceted reality of religious pluralism and shows the incomprehensibility of this mystery.

1.6 Conclusion

We have seen the context of theology of religious pluralism and different responses to the religious diversity. Different models of religious pluralism have tried for the same goal, i.e. to solve the dilemma between oneness of reality and manifoldness of religions. Exclusivists have solved it by asserting that there is only one reality and only one real

⁶¹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 264.

⁶² V.-M. KÄRKÄINEN, *Trinity and Religious Pluralism*, 58.

⁶³ CUNNINGHAM, David C., *The Trinity*, in: VANHOZER, Kevin J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, Cambridge ³2005, 189; [hereafter: D. C. CUNNINGHAM, *The Trinity*]

⁶⁴ Cf. D. C. CUNNINGHAM, *The Trinity*, 188-189.

religion. Inclusivists wanted to value other religions by shifting the exclusivity from religion, i.e., Christianity, to Christ. But pluralists considered all religions as equally valid and for that they rejected exclusive claim of reality in all religions. In order to make Christianity devoid of this claim they made Jesus Christ one among other redeemers. Dupuis tried to find out a middle way between inclusivists and pluralists. He, like an experienced funambulist, balanced between the complementarity of all religions and uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

Chapter II

Interreligious Dialogue Different Views and Implications

2.0 Introduction

Dialogue is a buzzword in contemporary world. But it is not as simple as it appears. It is a complex process which is influenced by the knowledge, feelings, convictions and logic of the persons involved in it. When the dialogue partners are the believers of different religious traditions, it becomes more complicated. This chapter deals with these complexities of interreligious dialogue. It starts from the general understanding of the concept of dialogue. The dialogue between religions raises naturally some questions about the essence of each religion. After discussing these complexities, the different opinions on interreligious dialogue are mentioned. How the Catholic Church officially understands dialogue is an important subject. Church's self understanding about his existence in this world is very crucial in deciding the scope and role of dialogue from her part. Finally, we try to understand Dupuis' attempt to solve the contradictions and disharmony between different opinions.

2.1 Dialogue: A General Understanding

Dialogue is not simply a conversation between two individuals or groups. It has wider meaning in modern world. We are dealing with the dialogue between religions. Therefore, the very essence of dialogue becomes here more complicated. First of all here is a general definition of dialogue. "Dialogue in general, includes every form of meeting and communication between individuals, groups, and communities to bring about greater understanding and better human relations in an atmosphere of sincerity, integrity, respect for persons, and mutual confidence."⁶⁵ There are three types of dialogue. Firstly, dialogue can be an attempt, basing on the human solidarity, to bring together isolated groups and overcome the atmosphere of mistrust. Secondly, there are dialogues to find out common goals and common action plan despite of differences.

⁶⁵ MEAGHER, Paul Kevin/ O'BRIEN, Thomas C./ AHERNE, Consuelo Maria, Art.: Dialogue, in: MEAGHER, Paul Kevin (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion A-E*, Washington D.C 1979, 1050; [hereafter: P. K. MEAGHER/T. C. O'BRIEN/C. M. AHERNE, Dialogue].

Thirdly, dialogue can be an encounter with the aim of searching for the truth and it affects the doctrinal positions of the participants involved.⁶⁶ These general understandings will be helpful to distinguish different forms of dialogue and to understand the difficulties involved in interreligious dialogue.

2.2 Dialogue between Religions

In the beginning of the first chapter we have seen the contemporary reality of ‘coming together’ of different religious traditions and resulted challenges of theologizing. Human beings are now more aware of developing positive and creative relationships with others. The same is valid for religions. Catholic Church has officially and solemnly announced her openness towards other religions in Second Vatican Council, especially in the document *Nostra Aetate*. Dialogue is the starting point of interpersonal and interreligious relations. It “involves a reciprocal process in which both parties stand on an equal level and are willing to receive as well as to present their own positions.”⁶⁷ But in dialogue between religions it is not easy to maintain the reciprocal process. Every religion *ipso facto* stands for its own uniqueness and completeness. It claims superiority over others based on even contradicting reasons. For example, Christianity sees itself as the only complete religion, which is directly founded by incarnated God. Hinduism acknowledges various ways to God. But at the same time it considers all the different ways as different *mārgās* towards *Brahma*, the Ultimate Reality. It has swallowed many religious traditions by its unique assimilating character. Islam and Judaism also hold their supremacy and legitimacy based on their own reasons. How can two “completely true and only real” religions, which consider other as false, or at least as inferior, stand on equal level and receive something positive from the other? In Catholic theology there is a wide range of discussions on this question. Theologians have different opinions in order to find a valid base of dialogue and their positions have influenced their theology and vice versa.

⁶⁶ Cf. P. K. MEAGHER/T. C. O'BRIEN/C. M. AHERNE, Dialogue 1050.

⁶⁷ BURNS, Robert A., Roman Catholicism after Vatican II, Washington 2001, 152.

2.3 Different forms of Interreligious Dialogue and its Complexities

Corresponding to what we have seen in the general understanding of dialogue we can distinguish in the spectrum of interreligious dialogue three types of dialogue. Firstly, there are dialogues between religions in order to bring together hitherto isolated religious groups and to clear the mistrust of misunderstandings. Secondly, dialogue is possible between religions with the goal of developing common ethical values and principles of humankind. These two types of interreligious dialogues are comparatively easier because almost all religions have common anthropological principles and they see human life as intrinsically valuable and moreover such dialogues are the need of the time. It is a good opportunity also to the religions to overcome their negative symbolization with violence and to foster peace in the world.

[O]ver the centuries, religions have tended to stir up the violence of history. Interreligious dialogue is thus something new and an opportunity. But it is no coincidence that it has come at the same time as what Edgar Morin calls the fourth age of humankind, namely its planetary age, that is, the fact that men and women find themselves in solidarity in this tiny region of the universe that is our “planetary village.”⁶⁸

In a globalised world a global ethic, which is applicable to whole humanity, is the need of time. Pope Francis calls our attention on the need of Dialogue between religions in this regard. “The majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity” (LS 201).

Interreligious dialogue with a theological motive is the third type of interreligious dialogue. It is very complex and presupposes some essential deconstructions and reinterpretations of religious dogmas. When dialogue is a mean to pursuit the ultimate truth, does it mean that a religion in itself does not contain truth in fullness? Will any religion accept that it possesses truth only partial? G. E. Lessing’s Ring Parable in his book *Nathan der Weise* is worth mentioning here, because it portrays the difficulty of determining the true, real religion.⁶⁹ Because of its complexity and possible Dilemmas this type of interreligious dialogue is viewed by various religious authorities with suspicion. Theologians, who engaged in such dialogues, also have different definitions

⁶⁸ PANIKKAR, Raimund, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, New York/Mahwah, N.J. 1978, 45-46; [hereafter: R. PANIKKAR, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*].

⁶⁹ Cf. LESSING, G. E., *Nathan der Weise*, Stuttgart 1779, 78-83.

and conceptions of dialogue basing on their theology. In catholic theological world, pluralist theologians attempt to reinterpret and reconstruct Christian theological dogmas. The so called “Copernican revolution” in theology is already discussed in the first chapter. They, by emphasising theocentrism, want to place religions in dialogue in an equal level.⁷⁰ They hold that without such a reconstruction of Christianity, Christian religion is not capable of engaging in dialogue with the religious other. Catholic Church has always rejected this view because it relativizes uniqueness of Jesus Christ and consequently it is far from catholic belief.⁷¹

Some other theologians argue that pluralist theologians through relativizing Christology and Trinity make dialogue impossible from Christian part, “since in that case the pluralist has already forsaken a traditional and [...] essential Christian claim for the sake of dialogue.”⁷² J. Moltmann argues that by relativizing all religious truth claims, pluralist theology of religions do add nothing more to the dialogue than the other Christian theologies of religions that pluralists want to overcome. Another important question is, “are only those religious communities which accept the conditions of dialogue as suggested by the “pluralistic theology” worthy of dialogue?”⁷³ According to Moltmann, the religion which has given up claiming uniqueness is a religion without significance.⁷⁴ Catholic Church promotes the dialogue between religions. But it is not in the sense that she lacks the fullness of truth and therefore has to engage in dialogue in order to realize the fullness of truth. Catholic understanding of dialogue is different from that of pluralists. But at the same time Church does not reject the possibility of truth in other religions (cf. NA 2, AG 11).

2.4 Catholic Understanding of Dialogue

Christianity is developed in the presence of Judaism and various Hellenistic and roman religions. From the very beginning it has developed its *credo* in the context of other religious believes. But the intercourse between Christianity and other religions at that

⁷⁰ Cf. J. HICK, *The Rainbow of Faiths*; P. F. KNITTER, *One Earth Many Religions*.

⁷¹ We have to read the CDF document *dominus Jesus* in this context.

⁷² E. LUTHER COPELAND, *A New Meeting of the Religions. Interreligious Relationships and Theological Questioning*, Texas 1999, 194.

⁷³ J. MOLTSMANN, *Is “Pluralistic Theology” Useful for the Dialogue of World Religions?*, in: Gavin D’COSTA (ed.), *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered. The Myth of a Pluralist Theology of Religions*, New York 1990, 155; [J. MOLTSMANN, *Is “Pluralistic Theology” Useful for the Dialogue of World Religions?*].

⁷⁴ Cf. J. MOLTSMANN, *Is “Pluralistic Theology” Useful for the Dialogue of World Religions?* 154-155

time had a form of apologetics than that of dialogue. Dialogue in its full sense is a modern phenomenon. The Second Vatican Council is a milestone, from which onwards Catholic Church officially took initiative to the interreligious dialogue and opened herself for this purpose. Formation of Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue based on *Nostra Aetate* in the proximity of the Council is a landmark in the history of Catholic Church.⁷⁵ John Paul Second's symbolic actions such as visit to chief rabbi in the synagogue in Rome, his speech to young Muslims in the stadium at Casablanca in 1985, gathering in Assisi in October 1986, pilgrimage to Jerusalem with the visit to Yad Vashem and the Wailing Wall in 2000, etc are positive signs of Catholic Church's attitude towards other religions.⁷⁶

Whether the positive approach to other religions diminishes the missionary zeal of Catholic Church is a widely discussed theme. But the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue makes the stand of Catholic Church clear: "[d]ialogue is a two-way communication. It implies speaking and listening, giving and receiving, for mutual growth and enrichment. It includes witness to one's own faith as well as openness to that of the other. It is not a betrayal of mission of the Church, nor is it a new method of conversion to Christianity."⁷⁷ Two documents, "Dialogue and Mission" and "Dialogue and Proclamation," published by the Pontifical Council, besides other papal documents, clarifies the catholic view on interreligious dialogue. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue differentiates various types of dialogue. There is dialogue on doctrinal field and on the field of daily relationship between believers. The second one promotes mutual respect and common awareness and favours peaceful coexistence (cf. DM 4). *Dialogue and Proclamation* also describes three levels of dialogue.

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

⁷⁵ Pope Paul VI founded in 1964 the Secretariat for Non-Christians. Only in 1988 it was renamed as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

⁷⁶ Cf. R. PANIKKAR, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, 46.

⁷⁷ Homepage of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html

and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment" (DP 9).

Understanding of Catholic Church on dialogue will be clearer from the following discussion. It is not easy to summarize Church's position in this theme, because there is a wide range of documents and they are sometime vague and to a certain extent contradicting. We are trying to elucidate Church's position under some simple sensible headings.

2.4.1 Necessity of Dialogue

Church does not see dialogue simply as an option among others, but as a necessity of the time. She exhorts Christians to engage in dialogue with the followers of other religions with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life (cf. NA 2). Here it is clear that according to catholic understanding witnessing to the Christian faith goes always along with dialogue. The pastoral constitution on Church in the modern world sees dialogue in close relation to the mission of the Church. "By virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all men of whatever nation, race or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of that brotherhood which allows honest dialogue and gives it vigor" (GS 92). Dialogue is to be guided solely by love and does not exclude anyone even the oppressors of the Church (cf. GS 92).

Second Vatican Council urges the need of dialogue, but do not provide detailed theological foundations for dialogue. Raimund Panikkar observes, "Indeed, the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* primarily proposed a certain ethic of dialogue with other religions. It did not provide a theological basis that could clearly justify the dialogue encouraged by the Church."⁷⁸ In this regard the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* is relevant. In this encyclical, which was published during the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI deals with dialogue. It is not precisely on interreligious dialogue, but on dialogue of the Church with the world and all human beings. Pope finds the foundation of dialogue in the missionary command received by apostles (cf. ES 64) and origin of dialogue in the mind of God himself, because He is in constant dialogue with man (cf. ES 70). In 1964, during the 38th International Eucharistic congress held in Bombay, while

⁷⁸ R. PANIKKAR, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, 47.

addressing different religious leaders, Pope said about the coming together of all, as children of God and as pilgrims who set out to find God in human hearts. In *Redemptor Hominis*, Pope John Paul Second affirms the presence of “seeds of the Word” in other religions and the very self awareness of the Church is formed a [sic] “in-dialogue” (cf. RH 11).

The document Dialogue and Mission states that “Dialogue is fundamental for the Church, which is called to collaborate in God’s plan with its methods of presence, respect, and love towards all persons” (DM 2, cf. AG 10-12, ES 41-42, RH 11-12). “For the Church, Dialogue is based on the very life of God, one and triune” (DM 2). The foundation of the Church’s commitment to dialogue is not merely anthropological but primarily theological. God, who is eternally in dialogue, always offers salvation to humankind and therefore the Church, which is the universal sacrament of salvation, must enter into dialogue with all men and women for salvation (cf. DP 33, 38). All Christians are called to dialogue irrespective of their expertise in Christian Dogma (cf. DM 4). These statements and understanding of dialogue prove that the dialogue is an inevitable character and duty of Catholic Church.

