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Introduction

The world displays a very large variety of religious and anti-religious ways of thinking, with most of them pursued by people of great intellect and seriousness. Consider the many varieties of beliefs that go under the names Hinduism or Buddhism, and the difficulty of categorizing such sects. Or even among theistic religions, there are many different types of beliefs that go by the names Christianity, Islam, or Judaism. There are also large varieties of beliefs that are essentially non-spiritual in nature such as Confucianism, that still fall under the category of religious belief. Consider what is said on the topic of religious diversity by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> Religious diversity exists most noticeably at the level of basic theistic systems. For instance, while within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam it is believed that God is a personal deity, within Hinayana (Theravada) Buddhism God's existence is denied and within Hinduism the concept of a personal deity is, in an important sense, illusory. Within many forms of Christianity and Islam, the ultimate goal is subjective immortality in God's presence, while within Hinayana Buddhism the ultimate goal is the extinction of the self as a discrete, conscious entity. However, significant, widespread diversity also exists within basic theistic systems. For example, within Christianity, believers differ significantly on the nature of God. Some see God as all controlling, others as self-limiting, and still others as incapable in principle of unilaterally controlling any aspect of reality. Some believe God to have infallible knowledge only of all that has occurred or is occurring, others claim God also has knowledge of all that will actually occur, while those who believe God possesses middle knowledge

> add that God knows all that would actually occur in any possible context.[1]

Add to this pantheon of religious diversity the areligious: those who reject religious belief. Amidst this backdrop in contemporary philosophy of religion there has been much debate about whether one can defend any form of religious exclusivism, the view that the religious propositions (or some of the religious propositions) of one religion are true. The debate typically asks whether mutually exclusive religious beliefs provide a defeater for the religious propositions of any one particular religion.[2] I will argue no. In this chapter, I will describe some of the general issues surrounding religious exclusivism before turning more specifically to Alvin Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological defense of Christian belief from this charge.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

One can construe religious exclusivism in many different ways, but my concern is with the Christian exclusivist. Consider the two most basic Christian propositions that most Christians believe are true (together known as CE):[3]

CE_1 The world was created by God, an almighty, all-knowing and perfectly good personal being (the sort of being who holds beliefs, has aims and intentions, and can act to accomplish these aims).

CE_2 Human beings require salvation, and God has provided a unique way of salvation through the incarnation, life, sacrificial death, and resurrection of his divine son.

Some Christian exclusivists defend CE by offering arguments for the truth of CE_1 and/or CE_2. Consider the following summary of such an argument given by Thomas Aquinas:

1. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Religious Diversity."

2. A defeater as I use it here is simply a belief P that is incompatible with another belief Q, such that given P, one cannot rationally hold to Q. Thus belief in Q is defeated by belief P.

3. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief,* 438. He refers to CE_1 and CE_2 as 1) and 2) in his book.

1. Nothing can move itself.
2. If every object in motion had a mover, then the first object requires a mover.
3. No movement can go on for infinity.
4. Therefore, there must be a first unmoved mover.
5. The first unmoved mover is God.

Regardless of whether one is convinced by this argument or not, Aquinas is arguing for the conclusion that God exists. To be sure there are evidentialist arguments that are considerably more sophisticated, but the general idea is the same. Namely, that a sound argument can be given that concludes that God exists.

The Reformed Epistemologists, unlike Aquinas, reject the notion that one can offer a sound argument for the conclusion that God exists. They believe (as we shall see) that belief in God is properly basic and one can hold to belief in God as true without offering an argument for the truth of God's existence. Plantinga in his Reformed Epistemological defense of Christian belief makes it clear that he will not be able to argue for the truth of CE in such a way that those who do not already hold to CE as true will accept the premises of his argument.[4] Yet, he believes that CE is true.

As we shall see, Plantinga argues that *if* Christian belief (or CE) is true, then Christian belief is likely to be warranted. In arguing for this conditional conclusion, we see that he also argues for the claim that the variety of mutually exclusive religious beliefs to Christian belief does not provide a defeater for CE. Plantinga further clarifies his Christian exclusivist views by adding a few conditions to the acceptance of CE. Someone does not count as a Christian exclusivist unless:[5]

(i) they are fully aware of other religions,

(ii) they are aware that there is genuine devotion and piety in the other religions,

(iii) and they know of no argument that would convince all or most of these other intelligent adherents of other religions and the anti-religious to their own exclusivist position.

