

Trinity in Unity in
Christian-Muslim Relations

History of Christian-Muslim Relations

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VOLUME 7

Trinity in Unity in Christian-Muslim Relations

The Work of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

By
Risto Jukko



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Christians and Muslims have been involved in exchanges over matters of faith and morality since the founding of Islam. Attitudes between the faiths today are deeply coloured by the legacy of past encounters, and often preserve centuries-old negative views.

The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, Texts and Studies presents the surviving record of past encounters in authoritative, fully introduced text editions and annotated translations, and also monograph and collected studies. It illustrates the development in mutual perceptions as these are contained in surviving Christian and Muslim writings, and makes available the arguments and rhetorical strategies that, for good or for ill, have left their mark on attitudes today. The series casts light on a history marked by intellectual creativity and occasional breakthroughs in communication, although, on the whole beset by misunderstanding and misrepresentation. By making this history better known, the series seeks to contribute to improved recognition between Christians and Muslims in the future.

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PREFACE

This is a book about the Christian theology of religions, with two *a priori* limitations: it will concentrate on the Roman Catholic theology of religions and take Islam as an example of a non-Christian religion. The fact that I have been residing in France has played a certain role in the birth of this study. In spite of all that has been said about its secularization, France is basically a Roman Catholic country. Although, at the very least, it has been greatly influenced by Christianity, France has today the largest Muslim population of any Western European country (in 2005 approx. 5 million, some 8% of the population). As my previous book dealt with Christian-Muslim relations in France from the Roman Catholic perspective, the widening of the subject to deal with the Christian-Muslim relations taken care of by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican has been a logical continuation of the previous study.

I am grateful to many Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars. Among Roman Catholics, I want to mention especially two: Professor Emeritus Maurice Borrmans, who, first in Rome, and later in Lyons, encouraged me to advance further in my research work, and Professor Christian Troll in Frankfurt, who was ready to read the manuscript carefully and give me critical and constructive feedback. Their profound knowledge of Islam has been very valuable for my work. Among Protestant scholars, I want to mention especially Docent Dr. Juhani Forsberg, who always found time, either in Germany or in Finland, to read my drafts. His profound theological insights and probing questions have made me consider issues that I otherwise would not have dealt with. His extensive knowledge of dogmatic theology has been of great help to me. I also want to thank Docent Dr. Risto A. Ahonen for being available to answer any questions I might have on my topic and for his useful insights into missiological matters.

If the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue as well as *Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica* (PISAI) in Rome had not been so helpful, I would never have been able to finish this book. I want to extend my warm thanks to their entire staffs for their cooperation,

especially to PISAI for its cordial hospitality and its excellent library. I also want to thank two Roman Catholic offices and their staffs in Paris, the first being the *Secrétariat pour les Relations avec l'Islam*, and the second being the *Oeuvres Pontificales Missionnaires et la Coopération Missionnaire*.

This study would not have been possible without the significant financial support of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission that allowed me to write parts of it during my working hours. E.J. Brill kindly agreed to publish this study in its series "The History of Christian-Muslim Relations". I warmly thank both of these agencies.

Two unexpected events in 2006 have occupied my mind in connection with the completion of this project. The first occurred on March 11, when it was announced in *l'Osservato Romano* that Pope Benedict XVI has merged, for the time being, the presidency of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue with that of the Pontifical Council for Culture. The second one was more personal: I lost both of my parents within a period of two months in May–July. I dedicate this work to them who, through their love, showed me what is ultimately important in life.

Paris, October 2006
Risto Jukko

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Vatican II, its documents, and a new dialogic attitude towards non-Christians

The overall importance of the Second Vatican Council cannot be overestimated, in any sense.¹ The totally unexpected decision announced by Pope John XXIII on January 25, 1959, to convoke the Church's 21st ecumenical council may be said to have opened the Roman Catholic Church to the world, including the non-Christian religions.² As Pope Paul VI said during the final session: "From now on *aggiornamento* will signify for us a wisely undertaken quest for a deeper understanding of the spirit of the Council and the faithful application of the norms it has happily and prayerfully provided."³

The first session began solemnly on October 11, 1962, and ended on December 8, 1962, without any completed documents. Next year, before the second session began on September 29, John XXIII died on June 3. His successor, Paul VI (elected on June 21), stressed dialogue as the Christian approach to the world.⁴ By the end of the second session on December 4, 1963, two council documents were ready for promulgation: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and *Inter Mirifica*, Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication. The third session began on September 14, 1964, and ended on Novem-

¹ See, e.g., *Histoire du concile Vatican II* 1997–2005. The ability of the council to acknowledge other Christian but non-Catholic communities as "Churches and ecclesial communities" (see UR 13) helped to change attitudes towards non-Christians as well.

² "What emerges from his [John XXIII's] first statements as pope is a frank commitment to Christian unity and to the renewal of the Church. These were the two aims which he set the Council... and these two so to speak 'domestic' Church aims were in turn seen as a contribution to the peace and welfare of the whole world." *Schoof* 1970, 229.

³ Cited in *Shehan* 1966, XVIII.

⁴ I follow here *Shehan* 1966, XV–XVII.

ber 21. The major achievement of this session was *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. It described the Church as the People of God,⁵ and formulated the traditional doctrine of collegiality.⁶ The third session also produced *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism, and *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches.

The fourth and final session began on September 14, 1965, and ended with a solemn ceremony on December 8. It was the most productive session as to the number of documents: eleven altogether. Five of them were promulgated on October 28: 1) *Christus Dominus*, Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church; 2) *Optatam Totius*, Decree on Priestly Formation; 3) *Perfectae Caritatis*, Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life; 4) *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions; and 5) *Gravissimum Educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education. Shortly thereafter, *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, were promulgated on November 18, and four more documents on December 7: 1) *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World; 2) *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests; 3) *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity; and 4) *Dignitatis Humanae*, Declaration on Religious Freedom.

It must be kept in mind that there is a hierarchy in these documents.⁷ Of the 16 documents, four are constitutions which show the fundamental orientation of the Church, nine are decrees of application, and three are declarations of "intention". However, only *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum* are dogmatic constitutions in the classical sense of the distinction between doctrine (theory) and discipline (practice). *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is a constitution, but it cannot be qualified as "dogmatic", whereas *Gaudium et Spes* is called a "pastoral constitution".⁸

⁵ Voted on November 19: 2134 *placet* et 10 *non placet*.

⁶ This means that the whole college of bishops shares the responsibility of the Church, "in union with and under the ultimate authority of the Bishop of Rome, the successor of Peter, who was the divinely appointed head of the Apostolic College." Shehan 1966, XVI.

⁷ See Theobald 2002, IV: "L'ordre des quatre documents majeurs est déjà une interprétation de l'oeuvre conciliaire: les deux constitutions sur l'Eglise encadrent celles sur la Révélation divine et sur la sainte liturgie." See also, e.g., Sullivan 2000, 616–617, and Scheffczyk 1999.

⁸ Concerning the pastoral constitution, Dupuis (1992a, 63) points out how the theo-

The nine decrees can be classified into two categories: five of them touch on various functions or states of life (bishops, priests, their formation, religious life, apostolate of the laity), the remaining four touch on relations within the Church or with other churches (missionary activity, ecumenism, eastern Catholic Churches, instruments of social communication). In relation to the four constitutions mentioned, these decrees have a secondary juridical status. In third place in the hierarchy are the three declarations: on Christian education, on the relationship of the Church with non-Christian religions, and on religious freedom.⁹ The documents, which can be seen in the light of the history of salvation, emphasize the Church's concern for the poor, the insistence on the unity of the human family, and the Christian's duty to build a just and peaceful world in brotherly cooperation with all human beings of good will.¹⁰ The dominance of theological anthropology as the basis for dialogue and cooperation is striking, especially in *Gaudium et Spes*.¹¹

Besides its general intention to renew Catholic theology and liturgy, Vatican II warmly recommended dialogue with non-Christian religions

logical method changed in *Gaudium et Spes*. This novelty in methodology was induction, not the normally used deduction. He argues that the premises were no longer dogmatic or theological, but an analysis of the concrete situation in the world. The Church was trying to situate itself in this concrete context and find its role: "... la Constitution Pastorale *Gaudium et Spes*, comparé aux autres documents, inaugura une méthode nouvelle. La nouveauté consista justement à passer d'une méthode déductive à la méthode inductive: la Constitution se met à l'écoute du monde actuel et de ses problèmes, apprend à lire les 'signes des temps' que manifestent les aspirations actuelles de l'humanité; elle cherche ensuite à illuminer ces problèmes et à répondre à ces aspirations à la lumière du message évangélique." Löffler (1977, 104) says: "Sie [eine neue Art, Theologie zu treiben] geht nicht deduktiv von den in der eigenen Tradition vorgegebenen Positionen aus. Vielmehr setzt sie bei der erfahrenen Beziehung zu Menschen anderer Religionen und bei erfahrbaren Begegnungen mit den anderen ein, über die theologisch reflektiert wird."

⁹ As to the form of the declarations of the council, *Theobald* (2002, IV), remarks: "Cette forme, proche de la 'déclaration d'intention', a probablement permis de traiter des thèmes nouveaux, comportant quelques difficultés dans l'élaboration d'un consensus conciliaire."

¹⁰ *Shehan* 1996, XVII.

¹¹ "L'autre élément décisif se trouve dans l'innovation en matière d'anthropologie. Le mystère de l'homme s'éclaire à partir de Jésus. Le thème à la fois biblique et patristique de l'image de Dieu—déformée par le péché et restaurée par le Christ—est remis en valeur, après avoir sombré dans l'oubli. Le Concile l'exploite dans trois directions: la relation à Dieu, au monde et à autrui (cf. en particulier in *Gaudium et Spes*). Il esquisse ainsi la grande vision de l'humain destiné à devenir conforme à l'image que représente le Christ lui-même." *Blaser* 1995, 361.

(*Nostra Aetate* 2; *Gaudium et Spes* 92). According to the conciliar documents, through dialogue Christians can become more aware of the truths and values present in non-Christian religions, so that they may show how Christ is the fulfilment of the good in those religions. Dialogue is also a means of making Christianity indigenous.¹² Vatican II did not affirm that dialogue should be an integral part of the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church. This development would be a postconciliar phenomenon.¹³ “However, ‘evangelization’ in the council documents remains a narrow concept, practically identified with the ‘proclamation’ of the Gospel, referring to inviting the ‘others’ to join the Church community.”¹⁴ *Ad Gentes* 2 affirms that the Church is missionary by its nature, and the mission of the Church is rooted in the Trinitarian mystery of God.¹⁵ The conciliar documents do not really define the relation between dialogue and evangelizing mission, whereas postconciliar documents try to do that.¹⁶

Concerning soteriology, the documents of Vatican II seem to indicate a move away from the question of the salvation of individual persons to the salvific significance of religions and their role in salvation history.¹⁷

¹² So, e.g., *Sheard* 1987, 32.

¹³ *Dupuis* 1994b, 124. Cf. *Henry* 1966, 18.

¹⁴ *Dupuis* 1999, 359.

¹⁵ “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.” AG 2 1966, 585. Cf. “The pilgrim Church is therefore ‘missionary by its very nature’.” DM 10.

¹⁶ *Amell* 1998, 32. *Rossano* (1979b, 91) states that “the founding of the Secretariat for non-Christians appeared to indicate the taking up of a theological position, but what position? *The documents gave no precise indication.*” (Emphasis added)—*Italics* are used in this study in the corpus text to indicate foreign words or phrases. In direct quotations they are sometimes used to indicate the emphasis or the focus of the quotation. The names of the documents and the bibliographical references in the footnotes are also given in italics. Square brackets are used to identify missing or complementary information within a quotation. Unless otherwise indicated, this information has been supplied by the author of this study.