2.4.2 Dialogue and Church’s Evangelizing Mission

If dialogue is so important today, does it replace the evangelizing mission of the Church? Are dialogue and mission identical? Church officially has never renounced its mission to invite all peoples to the kingdom of God. The Catholic Church respects and esteems non-Christian religions. But it does not mean that the Church withholds from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ. These people have the right to know the riches of the mystery of Christ (cf. EN 53). Pope John Paul Second states clearly that openness to others, readiness to dialogue and shared investigation of truth do not mean “giving up or in any way underestimating the treasures of divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught” (RH 6). Mentioning St. Paul’s speech in the Areopagus at Athens Pope says “The mission is never destruction, but instead is a taking up and fresh building [...]” (RH 12). When we think in this direction it is recognisable that the Catholic Church always places dialogue in the broader framework of mission. The document Dialogue and Mission states it clearly, “[T]he fact that Christian mission can never be separated from love and respect for others is proof for Christians of the place of dialogue within that mission” (DM 19). In Dialogue and

Proclamation, the term proclamation is used for the evangelization in its specific sense and it understands dialogue as “one of the integral elements of the Church’s evangelizing mission” (DP 8-9). Dialogue is not opposite to the mission *ad gentes*. It is one of the expressions of mission. There is no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue. Both are distinctive and at the same time interrelated (cf. RM 55, DP 77). But the dialogue is not whole of mission. Mission cannot be replaced by dialogue (cf. DP 82).

2.4.3 The Fruits of Interreligious Dialogue

The fruits of dialogue are not confined simply to worldly realm. Dialogue produces spiritual and intellectual fruits. Interreligious dialogue fosters mutual respect and it leads to better relationships. Such relationships based on respect and love are essential in solving the problems of human suffering. Without dialogue it is impossible to overcome the barriers of prejudice, suspicion and misunderstanding. Common efforts, irrespective of religion and other differences, to solve ecological problems and social and political inequalities are the phenomena of modern times. Besides this, Catholic Church considers dialogue as a means of seeking after truth and of sharing the truth with others. This search for truth is to be carried out by free enquiry with the help of teaching, communication and dialogue. The fruits of dialogue does not confine to the betterment of humanity. Dialogue fosters not only union between people, but also union of people with God.⁷⁹ A deeper conversion of all towards God is the ultimate aim of dialogue (cf. DP 41). Dialogue, to the Church, is always connected with its mission that is the realization of kingdom of God with its spatio-temporal and metaphysical implications.

2.4.4 Dialogue and Conversion

Does dialogue implies a conversion is an important question, if dialogue is seen in relation with proclamation. If dialogue does imply conversion, in which direction goes it? Church does not reject the possibility of conversion in dialogue. Dialogue can enrich the participants. The participants must be consistent with their own religious traditions and convictions. Dialogue leads to inner purification and conversion (cf. RM 56). Sincere dialogue implies respect for the free decision of persons taken according to the dictates of their conscience (cf. DP 41).

⁷⁹ Cf. Pope John Paul Second’s Address to the leaders of other religions, 4.

It is explicit that a person, when s/he is urged with inner conviction, can have a conversion in his/her religious conviction. Is this possibility only in one direction, i.e. from other religious conviction to true religion (Christianity)? In principle there is also a chance to convert from Christianity to other religious convictions. But church does see it as deviation from the truth. She accepts the shared investigation of the truth in interreligious dialogue. But this investigation of the truth is to be done in the spirit of Gospel. Investigation of truth does not mean “giving up or in any way underestimating the treasures of divine truth that the Catholic Church has constantly confessed and taught” (RH 6). The encyclical emphasises again that the noble thing to have a predisposition for recognizing what is right does not mean losing certitude about one’s faith (cf. RH 6). In an address to the Roman Curia on 22 December, 1986, Pope John Paul Second says that despite the differences in religions humans are included in the great and unique design of God, in Jesus Christ, who has united himself in some manner to every person even if the person is not aware of this.⁸⁰ “[...] The Catholic Church strives constantly [...] to bring all humanity [...] back to its source in Christ with him as its head and united in His Spirit” (LG 13). All persons are called to this catholic unity of the People of God. *Dominus Jesus* utters firmly that the interreligious dialogue is a part of Church’s evangelizing mission (cf. DI 22, RM 55, EA 31).

These observations make clear that dialogue implies conversion, but Church expects, prays and strives for the conversion of all people to the truth, which is necessary for salvation and contained in the Church. The Church must be primarily committed to proclaim to all people the truth, definitively revealed by the Lord and to announce the necessity of conversion to Jesus Christ and for the adherence to the Church through baptism (cf. DI 22).

2.5 Pluralists on Dialogue

Understanding of pluralists theologians on dialogue is different from that of catholic understanding. As we mentioned earlier the paradigm shift in theology was suggested by pluralist theologians to make dialogue possible in its true sense. Paul F. Knitter wants to place all religions in an equal level so that these religions can come together for dialogue without superior and inferior complexes. Therefore he calls for

⁸⁰ Cf. Address to Roman Curia on 22 December 1986, 5.

theocentrism rather than christocentrism in Christianity.⁸¹ John Hick places all religions in the same level basing on his empirical criterion. He rejects the Christian claim for absolute truth because Christianity has proved itself otherwise through its inhuman acts in the history.⁸² Even the incarnation of Jesus Christ is not to be considered literally, but metaphorically.⁸³ Bede Griffiths, an Indian based pluralist theologian holds the position that the Truth, who is Christ, can be fully known only if he is met in the wisdom of the other religions as well as in Christianity. It is impossible to be a Christian in any complete sense, if one is ignorant of the treasures of wisdom in other religious traditions.⁸⁴ Like other he also points out “[t]he most urgent need in Christianity as in all religions is to evaluate itself critically in order to distinguish clearly between what is historical conditioning and what is the essential Truth.”⁸⁵

We can observe a clear contradiction between catholic teaching on interreligious dialogue and pluralists’ view of dialogue. Pluralist theologians consider all religions as equal and they are oriented towards God and dialogue as a way to discover the Ultimate Truth. Catholic Church holds firmly that the whole Truth is contained fully in the revelation through Jesus Christ and entrusted to the Catholic Church.

2.6 Dupuis on Dialogue

After seeing the catholic and pluralist understanding on dialogue it is interesting to know how Dupuis develops his theology of dialogue based on his theology of religious pluralism. By reviewing the *magisterium* of that time Dupuis finds a slight development in the conception of dialogue. Pope John Paul Second has affirmed the presence of Holy Spirit in the persons of other religions and in the prayer of every person. But the dialogue was not yet propounded in terms of mission and evangelization. With the document Dialogue and Mission it became explicit that the interreligious dialogue is the part of evangelizing mission of the Church.

⁸¹ Cf. Paul F. KNITTER, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes to World Religions*, Maryknoll NY 1985, 170-231.

⁸² Cf. Marianne MOYAERT, “Why are Theologians annoyed by John Hick?,” in: *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*²² 2 (2012), 196-198.

⁸³ Detailed account of their theology is dealt in first chapter.

⁸⁴ Cf. Judson B. TRAPNELL, Bede Griffiths. *A Life in Dialogue*, Albany 2001, 185-186; [hereafter: J. B. TRAPNELL, Bede Griffiths].

⁸⁵ J. B. TRAPNELL, Bede Griffiths, 187.

All missionary activities are to be done in a spirit of dialogue. But “dialogue as a distinct dimension of evangelization is [...] clearly distinguished from the “spirit of dialogue” that must inform all the expressions of the Church’s evangelizing mission.”⁸⁶ Then what is the place of interreligious dialogue in the evangelizing mission of the Church? Analysing *Redemptoris Missio* and “Dialogue and Proclamation” Dupuis points out the answer to these questions. On the one side, dialogue cannot be reduced to a means for proclamation. On the other side, dialogue does not dispense from evangelization. Proclamation has the permanent priority in the evangelizing mission of the Church. Dialogue discovers and acknowledges the “seeds of the Word” in other religions and it leads to deep examination of Church’s own identity.⁸⁷

2.6.1 Comparison between *Redemptoris Missio* and “Dialogue and Proclamation”

Dupuis observes some differences between *Redemptoris Missio* and “Dialogue and Proclamation” regarding the relationship between dialogue and proclamation. Firstly, in *Redemptoris Missio* the emphasis is on proclamation, whereas “Dialogue and Proclamation” lays emphasis on dialogue. Secondly, the former appears more ecclesiocentric and the latter is more Christocentric and regnocentric. Thirdly, “Dialogue and Proclamation” affirms clearly that the dialogue and proclamation are not on the same level. They are related with each other theologically. Dialogue is oriented toward proclamation till the evangelizing mission of Church reaches in its fullness. *Redemptoris Missio* holds the priority of proclamation. Despite the differences both of them asserts that dialogue cannot be reduced to a means of proclamation. Dupuis observes here a forward step in the teaching of Church on evangelization, dialogue and proclamation.⁸⁸

2.6.2 Dupuis’ Differentiation between Proclamation and Dialogue

According to Dupuis, “Dialogue and Proclamation” has some ambiguities in the statements on the universal reality of the Reign of God and on the role of the other religious traditions as paths to salvation for their followers. There is also ambiguity in

⁸⁶ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 363.

⁸⁷ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 360-365; J. DUPUIS, *Dialogue and Proclamation in Two Recent Roman Documents*, in: A. THOTTAKKARA (ed.), *Dialogical Dynamics of Religions*, Rome 1993, 110-31.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 368-370.

describing the relationship between dialogue and proclamation. On the one hand interreligious dialogue is considered in itself as an authentic form of evangelization and on the other hand proclamation as the central element of evangelization, without which the other forms of mission of the Church lose their cohesion and vitality. Dupuis questions that “[i]f proclamation needs to be present always, is dialogue *in itself* a genuine form of evangelization? And can it be maintained that both are “absolutely necessary” (DP 89)?”⁸⁹

He further tries to explain his position regarding the relationship between dialogue and proclamation. His position is different from that of pluralist theologians. Dupuis examines in particular the opinion of Paul F. Knitter and differs himself from Knitter. Knitter proposes the identification of mission with dialogue. Knitter, by pointing out the ambiguities of the document “Dialogue and Proclamation,” says that the aims of dialogue and proclamation differ from each other. The aim of dialogue is a deeper conversion of the partners towards God. Proclamation is an invitation extended to others to become disciples of Jesus in the Church. Knitter differentiates clearly that the conversion of partners of dialogue towards God does not mean that the conversion of the other partner to one’s own way. Dupuis observes that Knitter’s reduction of mission to dialogue is the natural outcome of his theology. For Knitter, dialogue is mission and mission is dialogue.⁹⁰

Dupuis clears his position by admitting the tension and ambiguity in the document “Dialogue and Proclamation.” According to him, such a tension remains and must remain in the reality of Church’s evangelizing mission. The same tension exists between dialogue and proclamation. He identifies this tension with the tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ dimensions of the Church. Church is ‘already’ the sacrament of the reality of the Kingdom in the world and therefore, she has to proclaim Jesus Christ, in whom the Kingdom of God has been established by God, to the world. Since she is ‘not yet’ identifiable with the Kingdom of God and she is on pilgrimage to the

⁸⁹ J. DUPUIS, A Theological Commentary. Dialogue and Proclamation, in: W. R. BURROWS (ed.), *Redemption and Dialogue*, Maryknoll NY 1993, 154; [hereafter: J. DUPUIS, A Theological Commentary: Dialogue and Proclamation].

⁹⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 372-373.

Kingdom of God with others, she has to engage in dialogue with others.⁹¹ So underlines Dupuis the necessity of dialogue in the life of Church with other religions.

2.7 Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter the implications and complexities of dialogue and how the concept dialogue is differently understood by theologians according to their theological standpoints. As in the first chapter, here also I used the same methodology to understand Dupuis' idea of dialogue, i.e. the comparison of his position with that of Catholic Church and that of pluralist theologians. Dupuis does not explicitly take a different stand from that of Catholic Church. Catholic Church accepts dialogue as a part of mission, whereas pluralists hold that dialogue itself is the mission. Dupuis opines that proclamation and dialogue are distinct. He not only admits the tension between these two but also connects this tension to the very nature of Church. I think this is the peculiarity of Dupuis intelligence. He, with the flexibility of thinking and with an insight of an experienced mystic, tries to harmonize different views.

⁹¹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *A Theological Commentary: Dialogue and Proclamation*, 155; J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 371.

Chapter III

Magisterial response to Dupuis: *Dominus Jesus* and Notification

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter we are examining two documents by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which have great importance with regard to the theology of religious pluralism of Dupuis. First one is *Dominus Jesus*, which is published on 6th August 2000. The second one is addressed particularly to the readers of Dupuis' book "Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism". Even though they are two different documents, they show similarities not only in their *genus literarium* but also in their contents.

3.1 *Dominus Jesus*

Dominus Jesus, published by the Congregation for the doctrine of faith in 2000, initiated a wide range of discussions, among which prevails the criticism that the document has the dialogue between religions and between Christian churches discouraged and the openness of the Catholic Church diminished. Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian theologian and known supporter of liberation theology criticised *Dominus Jesus* as totalitarian.⁹² Peter Hünemann, noticed the lack of clarity in the statements of the document.⁹³ These are only some samples of variety of responses. We are trying to understand the document more closely by researching into its context.