4. As Plantinga does, I will use "Christian belief" synonymously with "CE."
5. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 440.

What sets this sort of Christian exclusivism apart from many other Christian exclusivists who hold to CE is condition (iii). This type of Christian exclusivist holds his ground that CE is true, even if he cannot produce an argument that shows that all mutually exclusive propositions to CE are false.

A major objection to any form of religious exclusivism is the problem of religious diversity. The objection can be formulated into an argument (PRD):

1. There are a large variety of mutually exclusive religious propositions held by a large variety of religious believers and non-believers.[6]
2. The believers and non-believers in premise 1 are epistemic peers, people who are alike epistemically in every way given the particular belief in matters of intelligence, honesty, thoroughness, exposure to question/research/data, etc.
3. One should give equal weight to all of the religious propositions in premise 1 because they come from epistemic peers.
4. Given 3, these mutually exclusive religious propositions serve as defeaters for one another.
5. Therefore, it is not tenable to hold to any one particular religious proposition in any exclusive sense.
6. Therefore, any form of religious exclusivism is unwarranted.

I will reply to this argument by arguing against premises 3 and 4.

Religious exclusivism, like many issues in the philosophy of religion, is a controversial issue so it is important to make clear what I will be defending and what I will not be defending. My main argument will take the following form:

1. If Plantinga's proper function account is a reasonable account of warrant, then rival religious views to CE do not serve as a defeater to Christian belief having warrant.

6. I count areligious propositions as religious propositions. So propositions such as "God does not exist," or "there is no good we know of that would justify God in allowing evil if God were absolutely good" count as religious propositions since they are concerned with religious belief or unbelief.

2. If rival religious views to CE do not serve as a defeater to Christian belief having warrant, then Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological defense of CE is reasonable.
3. Therefore, if Plantinga's proper function account is a reasonable account of warrant, then Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological defense of CE is reasonable.

Plantinga assumes that religious propositions are no different from scientific or philosophical propositions in that they have a truth-value: true or false. I will refer to all religious claims and propositions in the same manner that Plantinga does. I will not defend the concept of God in Christian belief nor will I defend the use of Christian scripture. Rather, my goal is to defend CE from PRD.

There are two additional issues surrounding PRD that I will not be defending. First, I will not be arguing for the truth of CE. My goal will be to defend Christian exclusivism against the more narrow charge that rival religious views count as an epistemic defeater for the rationality of Christian belief as construed in CE given Plantinga's proper function account of warrant. My defense, thus, will be an *epistemic* defense and not a metaphysical one. A metaphysical defense would require something much more than what I hope to defend, namely something beyond claiming that X does not serve as a defeater for Y given Z.

Second, I will not be defending or presenting any views that hold to a non-realist conception of truth. Although the nature of religious truth can be very complex given the varied ways of viewing God and ultimate reality, I will assume that religious propositions have a truth-value in much the same way that non-religious propositions have a truth-value. Hence, I will be ignoring or putting by the wayside any objection that rejects the principle of non-contradiction. Furthermore, I will not be considering any emotivist views on religious truth and language. Emotivist views typically claim that religious propositions (or judgments) are simply expressions of one's own attitude.[7] Though there are interesting questions to be pursued in this sort of non-realist context, I will not be dealing with them in this work. Finally, I will not be considering any non-cognitivist views on religious propositions and language. On this view, which is distinct from the view that religious truth is an expression of emotions, religious propositions fail to express anything at all—either

7. For an example of emotivism, see Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*.

true or false—they are more like music.[8] I will be putting by the wayside any such view that is non-cognitivist in nature.

Finally, certain religious traditions claim that religious claims are non-propositional or argue for a non-realist pluralism. This is to claim that a religious statement does not always have a truth-value or a religious statement can have differing truth-values. For example, one Hindu may claim that "God exists" is true. Another Hindu, may claim that "God exists" is false. A third Hindu may claim that both of the previous aforementioned views are correct, since the principle of non-contradiction does not apply at all times to religious statements. Although there are interesting questions to be pursued here with respect to religious claims, I will not be pursuing them. My focus will be on whether someone can hold to CE as true given that there are mutually exclusive religious claims by epistemic peers that contradict or are inconsistent with CE. PRD, as an epistemic objection, presupposes that religious propositions can have truth-values in the same way any other propositions about the external world can have truth-values. Thus my focus will solely be on whether mutually exclusive religious beliefs serve as a defeater for CE given Plantinga's proper function account of warrant. This endeavor then takes for granted or presupposes that religious propositions are no different than non-religious propositions with respect to truth.