¹⁷ LG 13 (1966, 32) says: “All men are called to be part of this catholic unity of the People of God, a unity which is harbinger of the universal peace it promotes. And there belong to it or are related to it in various ways, the Catholic faithful as well as all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole mankind. For all men are called to salvation by the grace of God.” It is really noteworthy that LG 14 speaks about those (Catholic Christians) who are fully incorporated into the society of the Church (in Latin: *Illi plene Ecclesiae societati incorporantur...*). LG 15 speaks of those with whom the Church is linked in many ways (...*Ecclesia semetipsam novit plures ob rationes coniunctam*), whereas LG 16 speaks of those who are

It also seems that there are two kinds of statements in the conciliar documents: on the one hand those that allow a possibility of salvation in the non-Christian religions, and on the other hand those that emphasize belonging to the Church as condition of salvation. In the texts about Islam no value of special revelation is given to it.¹⁸ The axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* was modified through Christological foundation of salvation, and the Church was characterized as “the universal sacrament of salvation”.¹⁹ These statements are unclear as to how effective truth and grace in non-Christian religions are and how far Christian dialogue with them can go.²⁰ All difficult questions, such as the significance of scriptures of other religious traditions, of their rites, of their founders in the salvation history, are not dealt with, as well as the question of evil and sin in other traditions.²¹

related in various ways to the People of God (Ii tandem qui Evangelium nondum acceperunt, ad Populum Dei diversis rationibus *ordinantur*). Cf. *Mystici Corporis* 103 (AAS 35 1943, 243): “... quandoquidem, etiamsi inscio quodam desiderio ac voto ad mysticum Redemptoris Corpus *ordinentur*, tot tamen tantisque caelestibus muneribus adiumentisque carent, quibus in Catholica solummodo Ecclesia frui licet.” (Emphasis added)—In this study, Latin citations of Vatican II documents are from *Vatican II. L'intégralité. Édition bilingue [French-Latin] révisée* (Paris: Bayard 2002). The English translation of the conciliar texts used in the study is that of *The Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher (London–Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman 1966).

¹⁸ *Caspar* 1966b, 213. *Ruokanen* (1992, 79) remarks: “But the crucial point of divergence lies in the mystery of grace. It is admitted that the Muslims believe in the ‘merciful’ God, but there is no incarnated means of revelation, reconciliation, and grace as in Christianity.” *John Paul II* (1994, 92) says: “Some of the most beautiful names in the human language are given to the God of the Koran, but He is ultimately a God outside of the world, a God who is *only Majesty, never Emmanuel, God-with-us. Islam is not a religion of redemption*. There is no room for the Cross and the Resurrection.”

¹⁹ *Hagemann* 1983, 100–101. Cf. AG 7; LG 48.

²⁰ *Knitter* 1995, 124. The Muslim *M. Aydin* (2002, 43) remarks: “Although the conciliar teaching maintains that the divine grace of salvation is available for all human beings, it does not attempt to clarify the actual manner by which this grace operates amongst the non-Christians and refrains from defining the measure of this grace.”

²¹ *Evers* (1974, 148) thinks that this can be explained by the fact that NA, DH, and AG were promulgated in the last session of the council, that they were prepared by different dicasteries, and that the target groups of those documents were different.

Nostra Aetate²²

The Second Vatican Council's dialogic attitude to non-Christian religions is best seen in *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.²³ It holds a special place in the Vatican II documentation in several respects. Even though *Nostra Aetate* is more a pastoral than a theological document,²⁴ it is, in today's increasingly pluralist world, perhaps the most discussed document of Vatican II.²⁵ Pope John Paul II himself called it "the Magna Carta of interreligious dialogue".²⁶ In order to understand its content and the theological (and political) stakes surrounding it, it is useful to consider it briefly here.

On September 18, 1960, Pope John XXIII opened the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, headed by Cardinal Augustin Bea, and asked it to prepare a declaration on the relation of the Church with

²² In this section I depend on Cottier 1966, Oesterreicher 1969, Ruokanen 1992, 35–44, Soetens 2000, 307–321, Miccoli 2003, 171–240, and Velati 2005, 264–274. (Oesterreicher 1969 is the English translation of Johannes M. Oesterreicher, "Erklärung über das Verhältnis der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen. Kommentierende Einleitung"—*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil, Teil II* [Freiburg & Basel & Wien: Herder 1967], pp. 406–478.) See also, e.g., Barnes 2002, 35–45, and Borrmans 2002c, 147–176. Cf. Cassidy 2005, 125–263.

²³ Cf., e.g., *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 5–6: "The first explicit reference to Muslims in the Council documents occurred in 1964, in the 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,' called by its Latin name, *Lumen Gentium*. In paragraph 16, the document treats of the relation of the Christian people to Jews and to Muslims; in the brief reference to Muslims (...) who are specifically included in God's plan of salvation for humankind, *the stage was set for the more complete development in the document Nostra Aetate.*" (Emphasis added).

²⁴ Fitzgerald and Machado (2002, 314) remark: "It should be noted that *Nostra Aetate* is a pastoral rather than a theological document. Its theological basis is to be found in other documents of the Council, notably in *Lumen Gentium*. Yet the discussions leading up to the final version of *Nostra Aetate* had an impact on other documents, and even on *Lumen Gentium* itself." Cf. Evers 1974, 135; Fitzgerald 2005a, 184.

²⁵ Evers 1974, 134; Machado 2002a, 170. Fédou (2000, 201) remarks that "des divergences peuvent se manifester quant à la manière de comprendre, trente-cinq ans après, le message exact de ce concile [Vatican II]..."

²⁶ "The principles of this search for a positive relationship with other religious traditions are set out in the Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, promulgated on 28 October 1965, *the Magna Carta of interreligious dialogue for our times.*" John Paul II 2000a, 41. (Emphasis added) In 1994 he wrote: "...the eve of the Year 2000 will provide a great opportunity... for *interreligious dialogue*, in accordance with the specific guidelines set down by the Second Vatican Council in its Declaration *Nostra Aetate* on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions." TMA 53 1994, 64 = John Paul II 1995, 126. See also Arinze 2002d, 201; *Guidelines* 1990, 15.

Jews.²⁷ In the background were the recent Holocaust²⁸ and subsequent delegations and written appeals from Jews, especially from the U.S.A., who wished the Roman Catholic Church to reject authoritatively all biblical or other theological arguments against Jews. Especially is to be noted that the Pope met Jules Isaac, a French Jewish historian, on June 13, 1960. Isaac asked him to correct false and unjust statements about Jews in Christian teaching.²⁹

In 1961 the Secretariat produced the first draft³⁰ of seven pages on the schema on Jews, *Decretum de Iudaeis*, and passed it on to the Central Commission, the highest organ of the council, which would decide whether the schema be presented to the council. As a result of diplomatic manoeuvres, political speculation, and increasing pressure from the Arab countries—who feared that Vatican was planning to extend diplomatic recognition to the state of Israel³¹—the Central Commission never presented the draft to the first session of the council. The declaration on Jews (and non-Christians) would become one of the most disputed documents of the council. It is to be noted, however, that the reasons for this were more political than theological.³²

On November 18, 1963, the first text introduced to the second session of the council was meant to be the fourth chapter of the decree on

²⁷ Improving policy on relations with the Jews was entrusted to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Today this secretariat is called the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Its “Commission for Religious Relations with Jews”, created in 1974, is the responsible for dialogue with Judaism. “The reason for the link with Christian Unity rather than Non-Christians is both historical and theological. Historically this placement reflects the notion that the first rupture (‘schism’) experienced by the church came with its break with Judaism, so that if unity within the church is to be achieved, some form of reconciliation with Jews is a logical necessity. Theologically the Vatican structure reflects awareness of the uniqueness of the Jewish-Christian relationship, one more intimate, so to say, than the church’s relationship with any other ‘non-Christian’ group.” *Fisher* 1985, 164, n. 1.

²⁸ “As Apostolic Delegate in Turkey [during the time of Hitler’s persecution], the Pope had succeeded in saving thousands [of Jews] from the clutches of those who sought to exterminate them.” *Oesterreicher* 1969, 6.

²⁹ See *Beozzo* 1997, 436–440.

³⁰ It affirmed that there is an unbroken continuation from the Old Covenant to the Church: all Christians are sons of Abraham in faith (see *Oesterreicher* 1969, 40).

³¹ *Cottier* 1966, 38. “Before and during the Council they [the Arabs] tried in every conceivable way to suppress any such [‘in favour of the Jews’] Council Declaration.” *Oesterreicher* 1969, 19.

³² *Cottier* 1966, 42. The remark of *Oesterreicher* (1969, 39) is important: “But there was another factor [besides the démarches of the Arab governments] that worked against the Declaration to the same, if not to a greater, extent: the theologians were not prepared for it in their own minds.”

ecumenism entitled *De Catholicorum habitudine ad non-christianos et maxime ad Iudaeos*. Out of 42 lines (a little more than one page), only three lines concerned non-Christian religions in general. The text denounced the idea that Jews are a “*gens deicida*”. “Mutual understanding and appreciation” were recommended to both Christians and Jews. The Church deplored and condemned (“*deplorat et damnat*”) all hatred and persecution directed against Jews. This strongest version of *Nostra Aetate* was never discussed on the floor of the council because Pope Paul VI wished to avoid a detailed debate of the Jewish problem prior to his pilgrimage to the Holy Land at the beginning of 1964. The council closed on December 4, 1963, without having taken the procedural vote on whether to accept or reject the draft as a basis for discussion.³³

A new draft of two pages was delivered to the third session of the council on September 25, 1964. Entitled *De Iudaeis et de non-christianis*,³⁴ it was still intended to be part of the ecumenism decree as sections 32–34. There was a totally new text on non-Christian religions other than Judaism. Muslims were also mentioned. Its general tone was attenuated. The theme of hope in terms of Ephesians 2 was omitted as well as the formula “*gens deicida*”. Considerable force was given to the schema’s denunciation of discrimination. According to the text, all human beings are created in God’s image and should be treated fraternally (“*fraterne gerere*”). The neutralization of themes concerning Jews and the mention of the Muslims can be interpreted as a concession to the political pressure applied by the Arab states. In discussions on September 28 and 29, 1964, most of the speakers demanded that the formula “*gens deicida*” be reinstated. The eastern fathers, led by Cardinal Gabriel Tappouni, Patriarch of the Syriac rite at Antioch, emphasized that any positive statement about Jews would be seen in the Arab countries as favouring the state of Israel, and the Christian minorities in those countries would suffer because of that. It was proposed, too, that the whole declaration be dropped.

The draft was revised and rewritten during the third session of the council. The revised draft—whose centre remained the declaration on the Jews—was introduced as a separate schema under the title *De Ecclesiae habitudine ad religiones non-christianas* and began by words “*Nostra*

³³ Oesterreicher 1969, 54.

³⁴ The title provoked negative reactions: Are not the Jews non-Christians as well?

aetate". However, because of a lack of time,³⁵ it could not be discussed during the third session of the council. It was provisionally accepted on November 20, 1964, but considered as an appendix to the constitution on the church. The revised draft had a long section on religions in general, but unfortunately a lack of time prevented it from becoming an object of thorough theological discussion. As to Jews, it was hoped that the Jewish people would never be characterized as guilty of deicide ("*deicidii rea*"). During the interval between the third and fourth session, the text was revised yet again.³⁶ It was presented to the council on October 14, 1965. There were only minor changes compared to the text presented to the third session. The focus of the text was on Jews. The controversial reference to deicide was again dropped, and antisemitism was clearly referred to.

Voting took place on this text on October 14 and 15, 1965. In the final vote on the whole text, 1763 votes were *placet*, 250 *non placet*, and 10 votes invalid. Compared to other votes, the number of *non placet* votes was relatively high. On October 28, 1965, Pope Paul VI promulgated—after the final vote of 2221 *placet*, 88 *non placet* and 3 invalid votes—the council's declaration *De Ecclesiae habitudine ad religiones non-christianas*, starting with the words "*nostra aetate*".³⁷

The real core of all the disputes concerned Judaism, but the reasons were not as much theological as political, inasmuch as the mystery of Israel and the relationship between Jews and Christians were accepted by the council, as well as the statements concerning (other) non-Christian religions. However, it must be noted that time did not permit a thorough theological discussion of non-Christian religions, and this certainly had consequences for the later formulas given by

³⁵ The text was distributed to the fathers on November 18, and the solemn final meeting of the third session took place on November 21, 1964.

³⁶ On March 31, 1965, Cardinal Franz König of Vienna gave his often-cited speech on monotheism to two thousand students and professors in the most representative Muslim university of theology, al-Azhar in Cairo (see, e.g., *La Documentation Catholique*, 2 mai 1965, N° 1447, p. 861).