3.1.1 General Context

Second Vatican Council opened the doors of the Catholic Church not only to the modern world but also to other religions and to other Christian Churches. It was the first

⁹² Cf. BOFF, Leonardo, Die Erklärung „*Dominus Jesus*“ ist totalitär, in: NW [Neue Wege] 94 (2000), 313-320.

⁹³ Cf. HÜNNERMANN, Peter, Theologische Reflexionen zu einem umstrittenen römischen Lehrdokument, in: FRANZ, Albert (Hg.), Was ist Heute noch Katholisch? Zum Streit um die Innere Einheit und Vielfalt der Kirche, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2001, 85; [hereafter: P. HÜNNERMANN, Theologische Reflexionen zu einem umstrittenen römischen Lehrdokument].

Council, which try to appreciate other religions in their own right and to define the relationship between Christianity and other religions in a positive manner (cf. LG 13). For the first time in a text by Roman Catholic *Magisterium*, the appreciation of the religious other referred not only to individual persons of other beliefs but to their religious traditions as such (cf. LG 13). The universal salvific will of God does not confine to a group, but since it is universal, it is applicable to all. “All men are called to belong to the new people of God” (LG 13). This can be interpreted in a strict missionary sense, i.e., as a universal call to all people to be the member of the Catholic Church. Then the ‘new people of God’ is completely identified with the Catholic Church, which is the only true and real religion. But the Second Vatican Council states that “the Catholic Church does not reject anything that is true and holy in these [other] religions” (NA 2). Comparing with the traditional exclusive views about other religions it was a considerable change.

This was further deepened in the world prayer day in Assisi in 1986. There was no such a situation in the history of the Catholic Church that marked by positive and open attitude towards other religions and other churches.⁹⁴ Since we have already discussed the attitude of Catholic Church towards other religions in the second chapter, it is not to be dealt here. From that chapter it is clear that there is an ambiguity and vagueness in the Second Vatican Council documents regarding the attitude towards other religions. The Council has left the salvific status of other religions open even though it made several positive assertions of them, including recognizing them as “concrete sociological realities.”⁹⁵ An answer to this ambiguity was given in the encyclical *Redemptoris missio* in 1990 by Pope John Paul Second. But the statements of this encyclical regarding christological and dogmatic truths were not sufficiently noticed. It was widely understood only as a missionary encyclical and its dogmatic and christological importance was undermined.⁹⁶ However, based on the positive attitude of Second Vatican Council, there were different attempts to redefine the presence of other religions in contemporary pluralistic society. Different theologians have tried to accept and interpret the plurality of religions in a positive way, among which the so-called

⁹⁴ Cf. P. HÜNERMANN, Theologische Reflexionen zu einem umstrittenen römischen Lehrdokument 73.

⁹⁵ Cf. RAHNER, Karl, On the Importance of the Non-Christian Religions for Salvation, in: his, *God and Revelation*, Theological Investigations 18, London-New York 1983, 289f.

⁹⁶ Cf. AMATO, Angelo, Einzigkeit und Universalität des Heilsmysteriums Jesu Christi, in: MÜLLER, Gerhard Ludwig (ed.), *Die Heilsuniversalität Christi und der Kirche. Original Texte und Studien der römischen Glaubenskongregation zur Erklärung „Dominus Jesus,”* Würzburg 2003, 103.

pluralists have called for a demythologization of the Christian dogmas. It is this theological development, which is labelled as relativism, was the immediate context of the document *Dominus Jesus*.

3.1.2 Immediate Context of *Dominus Jesus*

The pluralist model of theology holds that the dogmatic statements, which describe Jesus as the one and only redeemer of the world, and the claims that concerning the universality of Church are to be discouraged. This position is not completely new in the history of theology. In 1902, Ernst Troeltsch, in his book ‘Des Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte,’ rejected the absoluteness of Christianity. He challenged the tendency to describe Christian religion as supernatural revelation and other religions as natural religion, and the historical-evolutionary view of Hegelian Idealism, which views Christianity as the highest point of fulfilment of absolute spirit.⁹⁷ Pluralist theologians like John Hick, Paul Knitter, etc. tried to relativize Christian mystery as a part of a programme to place all religions in equal level for a fruitful dialogue.⁹⁸ Their theological position is already discussed in the first chapter. *Dominus Jesus* directly addresses this situation.

In the practice of dialogue between the Christian faith and other religious traditions,[...] new questions arise that need to be addressed through pursuing new paths of research, advancing proposals, and suggesting ways of acting that call for attentive discernment. In this task, the present Declaration seeks to recall to Bishops, theologians, and all the Catholic faithful, certain indispensable elements of Christian doctrine [...] (DI 3).

Dominus Jesus directly expresses its mistrust about the relativistic theories of pluralist theologians. “The Church's constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* but also *de jure* (or in principle). As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded” (DI 4). Here is a direct indication to the theology of religious pluralism of Dupuis. Dupuis opines that the plurality of religions is to be accepted not only as *de facto* but also as *de jure*.⁹⁹ *Dominus Jesus* stands against this attitude.

⁹⁷ Cf. TROELTSCH, E., *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, München-Hamburg 1969, 84-91.

⁹⁸ Cf. HICK, John (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*, London 1977; HICK, John/KNITTER, Paul F. (ed.), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. Toward a Pluralist Theology of Religion*, Maryknoll 1987.

⁹⁹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 11f, 386f.

The document lists the dogmatic truths which are relativized and diminished because of the relativistic theories (cf. DI 4). It names the theological developments, which cause the relativization of Christian doctrines, as a ‘problem’. “The roots of these problems are to be found [...]” (DI 4). *Dominus Jesus* finds the roots of these problems in some philosophical and theological presuppositions. They are:

the conviction of the elusiveness and inexpressibility of divine truth, even by Christian revelation; relativistic attitudes toward truth itself, according to which what is true for some would not be true for others; the radical opposition posited between the logical mentality of the West and the symbolic mentality of the East; the subjectivism which, by regarding reason as the only source of knowledge, becomes incapable of raising its “gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being” (DI 4).

From this it is clear that to which background is the document *Dominus Jesus* indebted for its origin. The document wants “to reassert the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ” (DI 5) as a remedy for this relativistic mentality. This background plays a significant role in the language and style of the document.

3.1.3 *Genus literarium* of the Document

According to CDF, the document *Dominus Jesus* is a declaration on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church. Tarcisio Bertone, then secretary of the CDF, declares that the very concept ‘declaration’ means that the document teaches not something new as a part of faith, but it simply emphasizes the teachings of the Catholic Church, which are already taught through previous magisterial documents.¹⁰⁰ The document was criticized by many theologians for its apodictic¹⁰¹, assertive and exclusive¹⁰² style. There are other types of review on *Dominus Jesus* that the usage of assertive and apodictic language is in tune with the nature of the document that is ‘declaration.’ For example, Akinwale considers *Dominus Jesus* as “a timely

¹⁰⁰ Cf. BERTONE, Tarcisio, Presentation to the Press Office of the Holy See of the *Dominus Jesus* Declaration, URL: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000905_dominus-iesus-bertone_it.html; (Stand: 22. 02. 2018); [hereafter: T. BERTONE, Presentation to the Press Office of the Holy See of the *Dominus Jesus* Declaration].

¹⁰¹ Cf. McDONNELL, Kilian, The Unique Mediator in a Unique Church. A Return to Pre-Vatican II Theology? In: ER [The Ecumenical Review] 52: 4 (2000), 544.

¹⁰² Cf. ADMIRAND, Peter, Rifts, Trust, and Openness. Pope John Paul II’s Legacy in Catholic Intra- and Interreligious Dialogue, in: JES [Journal of Ecumenical Studies] 47:4 (2012), 566.

reaffirmation and clarification of Vatican II” through the very title of his essay.¹⁰³ In fact, the document itself was aware of its apodictic and assertive style and states: “The expository language of the Declaration corresponds to its purpose” (DI 3). It does not intend to treat in a systematic manner the question of the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ and the Church. It is reiterated by the then secretary of the CDF. “As is explicitly mentioned in the Introduction, the document does not purport to deal in an organic and systematic way with the whole problem concerning the Christological and ecclesiological topics exhibited.”¹⁰⁴

The document wants only to set forth again the doctrine of the Catholic faith and to refute specific positions that are erroneous or ambiguous. It takes up what has been taught in previous magisterial documents in order to reiterate certain truths that are part of the Church's faith (cf. DI 3). That is why it follows such a style, which is criticized even as ‘Catholic Fundamentalism.’¹⁰⁵

3.2 Notification on the Book ‘Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism’

This notification by CDF is the direct response to Dupuis’ theology of religious pluralism, whereas *Dominus Iesus* was a response generally to the pluralist theologians. As it is mentioned in the introduction, the style and language of the document corresponds to *Dominus Iesus*. Their content is also similar. The very first foot note of the notification clearly states the relationship between two documents.

Because of tendencies in some circles, which have become increasingly evident in the thinking of the Christian faithful, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published the Declaration “*Dominus Iesus*” on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church [...] in order to protect essential truths of the Catholic faith. The *Notification* draws from the principles expressed in *Dominus Iesus* in its evaluation of Father Dupuis’ book.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Cf. AKINWALE, Anthony A., A Timely Reaffirmation and Clarification of Vatican II, in: POPE, Stephen J./HEFLING, Charles (ed.), *Sic et Non. Encountering Dominus Iesus*, New York 2002, 169-178.

¹⁰⁴ T. BERTONE, Presentation to the Press Office of the Holy See of the *Dominus Iesus* Declaration.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. MAY, John D’Arcy, Catholic Fundamentalism? Some Implications of *Dominus Iesus* for Dialogue and Peacemaking, in: RAINER, Michael J., “*Dominus Iesus*”. Anstößige Wahrheit oder anstößige Kirche? Dokumente, Hintergründe, Standpunkte und Folgerungen, Münster-Hamburg-London 2001, 112-133.

¹⁰⁶ CDF, Notification on the the Book ‘Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism’, footnote 1; [hereafter: Notification].

From this it is clear that the congregation includes Dupuis' position also within the 'tendencies,' which is mentioned in *Dominus Jesus*. The notification, published in 2001, appreciates author's attempt to remain within the limits of orthodoxy as well as his desire to remain faithful to the doctrine of the Church and at the same time states that the book contains "notable ambiguities and difficulties on important doctrinal points, which could lead a reader to erroneous or harmful opinions."¹⁰⁷ As in *Dominus Jesus*, the notification also states that there are some ambiguities to be cleared (cf. DI 3).¹⁰⁸ Both documents find a list of ambiguities to be corrected. In the notifications they are the "points concerned the interpretation of the sole and universal salvific mediation of Christ, the unicity and completeness of Christ's revelation, the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit, the orientation of all people to the Church, and the value and significance of the salvific function of other religions"¹⁰⁹ (also cf. DI 4). Here also the similarities of the themes are noticeable. Dupuis has personally noticed the connection between *Dominus Jesus* and the Notification, mainly in their subject matter and methodology.¹¹⁰ Therefore, in our investigation we are dealing with the two documents of CDF as a unit.

3.3 Important theological contents

Dominus Jesus has a lot of implications, which concern the ecumenical dialogue and ecclesiology¹¹¹. But "most of the *D.I.* referred to the issue of the salvific significance of non-Christian religions rather than to ecumenical dialogue."¹¹² Since the ecumenical dialogue does not come under the scope of this work, I concentrate more on the themes,

¹⁰⁷ RETTENBACHER, Sigrid, One Text- different Meanings. The Notification on Jaques Dupuis in the Light of the Second Vatican Council, in: CHEETHAM, David/WINKLER, Ulrich/LEIRVIK, Oddbjorn/GRUBER, Judith (ed.), *Interreligious Hermeneutic in pluralist Europe. Between Texts and People*, Amsterdam-New York 2011, 13f; [hereafter: S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings].

¹⁰⁸ Notification, Preface.

¹⁰⁹ Notification, Preface.

¹¹⁰ DUPUIS, Jaques, *Christianity and Religions. From Confrontation to Dialogue*, New York 2002, 260; [hereafter: J. DUPUIS, *Christianity and Religions*].

¹¹¹ Cf. JÜNGEL, Eberhard, Quo vadis ecclesia? Kritische Bemerkungen zu zwei neuen Texten der römischen Kongregation für die Glaubenslehre, in: RAINER, Michael J., "Dominus Iesus". Anstößige Wahrheit oder anstößige Kirche? Dokumente, Hintergründe, Standpunkte und Folgerungen, Münster-Hamburg-London 2001, 59-67; JÜNGEL, Eberhard, Paradoxe Ökumene, in: RAINER, Michael J., "Dominus Iesus". Anstößige Wahrheit oder anstößige Kirche? Dokumente, Hintergründe, Standpunkte und Folgerungen, Münster-Hamburg-London 2001, 68-78.

