

Contents

Preface to the English Edition	13
Preface	15
1. Introduction	19
October 27, 1986 – September 11, 2001.	19
Interreligious Encounter and the Emergence of Pluralism	20
An Outline of the Argument	26

**Part I:
The Need for a Christian and
Pluralist Theology of Religions**

2. Theology of Religions: What's It About?	31
The Dual Question Addressed by the Theology of Religions	31
The Dogmatic Problem	34
The Practical Problem.	36
The Criteriological Problem	41
The Hermeneutical Problem	50
The Apologetic Problem	55
3. Classifying the Options.	58
The Tripartite Classification	58
A Logically Comprehensive Classification	60
Clarification of Terms.	67
A Discussion of Some Objections	69
Comparative Theology as an Alternative?	80
4. A Critique of Christian Exclusivism	88
Forms of Exclusivism	88
Exclusivism in the History of Theology: An Overview	91
Recent Developments.	98

Critical Discussion . . . . .	.104
The Question of Salvation. . . . .	.104
The Question of Interreligious Parallels . . . . .	.111
5. A Critique of Christian Inclusivism . . . . .	.116
Inclusivism in the History of Theology: An Overview . . . . .	.117
Recent Developments. . . . .	.124
Post-Conciliar Doctrinal Developments in the Roman Catholic Church . . .	.124
Pluralizing Inclusivism: Mark Heim and Jacques Dupuis . . . . .	.125
Critical Discussion . . . . .	.136
Evaluating Religious Diversity . . . . .	.137
Insufficient Empirical Evidence . . . . .	.140
Dogmatic Evidence?. . . . .	.144
6. Religious Pluralism . . . . .	.147
Pluralism in the History of Theology: An Overview . . . . .	.147
Pluralist Approaches in Other Religions . . . . .	.154
Clarifications and Distinctions. . . . .	.158
Polycentric Pluralism?. . . . .	.158
Pluralism and the Ability to Dialogue . . . . .	.161
Pluralism and Religious Tolerance. . . . .	.162
Problems of a Pluralist Theology of Religions . . . . .	.164
On the Theoretical Status of a Pluralist Theology of Religions . . . . .	.165
Philosophical Consistency?. . . . .	.168
Theological Consistency?. . . . .	.170
Pluralism — a Christian Option. . . . .	.170

Part II:
Presuppositions of a Christian
and Pluralist Theology of Religions

7. Belief in a Transcendent Reality . . . . .	.175
The Concept of Transcendent Reality . . . . .	.175
The Inconceivability of Transcendent Reality . . . . .	.179
The Relevance of Transcendent Reality . . . . .	.187

8. Revelation and Experience	190
Revelation as Divine Self-Disclosure	190
Receiving Revelation via Religious Experience.	194
Experience and Interpretation	197
The Perspectivity of Religious Experience	200
9. Religious Language and Experience	203
How and Why We Must Speak about God	203
A Logical Reason and the <i>via negativa</i>	204
A Semantic Reason and the <i>via eminentiae</i>	206
A Spiritual Reason and the <i>via affirmativa</i>	209
Consequences for a Pluralist Theology of Religions	212
John Hick’s Hermeneutics of Religious Language	212
Contradictory Truth Claims? On the Consistency of the Pluralist Solution.	218
10. Revelation, Salvation, and Religion	222
What Does “Salvation” Mean?	222
Salvation as the Purpose of Revelation	227
The Salvific Significance of the Religions	228
Faith, Relationship to God, and Religion	228
The Universal Possibility of Salvation	232
The Chance of Salvation and the Salvific Situation	233
Soteriocentrism	235
11. Revelation, Incarnation, and the Mediation of Salvation	239
Jesus as Revealer.	239
Jesus as Mediator of Salvation	243
Jesus as Incarnation	251
How to Interpret Chalcedon?.	252
Incarnation as a Singularity or Basic Feature of Divine Immanence?	258
The Doctrine of the Trinity in Pluralist Perspective	262
Potential Pluralism—and Nothing More?.	267

**Part III:
Testing a Christian and Pluralist Theology
of Religions in Interreligious Encounter**

12. Christianity and Judaism	273
Christian Anti-Judaism . . . . .	.273
Historical Overview . . . . .	.273
Theological Roots of Christian Anti-Judaism. . . . .	.278
Inclusivist Openings . . . . .	.281
The Unrevoked Covenant. . . . .	.281
The Issue of Missionizing the Jews. . . . .	.286
Pluralizing Developments or an Inclusivist Alliance? . . . . .	.289
Rosemary Radford Ruether . . . . .	.292
Pluralist Perspectives . . . . .	.299
On the Christian “Yes” and the Jewish “No” to Jesus. . . . .	.299
Election and the Plurality of Religions. . . . .	.305
 13. Christianity and Islam	 310
Historical Burdens. . . . .	.310
Who is Surpassing Whom? Conquests, Reconquests, and their Religious Background . . . . .	.310
Islam from a Christian Exclusivist Perspective . . . . .	.315
Inclusivist Openings . . . . .	.323
The Significance of the Second Vatican Council . . . . .	.323
Muhammad and Jesus in the Writings of Kenneth Cragg . . . . .	.327
Wilfred Cantwell Smith. . . . .	.334
Pluralist Perspectives . . . . .	.338
Incarnation and Trinity . . . . .	.338
Muhammad and Jesus. . . . .	.340
Pluralist Islam . . . . .	.348
 14. Christianity and Hinduism	 352
Colonialism and Neo-Hinduism. . . . .	.352
The Beginnings of Indian Christianity. . . . .	.352
Christian Mission under Portuguese and British Rule. . . . .	.353
The Neo-Hindu Response. . . . .	.356

Inclusivist Openings . . . . .	.359
“The Crown of Hinduism” . . . . .	.360
Catholic Inclusivism after the Second Vatican Council . . . . .	.363
Raimon Panikkar . . . . .	.366
Pluralist Perspectives . . . . .	.371
Mutual Enrichment . . . . .	.371
A Pluralist Theology of Religions and the Question of Caste . . . . .	.376
Repressive Tolerance? . . . . .	.380
15. Christianity and Buddhism . . . . .	.383
On the History of Christian-Buddhist Encounter . . . . .	.383
An Explosive Pre-History? . . . . .	.383
Historical Burdens . . . . .	.386
Mutual Exclusivism . . . . .	.390
Inclusivist Openings . . . . .	.397
Lynn A. de Silva . . . . .	.402
Pluralist Perspectives . . . . .	.407
Christian-Buddhist Complementarity . . . . .	.407
Christian-Buddhist Relativization . . . . .	.412
16. Steps to the Future . . . . .	.422
A Plausible Theological Hypothesis . . . . .	.422
Practical Consequences . . . . .	.424
Toward a World Theology . . . . .	.429
Interreligious Spirituality . . . . .	.432
Bibliography . . . . .	.438
Index of Names . . . . .	.474