THE MORAL AND EPISTEMIC OBJECTION

We are now in a position to turn to the primary focus of my project. Does the fact that there are religious propositions that contradict CE provide a defeater for CE? Plantinga argues no. He goes further and claims that even if one is unable to give an argument for the truth of CE that would convince those who reject CE, one can still be reasonable in holding to CE as true. Of course Plantinga also claims that those who reject CE are also unable to offer an argument for the falsity of CE in such a way that those who accept CE would accept the premises of such an argument.[9]

8. For an example of a non-cognitivist ontology see Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology." According to Carnap, we can generate a framework for language such that certain propositions can be deemed necessary given the particular rules of the language. So what is "true" or "false" is simply a byproduct of the particular necessary propositions given the language constructed, rather than any correspondence to some fact about the universe construed via a realist picture of the universe.

9. I use the term non-exclusivist to denote any religious position that rejects religious exclusivism; including inclusivist, pluralist, pantheist, or even atheist. Of course

Plantinga's initial defense of Christian exclusivism is to defend religious exclusivism from two primary objections: the Moral Objection and the Epistemic Objection. I will consider each of these in turn.

The Moral Objection claims that there is a "self-serving arbitrariness, an arrogance or egoism" when anyone accepts propositions such as CE.[10] Plantinga concedes that anyone who holds to CE as true is going to claim that someone who believes something incompatible with CE is mistaken and believes something that is false. She also believes that those who do not believe as she does with respect to CE, fails to believe something that is true. Consider an example of someone who levels this sort of moral objection against the religious exclusivist:

> . . . except at the cost of insensitivity or delinquency, it is morally not possible actually to go out into the world and say to devout, intelligent, fellow human beings . . . we believe that we know God and we are right; you believe that you know God, and you are totally wrong.[11]

There are a few key assumptions working here in this sort of moral objection even if one tones down the rhetoric. We see this sort of charge would not work for just any case where someone believes something and others disagree. For example, it wouldn't work in politics. Imagine that one endorses a particular political view, X. If someone simply disagreed with you, and gave you reasons why they disagreed, one would be obstinate to consider that person arrogant, insensitive, or delinquent. What is the difference then between politics and religious claims? Perhaps one clue is that the moral objector against the religious exclusivist is presupposing that if there is a God, then everyone has equal or similar access to God[12]. Hence the claim that one cannot claim to know God while rejecting the claim that others know God equally well. The key in this particular objection seems to be the claim that no one person has some sort of exclusive *privileged access* to religious truth in rejecting the religious beliefs of others as false. Plantinga concedes that of course the

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someone can be a religious exclusivist (Islam, etc.) without being a Christian exclusivist and someone can hold to Christian Belief, including CE, without holding to Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological views.

10. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 443.

11. Cantwell Smith, *Religious Diversity*, 14.

12. Not all religious exclusivists are theists in the strict sense, so although I use the term "God" one could make the same case for the term "religious truth."

exclusivist *does see* herself as privileged in terms of her religious beliefs, but this does not mean that she should be subject to this objection.

Plantinga argues in the following way:

(1) If this moral objection charge is correct, there must be some possible way to correctly adjust one's beliefs so as to rid oneself of the defect (i.e., ought implies can, etc.)

(2) There are only two responses to (1). Either a) believe the negations of the exclusivist beliefs, or b) abstain from believing both the exclusivist beliefs and the negations of the exclusivist beliefs, assuming we have set aside non-cognitive and anti-realist views on religious truth and religious propositions.

(3) If one chooses a) and believes the negations of the exclusivist beliefs, this still leads to exclusivism.

(4) If one chooses b) and abstains from believing both the exclusivist beliefs and the negations of the exclusivist beliefs, they are still claiming their "abstaining from belief" is privileged in the same manner as the exclusivist or those in a).