¹¹² TAN, Loe-Joo, "Things are not What They Seem." *Dominus Iesus*, Ecumenism, and Interreligious Dialogue, in: JES [Journal of Ecumenical Studies], 48:4 (2013), 532; [hereafter: L. TAN, "Things are not What They Seem"].

which affect the dialogue between religions. There are so many factors to see this document also as a response to Dupuis. It is published after 3 years of the publication of Dupuis' masterwork 'Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism' and the notification, published by CDF has the same style and content of *Dominus Jesus*. Loe-Joo Tan, an evangelical theologian, rightly opines that the document was not only targeted at Catholic ecumenical attempts but also directed against proponents of interreligious dialogue, who veer towards a more pluralistic position, such as Jacques Dupuis.¹¹³ The notification, as it is directly concerned with the book of Dupuis, can be seen as a reiteration of *Dominus Jesus* with particular emphasis on some points. A comparison between the outlines and themes of both documents does make the things clear.

<i>Dominus Jesus</i>	Notification
I The fullness and definitiveness of the revelation of Jesus Christ.	I On the sole and universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ.
II The Incarnate Logos and the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation.	II On the unicity and completeness of revelation of Jesus Christ.
III Unicity and Universality of the salvific mystery of Jesus Christ.	III On the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit.
IV Unicity and unity of the Church.	IV On the orientation of human beings to the Church.
V The Church: Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Christ.	V On the value and salvific function of the Religious Traditions.
VI The Church and the other Religions in relation to salvation.	

The titles are almost parallel and dealing the same subjects.

3.3.1 Pluralism *de jure* and *de facto*

The subject of *Dominus Jesus*, as it is clear from the title, is uniqueness and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church. It is against the attempts to justify the

¹¹³ Cf. L. TAN, "Things are not What They Seem." 523.

reality of religious pluralism of principle (*de jure*). It calls the theories, which consider the religious pluralism *de jure* good, relativistic theories. Religious pluralism is a reality (*de facto*). When it is justified *de jure*, it leads to relativization of certain truths, for example, the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the personal unity between the Eternal Word and Jesus of Nazareth, the unity of the economy of the Incarnate Word and the Holy Spirit, the universal salvific mediation of the Church, etc (cf. DI 4).

Dupuis, on the contrary, affirms religious pluralism of principle (*de jure*). He finds its foundation on the immensity of a God who is love. According to him it is improper to consider religion as human quest for the divine. If religion has its original source in a divine self-manifestation to human beings, the principle of plurality is based on the superabundant richness and diversity of God's self-manifestations to humankind. Quoting Hebrews 1, 1 he says that God spoke in many and various ways before speaking through his son.¹¹⁴ But interestingly, the notification on the book of Dupuis does not speak directly about this issue.

3.3.2 Christological Assertions

3.3.2.1 Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ

Dominus Jesus takes its stand against all the so-called relativistic theories of theology of religions, which diminishes the fullness and universality of Jesus Christ. Quoting supporting biblical and magisterial references, also *Dei Verbum* 2, it states that “the theory of the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which would be complementary to that found in other religions, is contrary to the Church's faith” (DI 6). It also rejects the theological approaches, which considers “him [Jesus Christ] a particular, finite, historical figure, who reveals the divine not in an exclusive way, but in a way complementary with other revelatory and salvific figures” (DI 9). Against such theories, the document wants to defend Christian faith by asserting several statements about Jesus Christ. “The universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God” (DI 14). “Jesus Christ has a significance and a value for the human race and

¹¹⁴ Cf. J. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 387.

its history, which are unique and singular, proper to him alone, exclusive, universal, and absolute” (DI 15).

Dupuis does not reject the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. In this attitude he differs from pluralist theologians. But according to him, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is ‘constitutive’ not ‘absolute’. Against the pluralists he suggests ‘relational’ instead of ‘relative’.¹¹⁵ The notification also responds to such tendencies. “It is therefore contrary to the Catholic faith to maintain that revelation in Jesus Christ (or the revelation of Jesus Christ) is limited, incomplete or imperfect.”¹¹⁶ It also speaks about the sole and universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ and unicity and completeness of revelation of Jesus Christ.

3.3.2.2 *Unity of Eternal Word and Incarnated Word*

Both documents reject all tendencies to separate the eternal Word from the incarnated Word, Jesus Christ (cf. DI 9, 10, 11).¹¹⁷ In this case Dupuis’ standpoint is in tension with the spirit of *Dominus Jesus*. He holds that “the Christ-event [...] does not exhaust the power of Word of God, who became flesh in Jesus Christ”¹¹⁸ and that “[T]he enlightening and saving power of the Logos is not circumscribed by the particularity of the historical event.”¹¹⁹ But, according to Dupuis, there is no difference of economy between the action of Logos *asarkos* and the action of Logos *ensarkos*. *Dominus Jesus* rejects the positions which hold that there is an economy of the eternal Word in addition to an economy of the incarnate Word and the first would have a greater universal value than the second (cf. DI 9). But Dupuis says that a distinct action of the Logos *asarkos* endures not as constituting a distinct economy of salvation, parallel to that of Logos *ensarkos*.¹²⁰

3.3.2.3 *Unity of Holy Spirit and Incarnated Word*

Against the theories, which separate the economy of Holy Spirit from that of incarnated Word, the documents hold that the same Spirit works both in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the Church after the ascension of Jesus Christ (cf. DI 12).¹²¹ *Dominus Jesus* affirms that there is a clear connection between the salvific

¹¹⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 387-388; 292-294.

¹¹⁶ Notification 3.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Notification 2.

¹¹⁸ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 319.

¹¹⁹ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 321.

¹²⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 299.

¹²¹ Cf. Notification 5.

mystery of the Incarnate Word and that of the Spirit, The action of the Spirit is not outside or parallel to the action of Christ (DI 12). Dupuis is convinced of the universal presence of the Spirit. He also recognizes the action of Spirit before and after Christ-event. But it is not in the sense that there are two different economies of salvation. Spirit and Word are the two hands of God.¹²²

3.3.3 Church, Other Religious Traditions and Ways of Salvation

Dominus Jesus and the notification emphasises the Church as the sign and instrument of salvation for all people (cf. DI 16).¹²³ There is only a single body of Christ, a single Catholic and Apostolic Church. Referring to Lumen Gentium 8, *Dominus Jesus* states that “[t]his Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in [*subsistit in*] the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him” (DI 16). Against the attempts of certain theologians, who deny the intimate connection between Christ, the Kingdom and the Church, it affirms the close relationship between the Church and Kingdom of Christ (cf. DI 18). Here it is directed against pluralist theologians, who advocates for the primacy of Kingdom rather than of the Church.

According to Dupuis, the Church has no monopoly on the Reign of God and she has to be at the service to Reign of God.¹²⁴ The CDF documents unanimously reject all the theologies, which see other religious traditions as ways of salvation complementary to the Church (cf. DI 21).¹²⁵ Church is necessary for salvation. Dupuis recognizes in other religious traditions too certain mediation of the Reign of God. This mediation is different from that of the Church, but no less real.¹²⁶

Other religions are not considered, by CDF, as ways of salvation, complementary to the Church. They are preparation for the Gospel and contain insufficiency and errors (cf. DI 21).¹²⁷ The Church is necessary for salvation (cf. DI 20). The difference between Christianity and other religions cannot be underestimated. The sacred books of other

¹²² Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 197-198; 321.

¹²³ Cf. Notification 6.

¹²⁴ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 356.

¹²⁵ Cf. Notification 6.

¹²⁶ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 356.

¹²⁷ Cf. Notifications 8.

religions have some elements, which may be *de facto* instruments of relationship with God. All their good elements they receive from the mystery of Christ (cf. DI 7, 8).

3.4 CDF Documents and Dupuis' Theology: "one-sided accentuations"?

We have seen the clear cut refutation of the trends of relativism in theology in *Dominus Jesus*, and in the Notification, which resembles *Dominus Jesus*. But there is a wide criticism against the declaration of CDF that it, in order to substantiate its position, selectively refers the magisterial documents. *Dominus Jesus* states that it is necessary to avoid one-sided accentuations when it speaks of the relationship between Kingdom and Church (cf. DI 19). But the document itself lapses into the 'one-sided accentuations' that it demands to be avoided.¹²⁸ According to Elman Klinger, the main problem of *Dominus Jesus* is not concerning what it says, but concerning what it does not say and keep under silence.¹²⁹ *Dominus Jesus* concentrates very much on the identity of the Christian Church. The other religions are considered as the one, against whom the special role of the Church can be emphasized by way of differentiation. The very title in the form of a confession makes the direction and perspective of the document clear.¹³⁰ In the documents of Second Vatican Council there are both very progressive and very conservative streams.¹³¹ This ambivalence played an important role in the later theological development after the council. *Dominus Jesus*, as an attempt to correct the wrong ways of theologizing, also explained and interpreted the documents in a one-sided way.

In the notification to Dupuis also we can see such selectiveness. It is striking that both Dupuis and CDF notification base their reflections on the same text of Second Vatican Council. But they draw very different, even contrasting, conclusions from these texts. While Dupuis, in explaining the documents of council, depends more on *Dialogue and Proclamation*, of which Dupuis was a major contributor, CDF depends largely on

¹²⁸ Cf. S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings 16.

¹²⁹ Cf. KLINGER, Elmar, Jesus und das Gespräch der Religionen. Das Projekt des Pluralismus, Würzburg 2006, 65.

¹³⁰ Cf. S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings 15.

¹³¹ Cf. DIRSCHERL, Erwin, Die Widersprüchliche Vieldeutigkeit von *Dominus Jesus* als Chance, in: FRANZ, Albert (ed.), Was ist Heute noch Katholisch? Zum Streit um die Innere Einheit und Vielfalt der Kirche, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2001, 115.

its own declaration *Dominus Jesus*, which is criticized for its selective reference to the council documents. It is interesting that the notification does not refer to *Dialogue and Proclamation* for a single time, which treats the relationship between interreligious dialogue and proclamation of the gospel.¹³²

3.4.1 Relationship between Christ and Church

Dominus Jesus and notification concentrate clearly on the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ and connects this fullness to the Church. They hold that Christ and the Church “can neither be confused nor be separated” (DI 16). They identify the fullness of revelation with the Church. This becomes prominent in the title of *Dominus Jesus* (cf. DV 2, 4). Both documents do not work with the difference that exists between Jesus Christ and the Church. They omit the second chapter of *Dei verbum*, where in no. 7 this difference is expressed by the metaphor of mirror. Other magisterial documents also mention the pilgrim character of the Church (cf. LG 30, GS 40, DH 12, DP 36). *Dei Verbum* 8 states that the Church has its origin in God and mediates his self-revelation, but it moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her. *Lumen Gentium* 8 emphasise that the Church is an invisible and visible, a divine and human reality and therefore, there is an eschatological tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet.’ *Dominus Jesus* and the notification have not taken this tension as a positive means of relating to other religious traditions as Dupuis does.¹³³

3.4.2 Elements of Truth in Other Religious Traditions

Another tension in the council documents is about the ‘seeds of the words’ and the ‘elements of truth and grace’ in other religious traditions (cf. AG 9, 11). Council sees them as *preperatio evangelica*, which need to be cleansed, healed, raised up and perfected (cf. AG 9, LG 17). They are not only to be saved from the destruction and shall not be lost, but they should be recognized, preserved and promoted (cf. NA 2). While Dupuis tries to cope with this tension,¹³⁴ *Dominus Jesus* and notification concentrate on the first aspect, i.e., to be cleansed and perfected. Thus *Dominus Jesus* says that the followers of other religions are “objectively speaking in a gravely deficient

¹³² Cf. S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings 14-15.

¹³³ Cf. S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings 16.

¹³⁴ Cf. J. DUPUIS, Toward a Christian Theology 164f, 242-244, 382.

situation” (DI 22). It is not able to attribute a divine origin to the elements of truth in other religions and does not see the positive connection between faith in Jesus Christ and other religious traditions, which one can find in *Nostra Aetate* 2. It also acknowledges that it is the task of theology to reflect on the existence of other religious experiences and on their meaning in God’s salvific plan and to explain in what way the historical figures and positive elements of these religions may fall within the divine plan of salvation (cf. DI 14). Although both *Dominus Jesus* and the notifications refer to *Gaudium et Spes* 22, they do it in the one sided way. They refer to these passages to substantiate the sole and universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ in a rather “exclusive” way. They do not take up the positive implications of these passages in relation to the followers of other religious traditions.¹³⁵

3.5 Conclusion

We have seen that the declaration and notification of CDF in order to assert the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ and the Church were addressing the ‘problem’ of relativization in the theology of religions. In this regard their selective use of magisterial texts is justified. But the ambiguities concerning the explanation of some points, for example, the unity and difference between the Church and Kingdom of God, between the Church and Jesus Christ, remain so in spite of CDF documents. But the CDF makes clear that it does not intend to systematically elucidate its position against relativistic tendencies. It only wants to reiterate the traditional doctrines of Christian faith. Dupuis tries to explain theologically the tensions existing in the documents of Church, especially of the Second Vatican Council. In this process, I think, the ambiguities, which are mentioned by CDF, are unavoidable. It may be the incomprehensiveness of the ways of transcendent God, *Deus semper maior*, that stands beyond the explanations and quest of Dupuis. The Catholic Church also recognizes this, when She speaks of ‘in ways known to himself’ (cf. AG 7, DI 21) while dealing with the salvation of individual non-Christians.

¹³⁵ Cf. S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings 17-19.

Chapter IV

Implications of Kenosis in the Theology of Religions

4.0 Introduction

We have already discussed the different interpretations and one sided accentuations of the documents of Second Vatican Council in Dupuis' theology and in CDF documents.¹³⁶ CDF, by defending the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, wants to refute all the tendencies of relativism. Dupuis also holds the universality of Jesus Christ, but he considers only the Triune God as absolute. According to him Jesus' uniqueness is constitutive and relational. Pluralist theologians stand at the other end in comparison with CDF, by holding that only the Ultimate Reality has the absolute nature and Jesus has only a relative uniqueness among other saving figures.