³⁷ On this occasion, Paul VI said: "Que nos chers frères chrétiens encore séparés de la pleine communion de l'Eglise catholique veuillent bien contempler cette manifestation de son visage embelli. Que veuillent également le contempler les disciples des autres religions et, parmi eux, ceux qu'une même parenté en Abraham nous unit, les juifs spécialement, objet non certes de réprobation et de défiance, mais de respect, d'amour, d'espérance—*maxime Hebraei, quibuscum sic agitur, ut non reprobentur neque iis diffidatur, sed ut erga eos reverentia et amor adhibeatur spesque in iis collocetur.*" Cited in Cottier 1966, 78, and Oesterreicher 1969, 129 (the Latin citation). Italics in Cottier.

the Vatican. It must be noted, too, that the history of Christian theology has seen only some occasional assertions concerning non-Christian religions. In that sense *Nostra Aetate* was a real novelty. However, “it must not be forgotten that the *Nostra Aetate* needs to be studied and understood together with Conciliar documents, specially *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Ad Gentes*.”³⁸

Nostra Aetate strikes a positive note on Muslims.³⁹ Paragraph 3 of *Nostra Aetate*, consisting of two parts, was entirely devoted to them. The document mentions Muslims as being between the great Asian religions, which were born without any contact with Christianity, and the Jewish religion, whose ties with Christianity are clear. Consequently, Islam is the religion which is the nearest to the Judeo-Christian revelation.⁴⁰ It proposes dialogue and a practical orientation towards cooperation in the service of humanity, but it does not really take any theological position as to the soteriological nature of Islam:⁴¹

Upon the Moslems, too, the Church looks with esteem. They adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of Heaven and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary,

³⁸ Machado 2002a, 170. Cf. Aubert 1990a. “*Nostra Aetate* is to be read in conjunction with the declaration on religious liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*.” Fitzgerald and Machado 2002, 314; Fitzgerald 2005a, 183, 184. See also Jadot 1983a, 370 = Jadot 1983b, 104 = Jadot 1983c, 211. Cf. John Paul II’s Christmas address to the Roman Curia on December 22, 1986 (1987f, 58): “Both of these [*Unitatis Redintegratio* and *Nostra Aetate*] are to be read in the context of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*.” P. Rossano has underlined this in his articles about the existential-personalist character of *Nostra Aetate*, e.g., Rossano 1980, 27; Rossano 1990, 132.

³⁹ See, e.g., Caspar 1966b, Ries 1987, 433–453, and Aubert 1990a. A vote was taken on the paragraph concerning Muslims on October 14, 1965, with 1910 *placet* and 189 non *placet*.

⁴⁰ Caspar 1966b, 213.—It must be noted that in practice, there are many “Islams”. That is probably one of the reasons why NA 3 speaks of “Muslims”, not of “Islam”. Borrmans (2004a, 22) notes that “c’est avec un islam aux multiples visages et aux expressions parfois contradictoires que le Saint-Siège se voit amené à dialoguer, de loin ou de près.”

⁴¹ The same applies to all the documents of the council: they do not explicitly recognize the idea of non-Christian religions as “ways of salvation”. Galembert’s (1995, 54) view of Vatican II is more positive: “Far from being the instrument of the devil, the Muslims are promised to the salvation.” Cf. also Knitter 1995, 142: “The Catholic approach recognizes both revelation and salvation outside Christ and Christianity.”—Cf. Aubert 1990a, 129, Knitter 1995, 124–125, and Mohammed 1999, 78.

His virgin mother; at times they call on her, too, with devotion. In addition they await the day of judgment when God will give each man his due after raising him up. Consequently, they prize the moral life, and give worship to God especially through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.⁴²

The nondoctrinal, concrete, and pastoral intent of the document is clear even in this minimal statement. As far as Islam is concerned, the passage contains several important points of contact. The idea of the council was to look for doctrinal convergences which would justify dialogue and practical cooperation.⁴³ References are made to a common historical heritage in the first part of the text, which is a description of the doctrine of Islam. Firstly, the faith in one God is common to Christianity and Islam. Secondly, they both wait for resurrection and judgment. Thirdly, Abraham can be seen as a possible link between them, as can, fourthly, Mary, who is honoured also by the Muslims.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the description is partial. The omission of the prophecy of Muhammad is striking, inasmuch as his prophecy constitutes the second half of the Muslim credo, and a major difference is also given: the Muslims “do not acknowledge Jesus as God, [but] they revere Him as prophet.”⁴⁵ There was a deliberate effort to use such attributes of God that conform to the divine names in Christianity and that would have

⁴² NA 3 1966, 663. *Nasr* (1998, 127) mentions “the diversity of the experience of various parts of the Islamic world during the European domination of the colonial period which in any case cannot be divorced in the Muslim mind from Christianity.”

⁴³ *Caspar* 1966b, 219.

⁴⁴ *Ayoub* (1999, 171–172) remarks: “... honoring Jesus and his mother is not an Islamic gesture of good will toward Christians. It is rather an essential part of their faith.”

⁴⁵ *Hagemann* 1999, 111; *Hagemann* 1983, 102–103. Cf. *Küng* 1987, 85: “... the same church must, in my opinion, also respect that one [Muhammad] whose name is absent from the same declaration out of embarrassment, although he and he alone led the Muslims to pray to this one God...” *Kasimow* (1999, 14–15) makes an interesting comparison between NA and *John Paul II*'s book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (London: Jonathan Cape 1994). John Paul II gives only 4 pages to Islam in a chapter called “Muhammad?” but, like in NA, nothing is said about Muhammad in this chapter. *Kasimow* concludes that John Paul II does not consider Muhammad an authentic prophet.

a positive echo in the minds of Muslims, especially in Arabic: “merciful” (*rahman*) and “living and enduring” (*al-hayy al-qayyum*).⁴⁶ There is no mention of the Qur’an, of the sharia, or of the mystical tradition in Islam.⁴⁷

The second part of the statement is constructive. It is the call addressed to *both* religions for social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.⁴⁸ The fact that the council recognized the connection between moral life and the essence of religion in Islam⁴⁹ represents a genuine breakthrough in Christian-Muslim relations.

Another important text is *Lumen Gentium*,⁵⁰ the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, which treats of the relations of the Church, God’s people, with non-Christians. It gives the doctrinal elements common to Christians and Muslims, and places Islam in the first rank among monotheistic non-Christian religions (after Judaism, with which the Church has the closest ties). One statement affirms that the Muslims adore the same God as the Christians:⁵¹ “But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these are the Moslems, 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.”⁵² Islam has a special place in God’s plan of salvation. It is valued as a valid religion. In acknowledging the Creator, Islam as a religion does what is apparent to human reason.⁵³

To summarize *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* concerning Islam: the Church recommends to Christians an appreciation of the values in Islam through a better knowledge of its faith, a recognition of the errors in the past and a forgiveness, and a new start through esteem, respect, dialogue, and cooperation for the good of all people. However, both documents also leave open a restrictive interpretation: in fact

⁴⁶ Caspar 1966a, 124; Caspar 1966b, 217; the words come from Sura 2:255. Caspar (1966b, 217–218, Note 45) remarks that the merciful attitude of God in Islam to the weaknesses of creatures does not directly include the forgiveness of sinners.—In this study, Arabic words are given in widely accepted spellings.

⁴⁷ Fitzmaurice 1992, 87.

⁴⁸ Ruokanen 1992, 75–79; Caspar 1987, 84–87; Caspar 1966b, 230.

⁴⁹ Ruokanen 1992, 78.

⁵⁰ November 21, 1964, with 2154 for (*placet*) and 5 against (*non placet*).

⁵¹ See Hagemann 1983, 98–100. Cf. Caspar (1966a, 123): “One will no more be able to say, without qualifying, that the Muslims do not worship the same God as we.”

⁵² LG 16 1966, 35.

⁵³ Ruokanen 1992, 78.

they only repeat what the Muslims say about themselves, not what the Christian Church affirms.⁵⁴ No difficulties existing between Christians and Muslims are mentioned.

*The Secretariat for Non-Christians / Pontifical Council for
Interreligious Dialogue as a manifestation of the dialogic attitude*

During the interval between the second and third session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI announced in his sermon on May 17 (Pentecost Sunday) his intention to create an organ for non-Christians.⁵⁵ Two days later, on May 19, 1964, he indeed created the Secretariat for Non-Christians, SNC (*Secretariatus pro non christianis*), by the Apostolic Letter *Progrediente Concilio*, as a department of the Roman Curia “to search for the method and the ways of opening a suitable dialogue with non Christians. It should strive in order that non Christians come to be known honestly and esteemed justly by Christians, and that in their turn non Christians can adequately know and esteem Christian doctrine and life’ (Paul VI: *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, 1967).”⁵⁶ This happened less than three months before the date of publication of the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*.

⁵⁴ Michel 1985, 183. Fitzgerald (2004a, 43) notes: “Depuis le Concile Vatican II, il y a peu de développement dans l’enseignement officiel de l’Eglise au sujet de l’Islam, bien que les Papes aient constamment encouragé à assimiler la vision du Concile.”

⁵⁵ See *La Documentation Catholique*, 7 juin 1964, N° 1425, pp. 695–698.

⁵⁶ AAS 59 1967, 919–920: “Eiusdem Secretariatus est methodum et vias quaerere ad aptum instituendum dialogum cum non christianis. Curat igitur ut non christiani rite cognoscantur et iuste aestimentur a christianis, utque vicissim iidem christianam doctrinam et vitam aequae cognoscere et aestimare possint...” English translation in B 59 1985, 117. See also *La Documentation Catholique*, 7 juin 1964, N° 1425, pp. 699–700; Rossano 1974a, 143–144. Cf. Michel 1993, 34: “In the bull *Regimini Ecclesiae universae*, this dicastery was given the mandate to promote an effective dialogue with the followers of other religions in various ways: the *study* of other religions, *animation* of Christians to promote dialogue, and *engaging* in dialogue with other believers.” The Pope had already revealed his idea of creating a new secretariat at least to Cardinal Tisserant on September 12, 1963 (see *La Documentation Catholique*, 6 octobre 1963, N° 1409, pp. 1249–1254). “Suite à un projet dont il avait fait confidence au Cardinal Tisserant, le 12 septembre 1963, Paul VI annonça, dans son homélie de Pentecôte (17 mai 1964), la création d’un nouveau Secrétariat pour les relations avec les non chrétiens, confié au Cardinal Marella, ancien nonce apostolique au Japon. Ainsi aucun pèlerin, commentait le Pape, si éloigné que puisse être, religieusement et géographiquement, son pays d’origine, ne sera complètement étranger dans cette Rome, fidèle encore aujourd’hui à son programme historique de ‘Patrie commune’, que lui conserve la foi catholique.’ Et Paul VI de s’en expliquer avec les Cardinaux du Sacré Collège, le 23 juin, en les priant d’y voir un

The new Secretariat for the development of relations with non-Christian religions was headed by Cardinal Paolo Marella, former apostolic nuncio to Japan. Pierre Humbertclaude was appointed Secretary, and Pietro Rossano, first to the staff in 1965, then to be Undersecretary in 1967. At the beginning it was not very clear in the Roman Catholic world why the new Secretariat had been created.⁵⁷

The Apostolic Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* of 1967 defined the structure of the Secretariat as follows: President, Secretary, Undersecretary, Head of Office for Islam,⁵⁸ some officials, members chosen among bishops from different parts of the world, and consultors appointed by Pope Paul VI, for a period of 5 years. The consultors are nominated by the pope among the specialists of various religions, of missiology, and of other relevant disciplines. In the structures there are regular meetings with the consultors, which began in January 1965.⁵⁹ And then there are correspondents, whom the Secretariat for Non-Christians hopes will be nominated by the Episcopal Conferences in such a way that there is a priest in each diocese or country who is well informed about its developments, problems, needs, and challenges.⁶⁰

‘signe de cette sollicitude universelle qui nous incite à nous intéresser également aux problèmes et aux besoins spirituels de tous les hommes, à l’instar de ce qui a déjà été fait pour les frères séparés (...).’ *Bormans* 2000, 99. See also, e.g., *Michel* 1993, 34.

⁵⁷ *Humbertclaude* (1967, 29) states: “A diverses reprises déjà des précisions ont été données sur le rôle du Secrétariat pour les non-chrétiens et en particulier sur sa position par rapport au dicastère ecclésiastique dont relèvent les Missions, à savoir la Sacrée Congrégation de Propaganda Fidei. Ces précisions se proposaient de rectifier les affirmations erronées ou inexactes qui apparaissaient fréquemment dans la presse catholique. ... Pour certains, la création du Secrétariat marquerait le commencement d’une *Mission Nouvelle*, celle du *dialogue*, en remplacement de l’*Ancienne Mission*, celle de la *conversion*. ... Ni les déclarations du Concile, ni les faits n’autorisaient une telle affirmation.”

