
In this impressive volume Jacques Dupuis achieves a difficult task: a comprehensive presentation of both the history and current theology of Christian attitudes towards other religions. This task required the organization and synthesis of a “library” of data on religions, scripture, patristics, theology, mission, and dialogue. The book represents a lifework of scholarship and reflection for Dupuis; yes, it is an opus magnum in pluribus sensibus.

Dupuis, a native of Belgium, taught theology in India from 1948 to 1984. Currently he is professor of theology at the Jesuit Gregorian University in Rome, where he directs the University’s journal Gregorianum. Dupuis’ considerable gifts and insights are clearly in evidence in this work, chosen by the International Bulletin of Missionary Research as one of its “Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1997 for Mission Studies.”

In contemporary theological discussion two areas occupy
center stage: "the discussion of a Christian theology of the religious traditions of humanity, together with the debate on liberation theology." (1) And within the discussion on religions, there has been a change in theological perspective. "The new perspective is no longer limited to the problem of 'salvation' for members of the other religious traditions or even to the role of those traditions in the salvation of their members." (10) The current theological task centers on "searching for the root-cause of pluralism itself, for its significance in God's own plan for humankind, for the possibility of a mutual convergence of the various traditions in full respect of their differences, and for their mutual enrichment and cross-fertilization." (11)

In pluralistic societies today "genuine religion necessarily entails a relationship with other religions. . . . In short, to be religious is to be interreligious. . . . By way of consequence, a theology of religions becomes 'interreligious theology' with a 'universal imperative'." (11)

Insightfully recognizing this interreligious context and its concomitant challenges, Dupuis sets about providing a lucid and comprehensive analysis. A lengthy introduction takes note of current, relevant literature, provides clear definition of terms, comments on method, and gives an overview of the content and sequence of the material (1-23). Dupuis' systematic organization is both essential and appreciated; he carefully guides the reader through a complex, many-faceted conversation.

The main body of the book is divided into two parts with a general introductory overview for each section (25-28; 203-210). Part One of seven chapters is the historical section; Part Two of eight chapters is the synthetic and thematic presentation. Realistically, Dupuis always quickly notes that he is highlighting in depth key elements; he never claims to be all-comprehensive. He is, as noted earlier, digesting a "library" of material.
The historical section — "An Overview of Christian Approaches to Religions" (25-201) — examines scriptural and patristic texts, the disputed axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, the "substitutes for the Gospel" over the centuries, theological perspectives leading to Vatican II, the Conciliar and Postconciliar Magisterium, and various paradigms that mark today's debate.

The synthetic section — "One God-One Christ-Convergent Paths" (203-390) — thematically investigates Covenants, Word of God and Divine Revelation, Faces of the Divine Mystery, Jesus Christ as one and universal, Paths of Salvation, the Reign of God, and Interfaith Dialogue as theology and praxis; a brief concluding chapter rounds out Dupuis' constructive synthesis. Dupuis opts for a Trinitarian Christology and consistently weaves this thematic into his presentation; this perspective respects the "well-poised claim to oneness and universality for Jesus Christ [and] leaves room for an open theology of religions and of religious pluralism." (281)

The foregoing commentary presents the panoramic themes and broad coverage of the book. Yet, the volume is also filled with a variety of smaller gems: Dupuis as master-teacher always clearly poses the question/problematic for each chapter; he critically engages the thought of other authors, affirming some, critiquing others; he meticulously defines his terms; he struggles to promote renewal in personal attitudes and pastoral practice; he manifests scholarly balance and deep theological grounding.

In truth, one finds little to critique in this volume: there are few references to the literature in non-Indian theological journals published in Asia and none from Africa; the relevant literature from the World Council of Churches receives little attention; a thematic/subject index (aside from those giving names and biblical references) would have enhanced an already well-
designed publication.

As readers take up the Dupuis volume, they must steel themselves for a very rigorous and penetrating investigation into the complex questions surrounding religious pluralism. Yet, it is a labor that will bear abundant and lasting fruit. Here one meets a master; here one encounters depth, precision, and insight; here one holds a volume that is destined to become a recognized milestone for its contribution to investigating the questions facing Christian theology in the contemporary world of religious diversity. Although not common in book reviews, a concluding expression of gratitude and compliment to Jacques Dupuis is truly appropriate.

Reviewed by James H. Kroeger, M.M.

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The literature on interreligious dialogue emerging in the post-Vatican II era is extensive — even voluminous. Thus, a prospective reader of another “dialogue” book instinctively asks: Is there anything new and creative to be found here?

By design this is a practical handbook; it is authored by Cardinal Francis Arinze, President (since 1984) of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. It is a pastoral compendium for engagement in interfaith dialogue. In this reflective book the author invitingly shares his wide experiences and convictions.

Arinze is not primarily concerned with the theology of dia-