CHRI\r
ST AND WORLD RELIGIONS:
TOWARDS A PNEUMATOLOGICAL CHRISTOCENTRISM

Joseph H. P. Wong, S.D.B.

INTRODUCTION

Inculturation is an important theme for theological reflection. The Christian message must be expressed in accordance with the cultures of peoples and places.

Since there is a close bond between culture and the religions which people profess, it is necessary to deal with the topic of religion in our discussion on inculturation. This is particularly the case in the context of Asian countries where culture and religion are closely linked together. For example, it would be impossible to separate the Indian culture from Hinduism and would be difficult to understand the Chinese culture without studying Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. This topic on Christ and world religions has great relevance for today's theological discussions. Interreligious dialogue is important not only for inculturation but is an integral aspect of the Church's mission. In many places it is


practically the chief way for the Church to carry out her mission of evangelization. Two areas are particularly relevant for contemporary theology: the liberation theology of Latin America and the theology of religions of Asia and Africa. Just as the development of the so-called third Church has great significance for the universal Church so also third world theology has great impact on the theological reflections of the Church at large.¹

This paper is not concerned with a positive study of the history and phenomenology of religions, nor is it concerned with a comparative study of Christianity and other religions.⁴ Rather, it aims at something more fundamental. It is a theological reflection on the relationship of Christ, the founder of Christianity, to other world religions. It reflects on the place of Jesus Christ in these religions as well as the significance of the latter in the history of salvation. It also deals with the proper attitudes which Christians should have with regard to other religions in order to guide their dialogue with them. The paper contains the following parts: (1) the teaching of Vatican II and postconciliar documents on the relationship of the Church to the other religions; (2) a spectrum of different views on this topic among contemporary theologians, especially during the second half of the century; (3) a pneumatological christocentrism presented as the adequate view together with some related issues. A general conclusion will be given at the end of the article.

1. VATICAN II AND POSTCONCILIAR DOCUMENTS

The attitude of the Church concerning the salvation of non-Christians was founded upon two basic beliefs: God's universal will to save mankind and the necessity of the Church for salvation. In the attempt at balancing these two beliefs, the Church had put greater emphasis on the importance of the Church for salvation. Until Vatican II, the standard position of the Catholic Church can be expressed by the traditional axiom: "Outside the Church, there


is no salvation.” With its positive attitude and openness Vatican II forms a watershed in the relationship with other religions. This change of attitude with regard to extra-Christian religions can be seen especially in the following documents: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (LG), *Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity* (AG), *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (NA) and *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (GS). After stating that “all men are called to belong to the new People of God,” *Lumen Gentium* reaffirms the traditional teaching that “the Church . . . is necessary for salvation.” The Constitution then goes on to give a wider concept of belonging to the Church. Different people are ordained in various ways to the People of God. Among them there are 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.” The Constitution goes further to include the non-believers: “Nor does divine Providence deny the help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to His grace. Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel.” Thus, in both cases the grace of God is necessary and is actually offered to them: “moved by grace,” “thanks to His grace.” Moreover, the document does not only envisage the possibility of the salvation of non-Christians, but affirms the existence of “goodness” and “truth” in them as given by God and as a “preparation of the gospel.” In the next number, *Lumen Gentium* reaffirms the necessity of the Church to proclaim the gospel of Christ whom God has established “as the source of salvation for the whole world.” At the same time it assures us that through missionary activity, “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 healed, ennobled, and perfected . . .” In this paragraph

5. Cf. esp. the following nos.: LG 16, 17; AG 3, 7, 9, 11, 15; NA 2; GS 22.
6. LG 13, 14.
7. LG 16.
8. Ibid.
10. LG 17.
the document recognizes the presence of goodness not only in the individual non-Christians but also in their "religious practices."