⁵⁸ J.-M. Cuoq, the first person to be responsible for Islam in the SNC, was first “attaché to Islam” (1965–1967) and later “Undersecretary for Islam”.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., B 9 1968, 126–136.

⁶⁰ “This Vatican dicastery has an episcopal committee of Bishops from all parts of the world, consultors in Rome, and consultors throughout the world, including laymen and women. The aim of the dicastery is to create a climate of cordiality between Christians and followers of other religions, to dissipate prejudice and ignorance especially among Catholics, and to establish fruitful contact with members of other religions concerning questions of common interest.” *Machado* 2002a, 171, note 260. *Fitzgerald* (2005b, 94) says rightly: “Du côté de l’Eglise catholique, ce qui fait incontestablement sa force, c’est son unité ecclésiastique et sa structure hiérarchique qui lui permettent de désigner, à tous les niveaux (organisations pontificales, conférences épiscopales et diocèses) des personnes pouvant parler et agir en son nom.”

The new Secretariat was created to promote positive relations with believers of other religions. In 1971, two new sections were added to it: one for traditional religions, another for Asian religions. On October 22, 1974, the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims was established by Pope Paul VI within the ambit of the Second Vatican Council in order to facilitate encounters of a religious character with Muslims,⁶¹ and it was attached to the Secretariat for Non-Christians.⁶² The President of the Secretariat became the President, the Secretary became the Vice-President of the Commission, an official of the Secretary became the Secretary of the Commission, plus a group of specialists. It can be said that by the end of 1974 the Secretariat had reached its full stature.⁶³

On June 28, 1988, at the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation by Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II signed and promulgated in the Consistory of Cardinals the new law governing the Roman Curia. The Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus*⁶⁴ gave a new name for the dicastery:

⁶¹ It is noteworthy that during the pontificate of Paul VI an increasing number of official Muslim delegations—not only diplomats but also Islamic religious leaders—visited the Vatican. *Michel* (1985, 176) comments on Paul VI: “He expressed respect not merely for Muslims as individuals, but also for the faith which they profess.”

⁶² “The following year, 1975, the Commission for Islam had its first meeting. It decided that the *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, first published in 1969, should be revised.” *Fitzgerald* 1989, 110.

⁶³ *Fitzgerald* 1989, 110.

⁶⁴ “The new Pontifical document [*Pastor Bonus*] is a great encouragement for all who engage in the delicate apostolate of dialogue with other believers.” *Arinze* 1988, 185.—Articles 159–162 concern directly the PCID. *Pastor Bonus*, Art. 159: “The council promotes and regulates relations with the members and groups of those religions that are not included under the name of Christian and also with those who in any way are endowed with a sense of religion.” Art. 160: “The Council works so that the dialogue with followers of other religions take place in a suitable manner, and it promotes various forms of relationships between them; it promotes opportune studies and conventions so that these may produce reciprocal knowledge and esteem so that, through common work, the dignity of man and his spiritual and moral values are favoured; it also provokes [sic] for the formation of those who devote themselves to this kind of dialogue.” *Fitzgerald* 2003a, 48. Art. 161: “When the matter under consideration so requires, the Council must proceed in the exercise of its own function in consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and, if need be, with the Congregations for the Oriental Churches and for the Evangelization of Peoples.” Art. 162: “This Council has a Commission, under the direction of the president of the Council, for fostering relations with Muslims from a religious perspective.” *Fitzgerald* (2003a, 48) notes: “Four elements in the mission entrusted to the Council can be distinguished:—to give advice on the way dialogue is to be practiced;—to establish relations with persons belonging to other religions;—to engage in studies, above all with a view to human promotion;—to ensure the formation of persons engaged in dialogue.” *Fitzgerald*

Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, PCID (*Pontificium concilium pro dialogo inter religiones*).⁶⁵ A positive title was thought to be better than a negative one and more respectful towards the other believers.⁶⁶ The new name says what the department is set up to promote, whereas the former title led some people to think that the Secretariat (*Secretariatus pro non christianis*) was also the Secretariat for Non-Believers. The new Pontifical Constitution abolished the nomenclatura “Secretariat” and substituted “Pontifical Council”. The two reasons for this were partly to reduce the classifications of the dicasteries in the Roman Curia and, more importantly, to show that the three dicasteries (Secretariat for Christian Unity, Secretariat for Non-Christians, Secretariat for Non-Believers) for dialogue had come to stay and should not be regarded as temporary or experimental offices.⁶⁷ The term ‘pontifical’ is significant: the Council was created by the popes, it is at their service, working for the benefit of all the local Churches for whom the Papacy is a sign and instrument of unity. The PCID carries out its duties in an official capacity in the pope’s name and by his authority. As a matter of fact, the only writer who can almost certainly be found in any number of the SNC / PCID journal *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo* is the pope.⁶⁸

(2005b, 108–111) speaks of three circles as tasks of the Council. The first task of the Council is to give advice, and in the first place to the Pope himself. The second circle is the level of local Churches: the Council is to encourage, to stimulate, and to call them to encounters with people of other religious traditions, through the formation of dialogue. The third task is the direct contacts of the Council with the representatives of non-Christian religions.—In B 74 1990, 119, there is another English translation of *Pastor Bonus* 160, given by John Paul II: “The Council’s concern is to see that dialogue with the followers of other religions is conducted in a suitable way and to foster various forms of contact with them. It encourages appropriate studies and meetings with the purpose of building mutual knowledge and esteem and, by working together with others, of promoting human dignity and spiritual and moral values. It is concerned with the formation of those who are engaged in this type of dialogue.”

⁶⁵ The changes took effect on March 1, 1989.

⁶⁶ In 1974 Cardinal *Pignedoli* (1974, 91), President of the Secretariat, mentioned the problem but observed also that “words are much less important than the reality.”

⁶⁷ *Arinze* 1988, 185. “A careful comparison of what *Pastor Bonus* says of this Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (articles 159–162) and what *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* said about the Secretariat for non Christians in 1967 (articles 96–100) shows that what was presented as a new organ in 1967 is quietly treated as an ordinary dicastery in 1988.” *Arinze* 1988, 185.

⁶⁸ There are four popes whose tenure is concerned: Paul VI (1963–1978), John Paul I (1978), John Paul II (1978–2005), and Benedict XVI (2005–). Pope John Paul II died in Rome on April 2, 2005, at the age of 84, while this study was being completed. Pope Benedict XVI was elected on April 19, 2005. “After his election Pope Benedict XVI assured all that the Church wants to continue to weave an open and sincere dialogue

In a sense *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo* is his organ for theology of religions and interreligious dialogue. Pope John Paul II clearly said that one very important part of his ministry was the promotion of more friendly relations with non-Christians.⁶⁹ It has been rightly said that no pope in history devoted so much attention to Christian-Muslim relations as did John Paul II.⁷⁰ This can be seen also in *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo*.

On the administrative level, the PCID has a President, a Secretary, and an Undersecretary. World religions (Islam, Oriental religions, traditional religions) and the sects and new religious movements have an office and a responsible person. The PCID office is situated at the Vatican.⁷¹ The structure also includes a Plenary Assembly (decision-making body):⁷² the first Plenary Meeting took place from April 24 to April 27, 1979, then from February 27 to March 3, 1984 (theme: Dialogue and Mission), then on April 28, 1987 (theme: Dialogue and Proclamation), then from April 23 to April 28, 1990 (the first Plenary Assembly of the PCID), and then from November 9 to November 13, 1992. The following PCID Plenary Assembly took place from November 20 to November 24, 1995 (theme: The Dialogue of Spirituality and the Spirituality of Dialogue). The next PCID Plenary Assembly met from October 26 to October 30, 1998 (theme: Called to Conversion of the Heart (Metanoia)—Towards the Year 2000). The next Plenary Assembly of the PCID, from November 5 to November 9, 2001, focussed its attention almost exclusively on the draft of the document “A Christian Spirituality of Dialogue”. The latest Plenary Assembly took place from May

with the followers of other religions or with those who are simply seeking an answer to the fundamental questions of life and have not yet found it.” *Machado* 2005, 157–158. Cf. *Benedict XVI* 2005a, 161; *Benedict XVI* 2005b, 162; *Benedict XVI* 2005c; *Benedict XVI* 2005d; *Benedict XVI* 2005e; *Benedict XVI* 2005f, 268.

⁶⁹ “... what I have always considered a very important part of my ministry: the fostering of more friendly relations with the followers of other religious traditions.” *John Paul II* 1993a, 9.

⁷⁰ *Michel* 1985, 177. “Le dialogue interreligieux avec l’Islam devient toujours plus important et nécessaire, au début du troisième millénaire.” *John Paul II* 2001i, 177. Cf. *Rossano* 1981b, 210: “John Paul II followed up his Ankara message, within the span of 15 months, with 7 other speeches to Muslim communities throughout the world, taking the opportunities presented by his pastoral visits; no other Pope had ever shown, in such a short space of time, so much interest in the Moslems.”

⁷¹ Via dell’Erba, 1, 00120 Città del Vaticano, e-mail: dialogo@interrel.va.

⁷² “La raison d’être du Conseil Pontifical est d’assister le Saint-Père dans son ministère universel, en particulier pour ce qui concerne les relations avec les autres croyants. Le trait marquant de l’Assemblée plénière est naturellement l’orientation et les directives qu’elle reçoit du Souverain Pontife.” *Machado* 1999a, 187.

14 to May 19, 2004 on the theme of “Forty Years of Dialogue. An Evaluation”. The discussions faced problems from a practical-pastoral rather than a theological point of view.

So far the SNC/PCID has had five presidents: Cardinal Paolo Marella (1964–1973), Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli (1973 – d. June 15, 1980), Archbishop Jean Jadot (appointed as Pro-President on June 28, 1980–1984), and Cardinal Francis Arinze (appointed Pro-President on April 9, 1984–2002), who became president when created cardinal (on May 25, 1985). Since October 1, 2002, the president of the PCID has been Archbishop Michael L. Fitzgerald, White Father (Secretary from 1987 to 2002). Of the secretaries, the name of Pietro Rossano (Under-secretary 1967–1973, Secretary from 1973–1982) must be mentioned; he “may be considered to be the architect of the Secretariat.”⁷³

The PCID has close relations with other Vatican dicasteries, among others with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Council for the Family. It cooperates closely with the World Council of Churches Office on Interreligious Relations in Geneva⁷⁴ and with regional Church bodies. “Dialogue, in fact, is mainly the task of the local Church: we from Rome can be little more than a stimulus, an encouragement, and sometimes a help for an activity of study and of cordial relations which can only be carried out efficaciously *in loco*.”⁷⁵

It can be said that the task of the PCID is to promote and carry out serious, objective and scientifically sound studies of other religions so that Christians might arrive at a clearer understanding of the content and practice of other faiths. The preparation of Christians for dialogue has always been one of its primary tasks. Additional tasks are to encourage Catholic communities around the world to see the importance of

⁷³ *Camps* 1989, 382. See also *Borrmans* 2002b; *Gaia* 2003; *Selvadagi* 2003; *Zago* 2003; *Arinze* 2004, 285.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., PD 98 1998. *Fitzgerald* (1999a, 199) states: “La dimension oecuménique de notre travail se réalise principalement à travers le Bureau pour les Relations Interreligieuses du Conseil Oecuménique des Eglises.”—“Over the years the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the World Council of Churches Office for Interreligious Relations (OIRR) have had annual joint meetings at the level of staff.” *Mutiso-Mbinda* 2002, 363.—It is to be noted that “in every case *equivalent structures and efforts are carried out by offices of the W.C.C.*, which represent the Orthodox and Protestant traditions of Christianity.” *Jadot* 1983a, 375 = *Jadot* 1983b, 110 = *Jadot* 1983c, 217. (Emphasis added) There has been interaction not only on the level of structures, but also on the level of documents. See, e.g., *Michel* 1983b, 133–134.