(5) There is no way to avoid the moral objection against exclusivism regardless of what position one takes, including non-exclusivism or abstaining from belief. Hence the moral objection is mistaken.

So regardless of one's doxastic state with respect to any set of religious propositions, whether an exclusivist or non-exclusivist, Plantinga claims that one cannot avoid the moral objection (on a realist account of religious propositions). Hence, the moral objection is faulty at its core.

Consider premise (3). If one believes the negations of the exclusivist beliefs, then one is still holding to propositions that others don't believe. This of course doesn't put this person in a better position than the religious exclusivist with respect to the charge of arrogance or egoism as the moral objection claims. The religious non-exclusivist here holds to certain propositions not held by others, hence she is in the same position as the exclusivist. This is no objection at all against the exclusivist, since the non-exclusivist who holds to the denials of the propositions held by the exclusivist would fall prey to the same objection or charge.[13] The key for

13. Certain non-exclusivists deny that religious propositions are held to the same standards as philosophical propositions and advocate a non-realist position. Whether this can be shown to the satisfaction of those who disagree is another matter, since this

this sort of objection to religious exclusivism, as we have seen earlier for the one leveling this sort of charge at the exclusivist, is *privileged access* to religious truth. The religious exclusivist, at least the religious exclusivism that Plantinga defends, claims a sort of privileged access to God (and hence, religious truth) that the non-exclusivist lacks. The non-exclusivist in leveling this sort of charge rejects that the religious exclusivist has privileged access to religious truth. The moral objection seems to hold muster only if one assumes that the exclusivist and non-exclusivist have equal access to religious truth. Premise (3) simply claims that the non-exclusivist, if she believes in the negations of the exclusivist beliefs, is also holding to an exclusivism of sorts. Of course if that is the case, then it's not exclusivism the moral charge is leveled at but something entirely different and the objection loses its force. What of the one who suspends judgment on the issue? They would have to suspend judgment on both the views of the exclusivist and the non-exclusivist. As we shall see in the next section, I will argue that the one who suspends judgment is still endorsing a form of exclusivism—that is she holds certain religious propositions to be true and better supported than other ones.

Consider premise (4), the abstemious pluralist. This person withholds or abstains belief in both the exclusivist propositions and their negations. Plantinga characterizes the abstemious pluralist position (AP) as such:

> If *S* knows that others don't believe *p* (and, let's add, knows that he can't find arguments that will persuade them of *p*), then *S* should not believe *p*.[14]

Suppose the abstemious pluralist holds to AP. Of course he will recognize that not everyone holds to AP, and will have no argument—at least no argument that would convince most of those who disagree—that will change the minds of those who disagree with AP. He too is holding to a particular exclusive proposition, namely AP, which others reject.

Plantinga stops here, but suppose we go further. Suppose we substitute *p* in AP for AP itself. Then we have the following: (AP′)

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would put the person under the same moral objection of arrogance as the exclusivist since she still holds a position (i.e., that of a non-realist view of truth with regard to religious propositions, etc.) that others reject.

14. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 446.

> If *S* knows that others don't believe AP (and, let's add, knows that he can't find arguments that will persuade them of AP), then *S* should not believe AP.

Of course if AP were true, then AP′ would also be true. If AP′ were true, then one should not believe AP. Hence, AP falls on itself and rejects itself as a principle. The Moral Objection claims that there is a "self-serving arbitrariness, an arrogance or egoism" when a religious exclusivist rejects propositions such as P, since the religious exclusivist neglects the important point that there are others who don't accept propositions such as P. The abstemious pluralist abstains from believing both the exclusivist propositions and their negations. Plantinga is claiming that the abstemious pluralist position is also an exclusivism of sorts, that is the abstemious pluralist holds to some religious propositions as true and holds other ones as false. If that is the case, then he is in the same boat epistemically as the others in claiming his position is privileged. So the abstemious pluralist, in the end, has either the option of 1) continuing to endorse AP, which leads to AP′ which in turn leads to a rejection of AP, or 2) claim that her position is privileged, which is to give up her abstemious pluralism. Either way, her position is not a tenable one.