In this chapter we discuss first of all some major differences between the CDF documents and pluralists. The attempt of Dupuis to find his solution, which was generalized as pluralist opinion by CDF, is also mentioned in between. Then the concept of kenosis as a model for interreligious dialogue is presented. It is naturally followed by the implications of concept of kenosis in the theology of religions and in interreligious dialogue.

4.1 Major Differing Points

Reading of previous chapters makes clear that the concern of pluralist theologians and Dupuis is to accommodate all religions in the plan of salvation of God. Dupuis emphasises the one and only plan of salvation, which is valid to each and every human being. CDF tries to defend the primacy of 'Roman Catholic Church', which contains the fullness of revelation through Jesus Christ. Here, the basic theological differences of both approaches are discussed.

¹³⁶ Cf. Chapter 3, Subheading 4 of this paper.

4.1.1 Transcendence of God and Fullness of Revelation

Sigrid Rettenbacher has rightly pointed out the tension between the two aspects, i.e., the concealed and revealed aspects, of revelation. The concealed aspect of revelation emphasises the transcendence of God. Pluralist theologians find the basis of their arguments on the ineffable and ungraspable divine reality (*Deus semper maior*).¹³⁷ It is in this point all the religions, including Christianity can be placed on the same level. CDF documents, on the other hand, emphasises the revealed aspect of revelation. According to them, the fullness of revelation is in Jesus Christ and this fullness of revelation is directly given to the Church by Jesus Christ. They hold that Christ and the Church “can neither be confused nor be separated” (DI 16). Based on this certainty the documents criticises all attempts to relativize the Christian revelation. The notification on Dupuis’ book includes also the theology of Dupuis to the relativizing tendencies, which it does condemn.

When we closely analyse his theology, we can recognize that Dupuis does not come under the so-called relativizing tendencies. Gerald O’Collins, who was the defender of Dupuis before the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, says that Dupuis has never wanted to reduce Christ to one saviour among many.¹³⁸ Dupuis tries to find a middle path between two different positions, i.e., inclusivism and pluralism. In other words Dupuis tries to reconcile the revealed and concealed aspect of Christian revelation. Pluralist theologians, emphasising the concealed aspect (*Deus semper maior*), try to place all religions at the same level. CDF documents try to defend the prominence of Christianity by emphasising the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ. Dupuis, without denying the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ, tries to open a space for dialogue between religions. He himself conveys his intention:

It would be wrong, however, where it seems to imply that any theological theory of religious pluralism in principle is based on the denial of what is in fact the very core of the Christian faith. I hope to show later that it is not so, and there is no lack of theologians today who seek to combine and to hold together, even if in a fruitful tension, their unimpaired faith in Jesus Christ universal Saviour of humankind, on the one hand, and, on the other, a positive,

¹³⁷ Cf. S. RETTENBACHER, One Text- different Meanings 11-12.

¹³⁸ Cf. Gerald O’Collins, in: FS for J. DUPUIS 24.

salvific significance of the other religious traditions of the world for their followers, in accordance to the eternal plan of God for humanity.¹³⁹

In his book 'Christianity and other Religions', Dupuis summarizes the theology of pluralists. Pluralists advocate for a paradigm shift from christocentrism to theocentrism or, in other words, from inclusivism to so-called 'pluralism'. Christians should first of all give up their traditional Christian faith in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as universal Saviour in order to sincerely engage in dialogue with other religious traditions. Jesus Christ is only one among other divine manifestations to peoples in the world, and nothing suggests that a special claim of uniqueness ought to be maintained on his behalf. All religions will then appear as different paths leading to a common goal which is 'Absolute Reality.' Dupuis observes that the position of pluralists corresponds to the theories rejected by the congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Introduction to *Dominus Jesus*. He suggests a different theory to establish religious pluralism in principle in accordance with the Christian faith and with the mystery of Jesus Christ as traditionally understood by the Church. This other kind of religious pluralism in principle is made possible by combining an unimpaired faith in Jesus Christ with the positive salvific significance of the other religious traditions in God's plan for humankind.¹⁴⁰

In the attempt to combine these two elements Dupuis criticises the traditional Christology, which engaged in explaining the mystery of the 'God-man' and the 'hypostatic union' of the two natures in the God-man. According to him the New Testament Christology is not a neutral, abstract Christology of a God-man, but the concrete mystery of the Word-of-God-made-flesh in Jesus of Nazareth. Dupuis positively observes that in this mystery Christology and the divine Trinity are essentially united and inseparable. He reveals his conviction to keep both closely united in his theological thinking in order to develop a theology of religions which would combine Church's christological faith with the salvific value and positive significance of other religious traditions of the world.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ J. DUPUIS, *Christianity and Religions* 459.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Christianity and Religions*, 459-460.

¹⁴¹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Christianity and Religions*, 460-461.

4.1.2 Encounter with the Other versus Defending own Identity and Authority

As we have seen CDF and pluralists stand in extreme positions. While CDF tries to defend the identity of the Church by emphasising the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ and the Church, pluralists demands for a denial of Christian claims in order to engage in fruitful dialogue. Is it possible to have fruitful dialogue with other religions without giving up one's own identity? Dupuis has tried to find out a new way to encounter and respect the religious other without losing the identity of Christian faith. He developed his theology of religious pluralism, which he called "inclusivist pluralism".¹⁴² But his attempt was widely misunderstood and criticised. Even the Church has officially placed his attempt under threat and doubt. Franz Kardinal König has criticised the CDF action against Dupuis. He has pointed out not only the procedural errors and conceptual ambiguities in the acts and document but also the inhuman attitude of CDF.¹⁴³

My attempt is to present a model, which is basic to Christian faith that simultaneously preserves the identity of our faith and makes us capable for fruitful dialogue with other religions. This model is nothing, but kenosis, which is the part and parcel of Christian faith. It goes hand in hand with Dupuis' intention to value other religious traditions without losing the identity of the Church.

4.2. Kenosis

Kenosis is a concept, which found its place not only in theology but also in philosophy. Kenosis, as a refusal to use one's epistemic status as a method to overcome the impasses in dialogue, can be seen in the writings of Hegel. "Hegel's idea of *Entäußerung*, or *kenosis*, involves a refusal to use one's epistemic status [...] as a basis for dominating others. Properly understood, Hegel's idea of *Entäußerung* offers a model for an intellectual virtue that enables people to confront difference and disagreement without domination. It entails humility without humiliation."¹⁴⁴ Martin Luther used a form of the word *Entäußerung* in his German translation of the Bible to capture the idea

¹⁴² Cf. J. DUPUIS, Trinitarian Christology as a Model for a Theology of Religious Pluralism, 97; also Chapter 1, Subheading 5 of this paper.

¹⁴³ Cf. KÖNIG, Franz Kardinal, Let the Spirit Breathe, in FS J. DUPUIS, 14-17.

¹⁴⁴ FARNETH, Molly, "The Power to Empty Oneself". Hegel, Kenosis and Intellectual Virtue, in Political Theology 17 February 2017 vol. 18 (2), 157; [hereafter: M. FARNETH, The Power to Empty Oneself].

of *kenosis* (“emptiness”) in Philippians 2:5–7. ‘*Entäußerung*’ is often translated in English as self-emptying, externalization, or in translations of Karl Marx even as alienation. *Entäußerung* in Christian context means Christ's self-sacrifice.¹⁴⁵

In nineteenth century kenotic theology was a well discussed theme and Wolfgang Gess was one of the main proponents of this theological school. Keiji Nishitani, a well known Japanese philosopher, observed kenotic elements in the Buddhist teaching of *Shunyata* (emptiness). In the post modern philosophy Gianni Vattimo has excessively dealt with the theme kenosis.¹⁴⁶ According to Gianni Vattimo, the kenotic dimension in the biblical image of Jesus has special connotations. Incarnation and Cross brought the traditional metaphysical ontology to an end. All speculative substances of traditional god-concept were overcome. Religion has come out of its metaphysical and ideological corsets and attained a complete validity.¹⁴⁷ The incarnation of God in the form of a slave (kenosis) challenges the institutions and structures of the world to avoid the forms of authority and to take the role of servant.¹⁴⁸

Kenosis is the key point in the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar. His theology was kenotic theology than theology of kenosis.¹⁴⁹ He has contributed much to the theme ‘kenosis of God’ and he has dealt the subject in all possible details, started from the church fathers extended to the evangelic and orthodox theologies of kenosis.¹⁵⁰ Bertram Stubenrauch finds a model for and a foundation of interreligious dialogue in the kenosis of God.¹⁵¹ Revelation of God to the world can be also understood as kenosis. “Offenbarung ist das Bei-uns-Sein-Wollen des Absoluten, ist die Selbsterniedrigung Gottes, ist kenosis [...]”.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Cf. M. FARNETH, The Power to Empty Oneself 158.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. ODCIGUE, Randy J. C., The Radical Kenoticism of Gianni Vattimo and Interreligious Dialogue, in: Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 16 (2006), 173-189.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. VATTIMO, Gianni: Beyond Interpretation. The Meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy, Stanford 1997, 73; [hereafter: G. VATTIMO, Beyond Interpretation]; his, Die Stärken des schwachen Denkens. Ein Gespräch, in: WEISS, Martin G.: Gianni Vattimo. Einführung, Wien 2003, 171-182.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. DEIBL, Jakob Helmut, Geschichte-Offenbarung-Interpretation. Versuch einer theologischen Antwort an Gianni Vattimo, in: Religion-Kultur-Recht, Johann Reikerstorfer/Gerhard Luf/Wolfgang Treitler (ed.), Band 9, Frankfurt am Main 2008, 153-173; [hereafter: J. H. DEIBL, Geschichte-Offenbarung-Interpretation].

¹⁴⁹ Cf. KREUTZER, Ansgar, Kenopraxis. eine Handlungstheoretische Erschließung der Kenosis-Christologie, Freiburg im Breisgau-Wien et al 2011, 361; [hereafter: A. KREUTZER, Kenopraxis].

¹⁵⁰ Cf. BALTHASAR, Hans Urs von, Theologie der Drei Tage, Einsiedeln: Johannes 1990, 27-46.

¹⁵¹ Cf. STUBENRAUCH, Bertram, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? Gott, das Christentum und die Religionen, Regensburg 2017, 113-126; [hereafter: B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität?].

¹⁵² J. DEIBL, Geschichte-Offenbarung-Interpretation 14.

4.2.1 Exegetical Observations

Phil 2, 5-11 is known not only as Christ hymn but also as kenosis hymn and it describes the key points of kenosis of Jesus Christ in a concise manner.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness, And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God (Phil 2, 5-11).

The subject matter of the hymn is the post-resurrectional interpretation of Christ's life, death and resurrection as self-emptying and exaltation. The semantic of the words used in the hymn reveals the basic Christological implications, such as pre-existence of Son, incarnation of the Son, etc. Its different connotations were variously emphasized by the bible scholars. While Söding considers the Philippians hymn as Christological paradigm, Zeilinger, a New Testament scholar, emphasises the kerygmatic function of the hymn and considers it as the shortest form of Christian faith. In the early Christian community this hymn had more a doxological function than a dogmatic function. Bertram Stubenrauch opines that doxology in every religion is a response to incomprehensible things. The hymns of New Testament are not exceptions to this general principle. In the Philippians hymn there are powerful poetic language, metaphors and images. It has many similarities with Hellenistic hymns of that time. Paul has chosen a known hymn in order to convey the message of a new way.¹⁵³ He has effectively edited the already existed hymn as he had taken it into his letter to Philippians. Two modifications are notable that Jesus humbled himself and “became obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross” and “therefore God exalted him above all” (2, 8-9). Dialectic of humiliation and exaltation in this hymn, (also in 2 Cor 8, 9) is the key factor in Pauline Christology.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 116.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 219.

4.2.2 The Term ‘κενόω’

In Greek the adjective κενός has two meanings: literally it means ‘devoid of something;’ in a deeper psychological semantic level it can mean ‘futile, vain, etc’. In substantive and verb forms of the word these two meanings are equally valid. ‘Κενότης’ means ‘emptiness’ as well as ‘vanity.’ The verb ‘κενόω’ means an action of emptying.¹⁵⁵ ‘κενόω’ in Phil 2,7 has the literal meaning of emptying oneself.¹⁵⁶ “ἐκένωσεν” here means that the heavenly Son did not wanted stick upon his divinity; he has emptied himself and took the form of a slave.

4.2.3 Implications of Kenosis in Theology

According to the most bible scholars the death on the cross is the peek point of kenosis.¹⁵⁷ Emptying of God, His incarnation and His death on Cross, challenges many traditional attributes and characteristics of divine nature. Traditionally, philosophy has understood God as transcendent, immutable, omnipotent and ultimate reality. His birth as a human challenges transcendence; His suffering and death challenge immutability; His death questions omnipotence.