⁷⁵ *Pignedoli* 1977, 90. Cf. *Pignedoli* 1979, 86.—The PCID has also set up a foundation called “Nostra Aetate”, the purpose of which is to promote dialogue, mainly by according grants to people of other religions who wish to study Christianity.

dialogue, understand its role in Christian faith, and to be stimulated, despite obstacles and initial reservations, to establish good, cordial relations with other religious believers. As a result, the staff participate in various activities organized by local Churches. And still, in some situations, the PCID is to engage directly in dialogue with the followers of other religions. It is to be recalled that the PCID has no competence for Jewish-Christian relations.

Encounters with Muslims have always played a major role in the work of the SNC / PCID.⁷⁶ This is understandable in the light of *Lumen Gentium*: “The constitution *Lumen Gentium* 16 speaks directly of the different ways in which members of non-Christian religions are ‘oriented to’ (*ordinantur*) the Church—in fact, the order is based from the distance from the Catholic Church: first come the Jews, with whom the Church entertains the closest ties; then the Muslims, who ‘profess to hold the faith of Abraham’ ...”⁷⁷ The third group is other believers who believe in God, while the fourth group consists of those who do not believe in God but strive to live a good life. According to the distance from the Catholic Church, first come the Jews, with whom the relations are delegated to another dicastery, then the Muslims, with whom the PCID works closely.⁷⁸ As to the populations, by the middle of 2005, there were some 1,118,992,000 Roman Catholics, and some 1,313,984,000 Muslims in the world. (The total number of all kinds of Christians was estimated to be 2,135,783,000 persons.)⁷⁹ Pietro Rossano has remarked:

⁷⁶ *Shirieda* 1994, 199. See also the list of organized dialogue meetings between Christians and Muslims in *Guidelines* 1990, 116–119.

⁷⁷ *Dupuis* 1999, 160. The same order is in ES 107: first come the Hebrew people, then the adorers of God according to the conception of monotheism, the Moslem religion especially, and also the followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.

⁷⁸ “In this [interreligious] dialogue the Jews and *the Muslims ought to have a pre-eminent place*. ... However, care will always have [sic] be taken not to cause harmful misunderstandings, avoiding the risk of syncretism and of a facile and deceptive irenicism.” *John Paul II* 1995, 126. (Emphasis added) “Thus, as the arm of the Pope in his dealings with the followers of other religions, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (P.C.I.D.) sees its first task as that of encouraging Christians and other believers in each country to ‘enter into dialogue’: to examine the roots of tension and conflict, to seek out areas of cooperation, and to take a stand on those matters which touch their lives as people for whom God is a real and meaningful presence in the world. *Foremost among these partners in dialogue are*, as Vatican Council documents have pointed out, *Muslims*.” *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 70. (Emphasis added).

⁷⁹ *Barrett, Johnson, and Crossing* 2005, 29. Cf. the words of a Muslim: “It [Christian-Muslim dialogue] involves forty percent of the inhabitants of our planet: The Christians, who happened in the West to be more advanced technically and economically, and the Muslims who are undergoing a great religious revival which is unprecedented.”

Islam considers itself to be the definitive universal religion that knew Judaism and Christianity perfectly well and superseded them: it therefore follows that it can learn nothing from Christianity. One must also add the lack of distinction between the spiritual and temporal, the religious and the political. Yet, with all this, by reason of its theology and anthropology Islam is closely linked with Christianity. The Holy Father reminds us [of this] in his Encyclical [*Redemptor Hominis*]. Dialogue with Islam will certainly be one of the principal tasks of the Church in the future.⁸⁰

Since the 1990s the PCID has developed an institutionalized dialogue with Muslims.⁸¹ In 1995 an Islamic-Catholic Liaison Committee was established between the PCID and the four major world Islamic organizations: the Muslim World League (*Rabita*), the World Muslim Congress (*Mu'tamar*) (both in Saudi Arabia), the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief (in Cairo, Egypt), and the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) (in Rabat, Morocco). In 2002 it was decided to establish a Coordinating Committee between the World Islamic Call Society (Tripoli, Libya) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. After four years of negotiations, an agreement was signed on May 3, 1998, between the PCID and the Permanent Committee of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif for Dialogue with Monotheistic Religions (Cairo). As a consequence, the Joint Committee for Dialogue

Ayesh 1990, 110.—In connection with the Catholic-Muslim dialogue, the name of PISAI (*Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica*) must be mentioned. This institute, which was founded in Tunisia in 1949 by the White Fathers, was transferred to Rome in 1964 to fulfil its double mission: to teach Arabic and Islamic studies, and to do research work in Christian-Muslim relations. It was first named IPEA (*Institut Pontifical d'Etudes Arabes*), and since 1966 PISAI. The Pontifical Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies is especially well known for its publications: *Etudes Arabes*, *Encounter*, *Islamochristiana*, and the collection *Studi Arabo-Islamici del PISAI*. See, e.g., *Borrmans* 1999. Cf. *Kaulig* 2004, 289–350.

⁸⁰ *Rossano* 1979b, 106. Cf. *Fitzgerald* 1989, 112. Cf. *Akashah* 1999, 220: “Le dialogue islamo-chrétien [du CPDI] est sans doute le plus difficile, mais en même temps le plus nécessaire et peut être le plus prometteur.”—On the attitude of P. Rossano towards Islam, see, e.g., *Borrmans* 2003.

⁸¹ See, e.g., *Akashah* 2002a, 107–108; *Akashah* 2004, 195–204. This marks a development in the policy because at the beginning “the Secretariat did not feel called to organise official meetings between Christians and Muslims. It preferred to concentrate more on sensitizing Christians to the need for dialogue and the ways in which it could be prepared.” *Fitzgerald* 1975, 90.—One sign of this institutionalization is also the fact that the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome has an academic agreement and has had academic meetings with the University of Ankara since 1988 and with the Al-Zitouna University in Tunis since 1996—an agreement in which the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies is also involved (see *Fitzgerald* 2001, 248–249).

was established by an agreement signed in Rome on May 28, 1998, by the two organizations.⁸² Its purpose is to defend great moral values of the two monotheistic religions, as well as to promote a better mutual knowledge of the beliefs and rituals of the two religions, and to look after the education of their spiritual leaders. On April 2002, a Declaration of Intention was signed between the PCID and the presidency of the religious affairs of the Office of the Prime Minister of Turkey in order to promote interreligious dialogue in any form, especially on the academic level.

Of the Christian-Muslim dialogue meetings organized by the PCID, those between the PCID and the World Islamic Call Society, and between the PCID and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research Al Albait Foundation (Amman, Jordan) are especially noteworthy.⁸³

Finally, this overview should not be completed without mentioning the messages sent to the Muslims by the SNC / PCID at the end of Ramadan. This started in 1967, when the Office for Relations with Muslims sent a letter to Muslims around the world on the occasion of *'Id al-Fitr*, the feast of the breaking of the Fast at the end of the

⁸² The text was published in PD 99 1998, 338–340.

⁸³ PCID and World Islamic Call Society (Tripoli, Libya), bilateral deliberations and dialogue:

1st round: Tripoli, Libya, March 1989

2nd round: Rome, February 1990: Mission and Da'wah

3rd round: Malta, November 1990: Tolerance in Islam and Christianity / Coexistence between Religions: Reality and Horizons

4th round: Tripoli, October 1993: The Media and the Presentation of Religion

5th round: Rome, April 1997: Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wa in the Next Century

6th round: Tripoli, March 2002: A Culture of Dialogue in an Era of Globalization

7th round: Rome, March 2004: The Role and Formation of Priests and Imams

PCID and Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research Al Albait Foundation (Amman-Jordan):

1st seminar: Rome, 6–8 December 1989 (theme: Religious Education in Modern Society [With Particular Emphasis on Colleges and Universities])

2nd seminar: Amman, 13–15 December 1990 (theme: The Rights and Education of Children in Islam and Christianity)

3rd seminar: Rome, 24–26 June 1992 (theme: The Role of Women in Society according to Islam and Christianity)

4th seminar: Amman, Jordan 18–20 January 1994 (theme: Nationalism Today: Problems and Challenges)

5th seminar: Rome, 17–20 April 1996 (theme: Religion and the Use of the Earth's Resources)

6th seminar: Amman, Jordan 2–4 December 1997 (theme: Human Dignity).

Islamic month of Ramadan.⁸⁴ Since then it has become normal to greet Muslims in this way. The first letters were signed by a staff person responsible for relations with Muslims. In 1970, for some reason, no message was sent. From 1973 onwards the message has been sent by the president of the SNC / PCID. An exceptional year was 1991, shortly after the Gulf War, when Pope John Paul II decided to address the letter to Muslims himself. The messages are published in several languages.⁸⁵

Aim, method, and structure of the study

It can be said that the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) was of the utmost importance to the Roman Catholic Church and to the Christian theology in general, as to its attitude to non-Christians⁸⁶ and their religions. Through its documents—especially *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium*—Vatican II made a positive official pronouncement vis-à-vis the non-Christian religions for the first time in the Church's history.⁸⁷ The focus was on what was held in common. The council wanted to foster new attitudes of mutual understanding, esteem, dialogue, and cooperation. In fact, this positive attitude was not limited only to these documents. Namely, already in his first and programmatic encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964),⁸⁸ Pope Paul VI pointed to two types of dialogue: one concerned directly with the preaching mission of the

⁸⁴ The text, with an introduction of the fast of Ramadan to Christians by J.-M. Cuoq, was published in B 7 1968, 41–44. The text can be found also in *Meeting in Friendship* 2000, 8–9. See also *La Documentation Catholique*, 21 avril 1968, N° 1515, pp. 767–768 (the introduction of the fast of Ramadan to Christians and the text).

⁸⁵ *Machado* 2000a, 6.—In the mid-1990s the PCID started to send two other annual messages, one to the Hindus on the occasion of *Diwali*, feast of the victory of light over darkness, and the other to the Buddhists on the occasion of *Vesakhs*, commemorating the birth of Buddha, his illumination, and his entry to nirvana.

⁸⁶ In this study the term 'non-Christian' is not used qualitatively or pejoratively, but categorically.

⁸⁷ From the standpoint of this study it is of the utmost importance that the doctrine of non-Christian religions, authoritatively taught by an ecumenical council and by a pope, was promulgated in the Roman Catholic Church, even though the Church had had encounters with non-Christians ever since its beginning. E.g. *Rossano* (1980, 27) notes that “the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* represents the first time in history that this question [the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to other religions] has been confronted in an official way.”

⁸⁸ Text in AAS 56 1964, 609–659. Pope John Paul II said that *Ecclesiam Suam* “is rightly considered the *magna charta* of dialogue in its various forms” (*John Paul II* 1984c, 122).

Church, the other concerned with preliminary activities leading up to proclamation. The missionary task of the Church should be carried out in a dialogic way. Besides, Christians are to join with their non-Christian neighbours in dialogue to address common human problems. This second type of dialogue also has a missionary thrust.⁸⁹ Two other significant gestures were the creation by Paul VI in 1964 of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, and the Pope's visit to the Holy Land and India in the same year. He met in India with leaders of non-Christian religions and he addressed them with great warmth.⁹⁰

Although Vatican II was a decisive step towards a new attitude to non-Christian religions, the postconciliar period must also be studied to know more precisely how it affected the Church's theological position vis-à-vis non-Christian religions. Vatican II was not an end product which can be isolated as a bloc and analysed, and from which final conclusions could then be drawn. Rather, it is a beginning of a new project which must be implemented and received.⁹¹ And this is precisely the role and importance of the Secretariat for Non-Christians / Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The aim of its documentation is to foster dialogue between Christians and non-Christians, and to be a source of preparatory (pastoral, theological, and spiritual) material for Christians for their actual encounter and dialogue with non-Christians.

The SNC / PCID-fostered dialogue is important for Christian theology and Christian Churches. It represents the Roman Catholic Church's official position vis-à-vis non-Christian religions,⁹² and for

⁸⁹ ES 78–82. On the encyclical, see, e.g., *Rouquette* 1964, *Vidal* 1994, and *Fédou* 2005.—The Latin text of the encyclical uses the word “*colloquium*”, and not “*dialogus*”.

⁹⁰ Text in AAS 57 1965, 132–133; also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 125–126, and in *The Christian Faith* 2001, 437. In his speech to representatives of the various religions of India, Pope Paul VI pronounced these famous, often-quoted words: “We must meet not merely as tourists, but as pilgrims who set out to find God, not in buildings of stone but in human hearts.”

