

# 2

## Challenge of Religious Pluralism

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER we discussed Joseph Ratzinger's roots in Catholic Bavaria, his painful experience under the National Socialism of Hitler, and his classical education and theological formation as a priest; all of which strengthened his conviction of the superiority of the Catholic faith and shaped his negative attitude towards modernity. In this chapter we will now focus on Ratzinger's position on religious pluralism in relation to the three basic paradigms in the Christian theology of religions: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. Ratzinger perceives religious pluralism as a challenge to which the church needs to respond by proclaiming the uniqueness and saving universality of Christ.

Religious plurality and religious pluralism have at times been used interchangeably. Strictly speaking, the terms are not the same: religious plurality refers to the fact that there exist many different religious beliefs and traditions while religious pluralism reflects the view that one's religion is not the exclusive source of truth. Pluralism, therefore, suggests that many different religions could be valid paths to the divine. Christian adherents of pluralism reject the premise that God reveals himself only through Jesus Christ.

In spite of his inclusivist position which reflects the official teaching of the Catholic Church, this chapter seeks to show that Ratzinger's perception of non-Christian religions as valid paths to salvation is essentially pessimistic and negative. He believes that there may be revelation in these religious traditions, but not salvation. In this sense, he is an exclusivist as he asserts the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as savior of the world and the church of Christ as subsisting in the Catholic Church. At the same time, Ratzinger, influenced by the early church fathers' teaching on the *Logos*, reveals an open

inclusivism in which he acknowledges that truths found in non-Christian religions may be of significance for the church.

One thing is clear. Ratzinger's teaching on Christianity's relationship with other religions assumes the norm of Western philosophical and theological thought. He sincerely believes that the Greek intellectual and cultural expression found in Christianity is part of God's plan. For Ratzinger, the relation between faith and reason cast in Hellenistic philosophy is part of biblical inspiration and thus, part of faith itself. This giving precedence to Western thought, makes him rather critical and suspicious of theologians operating from a different theological framework and experience.

In *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* published in 1966, Joseph Ratzinger writes that the more positive interpretation of world religions which has been suggested in recent times is not supported by scripture. In fact, he maintains that some ideas characteristic of modern theology lack biblical foundation. He also argues that an optimistic interpretation of other religions is foreign to the biblical worldview and even "antipathetic to its spirit." He maintains that the prevailing optimism about the salvific values of non-Christian religions is "simply irreconcilable with the biblical assessment of these religions."<sup>1</sup> Even as a young, progressive theologian, Ratzinger had great reservations about the positive values of non-Christian religions.

Ratzinger acknowledges that the establishment of Christianity in Asia has so far failed.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, to be Christian means "conversion to Europeanism" and thus few people in Asia become Christians. A Christian faith that should be the universal religion of humankind has not been able to move beyond its occidental roots. Ratzinger says that up till now, there has been no genuine, Asian version of Christianity which reflects a profound grasp of the oriental culture and spirit.<sup>3</sup> This could be interpreted as openness to local theologies, but as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), Ratzinger is cautious about using the term "inculturation" and prefers the term "inter-culturality."<sup>4</sup>

It is understandable that Joseph Ratzinger as Prefect of the CDF takes a strong stand against those who would undermine Christian uniqueness, especially as it relates to that of salvation in Christ which is a fundamental aspect of the faith. He also tends to give "an exaggerated caricature" of religious pluralism and various aspects of it, such as Asian religions.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights*, 246.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 247.

4. Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, 64.

5. Boeve and Mannion, eds., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 174.

Let us now take a brief look at the history of the church in connection with the issue of religious pluralism.

## CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

The church has not been unfamiliar with religious pluralism in the past. In fact, Christianity itself was born within the milieu of Judaism and mystery religions. As Christianity separated itself from Judaism, it encountered Greek philosophy which led it to attempt to interpret the gospel in Hellenistic philosophical terms.<sup>6</sup> Regarding Christianity's encounter with Greek philosophy, Ratzinger writes:

The Christian faith opted . . . against the gods of the various religions and in favor of the God of the philosophers, that is, against the myth of custom and in favor of the truth of Being itself and nothing else . . . the early Church did indeed reject the whole world of the ancient religion, declaring none of it to be acceptable and sweeping the whole system aside as empty custom that was contrary to the truth.<sup>7</sup>

Later the threat of Gnosticism led to the formation of the biblical canon and the composition of the Creeds. It was the challenge of the Gnostic heresy that also instigated the process of understanding Christianity in terms of exclusivity. Christological doctrine taught by the church upheld Christianity's claim to uniqueness and normativeness.<sup>8</sup>

This understanding of Christianity as a unique and true religion continued with the writings of church fathers like Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement and Origen, much influenced by the Greek notion of *Logos*. The theological dispute in the early church culminated in the long and crucial dispute between Arius and Athanasius over the nature of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Harold Coward claims that the significance of this dispute is that Arius' position of subordinating Jesus to God would have made Christianity more open to other religions.<sup>9</sup> However, Athanasius' view dominated the period, became orthodox teaching and resulted in a closed, exclusive Christianity that proclaimed Jesus as the "only true incarnation" and the sole savior of humanity.<sup>10</sup>

6. Coward, *Pluralism in the World Religions*, 58.

7. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 142.