Perhaps the abstemious pluralist can object that Plantinga has miscategorized their claims and made their objection unnecessarily weak, a straw man objection. The abstemious pluralist may reject the claim that simply abstaining from believing both the exclusivist beliefs and their negations is truly a privileged position as premise (4) claims. Perhaps they may want to claim that theirs is an agnostic position of sorts, one where they believe there is not enough evidence or argument to accept the views of either the religious exclusivist or the non-exclusivist. The position is more a state of suspended belief rather than endorsing the views of the religious exclusivist or the non-exclusivist. Consider an example. Suppose you are an abstemious pluralist and are unsure whether a particular proposition X or its negation ~X is true.[15] After examining the evidence, you are still unsure where the evidence leads. Thus you suspend judgment with respect to X or ~X. The abstemious pluralist would have to hold to one of these three propositions regarding X:

15. The symbol ~ is the negation symbol, so ~X is equal to it is not the case that X or simply not-X.

1. X is true.
2. X is false.
3. I am unsure whether X is true or false and will abstain from believing in X or ~X.

The abstemious pluralist obviously holds to 3. How does she arrive at 3, rejecting 1 and 2? It's not for lack of knowledge on the topic. Rather it's the evidence (or the lack thereof) that leads her to 3, instead of 1 or 2.[16] Is position 3 any different from 1 and 2? The religious exclusivist holds to 1 because she believes the evidence leads her to position 1. Some religious non-exclusivists hold to position 2 because she believes the evidence leads her to position 2. The abstemious pluralist seems to hold to her position in the same manner. She is using her cognitive faculties in the same manner as the religious exclusivist and the non-exclusivist. She holds to the position that seems best to her given her assessment of the evidence or lack thereof.

The sort of abstemious pluralist that is being targeted is, as Plantinga stipulated earlier, someone who is aware of the religious diversity in the world and admits that people in the other religions display as much devotion and piety as she does. If someone who is familiar with the arguments for positions 1 and 2 still chooses 3, she must have a reason to choose 3. Even if her reason is that positions 1 and 2 are equally weak or strong, that is still evidence that leads her to position 3. The Moral Objection claims that there is a "self-serving arbitrariness, an arrogance or egoism" when anyone accepts propositions such as P. The abstemious pluralist is claiming that any religious view that claims they are privileged over another view is to be rejected. So whether in the strong sense as Plantinga has pointed out earlier or in the weaker sense as I have pointed out here, the abstemious pluralist seems unable to escape the claim that even abstaining from belief is still a claim that one's position is privileged. If this is the case, then the abstemious is still no different from our exclusivist.[17] The abstemious pluralist holds to a particular proposi-

16. I use the word evidence in the broadest sense here. For example, someone may not have evidence in the sense of a philosophical argument that there exist minds other than her own but this does not show there is no evidence at all. Perhaps direct awareness or sense perception may also fall in this category, evidence that is not the result of an argument.

17. Some philosophers take an even stronger route and claim there is no such thing as religious pluralism. Although it is not my intention to defend such a claim, some have

tion that she sees as privileged over others based on the evidence, which is precisely why she can launch an objection over positions 1 and 2. The abstemious pluralist holds to a position that is really no different than the ones held by the religious exclusivist and the non-exclusivist.

The second objection to religious exclusivism that Plantinga describes is the epistemic objection. The epistemic objection to religious exclusivism argues that Christian exclusivism is unjustified. The epistemic objection takes this general form:

1) The Christian exclusivist who holds to conditions (i)–(iii) violates certain epistemic duties.
2) The religious exclusivist is intellectually arbitrary.
3) Therefore, the religious exclusivist is unjustified in her condition.

Consider premise 1), that the Christian exclusivist violates epistemic duties and is not within her intellectual rights in holding to her religious exclusivism. This charge presupposes that the views of the exclusivist and the non-exclusivist are on epistemic par. For if they were on par with one another, the exclusivist would be either stubborn or irrational in holding to her beliefs and claiming the denials of her beliefs are false. The religious exclusivist would seemingly need a good argument then to distinguish her position from that of the non-exclusivist or else her position is arbitrary.