In a similar way the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church recognizes the positive value of the religious endeavors of the human race. These attempts by which human persons search for God, "need to be enlightened and purified"; yet "they may sometimes serve as a guidance course towards the true God, or as a preparation for the gospel." The Church finds the reason for its missionary activity in the universal salvific will of God (1 Tim 2: 4-5) and "the necessity of the Church," though admitting that "God in ways known to Himself can lead those inculpably ignorant of the gospel to that faith without which it is impossible to please Him (Heb 11:6)." Ad Gentes speaks of the presence of "truth and grace" among the nations "as a sort of secret presence of God," and referring to LG 17, reassures us that "whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost," but is healed, ennobled and perfected. The Decree also enjoins Christians to cultivate esteem and familiarity with the "national and religious traditions" of the people among whom they live, and gladly and reverently to lay bare "the seeds of the Word" which lie hidden in these traditions. This presence of "the seeds of the Word" is to be activated by the "preaching of the gospel" in order to lead people to faith in Christ.

In the document which explicitly deals with the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, the Council expresses even more positively its attitude towards these religions while affirming Christ as the fulfilment of religious life: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, 'the way, the truth and the life' (Jn 14: 6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in

11. AG 3.
12. AG 7.
14. AG 11.
15. AG 15.
God has reconciled all things to Himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19). The Council admits elements of truth and holiness in other religions which reflect the one Truth enlightening all men and which find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life.

In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the Council goes beyond the confines of religion and affirms the working of grace in all men of good will through the Holy Spirit: "all this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. . . . we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this Paschal mystery." 117

Postconciliar documents of the Magisterium continue to develop on the same line of thought. Thus in Evangelii Nuntiandi (1975), while emphasizing the duty of the Church to preach Christ who reveals "the ordinary paths of salvation," Pope Paul VI admits that God can accomplish this salvation in whomsoever he wishes by means which he alone knows." 118 In his encyclical letter, Redemptor Hominis (1979), Pope John Paul II makes a step forward by stating explicitly that the firm belief of the followers of the non-christian religions is "an effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body." 119 The Pope reaffirms the Council's teaching on non-christian religions, especially through the patristic expression "seeds of the Word": "The Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, 'seeds of the word'." 120 Attest that, though the routes taken may be different, there is but one single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit... 121 Different religions are seen as different routes leading to one goal of the deepest human aspiration. At the same time the encyclical presents Christ as the fullness of the definitive revelation of God to humanity: "In Christ and through Christ God has revealed himself fully to mankind and has definitively drawn close...
8

CHRIST AND WORLD RELIGIONS

to it”; hence, “Jesus Christ is the stable principle and fixed centre of the mission that God himself has entrusted to men.”

In another encyclical letter, Dominum et vivificantem (1986), the Pope emphasizes the christological and pneumatological character of grace and salvation. He urges for a broader view of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the world, both in terms of time and of space: “We need to go further back, to embrace the whole of the action of the Holy Spirit even before Christ — from the beginning, throughout the world, and especially in the economy of the Old Covenant. . . . we need to look further and go further afield, . . . The Second Vatican Council, . . . reminds us of the Holy Spirit’s activity also ‘outside the visible body of the Church.’”

This action of the Spirit prior to the coming of Christ is said to be “closely linked with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.”

To mark the twentieth anniversary of its establishment by Paul VI in 1964, the Secretariat for non-Christians issued a document on The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions. The document reassumes the teachings of Vatican II on the relationship of Christianity to the other religions. It is concerned above all with the relationship existing between dialogue and the mission of the Church. It clearly indicates dialogue as one of the integral elements of the Church’s mission: “There is, as well, the dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together towards truth and to work together in projects of common concern. . . . The totality of Christian mission embraces all these elements.”