⁹¹ E.g. *Sottocornola* 2002, 257: “To this teaching of the Council [*Nostra Aetate*], of course, one has to add the following teaching of the Magisterium of the Church... This Magisterium has been especially that of Pope John Paul II himself.” *Fisher* (1985, 158) notes: “For from the point of view of tradition as Catholics understand it, such a document [*Nostra Aetate*] can be properly understood only in the light of the teachings and statements of the magisterium that interpret and implement it.”

⁹² Pope John Paul II said in Damascus on May 6, 2001, when visiting the Umayyad Mosque: “At the highest level, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue represents the Catholic Church in this task [interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam].” *John Paul II* 2001g, 171. Cf. Cardinal Arinze's words to the Muslims and Christians in Amman in 1990: “... I intend in this talk to *present the stand of the*

Christian theology its positions issue a challenge and should be analysed theologically. No in-depth theological analysis has been made of the foundations of the SNC / PCID so far in the context of Christian-Muslim relations. However, its foundations deserve to be discovered and analysed to the benefit of the Christian theology and churches all over the world.

The aim of this present study is to explore the theological structures and argumentations of the publications of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue based in Vatican City. The study is being done in the recently-emerged discipline of the Christian theology of religions. The term 'Christian theology of religions' refers to the study of the religions of the world, in the light of the Christian faith, in order to reflect the relations of Christianity to other religious traditions and also the consequences of living with people of other faiths.⁹³

It is understood in this study that there is a difference between the Christian theology of religions and the various sciences of religion:⁹⁴

Catholic Church as expressed in statements of her official teaching." *Arinze* 1990, 16. (Emphasis added).

⁹³ *Rossano* (1990, 139) remarks: "Enfin, grâce au 'nouveau regard' sur les religions non-chrétiennes est né la branche de la *théologie des religions*, une réflexion nécessaire qui devra se développer dans les années qui viennent, pour penser la foi et en témoigner dans la société contemporaine pluraliste et multireligieuse." He is of the opinion (p. 142) that interreligious dialogue "suppose le développement d'une juste théologie des religions qui, s'abreuvant aux sources de la révélation confiée à l'Eglise et se confrontant aux traditions et aux expériences religieuses de l'humanité et aux nouveaux problèmes qui se posent à tous, sache découvrir les véritables repères indicatifs du cheminement à parcourir." *Geffré* (1993, 79; 1995, 87) says: "La tâche la plus difficile d'une théologie des religions est de chercher à penser la pluralité insurmontable des voies vers Dieu sans brader le privilège unique de la religion chrétienne." The term 'theology of religions' can be said to aim to "give some definition and shape to Christian reflection on the theological implications of living in a religiously plural world" (*Race* 1983, ix). Cf. *Odasso* 2002, 19.—The Protestant *H. Bürkle* (1977, 35) says succinctly: "Eine Theologie der Religionen bewegt sich damit zwischen der Skylla einer vermeintlichen 'objektiven' Bestandsaufnahme ohne die eigene religiöse 'Perspektive' (K. Rahner) und zwischen der Charybdis des vorurteilvollen *beatus possidens* in Sachen Glauben." Another Protestant, *V.-M. Kärkkäinen* (2003, 20) states: "Theology of religions is that discipline of theological studies which attempts to account theologically for the meaning and value of other religions. Christian theology of religions attempts to think theologically about what it means for Christians to live with people of other faiths and about the relationship of Christianity to other religions." Cf. *Ratschow* 1987.

⁹⁴ Such as the history of religions, the phenomenology of religion, the psychology of religion, the sociology of religion, the anthropology of religion, and the philosophy of religion. See, e.g., *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* 2000, 819–886. However, there seems to be a special relationship between the phenomenology of religion and the theology of religions: "It seems to us, then, that a *phenomenology of religion based on historico-*

the former searches into and interprets the data (various expressions of human religious experience) in the perspective of a personal commitment to a religious faith.⁹⁵ Christian theology, understanding itself as a normative science, judges in the light of Christian faith the validity of the religious claims of non-Christian religions.⁹⁶ The theology of religions takes into account also what is negative, what differentiates Christianity from other religions. The latter observes, evaluates and compares religious phenomena from without.⁹⁷

Above all, this study attempts to discover what kind of theology (of religions) the public SNC / PCID documentation represents, and consequently, whether coherent theological foundations can be found for relations between Christians and non-Christians, in particular between Christians and Muslims, and if so, what they are. Even though this is not a genetic study, and systematic analysis does not treat the roots and developments of every theological point genetically, historical perspectives and any developments emerging in them are discussed within the analysis. In the case of the SNC / PCID the period is some 40 years (1966–2005).

The method used in this study is systematic analysis of the theological—and specifically Roman Catholic—concepts appearing in the SNC / PCID documentation. Systematic analysis in this case looks for those essential concepts and ideas included in the documentation when the research material is dealt with as a whole. The central concepts of the documentation, their contents, and their mutual relationships will be analysed, and the theological constructions which they form will be presented. The theology of religions presented in this study is

comparative research (and thus a phenomenology of religion constituting one of the most important chapters in the history of religions) is a presupposition which a ‘theology of religions’ (or theology simpliciter, whether it is dealing with religions or the religious fact) cannot do without—though not confusing itself with it either in method or in its special object.” *Bianchi* 1972, 23. (Emphasis added).

⁹⁵ “Im Unterschied zu den Methoden einer historisch orientierten u. vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft setzt die theol. Beschäftigung mit den nichtchr. Religionen den für einen echten Dialog unentbehr. Bezug z. eigenen chr. Glauben voraus. Gleiches gilt für die Behandlung anderer Religionen als Gegenstand einer ThR.” *Bürkle* 2000, 1446.

⁹⁶ *Dhavamony* 2000, 887. *Dhavamony* (1998, 753, 754) notes: “Being normative, the theology of world religions judges, in the light of Christian revelation, the validity of the results of the historical phenomenology of religions. ... theology of religions is always a *systematic reflection on Christian faith in all its specificity and uniqueness*, not merely in its common elements with other faiths.” (Emphasis added).

⁹⁷ *Dupuis* 1999, 5; *Dhavamony* 2000, 887.

thus elaborated systematically, without the “other” being interrogatively present and in isolation from the specific interface of the encounter.⁹⁸

Although Christian-Muslim dialogue is its starting point, the study does not focus on the reception of SNC / PCID documentation by Muslims. However, there are occasionally some Muslim (and other non-Christian) contributions to SNC / PCID documentation, and they will be referred to when necessary or appropriate. The writings of Muslims or other non-Christians are not analysed systematically in this study.

Roman Catholic theology has always sought to find a proper balance between extreme emphasis on faith (fideism) and extreme emphasis on reason (rationalism).⁹⁹ In other words, there has been continuous interaction between theology and philosophy. Especially as to the Christian theology of religions and to interreligious dialogue, Roman Catholic theology has been influenced by some 20th century philosophical and theological currents. Chapter Two identifies who and how.

The theological foundations of the SNC / PCID are closely linked to Roman Catholic fundamental theology because one of the tasks of fundamental theology has been to show that religion is something which belongs to human nature and is suitable to it.¹⁰⁰ The task of fundamental theology is to show a generally anthropological basis of religion that is understandable to people today. Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six deal with questions that are shared by fundamental theology and the theological and anthropological foundations of the PCID.

⁹⁸ However, SNC/PCID documentation is partly elaborated in contact with “others” in and through actual encounters with Muslims and other non-Christians.—*Troll* (1998, 68) states: “Furthermore, the development of Catholic theological views of Islam is the fruit of the continuous interaction between, on the one hand, apostolic-missionary action and, on the other, vision of faith and theological reflection. And these in turn are influenced by increasing intra-Christian ecumenical dovetailing, and even interpenetration, in action and thought, as well as by the way the Muslim community develops and/or is perceived to develop at a given place and period of time.”

⁹⁹ *Wagner* 1981, 70. Cf. *Stürnimann* 1977, 337.—In fundamental theology another pair of extreme positions to be avoided is general dogmatics and metatheology (*Stürnimann* 1977, 351; see also p. 355, Note 245). Cf. *Torrell* 1982, 16.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., *Latourelle* 2000, and *Waldenfels* 2000. An interesting detail shows the intimate link between Catholic fundamental theology and theology of religions: among the eleven authors of articles in *Christus allein?* 1996, seven are university professors or teachers of fundamental theology.—Cf. a Protestant dogmatic approach to the issue: *Barth* 2002. An interesting approach is taken by *N. Smart* and *S. Konstantine*, *Christian Systematic Theology in a World Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1991).

Chapter Three deals with the question of God and human existence.¹⁰¹ How is God understood in Christianity and in Islam, and what is the proper human answer or response to God? Chapter Three deals also with the so-called “anthropological turn” in 20th century theology and its consequences for the Christian theology of religions. Chapter Three also takes up the topic of what it means to believe in God and to lead one’s life before God.

Chapter Four takes up the subject of revelation, which is the main theme of fundamental theology and probably the major theme in the Christian theology of religions. Chapter Four will deal with the nature of revelation (personal or literal?) and the question of salvation. For Christians, revelation is a historical event, the culmination of which is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian theology of religions, just like fundamental theology, does not ignore God’s plan of salvation in its historical stages.¹⁰² God’s salvific action is concentrated in Jesus Christ, and God wants to save everybody. How does he do that? Is the Christian God salvifically present in other religious traditions? What is the role of the Spirit? The Christian theology of religions cannot ignore either Christology or pneumatology. The complex subject of the relationship between nature and grace will also be taken up.

Chapter Five will deal with the Church and the Reign of God. What role does the Church have in the Christian theology of religions? What is its relation to the Reign of God? Are they identical or totally different entities? What role do non-Christians have in the Reign of God? To have faith in the Christian sense means to be part of the community of believers, the Church. Faith comes to those who believe through the Church and its proclamations.

Chapter Six explores how interreligious dialogue is understood in SNC / PCID documentation. The anthropological and theological foundations of interreligious, especially Christian-Muslim, dialogue are explored. To this end, the various foundations of interreligious dialogue are explored, as well as its relations to the other, closely related concepts, such as evangelization, proclamation, mission, and conversion.

¹⁰¹ *Ratschow* (1987, 502) notes: “Die Überzeugung, daß es nur einen Gott gibt, daß er hinter allem Götterwirken wirkt, steht in allen Versuchten einer Theologie der Religionen heute an entscheidender Stelle.”

¹⁰² *Wagner* 1981, 52–54; *Ratschow* 1987, 497; *Latourelle* 2000, 331. Cf. *Stirmmann* 1977, 313.

As spirituality in dialogue has become an important theme, interreligious prayer will also be considered.

Even though no previous study has been devoted to my topic, there is a literature on the Second Vatican Council and postconciliar Vatican documents and their various different interpretations and consequences for postconciliar Roman Catholic theology of religions.¹⁰³ Three relevant studies need to be mentioned. The first one is a historical and theological study entitled *Interreligious dialogue in the Catholic Church Since Vatican II* by Robert B. Sheard (1987). The second one is that of Miikka Ruokanen entitled *The Catholic Doctrine of Non-Christian Religions According to the Second Vatican Council* (1992).¹⁰⁴ Despite the negative review given to it by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Jacques Dupuis's *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (1997) has become a major work in the theology of the religions.¹⁰⁵

Sources of the study

The Second Vatican Council was a watershed for Christians' relations with non-Christians, as it has served as the basis for all postconciliar discussions and theological reflections concerning non-Christian religions. The council and its documentation have also provided a firm basis for postconciliar Vatican statements on non-Christians and their religions.

¹⁰³ See, e.g., the pertinent literature in the bibliography of Dupuis 1999, 391–424.

¹⁰⁴ The end of Ruokanen's book includes an interesting exchange first published in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* in 1990 between the author (Lutheran) and Paul F. Knitter (Roman Catholic), as well as William R. Burrows's comments on the articles by Ruokanen and Knitter (pp. 133–156).

¹⁰⁵ On January 24, 2001, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a notification on Dupuis's book. In the Preface it is said: "The Members of the Congregation recognized the author's attempt to remain within the limits of orthodoxy in his study of questions hitherto largely unexplored. At the same time, while noting the author's willingness to provide the necessary clarifications, as evident in his *Responses*, as well as his desire to remain faithful to the doctrine of the Church and the teaching of the Magisterium, they found that his book contained notable ambiguities and difficulties on important doctrinal points, which could lead a reader to erroneous or harmful opinions." This text as well as its commentary can be found in http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations (August 2005). The French version can be found in *La Documentation Catholique*, 18 mars 2001, N° 2244, pp. 271–276. See also Dupuis's comments in the Postscript of his book *Christianity and the Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2003 [2002]), pp. 260–263. (Jacques Dupuis died in Rome on December 28, 2004, at the age of 81.) See also D'Costa 1998b.