A good argument has to be valid of course, and also must not be circular or beg any questions against those with whom one disagrees. What of the premises? If the argument is valid, then the premises must also not be circular or beg any questions against those with whom one disagrees. A good argument must also be cogent, since the goal of such an argument would be to distinguish one's own position from that of one's opponents. (I will set aside the claim that a good argument need not be persuasive since the opposition may hold false beliefs.) The goal of a good argument for religious exclusivism would be to show the non-exclusivist that the views of the religious exclusivist are epistemically privileged. On such an account, if the argument consists of premises that are not accepted by those who disagree, then I won't have a right

argued that there are only exclusivist religious views since every religious view is going to claim some religious propositions as true that are denied in other religious belief systems. See D'Costa, "Impossibility of a Pluralist View of Religions."

to accept these premises either based on this charge of epistemic parity unless I have another argument for those premises. Then we'd have to come up with another argument for the argument that one gave for the original premises, since the premises of the new argument would not be accepted by those who disagree. And so on, ad infinitum. If this is what one means by violating one's epistemic duty, the argument is lacking. Plantinga says of this that:

> The result seems to be that my duty precludes my being party to any *ultimate* disagreements, at least any *ultimate* disagreements of which I am aware, and at least as far as decisive assent goes. Can that be right? Perhaps there is no way you can find moral common ground with a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Perhaps you can't find any premises you both accept that will serve in a good argument for your views against his. Would it really follow that you don't have a right to give decisive assent to the proposition that racial bigotry is wrong? Hardly.[18]

So even if epistemic duties do exist as described, the religious exclusivist does not hold to a position that is significantly different from the religious non-exclusivist. Like the non-exclusivist, the religious exclusivist would think long and hard about her position and appeal to her epistemic community in much the same way the non-exclusivist would. She, like the non-exclusivist, would think her conclusions were correct even if there were others who dissent. She could not be shirking a duty since she is doing exactly what the non-exclusivist does in forming his position, or if she is shirking a duty, the non-exclusivist would also be shirking the same duty. Hence, the charge that the exclusivist violates some epistemic duty is mistaken, since the non-exclusivist seems to be in the same position.

Consider premise 2), that the exclusivist position is intellectually arbitrary. The charge is that when the exclusivist prefers her own religious propositions based on her own religious views, there will be epistemic parity among her beliefs and those who disagree with her. However, both the exclusivist and the non-exclusivist would have nearly the same internal markers, including devotion, intelligence, inner experience, etc. The Christian exclusivist we are concerned with already concedes (iii) that any non-exclusivist (and also the exclusivist for a rival religion who rejects CE) would display the same internal markers with

18. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 450.

respect to devotion, piety, and the like. Of course even in conceding this point, the Christian exclusivist need not claim that her beliefs are on par epistemically with those who reject CE. Consider an example that Plantinga gives.

Suppose you and a colleague are in dispute over whether it is morally right to advance one's career by lying. Suppose further that the colleague is an epistemic peer, someone who displays as much intelligence as you do and has thought about the issue with as much concern as you have, etc. You of course think that your beliefs are epistemically privileged, that is you believe that your colleague's position is immoral even though both of you display nearly identical internal markers with respect to the issues of morality. Does the mere fact that she holds that she is right give you a good reason to abandon your belief that it is morally wrong to advance one's career by lying? Of course not. You would think your colleague had some moral blind spot, or she was raised in a particular environment that led to such a blind spot, etc. You would think that you were privileged in your position even when you couldn't show to the satisfaction of your colleague that you are right and she is wrong via an argument. Plantinga claims in such a case that "the believer in question doesn't really think the beliefs in question are on a relevant epistemic par" even though the opposing party may share very similar internal markers.[19] So the fact that the non-exclusivist has the same internal markers as the exclusivist does not show that their positions are epistemically identical or that the religious exclusivist is being arbitrary in holding to her belief. This is true even if, as we have seen, the religious exclusivist cannot produce an argument that would satisfy those who disagree with her that she is in fact epistemically privileged.