2. A SPECTRUM OF VIEWS

With the opening and positive attitude of Vatican II, Christian

22. Ibid.
23. DeV 53.
24. Ibid.
25. See note 2 above.
26. AG 26; citing OT 16; GS 92; AG 9, 11, 15, 18; NA 2, 3.
27. Ibid. 5.
28. Ibid. 13. Five elements are enumerated as pertaining to the totality of christian mission: simple presence and living witness; commitment to the service of mankind and activities for social development; liturgical and prayer life; dialogue with other religious traditions; announcement and catechesis.
ty’s relationship to other religions has become an increasingly important subject in theological discussions. Theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, hold different views with regard to the topic. There have been several attempts at classifying the different positions according to some basic paradigms or models. Peter Schineller distinguishes the different views as ecclesiocentric, christocentric and theocentric. Each view is joined to a particular type of christology respectively: exclusive christology, inclusive christology and normative or non-normative christology, the last two being related to the theocentric view. Hence, according to this classification there are four basic paradigms. More recently, writers have made use of the following three paradigms for their classification: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. I still find the classification of Schineller most helpful. My presentation of a spectrum of different views will adopt the paradigms proposed by him with some modifications. Moreover, I shall present one or two theologians as representatives of each paradigm whereas this is not found in Schineller’s article. The following are the main paradigms: (a) ecclesiocentric view with an exclusive christology; (b) christocentric view with an inclusive christology; (c) christocentric view with a normative christology; (d) theocentric view with a non-normative christology.

A. ECCLESIOCENTRIC VIEW: EXCLUSIVE CHRISTOLOGY

This represents the most conservative position regarding the relationship of Christianity to other religions. It holds the axiom “no salvation outside the Church” in vigour. Jesus Christ is understood as the exclusive centre of the universe. There are no other mediators of salvation than Jesus. In order to obtain salvation it is necessary to have an explicit knowledge of and personal commitment to Jesus Christ who is the one mediator of salvation.

“No Salvation outside the Church.” This was the standard posi-
tion of the Catholic Church up to Vatican II. The axiom "extra ecclesiam nulla salus", formulated by Origen and applied by Cyprian, had become the traditional teaching of the Church.\textsuperscript{32} The Council of Florence (1442) defined this traditional teaching by using the words of Fulgentius of Ruspe.\textsuperscript{33} This position was softened by the Council of Trent. Pagans could be saved through desire for baptism \textit{(in voto)} or desire for the Church \textit{(votum ecclesiae)}; even an implicit desire would be sufficient, if they followed their conscience and lived accordingly.\textsuperscript{34} Other theories were also formulated to explain the possibility of salvation of honest people living outside the Church, such as the ideas of a primitive or general revelation and of a death-bed conversion.

Vatican II reiterates this traditional Catholic teaching on the necessity of the Church for salvation.\textsuperscript{35} But, as has been shown, it has broadened the idea of belonging to the Church. While recognizing full membership to the baptized Catholics, the state of being ordained to the Church in varying degrees is also attributed to all baptized Christians, Jews, Moslems, believers of other religions and even atheists; in a word, to all people of good will.\textsuperscript{36} A strict interpretation of the traditional axiom "no salvation outside the Church," and hence, a strict exclusivism, is no longer tenable by Catholics after Vatican II.

\textit{Karl Barth.} On the Protestant side K. Barth may be alluded to as chief exponent of an exclusive christology. Rather than an ecclesiocentrism, Barth's is a christomonism, which upholds the unique salvific mediatorship of Jesus Christ to the exclusion of any other mediation of salvation. Hence, there is no truth, no genuine relation of God outside the christian faith. Barth makes a sharp distinction between revelation and religion. Religion is understood as the human attempt to reach God. But this is simply impossible inasmuch as, by themselves, human beings know nothing about God. Only God can make God known.\textsuperscript{37} Revelation is God's outreach to humanity which takes place uniquely in Jesus Christ, the inca-

\textsuperscript{33} DS 1351; cf. Fulgentius of Ruspe, \textit{De fide ad Petrum}, 38, 79 - 39, 80.
\textsuperscript{34} DS 1524, 1542.
\textsuperscript{35} LG 14.
\textsuperscript{36} LG 15, 16.
nation of the eternal Word. Not only are human beings unable to know God, they cannot do anything to help themselves. Only God can save humanity. Hence, religion as human effort to know God and attain salvation is condemned as "unbelief" (Unglaube), because it attempts to do what only Jesus Christ can do. There are no "points of contact" between the Christian message and religions. The coming of Jesus Christ brings about the abolition of religion.

Even Barth's view of Christianity as true religion is a dialectical affirmation. On the one hand, revelation and salvation are offered only in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Christianity is true religion as a "justified sinner." The fact that Christianity is justified by Christ has nothing to do with its quality as religion, nothing being altered in this regard by the justification. Barth presents the example of sunlight shining on one part of the earth, illuminating it without changing it really.