As to documents, three groups can be distinguished. The first group is the Vatican II documents themselves. The second group comprises the magisterial documents, of which the SNC / PCID has so far published three. The first one is called *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission* (1984).¹⁰⁶ The members and consultors deliberated on four drafts (March and June 1981, February 1982, and February 1983) of the document, which was finalized during the Plenary Session of the SNC in 1984.¹⁰⁷ This document—published 20 years after the SNC was created—presents, among other things, the forms of dialogue, and proposes, for the first time in official Roman Catholic texts, a definition of the term ‘dialogue’: it is “a manner of acting, an attitude and a spirit.”¹⁰⁸ The second magisterial document is entitled *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1991).¹⁰⁹ The Plenary Assemblies

¹⁰⁶ On May 10, 1984. AAS 76 1984, 816–828. The Italian text is in *l'Osservatore Romano*, June 11–12, 1984, and also in B 56 1984, 166–180. The French text is in *La Documentation Catholique*, 2 septembre 1984, N° 1880, pp. 844–849, in B 56 1984, 146–161, and in a separate booklet by the *Secretariatus pro non christianis: Attitude de l'Eglise Catholique devant les croyants des autres religions. Réflexions et orientations concernant le dialogue et la mission* (Città del Vaticano, Pentecôte 1984). The English text can be found in a separate booklet by the *Secretariatus pro non christianis: The Attitude of the Church toward the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission* (Città del Vaticano, Pentecost 1984). The English text can be found also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 566–579, and in B 56 1984, 126–141. The text exists also in Spanish (B 56 1984, 185–200), German (B 56 1984, 205–221), Arabic (B 56 1984, 227–242), and Portuguese.—In this study the document is called *Dialogue and Mission* and is abbreviated DM.

¹⁰⁷ “The first major fruit of such [theological] reflection was produced by the Plenary Assembly of the dicastery in 1984. ... The document investigates the place of interreligious dialogue in the total mission of the Church and draws out some practical orientations.” *Arinze* 1989, 315–316. The official documents of the Roman Catholic Church are the result of consultations between bishops, commissions, experts, and individual specialists. In that sense the official teaching is always a reflection of the wider thinking in the Church.

¹⁰⁸ “Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude and a spirit which guides one’s conduct.” DM 29.—*Sheard* (1987, 131) remarks critically: “The most disappointing aspect of this 1984 statement on dialogue is that it contributes little to the discussion of a theology of religions. Absolutely critical questions, such as whether the religions are means of salvation and how they may fit into the divine plan of salvation, are not touched on.”

¹⁰⁹ On May 19, 1991. AAS 84 1992, 414–446 (in Italian). The Italian text is also, e.g., in B 77 1991, 159–200. The French text is in *La Documentation Catholique*, 20 octobre 1991, N° 2036, pp. 874–890. The text was published in French in *Dialogue et Annonce—Mission de l'Eglise*, n° 96–97, juin-septembre 1992, in B 77 1991, 260–302, and in a separate booklet

of 1987 and 1990 worked on the preparation of this document, which makes a clear distinction between dialogue and evangelization.

The third magisterial document published and sponsored by the PCID is a book called *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963–1995)*,¹¹⁰ edited by Archbishop Francesco Gioia. Originally published in Italian in 1994 under the title *Il dialogo interreligioso nel magistero pontificio*, it covers the years 1963–1993, in commemoration of 30 years of the existence of the SNC / PCID (1964–1994).¹¹¹ The English edition was enlarged to cover two additional years. It was published in French in 1998, covering the period of 1963–1997.¹¹²

This book is a collection of the statements of the Pontifical Magisterium on interreligious dialogue and non-Christian religions. Among other things, it includes the other two documents mentioned above. It is to be noted that not all documents in the collection have the same theological weight, including council texts and encyclicals, speeches made by the last four popes, and directives of some departments of the Roman Curia.¹¹³

The third group of documents is the SNC's / PCID's "own" documents. These include the acts, which are papers from different meetings and colloquia, some intra-Christian, others interreligious (see the list of acts of meetings in "Sources"). The following were published

by *Conseil pontifical pour le dialogue interreligieux* and *Congrégation pour l'évangélisation des peuples: Dialogue et annonce: Réflexions et orientations concernant le Dialogue Interreligieux et l'Annonce de l'Évangile de Jésus-Christ* (Cité du Vatican, Pentecôte 1991). The English text can be found in a separate booklet by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples: *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Vatican City, Pentecost 1991). The English text can be found also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 608–642, in B 77 1991, 210–250, and also in *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1994), pp. 93–118. The text exists also in German. In this study the document is called *Dialogue and Proclamation* and is abbreviated DP. It is noteworthy that this paper is a joint document of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and that it was originally published in Italian.

¹¹⁰ *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963–1995)* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media 1997). In this study it is called *Interreligious Dialogue*.

¹¹¹ *Il dialogo interreligioso nel magistero pontificio (Documenti 1963–1993)* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1994). See the presentation of the book by Gioia 1994.

¹¹² *Le dialogue interreligieux dans l'enseignement officiel de l'Église catholique (1963–1997). Documents rassemblés par Francesco Gioia* (Editions de Solesmes, France 1998).

¹¹³ There is another major PCID document under preparation on the spirituality of dialogue. See, e.g., Machado 1999a, 188; Fitzgerald 2004a, 52.

as special issues of *Pro Dialogo*: Interreligious Prayer: A Joint Study Project—PCID and OIRR, WCC, 1998 (Special Issue of *Current Dialogue* and *Pro Dialogo* 98, 1998); Theological Colloquium: Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour, and the Encounter with Religions (Special Issue of *Pro Dialogo* 85–86, 1994); *Colloque Théologique: L'Évangile de Jésus-Christ et la rencontre des religions traditionnelles* (in French; Special Issue of *Pro Dialogo* 94, 1997); Second Buddhist-Christian Colloquium: Word and Silence in Buddhist and Christian Traditions (Special Issue of *Pro Dialogo* 100, 1999); Sangha in Buddhism and Church in Christianity (*Pro Dialogo* 113, 2003).

Of the other 19 documents (see the list of other publications in “Sources”), 4 deal with Islam,¹¹⁴ 3 deal with various religions or various themes in various religions, 2 deal with Buddhism, and 2 deal with African traditional religions and culture. One each deals with Hinduism, interreligious marriage (joint document with WCC OIRR), the proclamation of Christ, witness and dialogue, peace, the “New Age”, reading Church documents on relations with people of other religions, and teaching religions and interreligious dialogue. The last of these is an Interreligious Dialogue Directory.¹¹⁵

However, the basic level of the SNC/PCID documentation is a journal entitled *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo*.¹¹⁶ This journal is normally published three times a year. During the first two years supplements were included: 1) *L'espérance qui est en nous* (Supplément N. 1 au Bulletin, 1967) (P. Rossano); 2) *Seconda raccolta di testi di S.S. Paolo VI concernenti i rapporti con le religioni non cristiane* (Serie supplementare al Bollettino N. 2 – 1967); 3) *Towards the Meeting of Religions* (3rd Supplement to the “Bulletin”, 1967); 4) *Visions d'espoir* (Supplément N. 4 au Bulletin, 1967)

¹¹⁴ Of this documentation only the guidelines for dialogue with Muslims have been revised. They are called in this study *Guidelines* 1969 and *Guidelines* 1990 respectively. This, too, shows the major role of Christian-Muslim relations in the work of the SNC/PCID. Rossano (1979b, 94) remarks: “In order to help the Churches come to a knowledge of and to actual dialogue with the great religions, the Secretariat proceeded to publish booklets entitled Guidelines or Suggestions for dialogue. ... *The Guide for contact with Islam was especially important.*” (Emphasis added).

¹¹⁵ The 1986 document, *Sects or new Religious Movements. Pastoral Challenge*, prepared by several dicasteries but signed only by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, as well as the 1995 document, *Sects and New Religious Movements. An Anthology of Texts from the Catholic Church 1986–1994*, edited by the Working Group on New Religious Movements, Vatican City, are not included in this study. See, e.g., *Zago* 1989, 370–373.

¹¹⁶ In this study abbreviated B or PD respectively. It was printed in 2005 in 1800 copies, of which 1600 copies were distributed.

(P. Marella); 5) *L'homme et la religion* (Supplément n. 5 au "Bulletin", 1968) (P. Rossano). The first number was published in May 1966. The journal was meant to be a means of communication between the Secretariat and the local churches; its scope was limited to addressing exclusively the bishops and/or those designated by them in the local churches in order to exchange information and seek their counsel.

There are some interesting features in the development of this journal. First of all, up until number 24, the journal was published both in French and in English;¹¹⁷ thereafter each number was bi-lingual, with

¹¹⁷ Numbers 1–8 include some articles in Italian, Spanish, and Latin: Paul VI: La chiesa e la religioni non cristiane (B 1 1966, 9); Telegramma di Paolo VI per la VI "Settimana di studi missionari" presso l'Universita Cattolica del S. Cuore di Milano (B 1 1966, 10); Esortazione nella IV domenica di Quaresima: "Tutti gli uomini sono chiamati al Regno di Dio" (B 1 1966, 13–14); Il Popolo di Dio (B 2 1966, 46); Come la Chiesa guarda al mondo (B 2 1966, 46–47); I non cristiani e la Chiesa (B 2 1966, 47); Da Cristo luce del mondo la Chiesa trae i fulgori per svolgere la sua eccelsa missione di "lumen gentium" (B 2 1966, 47–49); Paolo VI ai Vescovi del Vietnam (B 3 1966, 100); Per la pace nella concordia degli spiriti (B 3 1966, 100–101); Serene prospettive di luce e di carità (B 3 1966, 101–102); La Chiesa concorre alla soluzione dei problemi del nostro tempo con le risorse religiose e soprannaturali ricevute da Cristo (B 3 1966, 102); La spiritualità tesoro interiore della Chiesa (B 3 1966, 103–105); (Per la fame nel mondo) La vigile attenzione della Chiesa per i grandi problemi dello sviluppo (B 3 1966, 105–106); Tutti gli uomini "docibiles Dei" e dovere della testimonianza (B 3 1966, 107–108); Voti ed esortazioni del Papa nel 70° della fondazione della F.U.C.I. (B 4 1967, 3); Perenne e attiva la costruzione della Chiesa (B 4 1967, 3); Viva testimonianza a Cristo con la pratica della fede e della carità (B 4 1967, 4–5); Radiomessaggio natalizio di Paolo VI al mondo (B 4 1967, 5–6); La cultura per la comprensione tra gli uomini (B 4 1967, 6); Amore e servizio della Chiesa in bene dell'intera umanità (B 4 1967, 6–7); Paolo VI per la libertà religiosa e per la pace internazionale (B 4 1967, 8–9); Il Sommo Pontefice riceve le Credenziali del primo Ambasciatore del Senegal (B 4 1967, 9); Omaggio di giovani dell'India (B 5 1967, 65); Inizio della S. Visita Pastorale (B 5 1967, 66); Contributo della Gioventù Agricola Europea per il bene morale e materiale dell'uomo (B 5 1967, 66—the discourse is in French); Messaggio augurale alla Conferenza dei Presidenti a Punta del Est (B 5 1967, 67—the message is in Spanish); Messaggio di Paolo VI ai lebbrosi (B 5 1967, 67); Udienza ai Direttori dei Giornali della C.E.E. (B 5 1967, 67–68; the text is in French); La Prima Sessione della Pontificia Commissione di Studio "Iustitia et Pax" (B 5 1967, 68; in French); Udienza Pontificia al Comitato del "Programma Alimentare Mondiale" (B 5 1967, 68–71; in French); Il Congresso Mondiale per lo Studio dei valori Spirituali del Turismo (B 5 1967, 71; in French); Compiacimento gratitudine voti del Santo Padre per le Pontificie Opere Missionarie (B 5 1967, 71–72; in French); Inaugurazione dell'Anno della Fede (B 6 1967, 129); La Chiesa è nel mondo, non del mondo, ma per il mondo (B 6 1967, 129–130); Incontro in Turchia del S. Padre col Corpo Diplomatico (B 6 1967, 130; in French); Viaggio di Paolo VI in Turchia (B 6 1967, 130–131; in French); Cordiale augurio di Sua Santità per la Delegazione Giapponese al Congresso dei Federalisti (B 6 1967, 131; in English); Lettera del Card. Amleto Cicognani al Congresso Nazionale della

most of its contents appearing in English, some in French.¹¹⁸ Some numbers include two journals,¹¹⁹ and some are indexed.¹²⁰

Secondly, at the beginning the journal had the simple name, *Bulletin*, or more precisely, *Bulletin* of the Secretariat pro non christianis (nos. 1–69). Then, following the directives given by the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, *Pastor Bonus*, of Pope John Paul II in 1988, it became the *Bulletin* of the Pontificium concilium pro dialogo inter religiones (nos. 70–84). With number 85 (1994) was given its current name, *Pro Dialogo* of the Pontificium concilium pro dialogo inter religiones.