The abstemious pluralist believes that it is better to withhold judgment. Of course others disagree, and those that disagree would have the same internal markers of justification as the abstemious pluralist. The assumption here is that the internal markers are the same for everyone. Premise 1) of the epistemic objection claims that the Christian exclusivist violates certain epistemic duties. This seems to presuppose that the internal markers are the same, hence the exclusivist has the same epistemic duties as the non-exclusivist. If the internal markers are the same, then the abstemious pluralist seems to be no better off than the exclusivist. Even though the Christian exclusivist could be wrong in

19. Ibid., 453.

holding P as true, this could also be so for the non-exclusivist in holding to his belief. As we have seen earlier, this is also true of the abstemious pluralist.[20] Hence, a fallibilism with respect to religious propositions need not lead one to skepticism on all religious propositions. From a neutral vantage point one could be wrong in holding to an exclusivist position with respect to epistemic duty, intellectual arbitrariness, and internal markers. Of course this is also true of the non-exclusivist and the abstemious pluralist position as well. If the internal markers are not the same, then one could not really claim that the exclusivist violates certain epistemic duties. How could one launch this sort of objection when the internal markers are totally different in the absence of any argument? After all, the exclusivist does claim that her views are privileged in that she believes what is true and those that do not believe what she believes, believes something that is false. The non-exclusivist also does the same. Hence, it's not problematic to claim that one can reasonably hold to one's religious exclusivism even when one *cannot* produce an argument (or knows of no argument) that would convince all or most of those who disagree.

Finally, Plantinga notes that a religious exclusivist's confidence may be reduced once she encounters the religious diversity that exists in the world but it need not do so via arguments. Consider what he says of this:

> Since degree of warrant depends in part on degree of belief, it is possible, though not necessary, that knowledge of the facts of religious pluralism should reduce his degree of belief and hence the degree of warrant that P can have for him; it can deprive him of knowledge of P. . . . Things *could* go this way with the exclusivist. On the other hand, they *needn't* go this way.[21]

It may even be that the knowledge of the facts of religious pluralism can increase the warrant that a Plantinga-exclusivist has in CE, since the mere knowledge of this could serve as an occasion for a renewed and

20. I'm presupposing here that both the non-exclusivist and the abstemious pluralist hold to certain religious propositions. I define religious propositions as those that affirm or reject religious belief. The non-exclusivist holds to the negations of the religious exclusivist's propositions. The abstemious pluralist also holds to certain religious propositions on this view, including "there is equally good evidence for or against P" or "there is no good evidence for P or against P," etc.

21. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 457. Plantinga's emphasis.

more powerful working of the belief-producing processes by which she has come to believe CE in the first place. As we shall see, Plantinga labels this belief-producing faculty the *sensus divinitatis* (sense of divinity). For if there were a *sensus divinitatis*, then the knowledge of the facts of pluralism could trigger a more powerful working of the process by which one comes to have religious (or Christian) beliefs.

It need not go this way but according to Plantinga it could, if Christian belief were true and warranted in the way that he has (as we shall see) outlined. Plantinga concludes that mere knowledge of religious diversity need not reduce a Christian exclusivist's confidence in her religious exclusivism. His strategy is to argue that if the Christian exclusivist's cognitive faculties are functioning properly, then her Christian beliefs would likely be warranted if true.

PROSPECTUS

In this first chapter, my goal was to try and isolate some of the key issues surrounding CE and PRD. My intention for this chapter was merely to lay out some preliminary issues before a more detailed defense of my thesis. My goal for this work is to offer a more detailed defense of Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological defense of CE from the problem of religious diversity.

My strategy will be as follows. In chapter 2, I will argue that Plantinga's argument for Christian belief is tied to his account of warrant as proper function. I try to motivate the first premise of my main argument, by claiming that warrant as proper function is a reasonable account of warrant. In chapters 3, 4, and 5, I defend the second premise of my main argument: if rival religious views to CE do not serve as a defeater to Christian belief having warrant, then Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological defense of CE is reasonable. In chapter 3, I specifically argue against the third premise of PRD, the equal weight view. Proponents of the equal weight view claim that in cases of peer disagreement, one should give equal weight to the opinion of an epistemic peer and to one's own opinion. I argue that the equal weight view is mistaken. I will also argue that the claim that CE is not defensible due to its multiple competitors is mistaken because of its dependence on the equal weight view. In chapters 4 and 5, I take up the notion of defeaters and argue against some prominent objections to Plantinga's Reformed Epistemology and warrant as proper function. I argue that these objections do not serve

as defeaters to Christian exclusivism. Finally in chapter 6, I consider the central issue of exclusivism and conclude that it is reasonable to claim that if a proper function account is a reasonable account of warrant, then Plantinga's Reformed Epistemological defense of CE is reasonable. This of course does not entail that CE is true nor that Christian belief is in fact warranted.