Just as Vatican II has moved beyond a strictly exclusive ecclesiocentrism, the position of Barth regarding religions does not represent the mainline Protestant view. Theologians such as P. Althaus and E. Brunner already made a distinction between revelation and salvation. While maintaining the conviction of salvation only in Christ, they admit the existence of genuine revelation outside Christianity. They call this revelation among the gentiles (Rom 1: 18 ff., 2: 12-16; Acts 14: 15 ff., 17: 27 ff.; Jn 1) "original revelation" or "creation revelation." They observe that this is not to be confused with a "natural revelation" or a "natural theology," as if it were something deriving from human discovery. Rather, as the work of God through the Spirit, it is a genuine revelation. However, when it comes to the question of salvation through other religions, both Althaus and Brunner give an unambiguously negative answer. Some other Protestant theologians, while admitting to a salvific value in the religions, would qualify their admission in such a way as to fit within the scope of Christianity.

38. Cf. ibid. 1.
40. Cf. ibid. 329.
41. Cf. ibid. 295-96.
42. Cf. ibid. 325.
43. Cf. ibid. 388.
44. Cf. Knitter, No Other Name?, 97-119.
a way that this salvific value apparently can only be in a corrupted or fragmentary form.46

B. CHRISTOCENTRIC VIEW: INCLUSIVE CHRISTOLOGY

The second position moves away from an ecclesiocentric view into a christocentric perspective, and from an exclusive christology into an inclusive one. This position is held by the majority of both Catholic and Protestant theologians nowadays. An inclusive christocentric view holds the necessity and centrality of Christ in the economy of salvation. Christian faith is necessary but it is possible to have implicit faith in Christ. Salvation is only through the grace of Christ, but this grace is actually offered and available to all. There is only one economy of salvation. Jesus Christ is not only the decisive and normative revelation of God, but is also constitutive of salvation. The word “constitutive” is important here. As a constitutive mediator, Christ is indispensable for salvation. He is the efficient cause of saving grace and source of salvation for humankind. Moreover, salvation is constituted not by the eternal Logos as such but by the Logos incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. Without the Christ event, nobody can be saved. While maintaining the traditional teaching of the necessity of the Church for salvation, the inclusive christocentric view admits degrees of belonging to the Church, and hence, the presence of saving grace outside the visible boundaries of the Church. The basic scriptural texts for this view are 1 Tim 2: 4-6 and Acts 17: 23. The first text declares the universal salvific will of God indicating Jesus Christ as the one mediator, while the second deals with the unknown God worshipped by the Athenians.

Karl Rahner. The teaching of Vatican II clearly manifests this inclusive christocentrism. If Vatican II marks the watershed in the christian attitude towards other religions, K. Rahner is rightly called its “chief engineer.”47 To substantiate his contribution to Vatican II I shall present Rahner’s thinking on this topic through two of his major articles written before or during the Council.48 In his

46. Cf. Knitter, No Other Name?, 103.
47. Cf. ibid. 125; D’Costa, Theology and Religious Pluralism, 80.
48. K. Rahner, “Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions,” in Theological Investigations (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) 5: 115-34; the German original of this volume was published in 1962; “Anonymous Christians,” in Theological Investi-
article dealing with "anonymous Christians," Rahner considers the possibility of the salvation of non-Christians and their relation to Jesus Christ. In an earlier article entitled "Christianity and the non-Christian Religions," Rahner reflects on the positive value for salvation of extra-christian religions. Obviously the two articles are closely related to each other.

With regard to the question of the salvation of non-Christians, Rahner thinks that we are faced with two basic principles. On the one hand, there is the necessity of faith in God and in Christ in order to obtain salvation. It is not only a necessity in view of a positive precept but is an absolute necessity based on the very nature of salvation which means God’s offer of grace in Christ to be accepted by faith. Consequently, we have to hold the tradition-teaching: no salvation outside the Church. On the other hand, there is the universal love of God which intends seriously to save all human beings (1 Tim 2: 4). As a result of these apparently conflicting principles Rahner believes it necessary to adopt a wider concept of belonging to the Church by affirming different degrees of being related to the Church which would include the explicitly professed Christians as well as the so-called "anonymous Christians."