8. Coward, *Pluralism in the World Religions*, 58.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 59.

By 500 CE this version of Christianity based on exclusivity had destroyed the previous Greek and Roman religions and the Catholic Church began to identify itself with the kingdom of God on earth. In the seventh century Christianity had to compete with Islam as another missionary religion. In the sixteenth century, Western Christian missionaries encountered the ancient and venerable religions of Asia in the forms of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. In spite of all these contacts, or perhaps because of them, the attitude of Western Christianity maintained its exclusive claim as the one, true religion.<sup>11</sup>

Thus it was not surprising that in 1442 the Council of Florence-Ferrara declared that the Holy Church of Rome firmly believed that no one outside the Catholic Church—not just heathens, but also Jews, heretics, and schismatics—could be saved unless they were received into the church before they died. Edward Schillebeeckx says such thinking was acceptable at that time. For centuries, Catholics ardently proclaimed exclusivism and put their beliefs into action, even resorting to physical force.<sup>12</sup> However, at the Second Vatican Council, we heard a different message: those who through no fault of their own did not know the gospel, but nevertheless sought God with a sincere heart could also be saved.<sup>13</sup> As we can see, these two official church teachings appear to be diametrically opposed, but Vatican II does not make clear what “seeking God” really means, so it could be interpreted as explicitly searching for God or as doing charitable work.<sup>14</sup>

According to Schillebeeckx, the council fathers at Florence-Ferrara were right in proclaiming Jesus as the only way to God because they could not imagine any other means in which people could be saved. However, they were mistaken to think that God could not work outside Christianity for the salvation of humankind. At a deeper level, the mistake lies in confusing a personal conviction with a truth that can be known objectively. Schillebeeckx argues that although dogmas have become irrelevant with the passing of time, they still remain important for our understanding of faith. As Christians, we have to confess that Jesus Christ “is the only way of life *for us*,” though God leads others in different ways. We can remain sincere Christians without condemning others as heretics or infidels.<sup>15</sup> The multiplicity of religions is not just a historical fact but a matter of principle

11. Ibid.

12. Schillebeeckx, *Church*, xvii.

13. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 16.

14. Schillebeeckx, *Church*, xvii.

15. Ibid., 43.

and there are genuine religious experiences in other faiths which are never realized in Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

It is against this historical background that the church now seeks to formulate an appropriate theological response to the reality of religious pluralism as the new context within which to witness the gospel. Christians now have to deal with this reality as a fact of contemporary life. In spite of Christian missionary efforts, religious diversity is here to stay. The Christian theology of religions seeks to account for the diversity of world religious traditions and to discover appropriate responses to this phenomenon. This particular theology attempts to understand the doctrines of other religions and to evaluate the relationship between the Christian faith and the beliefs of other religious traditions. Paul Tillich, in his contact with the history of religions, realized that “every individual doctrinal statement or ritual expression of Christianity receives a new intensity of meaning.”<sup>17</sup> This means that the future of Christian theological endeavor lies in the attitude Christianity is going to adopt to religious pluralism. This linking of systematic theology with the history of religions, in positive engagement, is crucial for revitalizing the self-understanding of Christianity. Tillich draws our attention to the fact that religious pluralism is the context for Christian faith and practice.

## ARE NON-CHRISTIANS SAVED?

In 1964, Joseph Ratzinger preached a sermon entitled “Are Non-Christians Saved?” It is important to examine this homily as it foreshadows his later teachings, as prefect and pope, on the theology of religions. He writes:

We are no longer ready, no longer willing, to think that eternal corruption should be inflicted on people in Asia, in Africa, or wherever it may be, merely on account of their not having “Catholic” marked in their passport.

... Yet if we are honest, we will have to admit that this is not our problem at all. The question we have to face is not that of whether other people can be saved and how. We are convinced that God is able to do this with or without our theories, with or without our perspicacity, and that we do not need to help him do it with our cogitations. The question that really troubles us is not in the least concerned with whether and how God manages to save *others*.

16. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism*, 386–87.

17. Tillich, *The Future of Religions*, 91.

The question that torments us is, much rather, that of why it is still actually necessary for us to carry out the whole ministry of the Christian faith—why, if there are so many other ways to heaven and to salvation, should it still be demanded of us that we bear, day by day, the whole burden of ecclesiastical dogma and ecclesiastical ethics?<sup>18</sup>

Ratzinger sees religious pluralism as a problem and a challenge which should encourage the church to continue with its missionary endeavors, so that all might be saved through the Christian gospel. This means that Christians are responsible for spreading the message of Christ, especially when many people in the world remain unconvinced of the gospel. It is not our problem to know if non-Christians are saved or not. According to Ratzinger, Catholics just need to bear witness to Christ in all aspects of life.

The years from 1992 to 2002 were the time in which the CDF, under the charge of Cardinal Ratzinger, investigated several theologians writing on religious pluralism and the theology of religions. On August 6, 2000, the declaration *Dominus Iesus* was published by the CDF. It is obvious that the document, though not written by Ratzinger, represents his own theological thought. Its main concern was to combat inappropriate, pluralistic theologues with fundamental christological and ecclesiastical orthodoxy.

On September 14, 2000, Ratzinger sent a letter to the presidents of the Bishops' Conferences explaining the purpose and authority of *Dominus Iesus*. He wrote:

The declaration presents the principal truths of the Catholic faith in these areas; such truths require, therefore, irrevocable assent by the Catholic faithful; the text also refutes errors, clarifies some ambiguities and points out important questions that remain open to theological investigation and debate.<sup>19</sup>

Ratzinger's thinking on the theology of religious pluralism is clearly reflected in *Dominus Iesus* and his further insights on this topic are found in *Truth and Tolerance*. The essays in *Truth and Tolerance*, mostly from the 1990s, together with his more recent comments and elaborations, are actually reaffirmations of his basic Catholic orthodoxy on those questions raised by religious pluralism. In *Truth and Tolerance*, Ratzinger indicates that there was "a cry of outrage from modern society but also from great non-Christian cultures such as that of India: this was said to be a document [*Dominus Iesus*] of intolerance and of a religious arrogance that should have no more

18. Ratzinger, "Are Non-Christians Saved?"

19. Letter of Cardinal Ratzinger Regarding *Dominus Iesus*.

place in the world of today.”<sup>20</sup> It is in the context of this tense situation that Ratzinger’s collection of essays was published. It reaffirms the fundamental christological and ecclesiological orthodoxy expressed in *Dominus Iesus*. However, *Dominus Iesus* appears to be incompatible with Vatican II’s teaching on other religions.

## THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL ON OTHER RELIGIONS

For the first time in the history of the Catholic Church, during the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), her teaching on other religions takes on a positive note. It has taken the church many centuries to acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of other religions. Here I would like to discuss two documents which have had a great impact on the Catholic understanding of other religious traditions: *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate*. *Lumen Gentium* first teaches that “the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind, for all men are called by the grace of God to salvation.”<sup>21</sup> It then offers an explicit teaching on Muslims by highlighting common ground: “In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind.”<sup>22</sup> The document suggests that there is saving efficacy in Islam because Muslims have acknowledged the creator who will come in judgment one day.

After the Muslims, *Lumen Gentium* also teaches that the divine presence is found in all God-seekers, other believers in God, even if it is “in shadows and images” that they seek the unknown God. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, those who through no fault of their own, “do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience” will also be saved.<sup>23</sup> Here we see Paul’s speech in Athens, as presented by Acts 17, having a great influence on Vatican II’s approach to other religions. It suggests that all human beings are called by God’s grace to salvation (cf. 1 Tim 2:4).

*Lumen Gentium* also teaches that “Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the

20. Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, 9.

21. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 13.

22. *Ibid.*, no. 16.

23. *Ibid.*

Gospel.”<sup>24</sup> Here Gerald O’Collins cautions us against thinking that this “preparation for the Gospel” means people will enjoy the gifts of grace and truth only if they accept the gospel and baptism.<sup>25</sup> Vatican II never states this. In *Lumen Gentium*, we are told that non-Christians can move from an implicit to an explicit knowledge of God and that they can also move from shadow and images to light.