4.2.3.1 Apathy and Immutability of God

Kenosis in God implies change in God. It is against the traditional teaching about the apathy of God, which emphasizes the immutability of God. The decision of God for incarnation is, in a way, a decision to humiliate himself or to step down from His godliness to the humanness. Incarnation was an act of kenosis out of free will, not out of any compulsion. Since everything, including self-humiliation and self-emptying, happens under his sovereign power, he remains as himself even after the kenosis. However a change is possible. Basing on Hilarius, Balthasar questions the immutability of God and argues that God, out of his omnipotence, can also empty himself and can change his mode of existence (*μορφη*). Balthasar says that the mode of existence of pre-existent Son and incarnated Son are not compatible. In the act of kenosis the Subject

¹⁵⁵ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 198-199.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. OEPKE, Albrecht, κενός, κενώω, κενόδοξος, κενόδοξια ThWNT (Theologischen Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament) GERHARD, Friedrich ed., Stuttgart Kohlhammer 1967.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. HOFFMANN, Alexander, *Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule. Ein Beitrag zum Dialog der Religionen*, WALDENFELS, Hans (ed.), *Begegnung. Kontextuell-dialogische Studien zur Theologie der Kulturen und Religionen* 17, Bonn 2008, 19; [hereafter: A. HOFFMANN, *Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule*].

remains as the same, but the change of status is unavoidable.¹⁵⁸ As long as the Son is in the form of a slave there is the *vacuitatis dispensatio* (expression of Hilarius), which does not change the Son himself but which does involve for him in his inmost being a self-concealment which is expressed in his loss of the free divine power.¹⁵⁹

4.2.3.2 *Urkenosis and its Further Manifestations*

Balthasar observes an initial kenosis (*Urkenosis*) in Immanent Trinity, in the *generatio* of the Son and the *spiratio* of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁰ According to him, all acts of kenosis of Triune God are based on this initial kenosis. Creation was the first act of kenosis by Triune God, in which God has gifted human the freedom, even though it reduced His freedom. The second act was the covenant and the third act is the incarnation of God.¹⁶¹ Kenosis of God is an act out of love and free will. Karl Rahner opines, “We can understand creation and incarnation as two moments and two phases of the *one* process of God’s self-giving and self-expression [...]”¹⁶²

Kenosis within the Trinity and its extension in the creation and incarnation reveals a new image of God. Philippians hymn depicts this new image of God, who is primarily the absolute love, than the absolute power. Limiting himself, emptying himself, giving himself, etc belong to the essence of God. The act of limiting His own power and freedom by God in creation and incarnation can be understood only as the act of love.¹⁶³

4.2.3.3 *Pro-existence and kenosis*

Pro-existence and kenosis are substantial parallels. The denunciation and exaltation contains two parallels of kenosis and pro-existence. Firstly, kenosis can be seen as a radical pro-existence, that means, Jesus’ ‘existence for the other.’ This pro-existence of Jesus Christ is marked by his whole life and especially by his death on the cross. Secondly, kenosis by Jesus Christ has an exemplary function. It is clearly expressed in

¹⁵⁸ Cf. A. HOFFMANN, Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule 20-21.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. KNISELY, Nicholas, Theodicy and the Mutable Immutable God (April 2, 2010), <https://entangledstates.org/2010/04/02/theodicy-and-the-mutable-immutable-god/> (Stand: 22.06.2018).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. BALTHASAR, Hans Urs von, Theodramatik 3. Die Handlung, Einsiedeln 1980, 308.

¹⁶¹ Cf. A. HOFFMANN, Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule 21f.

¹⁶² RAHNER, Karl, Foundations of Christian Faith, trans. DYTCH, William V., New York 1978, 197.

¹⁶³ Cf. A. HOFFMANN, Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule 24.

the letter to Philippians. The life and death of Jesus must be a model for kenotic-humble life style of the Christian community.¹⁶⁴

Schürmann interprets ‘pro’ of pro-existence as a kind of ‘existence-substitution’ (Existenz-Stellvertretung). ‘Pro’ is a soteriological word. The second part of pro-existence is not biblical, but a philosophical term, a jargon of existential philosophy. Latin verb ‘ek-sistere’ literally means ‘to sit outside his/her own self.’ Existence of Jesus clearly shows that his existence was directed radically to the other. His pro-existence extends even to the self-giving.¹⁶⁵

4.2.3.4 *Kenosis: a Praxis*

G. Theißen has developed a theory of early Christianity. He defines religion as a cultural symbol system, which promises success of life through correspondence to an ultimate reality. The basic elements of this cultural symbol system are *mythos*, *riten* and *ethos*. *Mythos* is the worldview or the belief system of a religion. *Riten* is the repeated behavioural pattern, with which man orders his daily life according to the belief system (*mythos*). *Ethos* is a way of life corresponding to *mythos*. The belief system of Christianity contains two important elements; viz. love to God and love to brethren. A close relationship with God is the basic theological motive of Christianity. The basic anthropological motive is double sided. On the one side it consists in the love of neighbour and on the other side in the humility, i.e., renunciation of status. This humiliation is realized through the renunciation of the superior status by the superior being and through the upgrading of the inferior.¹⁶⁶

This idea seems to be very close to kenosis and its scheme of humiliation and exaltation corresponds to that of Philippians hymn. *Ethos* of early Christian community was characterized by these both anthropological-ethical motives; love to the neighbour and renunciation of status. Both of them were beyond the conventional ethics. They surpass all the social limitations and separations, such as hierarchy and social class system. Renunciation of the status always implies a movement from above to below. It

¹⁶⁴ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 219-220.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 219-221.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. THEIßEN, Gerd, *Die Religion der ersten Christen. Eine Theorie des Urchristentums*, Gütersloh ⁴2008 19-39.

is renunciation of demonstrative presentation of one's own status. A person decides to leave behind his higher position in the society and to follow Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁷

The *ethos* is essentially related to *mythos*. The kenosis motif of Phil 2, 5-11 and its placing within the parentheses of letter to Philippians explain clearly the relation between the *mythos* and the *ethos* of early Christianity. Paul demands from the members of his community to do nothing from selfish ambition, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves (Phil 2, 3). He invites the Christians to own the attitude of Jesus Christ. "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2, 5). The kenosis and exaltation of Christ is presented in detail as a model to all His disciples. The pre-existent Christ was equal to God. But he emptied himself and left his divinity behind. He took the form of a slave and became man. Then there is the kenosis in its extreme form or at its peak; that is voluntary martyrdom on the cross. He was killed like a thief, a slave or a rebel. The early Christians have made the kenosis of Christ as part of their *ethos*. Here we can see a clear correspondence between the *mythos* and *ethos* of Christianity, between Christology and ethic.¹⁶⁸

In the theology of Balthasar the correspondence between kenosis and action is not much important. But it does not mean that he completely avoided this practical aspect. We can find an application of kenosis in ecclesiology in his discussion about the kenosis of the Church. The Church has to identify with the kenosis of Christ, i.e. His renunciation of divine status, majesty and power. Eucharist is the model and inspiration for Church to divide and give herself to the others like her Master. The Church is to be ready to give up her power and authority and to find her identity in the selfless service to the humanity.¹⁶⁹

4.3 Kenosis and Theology of Religions

We have already seen the implications of kenosis on the Church as a whole and on each Christian. The goal of different models of theology of religions is to make the dialogue between religions effective through overcoming the limitations. In this regard the standpoints of pluralists and the Catholic Church stand in conflict. We have discussed these major differences in the above chapters. Here, we will see how the concept of

¹⁶⁷ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 228f.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 230.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 398f.

kenosis does approach the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ and his universality with regard to the salvation of the humans. Its implications on the identity and mission of Church will be dealt afterwards.

4.3.1 Fullness of Revelation and Kenosis

The basis of the Christian kerygma is that Christ, i.e. Jesus of Nazareth, is true human and true God; he is the 'Son' (cf. John 14, 13; Heb 1, 2); he is the *pleroma* of God (Kol 1, 19), that means, in Jesus Christ, the Son, everything is given and communicated, which God wanted to give and communicate to the world. Through Jesus Christ God has given not something, but everything. But the pluralist theologians want to reduce this basic content of Christian faith. John Hick limits the *pleroma* element only to the epistemological level. Stubenrauch opines that according to the testimony of New Testament and the history of Christian dogmas the so-called de-absolutization of Christology is not plausible.¹⁷⁰

At the same time he points out that the exclusivism undervalues the universal salvific will, which relates Church with Jesus Christ.¹⁷¹ It rejects the fact of pluralism in the world and stands for a uniform profession of faith. For exclusivists the cases of rejection of the gospel has not relevance.¹⁷² They are absolutizing Church as the only way of salvation. Here it is clear that Stubenrauch does not accept pluralism as well as exclusivism. Whereas Dupuis wants to develop an inclusivist pluralism, Stubenrauch develops his theology on the basis of God's kenosis.

Dupuis mentions the statement of Indian Theological Association, which looks to kenotic Christ as a model that provides guidance and inspiration.¹⁷³

We look at Christ as one who, by emptying himself, takes us to the ineffable mystery of God. His *kenosis* signifies a 'not clinging to' his divine status (Phil 2:6). It was an act of unconditional surrender to his Father's universal salvific will. Christ accepted the human condition to the ultimate consequences. He gave himself totally to others... This led him to the final expression of *kenosis*, namely, the death on the cross, consecrated by the resurrection and symbolized in the Eucharist. This kenotic Christ is present in every human vicissitude as servant and leaven. He belongs to the whole humanity. Through this

¹⁷⁰ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 140f.

¹⁷¹ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 141.

¹⁷² Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 143.

¹⁷³ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 297.

servanthood he gives himself incessantly to men and women of all cultures and leads them unobtrusively to their self- realization. His is a liberative action which makes the person whole, transforms the cultures it encounters by forming them into a community of love in which the other is respected and accepted in his or her self-understanding.¹⁷⁴

In the background of kenosis it is understandable that the communication of God to the world through the incarnation is not completely definitive. Dupuis considers the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ as neither relative nor absolute, but as constitutive.¹⁷⁵ According to Stubenrauch, definitiveness of revelation through Jesus Christ must be identified, recognized and articulated. This is the duty of theology. The divine communication always refers to the corresponding response from the part of humans, because the Word has become man. The first response to this divine communication comes from men and women, who have bend their knees consciously and openly before the name that is above every name. This testimony is always renewed and handed over to other humans, who have not yet accepted it. The exchange of thought between the Christians and believers of other religions makes the acceptance of the Word by others possible.¹⁷⁶

Two key points of kenosis are firstly, God has unconditionally shared the human life situation in Jesus of Nazareth and secondly, Jesus was a real human and limited in many ways because of his humanness.¹⁷⁷ Dupuis emphasises that “[t]he universality of the Christ who, “being made perfect,” became “the source of eternal salvation” (Heb 5:9) does not cancel out the particularity of Jesus, “made like his brothers and sisters in every respect” (Heb 2:17).”¹⁷⁸ The idea of kenosis bridges the contrast between a transcendental God and Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter. God has revealed himself to the human after He has spoken through wise and prophets (Hebr 1, 1).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ ITA Statement 1989, Towards an Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism no. 26-27; cit. according to PATHIL, Kuncheria, Theological Reflections on the Church from India, in: AH [Asian Horizons] vol. 6 no. 4 December 2012, 691; [hereafter: K. PATHIL, Theological Reflections on the Church from India].

¹⁷⁵ Cf. J. DUPUIS, Toward a Christian Theology 283.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? 120.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? 115.

¹⁷⁸ J. DUPUIS, Toward a Christian Theology 297.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? 116.

4.3.2 Christ: for All or Many?

The key point of Christian proclamation was ‘*a* God of *all*’. Since He is not a part of this world, ‘revelation’ was needed to communicate something universal about him. God acts and speaks in the world through Jesus. In order to fulfil his radical love towards the world, God has emptied himself, has come down to the world. The *theology of name* in the Philippians hymn is noteworthy here. “At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” (Phil 2, 10-11). Pluralist theologians are ready to accept this name in so far as it is a name ‘for many’, i.e., for Christians. But according to scripture this name is not *a* name *for many*, but *the* name *for all* (Acts 4, 12b). Therefore, the name of Jesus Christ, like that of Adam, is for all human beings. At this point, Stubenrauch finds the decisive objection to the pluralist theologians. The kenotic Christ indicates that the Absolute is revealed in its fullness in one concrete person and event under the conditions of natural finitude and multiplicity. Therefore the incarnation of God is universal and unique.¹⁸⁰

Pluralists consider Jesus Christ as a manifestation of God, valid only to many, not to all. For others, who are apart from this ‘many’, there are other manifestations of God. This approach, which is contrary to the fundamental Christian belief, separates Christ from the triune God. Christ is the incarnation of the triune God. He is not an adopted son of God. Through Jesus Christ, the whole Trinity is active in the world. Christ has not a separate economy of salvation other than that of triune God. Therefore, if God wills the salvation of whole humanity, He wills this salvation through Jesus Christ.

Dupuis consider Jesus Christ as the universal sacrament of God’s will to save humankind. But this does not exclude the saving action of God through the nonincarnated Word. Dupuis differentiates the action of Logos *asarkos* from that of Logos *ensarkos*.¹⁸¹ But they do not represent two different plans of salvation, but they are the manifestations of God’s superabundant graciousness and absolute freedom.¹⁸² The differentiation does not mean that the Word of God and Jesus Christ are two separated entities.¹⁸³ He also emphasises the action of Holy Spirit in the world.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 117.

¹⁸¹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 300.

¹⁸² Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 297-300.

¹⁸³ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Universality of the Word* 335.

Christ-event is unavoidably limited by the particularity of history. But the work of Spirit has no boundaries of space and time.¹⁸⁴ Dupuis' Pneumatology also stands always in its interrelationship with Christology and vice versa. He accepts the one and only plan of salvation of God for all.