The foundation for "anonymous Christianity" is to be sought in the basic human structure as spiritual being and in the design of God at the beginning of creation. As spirit, human person is a being of unlimited openness to the limitless being of God. Rahner considers "transcendence" as the best definition for human beings. What is most important and original is Rahner’s insight that there is an inner unity among the following three factors: human transcendence, God’s bestowal of grace and the mystery of the incarnation. From revelation we come to know that right from the beginning of creation God has decided to communicate himself to humanity in a radical closeness through the bestowal of grace. In God, whatever he intends becomes reality. Hence, the offer of...
grace at the moment of creation, even prior to the free response of human persons, stamps and determines human nature in its deepest being and should rightly be designated as a freely given "supernatural existential." Hence, human being's experience of transcendence is not purely natural experience; rather, it is already experience of supernatural grace.

Moreover, God's graceful self-communication is offered to all but is fulfilled in the highest way in Christ. As "the uniquely supreme case of the actualization of man's nature in general," the incarnation constitutes the goal of creation and human existence. Hence, in accepting one's own human existence through silent fidelity and constant dedication to the duty of everyday life, human person is responding to God's offer of grace and accepting the mystery of Christ even without knowing it explicitly. In this way, the Christian revelation is to be seen as the explicit statement of the basic revelation of grace which human person always experiences implicitly in the depths of his being. Later on Rahner explains his theory of "anonymous Christians" through what he calls a "searching christology" and the idea of "memoria" which means human being's innate expectation for an absolute Saviour to be encountered in history.

So far we have seen the possibility of the salvation of non-Christians through an implicit acceptance of Christ. What about the function of the extra-christian religions as such? Are non-Christians saved in spite of or precisely in and through their religions? In his germinal article on this topic, Rahner proceeds by presenting four theses. The first thesis states that Christianity claims to be the absolute religion intended by God for all. But this absolute religion comes to human persons in an historical way. Hence Christianity's demand for adherence must be balanced by

51. Cf. ibid. 393.
52. Ibid.: "Man is accordingly in the most basic definition that which God becomes if he sets out to show himself in the region of the extra-divine. And conversely, formulating it from the point of view of man: man is he who realises himself when he gives himself away into the incomprehensible mystery of God." Cf. also Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," TI, 4: 105-20.
53. Cf. ibid. 394.
54. Cf. ibid.
55. For "searching christology" see "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation," TI, 16: 220-22. For the Augustinian idea of "memoria" see "Jesus Christ in the Non-Christian Religions," TI, 17: 46-49.
difficulty involved in deciding "when the existentially real demand is made by the absolute religion in its historically tangible form." While the objective obligation for all to embrace the Christian religion started with the apostolic age, this moment may be postponed with regard to a particular people or individual of concrete history and culture, until they are really and seriously confronted by the Christian message.

The second thesis is based on Rahner's view on the possibility of salvation of non-Christians seen under the social aspect. Human being is called to be homo religiosus in order to attain salvation, and he is this homo religiosus in the concrete religion in which he finds himself. In other words, as a social being, human person should live his relationship to God in a society. Hence, the religions before Christ and even after Christ, until their followers are existentially and seriously confronted by the Christian message, should contain supernatural elements of grace leading to salvation. In this sense, the extra-Christian religions, in varying degrees, may be considered lawful religions "whose 'use' by man at a certain period can be regarded on the whole as a positive means of gaining the right relationship to God and thus for the attaining of salvation, a means which is therefore positively included in God's plan of salvation." Thus in this second thesis Rahner has taken an important step forward by affirming that non-Christians are saved not in spite of but precisely through their religions as historically concrete mediations of the saving grace of Christ.