Further, *Lumen Gentium* also maintains that through the church’s effort, “whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is also cleansed, raised up and perfected unto the glory of God, the confusion of the devil and the happiness of man.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, those who are converted to Christianity already possessed elements of revelation inherited from their former religion. Nothing is lost or wasted. In fact, there is some continuity between their old religion and their newfound Christian faith. God’s self-communication always includes revelation, regarding the truth of the gospel, and salvation, regarding the influence of grace. The two cannot be separated.<sup>27</sup>

*Nostra Aetate* first considers the “riddles of the human condition” and how different religions strive to respond to it. Then it reflects on the merits of Hinduism and Buddhism in their response to the human condition.<sup>28</sup> More importantly, this document also maintains that the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. The church believes they reflect a ray of truth that enlightens all men and women, and thus encourages its members to dialogue with adherents of other faiths so as to learn from them. This means looking at their doctrines, “precepts for life” and “sacred doctrines.” The church acknowledges positively some aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism, the two religions which existed before the coming of Christ.

Besides commenting favorably on these two Asian religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, *Nostra Aetate* devotes an entire article to the Muslims, which shows the importance of understanding and conducting dialogue with them. The document acknowledges major features in their understanding of God: “They [Muslims] adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His

24. Ibid.

25. O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*, 78.

26. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 17.

27. O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*, 81.

28. *Nostra Aetate*, no. 2.

inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God.”<sup>29</sup> The declaration reveals its respect and esteem for the religious and moral life of the Muslims, the way they worship God in prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

In his encyclical, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis teaches that “Our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance, since they are now significantly present in many traditionally Christian countries, where they can freely worship and become fully a part of society.”<sup>30</sup> Francis respects the Muslim’s commitment to righteous living and compassion towards the needy. At the same time, he expects Muslims to respect the rights of Christians to worship and practice their faith in Islamic countries.

### THREE DOMINANT PARADIGMS

We will now briefly look at the standard typology in the Christian theology of religions—exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. There have been various criticisms against this categorization. However, I agree with Paul Hedges that, in spite of criticisms, this typology is useful as a “descriptive and heuristic” guide. It is not meant to be “prescriptive.”<sup>31</sup> Ratzinger rightly thinks that many advocates of the various positions are too quick to equate the issues of religion with the question of salvation. They are not able to discriminate between the various types of religion because not all religious faiths consider salvation to be their main concern. The various positions stated above, exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, offer too simplistic a view of religions which “by no means all lead men in the same direction but which above all do not, each in themselves, exist in one single form.”<sup>32</sup>

S. Mark Heim also argues that the typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism in the theology of religions is fully coherent only if it is assumed that the idea of salvation is the same for one and all. This assumption is clearly dubious and limited. If we take religion seriously in its historical and empirical contexts, the inevitable approach is the exclusivist one. Thus, for Buddhists, the dharma is the only way, for Christians, it is Christ, etc.<sup>33</sup> The fact that some people follow both Buddhist and Confucian paths reinforces the point that each tradition constitutes a unique way of obtaining “distinct fulfillments,” although they are “compatible and comple-

29. Ibid., no.3.

30. *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 252.

31. Hedges, “A Reflection on Typologies,” 22.

32. Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, 53.

33. Heim, *Salvations*, 4.

mentary.” If they are not exclusive religions, then there is no need to follow two different ways because they both reach the same goal.<sup>34</sup> Another person who disagrees with this typology is Joseph S. O’Leary who laments that “the pontifications of theologians about inclusivism, exclusivism, pluralism, and relativism are part of that in-house ecclesiastical wrangling that is the mark of a theology disengaged from a living context.”<sup>35</sup>

In spite of its limitations, this standard typology is useful for examining Ratzinger’s position regarding Christianity in relation to other religions. In *Truth and Tolerance*, Ratzinger has offered a critique on these three paradigms and thus it is fitting that we use it to ascertain his position. This typology also deals with two underlying theological principles in each category—the universal salvific will of God and the claim that only in Jesus Christ (or his church) can human beings be saved. Each paradigmatic position places different emphases on one or both of these axioms.<sup>36</sup> This is an important issue when we explore Christianity as a particular religion, an historical event in time and place, with a universal role, and also, when we examine its relationship with other religions.

## EXCLUSIVISM

The New Testament presents Christian faith as absolute and final: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel also says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Thus, the church’s predominant attitude, throughout its history, has been to regard other religious beliefs as false. In the Catholic Church we have the axiom, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (Outside the church there is no salvation). Originally, the people this referred to were heretics and schismatics, but later, it also came to include non-Christians.<sup>37</sup> In recent times, exclusivism in the theology of religions is more a product of Protestant than of Catholic theology due to its strong reliance on the New Testament as the starting point for faith.