4.4 Kenotic Role of the Church in the World

Gianni Vattimo calls for a change in religion. Religion must be newly expressed in terms of unpretentious love. It can be done by avoiding violence and intolerance, by breaking rigid identities and by teaching to accept the others.¹⁸⁵ Kenotic presence of Christianity in the world, which is in accordance with the kenosis of God, can identify oneself with others and overcome the boundaries, without losing one's identity. The example of Christ is here relevant. He has given himself to the other out of his unlimited love without losing his own identity.¹⁸⁶

It is clear from the Philippians hymn that Christ possesses the fullness of revelation. But his way of life and style of proclamation were of kenotic style. He reveals himself as dead on Cross. "[...] though he was in the form of God, [he] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, [...] and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Phil 2, 8). This is the way through which the Church has to perform her call in this world. Taking part in the fullness of revelation through Jesus Christ does not motivate her to express herself as a triumphal and authoritative entity in the world. She has to identify herself with Christ, her Lord and Head, through self emptying, through selfless service to the world.

4.4.1 Kenosis of Christ and Kenosis of Church

The Church is called to follow kenotic Christ. But there is a fundamental difference between the kenosis of God and kenosis of Church. Church, in difference to divine Logos, is not a pre-existent divine reality. In spite of such differences Balthasar finds certain analogies between kenosis-Christology and kenosis-Ecclesiology. The voluntary restrain of Son of God to the narrowness of the sinful humanity can be compared with the insertion of Christian, who is filled with the Holy Spirit, into the narrowness of

¹⁸⁴ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 196f; Paul F. KNITTER, *Theologies of Religions*, 92.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. G. VATTIMO, *Beyond Interpretation* 73.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 113.

institutionalized Church. However, Balthasar isolated the kenotic-Christology from an ecclesiological behaviour theory. In opposition to that Kreutzer emphasises a continuation and interconnection of Paul's kenosis-Christology and the ethics of humiliation in the Church, which is indebted to the service of the people in the world.¹⁸⁷

LG 8, while presenting Church as the sacrament of salvation, binds the kenosis motif (Phil 2, 5-11; 2 Cor 8, 9) with the mode of presence of the Church in the world. But here also the application of Christological basis in ecclesiology is at the level of analogy, not in real sense.

Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and persecution, so the Church is called to follow the same route that it might communicate the fruits of salvation to men. Christ Jesus, "though He was by nature God [...] emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave", and "being rich, became poor" for our sakes. Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and persecution, so the Church is called to follow the same route that it might communicate the fruits of salvation to men. Christ Jesus, "though He was by nature God [...] emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave", and "being rich, became poor" for our sakes.¹⁸⁸

The council suggests an Christological option for the Church. She has to renounce all forms of power politics and to become the servant of the Kingdom of God for the world. An ecclesiology based on kenosis-Christology has the potential for a contemporary theology of the Church. The kenotic being of the Church makes clear the roll of the Church in the modern society.¹⁸⁹ In our context of religious pluralism, the ecclesiology, based on kenosis-Christology, explains clearly the function of the church in the world.

Lumen Gentium 8 admits the weakness and error-proneness of the Church. They belong to the kenotic identity of the Church. It can be seen in two levels: firstly, the Church embraces sinners in her bosom; secondly, the Church is always in need of purification and always follows the way of penance and renewal. Interpreting these lines of *Lumen Gentium*, P. Hünemann opines that these are to be considered as the confession of structural sins in relation to the institutional forms and manifestations of the Church.¹⁹⁰ The Church is to come out of this structural and institutional

¹⁸⁷ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 400f.

¹⁸⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 8.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 401.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. HÜNNEMANN, Peter (ed.), *Theologischer Kommentar zur Dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche*, Freiburg im Breisgau-Wien 2004, 369.

triumphalism, following the example (kenosis) of her master, Jesus Christ. She has to engage in her mission, entrusted by the same kenotic God, with a humble and self-emptying attitude.

4.4.2 Church: Continuation of Christ

Almost all theologies of religion differentiate the faith in Jesus Christ from Church. But, according to Stubenrauch, this can be accepted only if the differentiation does not mean separation.¹⁹¹ The Jesus of New Testament is completely incomprehensible without his people, which through him became the messianic people. The Church signifies the fullness of Christ, who is exalted from the cross. The Church, as the messianic folk, as the body of the exalted one, makes her Lord present in the world and history. She keeps the seed of kingdom of God and is the part of salvation history. Even though she has the fullness of Christ, the kenotic character is the unavoidable mark of her existence. As the messianic folk she is exalted in Christ. But the mode, through which she communicates this honour, remains totally defined by incarnation.¹⁹²

Jesus has emptied himself and became servant for the sake of the Kingdom of God, which was the subject of his proclamation. The Church is called to continue the mission of Christ. “The Church is thus said to be the *sacrament, messenger, and servant of the Kingdom*.”¹⁹³ Before dealing with the hymn in particular Paul reminds his fellow Christians that they should have the same mind of Jesus Christ (Phil 2, 4). Church is the continuation of Christ in the world means also that she is the continuation of Jesus’ kenotic presence in the world. Jesus was limited like every human. He was born and bought up in a particular culture and his thoughts were in accordance with this culture. His teachings and acts received not only appreciations but also rejections. His expressions were not equally grasped by all those who listened to him. Reception of his words was depended on the horizon and ability of understanding of each person and this fact remains so even after two thousand years.¹⁹⁴ In order to better understand and to make Jesus’ message graspable to others, Christians need to study other religions. Jensen has written in reference to the Credo of the baptised: “Christians need others

¹⁹¹ Here also Dupuis’ ‘differentiation but not separation’ is noteworthy.

¹⁹² Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 125.

¹⁹³ K. PATHIL, *Theological Reflections on the Church from India* 693.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 120f.

-their wisdom, their perspective, their commitments- to be more faithful followers of the Incarnate One.”¹⁹⁵

4.4.3 Kenosis and Mission

Christ has revealed the truth through incarnation and entrusted the further proclamation of this truth to the Church. It is her duty to engage always in the work of mission, i.e. the proclamation of truth, revealed by Jesus Christ. When Christians speak of *a* God of *all* it cannot be a speech about a triumphal sovereignty. Kenosis is an expression of obedience. Christianity’s claim for absolute truth contains the symbol of a kenosis and obedience. God is to be proclaimed in a manner, in which he has revealed himself. He let himself to be tortured out of unlimited love.¹⁹⁶

Theology of the incarnation of God refers to a particular historical personality. Here, the *theology of name* in the Philippians hymn plays a significant role. It is discussed already under the title ‘Christ: for all or many’. The name of Jesus Christ is for all human beings. Every human represents simultaneously worldly finitude and transcendental divinity. S/he is the bond between heaven and earth, representative of God on the earth. God has included every single person in his self-revelation. Christians are called to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ, at which every knee should bend. Therefore, for Christians the religious other is the unavoidable dialogue partner.¹⁹⁷ The people, belong to other religious traditions, are the hearers of the proclamation of truth by the Church. Jenson sees in God’s radical altruistic turn towards the world a radical altruism of Christian readiness for dialogue. Because God has revealed himself unreservedly to the creature as his other, every Christian must do the same.¹⁹⁸

Also in her fight against the evil and injustice in the world, Church has to follow kenotic life style. The evil is to be confronted. The one, who was equal to God and completely innocent and sinless, as a human, has taken the place of sinners and accepted death *with* them and *for* them. In order to perform such an action Jesus had to deeply humble himself according to the will of the Father. (cf. Mark 14, 36). This battle with the evil also has a kenotic character. God does not use any form of thundering words of

¹⁹⁵ JENSEN, David Hadley, The Emptying Christ. A Christological Approach to Interfaith Dialogue, in: *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 11 (2001) 1, 15.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? 116.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? 118.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, Pluralismus statt Katholizität? 119.

power. Jesus did not get down off the cross. He forgives even though he is the victim and sufferer and surrenders himself to the Father. Therefore, God has exalted him. Religion is also to act according to the divine act. The kenosis of God compels the Christians to turn towards the other. Power politics is not the way of the Church.¹⁹⁹ Christianity, which turns towards the other with an emptying attitude, and the love and service of Christians to the other proclaim the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ.

The first act of kenosis, i.e. creation, gave freedom to human, even though it has reduced the freedom of God concerning the acts of human.²⁰⁰ Through creation he gave space to other, his dialogue partner. This was out of God's unlimited love. Trinitarian God, which is characterized by selflessness, mission and love, is the basis of Christian dialogue. Only when a Christian gets out of his/her selfishness and authority, s/he can be capable of dialogue.²⁰¹ We have already seen that the Christian *ethos* was characterized by the love to the neighbour and renunciation of status. The Church needs to surpass all the social limitations and separations, such as hierarchy and social class system. Renunciation of the status always implies a movement from above to below. It is renunciation of demonstrative presentation of one's own status.²⁰² Church has to identify with the kenosis of Christ and to renounce the superior status to be ready for the dialogue with other religions.²⁰³

4.5. Conclusion

We have discussed the implications of kenosis in the theology of religions. As Dupuis' theology of religious pluralism, kenotic theology of religious pluralism also wants to keep away from exclusivism and pluralism. It, like Dupuis, also tries to find a way of theologizing different from that of traditional inclusivism. The proclamation of Christ's message is a duty of Christians, which cannot be avoided. But it is not to be performed through triumphalism. Triumphalism can also take a form of assimilation, in which other religion or some elements of religion are one-sidedly taken into own religion and are claimed as a part of own religion. These thoughts of Stubenrauch refer to inclusivist

¹⁹⁹ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 122.

²⁰⁰ Cf. A. HOFFMANN, *Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule* 21f.

²⁰¹ Cf. A. HOFFMANN, *Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der japanischen Kyoto-Schule* 23.

²⁰² Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 228f.

²⁰³ Cf. A. KREUTZER, *Kenopraxis* 398f.

theologies.²⁰⁴ Stubenrauch opposes also the synthesis of religions, which is, by pluralists, often perceived as the goal of interreligious dialogue. According to him this synthesis is the act of Holy Spirit and an eschatological gift. Dupuis also shares same opinion. “It is permitted to think that convergence between the religious traditions will also attain its goal in the fullness of the Reign of God. An eschatological “reheading” (*anakephalaiòsis*) (Eph 1:10) in Christ of the religious traditions of the world will take place at the eschaton [...]”²⁰⁵ He, as it is mentioned in the first chapter, also emphasises the universal work of Holy Spirit and eternal Logos. Stubenrauch says that the actions of Christ exist beyond the limitations of time and present for ever through his person.²⁰⁶ Considering the plurality of religions, says Stubenrauch referring to Henri de Lubac, for Christians it is enough to trust on Holy Spirit, because the gift of belief is completely independent of theories.²⁰⁷ If we artificially try to do this, it will be violence. Kenotic sensitive Christian also avoids closed theology of religions and at the same time he does not deny the enlightening Christ-event, which is at the centre of the history of religions. The appropriate ‘sitz im Leben’ for the dialogue is the friendly dealing with the people of other religions. Dialogical presence is kenotic presence, i.e., the calm testimony of the faith in Jesus Christ in the middle of other religions.²⁰⁸

Kenotic presence of Christianity in the world crosses the border of religion and culture and encounters the people. It does not destroy its own identity, as the pluralists suggest, but strengthen the Christian identity.²⁰⁹ In the incarnation God has emptied himself and taken the form of a slave and become human. Likewise even though Christianity has the fullness of revelation, it is to be emptied itself and to become servant in the world. The concept of kenosis does justice to both the revealed and concealed aspects of God. It goes close to the approach of Dupuis with regard to the theology of religious pluralism.

²⁰⁴ Karl Rahner’s concept of ‘Unknown Christianity’ and other inclusivist positions are relevant here.

²⁰⁵ J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology* 389.

²⁰⁶ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 124.

²⁰⁷ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 124; LUBACH, Henri de, *Geheimnis aus dem wir Leben* (Kriterien 6), Einsiedeln ²1990, 144.

²⁰⁸ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 124.

²⁰⁹ Cf. B. STUBENRAUCH, *Pluralismus statt Katholizität?* 113.

General Conclusion

The positive attitude towards other religious traditions by Catholic Church in Second Vatican Council has ignited among theologians a wide range of discussions on the relationship and attitude towards other religions. Some theologians are surprised to see statements such as NA 2 and have tried to stress the uniqueness of Catholic Church while appreciating the values of other religious traditions. Other theologians, motivated by council's statements, have developed new theologies to appreciate other religions, even to the extent of denying the uniqueness of the Church. Some others have formed their theological perspectives even by compromising the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. These different trends in theology of religious pluralism is generally grouped into three; i.e., Exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. This classification is mentioned already in this work. Jaques Dupuis, inspired by his religious experience in India, developed his theology of religious pluralism, which he named 'inclusivist pluralism,' because it does not confine to the boundaries of the above mentioned three-level classification. In his theology he does not question the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, but calls this uniqueness constitutive rather than absolute. In this respect he can be considered as an inclusivist. He also underlines the presence of eternal Logos in the other religious traditions and sees a mutual complementarity between various religious traditions including Christianity. Then he can be called as a pluralist.