The third thesis considers the member of an extra-Christian religion as not merely a non-Christian, but an "anonymous Christian." According to Rahner, an existential revelation is given through the experience of grace as the a priori horizon of all the spiritual acts of a human person which accompanies his consciousness subjectively, even though it is not known objectively. Christianity is seen as the explicitation of this previously anonymous state through

---

15

WONG

---

1. ibid. 119.
2. Cf. ibid. 128.
3. Cf. ibid. 121, 130.
4. ibid. 125. The mixture of what is right and what is false in these religions not invalidate this thesis, for the same phenomenon is also found in the Old Testament religion (cf. 126 f.).
5. Cf. ibid. 131.
an inner dynamism.\textsuperscript{62} This explicit self-realization of a previously anonymous Christianity is demanded by the incarnational and social structure of grace and of Christianity itself. It is also demanded by the fact that, other things being equal, an explicit Christian has “a still greater chance of salvation” than the anonymous one.\textsuperscript{63}

The fourth thesis then clarifies the idea of mission in this perspective. It means bringing people to explicit consciousness of what already belongs to them as a divine offer or already as a divine gift of grace accepted by human persons implicitly.\textsuperscript{64} Thus the Church will no longer regard herself as the exclusive community of those who have a claim to salvation, but as the “historically tangible vanguard” and “explicit expression” of what is present as a hidden reality even outside the visible Church.\textsuperscript{65} Non-Christians may regard the designation “anonymous Christian” as presumptuous. But the Christian cannot renounce this presumption, which should actually be a source of humility and should inspire not only tolerance but respect for the presence of saving grace in the non-Christians.\textsuperscript{66} To label the title “anonymous Christians” as “arrogant” and “patronizing” is to misunderstand the original intention of Rahner. He was speaking to Christians and from a Christian context. The title was and is not meant as an immediate tool for dialogue with other religions. Rather, it was meant to clarify and broaden the then standard outlook of the Catholic Church on the followers of the extra-Christian religions.\textsuperscript{67} Further reflections on Rahner’s teaching on this topic will be dealt with in the third part of the paper.

C. CHRISTOCENTRIC VIEW: NORMATIVE CHRISTOLOGY

Whereas for Schineller this view and the following one both

\textsuperscript{62} Cf. ibid. 132; “Anonymous Christians,” TI, 6: 395; the name itself wants to express this intrinsic tendency towards explicitation.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. For the importance of the missionary activity see “Anonymous Christians,” TI, 6: 396-97.

\textsuperscript{64} Cf. ibid. 133.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.; here Rahner anticipates the idea of the Church as sacrament of salvation adopted by Vatican II.

\textsuperscript{66} Cf. ibid. 134.

\textsuperscript{67} Cf. D’Costa, Theology and Religious Pluralism, 89-90.
ong to a theocentric universe which may be related to two different types of christology: normative and non-normative, I would prefer not to describe this third position as theocentric but as a christocentric view which adopts a normative christology. I understand a non-normative christology as proper to a theocentrism which is proposed as an alternative to christocentrism. I believe that both this present view and the preceding one belong to a christocentric perspective. The difference lies in the fact that while the previous view considers Christ as constitutive as well as normative of salvation (inclusive christology), this present view sees Christ as not constitutive but only normative of salvation (normative christology).

This is a christocentric view inasmuch as Christ is seen as the fulfillment of human history. He is the decisive and the highest revelation of God and of human existence. It presents a normative christology in which Christ is the ideal type, the measure and criterion for judging others. The salvific mediation of Jesus Christ both fulfills and corrects other mediations of the past, present and future. The mediation of Christ is not exclusive nor is it constitutive. Salvation which is always possible for the whole of humankind, apart from Christ, becomes decisively and normatively manifest in him. Hence Christianity is viewed as the summit and completion of all the other religions.

Hans Küng. In his book, *On Being a Christian*, Küng deals extensively with the relationship of Christianity to the world religions. He calls for a more positive attitude towards other religions. At the same time he presents Christ as the norm for religions. Küng advocates an inductive method based on an historical-critical study of the New Testament sources on the life and message of Jesus. Through such an historical-critical method and a comparative study with other religions, Küng arrives at the statement of the superiority and finality of Jesus and his message. Jesus Christ is presented as definitive, decisive and normative for our relationship with God, with our neighbours and with society. In his view of Christianity Küng proposes a fulfilment

---

Cf. ibid. 69, 265.
Cf. ibid. 317.