Alan Race thinks that the current emphasis on dialogue has led to the adoption of exclusivism as a defense mechanism. Dialogue can pose a serious threat to the traditional belief in the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity. Proponents of exclusivism in the Christian theology of religions

34. Ibid., 5.

35. O’Leary, “Toward a Buddhist Interpretation,” 42.

36. D’Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism*, 18.

37. Sullivan, *Salvation outside the Church?* 22–23.

want to expose this potential threat. Exclusivists stress that the revelation in Jesus Christ is the “sole criterion” on which to judge all religions, including Christianity.<sup>38</sup>

In his *Church Dogmatics* (Vol 1/2), Karl Barth presents a theory which represents the most extreme form of exclusivism: “The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion.” Barth believes that only the Christian faith can save people. Other religions do not lead to salvation and nor does Christianity, as a religion. He distinguishes religion and revelation. Barth believes that religion is contrary to faith; religion consists of human attitudes constructed to reach God. His guiding principle is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as given in the scripture. Thus, he considers religion as a kind of unbelief, it is false and blind. As an attempt by human beings to redeem themselves, religion is not only a futile endeavor, but also “an activity of unbelief” if practiced without the benefit of revelation.<sup>39</sup> Barth is determined to defend the absolute freedom of God to act in his exclusive divine initiative. Any attempt by a human being to “supply criteria out of his own reason by which the gospel may be interpreted, is a direct contradiction of the meaning and act of revelation.”<sup>40</sup> According to Barth, “Revelation is God’s sovereign action upon man or it is not revelation.”<sup>41</sup>

This radical separation between revelation and religion becomes the criterion on which Barth judges other religious traditions. Genuine faith, however, is a gift from God who reaches out to save us personally. Barth believes that it is the “presence and reality of the grace of God” that differentiates Christianity from others as the true religion. The gospel is linked to revelation, but “other faiths are the product of ‘religion’”—this is Barth’s understanding of the Christian revelation. He condemns Christianity and other religions when they are not centered upon the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, other faiths cannot be judged in comparison with Christianity as a historical religion, but only with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore Christians are more likely to be condemned if they fail to live up to the gospel.<sup>42</sup>

Paul J. Griffiths holds that the theory of exclusivism, which teaches that one’s own religion is uniquely privileged with regard to the possession of truth, is not widely accepted. This is because it commits anyone who holds this position to the claim that none of the teachings in other religions is identical with his or her own. If, for example, one’s religion teaches that

38. Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism*, 11.

39. *Ibid.*, 12.

40. *Ibid.*, 13.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

there is only one God, who alone is worthy of being worshipped, then an exclusivist who adheres to such a belief must say that no other religions teach this doctrine. If there is such “instance of identity,” it follows that if the relevant teaching of one’s own religion is true, then it applies to other religions as well.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding exclusivism, Ratzinger claims that giving an absolute value to a religion is not unique to monotheism; it also applies to mysticism and enlightenment. He asserts that everyone sets up an “absolute value” to what they believe to be true, not just Christians. There are those who follow someone like Radhakrishnan who teaches the relativity of all religions and at the same time gives the experience of mysticism an absolute value.<sup>44</sup> Ratzinger says this is no less arrogant than “offering the absolute value of Christ to the non-Christian.”<sup>45</sup> He also remarks that no one takes the position of exclusivism in the sense of denying salvation to all non-Christians, not even Karl Barth. However, he thinks Barth’s radical view of exclusivism is “contradictory and illusory.” According to Ratzinger, faith must express itself in religion and through religion, but it cannot be reduced to religion alone.<sup>46</sup>

Lai Pan-chiu challenges the traditional reading of Barth as an exclusivist in the theology of religions. Lai does concede though, that for Barth, the true nature of religion refers only to the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, meaning that religion without the revelation of God is a futile human undertaking. But Lai alerts us to the fact that Barth does not say *all* religions are false except Christianity. In fact, unbelief can also be found in Christianity itself. Only God can judge whether a religion is true or false, but this should not prevent us from appreciating the grace and goodness of other religions. Barth affirms that besides Christ, the true light, there might be other lights such as Confucius, Buddha, and Mohammed. This suggests that Christianity must not attempt to push other religious traditions out of its ken because, in so doing, it will only manifest an attitude of arrogance and self-righteousness. Lai argues that a close reading of the latter part of *Church Dogmatics* reveals the inclusivist nature of Barth’s theology of religions, namely that salvation wrought by Christ is not exclusive and the revelation of God cannot be confined to Christianity alone. Thus, Christianity should not “absolutize” itself because grace is not its exclusive possession.<sup>47</sup>

43. Griffiths, *Problem of Religious Diversity*, 54.

44. Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, 30.

45. *Ibid.*, 31.

46. *Ibid.*, 50.

47. Lai, “Barth’s Theology of Religion,” 250–53.