As we have seen in the first chapter the key points in Dupuis' theology are the constitutive and relational uniqueness of Jesus Christ, orientation of the Church to the Kingdom of God and the Trinitarian Mystery. He, even though emphasises the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, is not ready to consider this uniqueness as absolute, as it is said by CDF. He does not call this uniqueness relative, which is the position of pluralists. According to him, Jesus Christ's uniqueness is constitutive and relational. Dupuis says that the acts of incarnated Logos (*logos ensarkos*), Christ-event, does not refute the works of salvation by eternal Logos (*logos asarkos*) and by Holy Spirit, which acted and even presently acts in the whole world, also through other religious traditions. But this does not mean that there are different plans of salvation. There is only one plan of salvation and that is of Trinitarian God. Christology, separated from the Trinity, leads to Christomonism. Christ-event does not mean that the Trinitarian God

became completely comprehensible to all humans. Dupuis' ecclesiology gives always importance to the Kingdom of God, which was the key factor in Jesus Christ's proclamation. The Church is the sacrament of Kingdom of God in the world, which is to be fulfilled only in the second coming of Christ. Church is oriented towards Kingdom of God and needs self-renewal and dialogue with other religions in this respect.

Basing on the understanding about other religions there is also different views about interreligious dialogue. According to the different perspectives of theology of religions the meaning and purpose of interreligious dialogue also can vary. For example, the document *Dialogue and Mission* places interreligious dialogue within the inevitable mission of Catholic Church (cf. DM 19) and *Redemptoris Missio* presupposes conversion as a result of dialogue (cf. RM 56). Interestingly, here, the conversion is considered as one-sided; that is conversion to Christian beliefs, not vice versa. Dialogue is an invitation to the people, who belong to other religious traditions, to realize the truth of Christianity. But according to pluralist theologians, dialogue is a way to understand the ultimate truth. This ultimate truth is not identical with the truth proclaimed by the Church. They hold that all religions are equal ways to the ultimate truth, which is an incomprehensible mystery. Therefore, interreligious dialogue helps all religions to understand the ultimate truth. Catholic Church holds that she has the fullness of revelation through Jesus Christ and therefore, she has no need to be supplemented through interreligious dialogue. Church promotes interreligious dialogue as a part of evangelisation. Dupuis observes ambiguities with regard to the relationship between dialogue and proclamation in Church's evangelizing mission. According to him, Church, as the sacrament of Kingdom of God, has to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ and, as an entity with imperfections (not identical with the Kingdom), she needs interreligious dialogue as way to recognize the truth in other religions and also to examine her identity. He sees this tension as a normal outcome of the eschatological tension ('already and not yet') in ecclesiology.

In order to defend the Catholic faith from the 'relativizing' tendencies in theology, Congregation for Doctrine of Faith issued *Dominus Jesus*, which upholds the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and Catholic Church, and notification on Dupuis' book 'Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism.' This work concentrates mainly on the tension between the theology of Dupuis and that of the CDF documents. CDF

considers Jesus Christ's uniqueness as absolute, whereas Dupuis calls Jesus Christ's Uniqueness as constitutive and relational. Jesus Christ has completely revealed the Trinitarian Mystery and therefore, he is the fullness of revelation. He has handed over this fullness to Church; therefore, the Church also shares this fullness of revelation. Moreover CDF warns about the tendencies, which separate Church from the Kingdom of God. Dupuis' view that the plurality of religions is not mere a fact (pluralism *de facto*), but a principle (pluralism *de jure*), is also criticised by CDF.

Pluralist theologians emphasise always the concealed aspect of revelation (*Deus semper maior*) and challenge the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ and in Church. In order to defend the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Church, CDF concentrates only on the revealed aspect of revelation. The congregation affirms the fullness of revelation in the Church through Christ against all relativizing tendencies in theology. While attempting to defend the uniqueness of Church, CDF documents directly identify the fullness of Jesus Christ with Church (cf. DI 16). They keep silence on the fact that "Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her" (DV 8). CDF's affirmation that Church and Jesus Christ are completely identical overlooks the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Church.

Such one-sided accentuations can be seen further in the documents of CDF. It is discussed in the third chapter. My point is that Dupuis wanted to reconcile the concealed and revealed aspects of revelation in his theology of religious pluralism. Pluralist theologians want to place all religions in the same level in order to have effective interreligious dialogue. To place every religion in the same level, they want to deny the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Church and to develop a theocentric theology. Their theory denies Christianity its fundamentals basics. Defending the uniqueness of Church CDF denies the 'pluralism *de jure*' and identifies the Church directly with Jesus Christ. It forgets the tension of 'already, but not yet' aspect of the Church. Dupuis suggests a different theory to establish religious pluralism in principle in accordance with the Christian faith and with the mystery of Jesus Christ as traditionally understood by the Church. His theology of religious pluralism is made possible by combining an unimpaired faith in Jesus Christ with the positive salvific significance of the other religious traditions in God's plan for humankind.

In his attempt to combine the revealed and concealed aspects of revelation, Dupuis criticises the traditional Christology that engaged in explaining the mystery of the 'God-man' and the 'hypostatic union' of the two natures in the God-man. He opines that the New Testament Christology is not a neutral, abstract Christology of a God-man, but the concrete mystery of the Word-of-God-made-flesh in Jesus of Nazareth. According to him, in the mystery of incarnation Christology and the divine Trinity are essentially united and inseparable. To develop a theology of religions, which upholds Church's Christological faith and simultaneously appreciates the positive significance of other religions in salvation, it is necessary to highlight the inseparable relation between Christology and Trinity. Dupuis calls it Trinitarian Christology. The theology of kenosis is relevant here. It goes hand in hand with Dupuis intention to value other religious traditions without losing the identity of the Church.

Kenosis contains all the elements of basic Christian faith. God has emptied himself and became human. Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the highest point of this self-emptying. But this self-emptying does not mean that Jesus Christ has become only a man. He is God and human at the same time. This is a mystery. God has revealed himself as a human being to the human beings. But God remains as God. This act of kenosis is a pro-existence, existence for the other. The *Urkenosis*, i.e., *generatio* and *spiratio*, and acts of kenosis, i.e., creation, incarnation and the death on the cross, show God's will to give himself to the other. This kenotic attitude of God is a guideline for Christians in their attitude towards world and the members of other religions. Jesus Christ, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself. He did not want to take advantage of his divinity. He died on the cross for others, including his killers. It was a boundless self-giving. Church is the sacrament of Kingdom of God in this world and is the mystical body of Jesus Christ. The self-emptying and self-giving of Jesus Christ are handed over to the Church. If Church participates in the fullness of revelation through Jesus Christ, she has to take part also in the self-emptying of Jesus Christ. Every Christian and the Church as a whole have to imitate Jesus Christ's self-emptying and pro-existence.

Interreligious dialogue is one of the expressions of the self-emptying and pro-existence of the Church in the world. In her pilgrimage towards the Kingdom of God,

which is to be fulfilled in the *eschaton*, she goes hand in hand with other religious traditions, without losing her identity, but emptying even her identity for the sake of Kingdom of God. This readiness for self-emptying makes her eligible for interreligious dialogue.

Abbreviations

AG *Ad Gentes*

CDF Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith

DH *Dignitatis Humanae*

DI *Dominus Jesus*

DM “Dialogue and Mission” (document published by the Secretariat for Non-Christians)

DP “Dialogue and Proclamation” (document published by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples)

DV *Dei Verbum*

EA *Ecclesia in Asia*

EN *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

ES *Ecclesiam Suam*

GS *Gaudium et Spes*

ITA Indian Theological Association

LG *Lumen Gentium*

LS *Laudato Si*

NA *Nostra Aetate*

RH *Redemptor Hominis*

RM *Redemptoris Missio*

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Abstract

The modern world is a multicultural and multi-religious. In the day to day life we encounter people with different religious convictions and beliefs. Christianity, which combines not only the Catholic Church but also other Christian denominations, is also one religion among others. In this background the question why there are so many religions is relevant. Are these religions mere human attempt to reach God? Is Catholic Church the only religion, which is established by God? Or all the religions have divine elements? The Second Vatican Council has appreciated and acknowledged the positive elements in other religious traditions. The council has also affirmed the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. The Church is considered as the historical continuation of Jesus Christ's words and deeds. At the same time, Church is not identical with the Kingdom of God. This differentiation is very important. The Kingdom of God was the central theme of the proclamation of Jesus Christ. The Church is directed towards the Kingdom of God and she is the sacrament and instrument of Kingdom of God in the world. But she is not same as the Kingdom of God.

In the discussions of theology of religions the last decade witnessed different positions in the attempt to explain the relationship between Catholic Church and other religions. Exclusivist theologians hold that the Catholic Church is the only real way to salvation and that other religions are the human efforts for salvation. Because other religions too work for the salvation of people, they may have positive elements. The Church is called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole humanity and in this sense all humans are the addressees of Church's mission. God invites all people to be the members of the Church. According to inclusivist theology the Church is not identical with the Kingdom of God. Other religions are far away from the Kingdom of God, because they lack the unmediated revelation through Jesus Christ. But God wills the salvation of every human and according to the plan of God, all people will be saved even through the merit of their own religions. Therefore the positive elements of other religions can be considered as willed by God. Pluralist theology is based on the premise that besides the revelation through Jesus Christ there are other revelations and all the revelations are equally valid. The saving figures of other religions, which can save the members of these religions, are the manifestations of these revelations.

Pluralist theology stands in conflict with the claim of Catholic Church that she possesses the fullness of revelation through Jesus Christ. Pluralist theologians relativise the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the 'Word of God made flesh,' which belongs to the basic Christian faith. Inclusivist theology does not relativise the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ in the history of salvation. But it emphasises that God can fulfil the salvation of people even outside the Church through his Spirit. Exclusivists underestimate other religions in comparison with Christianity and consider them as mere human efforts to attain salvation. This work is an attempt to present a theological model, in connection with Jaques Dupuis, which appreciates and acknowledges all religions without relativising the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ. This model emphasises the kenotic identity of the Church that helps her to engage in dialogue with other religions without triumphalism and claims of superiority.

Abstrakt

Die Welt ist in der späten Moderne multikulturell und multireligiös geworden. Im alltäglichen Leben begegnen wir vielen Zeitgenossen, die verschiedene religiöse Überzeugungen haben. Die christliche Religion, die sich neben der katholischen Kirche in unterschiedliche Konfessionen auffächert, ist eine Religion unter anderen. So wird die Frage virulent: Warum gibt es so viele Religionen? Sind sie nur menschliche Suchbewegungen zu Gott? Ist die katholische Kirche die einzige von Gott selbst gegründete Religion? Oder weisen auch andere Religionen göttliche Spuren auf? Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil hat die positiven Elemente anderer Religionen gewürdigt und anerkannt. Das Konzil hat allerdings zugleich an der Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi festgehalten. Die Kirche wurde als geschichtliche Fortsetzung der Worte und Taten Jesu Christi verstanden. Aber die Kirche und das Reich Gottes sind nicht identisch. Diese Differenz ist wichtig. Das Reich Gottes war das zentrale Thema der Verkündigung Jesu. Die Kirche ist auf das Reich Gottes hin ausgerichtet, sie ist Zeichen und Werkzeug des Reiches Gottes, aber nicht dieses selbst.

In der religionstheologischen Diskussion der letzten Jahrzehnte sind unterschiedliche Positionen vertreten worden, das Verhältnis der katholischen Kirche zu den übrigen nichtchristlichen Religionen zu bestimmen. Die exklusivistische Position behauptet, dass nur die katholische Kirche der wahre Weg zur Erlösung ist und dass die anderen Religionen allenfalls menschliche Bemühungen zur Erlösung sind. Weil die anderen Religionen die Erlösung der Menschen suchen, haben sie möglicherweise auch positive Werte. Die Kirche aber hat den Auftrag, allen Menschen das Evangelium zu verkünden. Deshalb sind alle Menschen potentielle Adressaten der kirchlichen Mission. Gott lädt alle Menschen zum Gottesvolk der Kirche ein. Die inklusivistische Position lautet so: Die Kirche ist nicht identisch mit dem Reich Gottes. Andere Religionen sind zwar weit vom Reich Gottes entfernt, weil sie keine unmittelbare Offenbarung durch Jesus Christus empfangen haben. Nach dem Plan Gottes aber können Angehörige anderer Religionen durch ihre eigene Religion erlöst werden. Deswegen können die Werte in anderen Religionen als von Gott gegeben betrachtet werden. Die pluralistische Position geht davon aus, dass es neben der Offenbarung Gottes in Jesus Christus auch andere Offenbarungen gibt, die prinzipiell gleichwertig sind. Die Heilsfiguren der

nichtchristlichen Religionen sind Ausdruck dieser anderen Offenbarungen, die Nichtchristen auf ihren Wegen zum Heil führen können.

Die pluralistische Position steht quer zum Anspruch der katholischen Kirche, die Fülle der Mittel zu Heil zu haben. Die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi, der nach dem Glauben der Kirche der menschgewordene Sohn Gottes ist, wird durch die pluralistische Religionstheologie relativiert. Die inklusivistische Position hingegen widerspricht nicht der Lehre von der Einzigartigkeit und Heilsuniversalität Jesu Christi nicht. Aber sie behauptet, dass Gott die Erlösung auch außerhalb der Kirche durch das Wirken seines Geistes bewirken kann. Die exklusivistische Position unterschätzt andere Religionen im Vergleich mit dem Christentum und betrachtet sie als bloß menschliche Bemühungen zum Heil. Die vorliegende Arbeit versucht, im Anschluss an Jacques Dupuis ein theologisches Modell zu entwerfen, das alle Religionen differenziert würdigt und anerkennt, ohne die Einzigkeit und Heilsuniversalität Jesu Christi zu relativieren. Dieses Modell betont die kenotische Berufung der Kirche und lässt sich auf die Begegnung mit anderen Religionen ein, ohne triumphalistische Überlegenheitsansprüche geltend zu machen.