Thirdly, at the beginning it was clearly stated that *Bulletin* would not open its pages to non-Christians, which gave rise to criticism.¹²¹ However, beginning with *Bulletin* number 32 (1976), ten years after the creation of the journal, editorial policy was changed to permit the publication of articles written by non-Christians.¹²² And fourthly, there

F.U.C.I. (B 6 1967, 131–132); Paterno cordiale augurio di Paolo VI a un Pellegrinaggio di Vietnamiti (B 6 1967, 132–133); Ai Capi Missione del Corpo Diplomatico (B 7 1968, 1–3); Udienda Generale (B 7 1968, 3); Udienda a S.E. il Presidente del Consiglio Esecutivo di Jugoslavia (B 7 1968, 3–4); General Audience of the Holy Father (B 8 1968, 59–60; in Italian); P. Rossano: Quid de non christianis Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II docuerit (B 1 1966, 15–22).

¹¹⁸ “Until last year we had two editions of our *Bulletin*, one in English, the other in French. From this year onwards we shall have only one edition, in two languages. That means to say that articles will be published in the language in which they are written—English or French. We regret any inconvenience resulting from this arrangement.” B 25 1974, 1.

¹¹⁹ This is the case for numbers 23–34, 28–29, 34–35, 41–42, 49–50, 85–86, and 104–105.

¹²⁰ This is the case for number 65 (index of nos. 1–64), 74 (66–73), 87 (74–84), 99 (85–99), and 115 (100–114).

¹²¹ “It [another criticism] can be summed up thus: the *Bulletin* does not make the non Christians speak but confines itself to giving its own point of view; the result is that the so-called dialogue is in fact a monologue. ... The only point that we do not accept here is the assertion that the *Bulletin* should open its pages directly to non Christians. The *Bulletin* belongs strictly to the agents of dialogue, even though it is read by others.” *Humbertclaude* 1968a, 95. “... the Secretariat is conscious of its responsibility for what it publishes and can neither solicit nor publish articles which are not within the range of this organ of the Vatican...” B 9 1968, 128.

¹²² Number 32 (1976) is a theme number on “Religions and man’s problems”. At the beginning of 1974 the Secretariat for Non-Christians sent a questionnaire to a number of personalities of the different religions in the world. The questions can be found on p. 107. These are followed by responses given for Buddhism (pp. 108–125, two Buddhists), for Hinduism (pp. 126–154, two Hindus), and for Islam (pp. 155–208, two Muslims: Dr. Mohamed Aziz Lahbabi, pp. 155–173, and 174–185: “L’Islam et la paix”, and Dr. Rashid Ahmad Jullundry, pp. 186–208). Number 37 (1978) includes a

has been a strong ecumenical input in *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo*, especially from the World Council of Churches.¹²³

The structure of *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo* has regularly been as follows. Each number begins with extracts from the discourses of the pope. These are followed by articles, authored by various scholars, often written also by consultants or permanent members of the staff. These articles form the core of the journal. They aim at offering useful theological-pastoral reflections on different aspects of interreligious dialogue,

discourse by Professor Sayyed Hossein Nasr, addressed to the Pope in the name of an Iranian delegation (pp. 3–4).—As to the other Muslim writers, the following articles have been published: Wahid, Abdurrahman in B 51 1982, 252–257: “Cultural Diversity and Religious Unity in Islam: the Indonesian Experience”; ‘Abd el-Shakour, ‘Abdallah, undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf (religious benefices) of Egypt, in B 58 1985, 72–83: “Comment l’Islam des origines voit les relations interreligieuses notamment avec les chrétiens et les Juifs”; Sayeed, S.M., Professor in Hyderabad, Pakistan, in B 60 1985, 306–308: “Training Leaders for today’s world: An Islamic View”; Saliou Kandji, M., a Senegalese Muslim, in B 63 1986, 301–323: “La Place de la Religion dans les Programmes Scolaires: Le cas du Sénégal”; Nasseef, Abdulla Omar, General Secretary of the Muslim World League in Mecca, in B 66 1987, 277–282: “Muslim-Christian Relations: The Muslim Approach”; Atay, Huseyin, Professor in Ankara, in B 66 1987, 283–288: “Dialogue and relations among religions”; Rahal, Redouane, in B 70 1989, 45–46: “Réponse d’un participant musulman [d’une rencontre entre musulmans et chrétiens à Assise du 24 au 28 octobre 1988]”; Mushir-ul-Haq, le Vice-Chancelier de l’Université de Kashmir, Srinagar, in B 74 1990, 164–171: “Compréhension Inter-Religieuse: Vers la réalisation de l’Idéal d’une Communauté Mondiale”; Algabid, Hamid, Secrétaire Général, Organisation de la Conférence Islamique, in B 76 1991, 12–13: “Lettre envoyée au Saint-Père”; Sharif, Muhammad Ahmad, Dr., in B 76 1991, 104–105: “Opening Address (Paola-Malta: Christian-Muslim Meeting, 22–23 November 1990)”; Ligali, Issiaka, Imam in Benin, in B 83 1993, 115–117: “Discours d’accueil [du Pape] de la Communauté islamique du Bénin”; Bou Imajdil, Abdeslam, Professor of Philosophy in Rabat, in B 97 1998, 63–67: “De la Conversion en Islam: point de vue sunnite”; Tabbara, Nayla, Muslim student, in B 108 2001, 393–396: “A Roman Experience”; Tantawi, Al-Azhar Mohammed Sheikh in B 109 2002, 148–149 (testimony for peace [Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi on 24th January 2002]); Demiri, Lejla, Muslim student, in B 114 2003, 375–378: “My Experience of Dialogue”; and in B 114 2003, 409–410: “Rome, Italy: 15 March 2003. A Report for ‘Nostra Aetate’ Foundation, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, by a Muslim student who had received a study grant”; Mechergui, Ahmed, in PD 116–117 2004, 304–306: “Témoignage (Musulman, Tunisie)”.—On the question of how Muslims appreciate “Pontifical Rome”, see *Bormans* 2004a. On the question of how non-Christians see Christianity, see, e.g., *Christianity through Non-Christian Eyes* 1998, especially Part II, “Islamic Perceptions of Christianity in the Twentieth Century” (pp. 67–134: articles by S. Qutb, M. Talbi, F. Rahman, S.M.N. al-Attas, and S.H. Nasr). See also, e.g., *Ayoub* 1984, *Talbi* 1988, and *Aydim* 2002.

¹²³ See, e.g., B 17 1971, 109–115; *Lopez Gay* 1969 and *Lopez Gay* 1970; *Fitzgerald* 1972; *Samartha* 1974; B 36 1977, 103–153; *Michel* 1982a and *Michel* 1982b; B 73 1990, 84–91; *Mitchell* 1999; B 115 2004, 92–95.

addressed to a general readership. The third section is devoted to book reviews. Since number 41 (1979) editorials, since number 60 (1985) official documents of the Roman Curia and the Church, and since number 83 (1993) reports of meetings organized by the PCID or in which the PCID is represented have also been included. Even though *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo* has represented the official line of the SNC / PCID, it must be noted that the dicastery does not necessarily agree with everything that is published in its journal.¹²⁴

To penetrate especially into the Christian-Muslim dialogue, the following publications are also included among the sources: *Chiesa e Islam (Segretariato per i non cristiani, 1981)*, which is a collection of *Nostra Aetate* 3 and papal discourses in English, French, and German—and those texts translated into Arabic. The Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims published seven dossiers between 1992 and 1993. In 1999 it published “*Religion et politique: un thème pour le dialogue islamo-chrétien*”. All of these documents are included in the sources (see the list of “Sources”).

One important characteristic of the SNC / PCID publications is that no single writer but several individual, mostly Roman Catholic, writers, men and women, clergymen and lay people represent the Church’s movements and orders, theological currents and faculties. Some writings are anonymous. Another characteristic is the diversity of the publications: most of the articles are written specifically to be published by the SNC / PCID, many are speeches given on a specific occasion (e.g. papal speeches).¹²⁵ Still others were written originally for other purposes and then revised and published by the SNC / PCID. The SNC / PCID publications represent a Roman Catholic understanding of the theology of religions and interreligious dialogue, but the issues also include a few reports of actual encounters and articles written by non-Christians. In spite of this great variety of origin, the publications have one goal: forming a certain whole, they show the theological foundations for

¹²⁴ This is understandable, as there are non-Christian contributors as well. See, e.g., *Fitzgerald 1994, 2*.

¹²⁵ I am aware that many papal speeches are initially prepared by others than the pope himself. This raises the question of their originality and authenticity. However, taken as they are, pronounced publicly by the pope and later published in his name, they can be regarded as his official statements as the head of the Roman Catholic Church. This fact, however, can create tensions in his statements. *Troll (2000, 270)* notes: “These [allocutions of the Pope addressed to Muslim, Catholic or mixed audiences] naturally would seem to favour a polite, somewhat general, not too explicit, optimistically coloured type of discourse.”

Christians' relations to non-Christians of the Roman Catholic Church at the end of the 20th century. In addition to the fundamental importance of papal statements, special emphasis is given, qualitatively and quantitatively, to the statements made by the president, secretary, and undersecretary of the SNC / PCID as well as to those made by the person having responsibility in the office for Islam.¹²⁶ Two magisterial documents, *Dialogue and Mission* and *Dialogue and Proclamation*, are also of special importance.

This study will take into account all the official SNC / PCID publications: two (three) magisterial documents, the acts of meetings, other publications, including those of the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims, and the journal *Bulletin / Pro Dialogo*, nos. 1 (May 1966) – 120 (autumn 2005). All the above-mentioned documents were published between 1966 and 2005. Their titles and dates of publication are given in the “Sources”. The individual writings included in the sources are given in the “Bibliography”, for the sake of convenience. For the purposes of this study, I have used the English-language version of source texts published in several languages. For some earlier numbers of *Bulletin*, I have had access only to the French version. Translations into English supplied by the author of the study are indicated by the use of the initials “RJ”. Unless otherwise indicated, the biblical citations are from the New International Version, and the Qur'anic citations are from “The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an. An explanatory translation by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall” (London).

When relevant, I have referred in footnotes to the general debate concerning religious pluralism, interreligious dialogue, and the Christian theology of religions, whether Roman Catholic or not. As a matter of fact, the general debate is not taking place between different Christian confessions.

There is still one last important matter that needs to be kept in mind. This study is based on the Roman Catholic documents and their

¹²⁶ It must be mentioned that a good number of distinguished Roman Catholic scholars and experts in Islam are not directly in the scope of the present study but have influenced Roman Catholic theology and Vatican II statements on Islam and non-Christian religions. They are, among others, L. Massignon, J.-M. Abd-el-Jalil, Y. Moubarac, J. Basetti-Sani, J. Jomier, R. Caspar, M. Asín Palacios, G. Anawati, L. Gardet, R. Arnaldez, and A.-T. Khoury. L. Massignon had contact not only with intellectuals and with parish priests, but also with Pope Pius XI (1922–1939), Pius XII (1939–1958), and Mgr. Montini, the future Paul VI (1963–1978; see *Borrman* 1978b, 1). (*Caspar* 1987, 80).

interpretations. In fact, SNC / PCID documentation is already an interpretation of the Magisterium, especially Vatican II, documents. It can be said that post-Vaticanum statements are interpretations of a process which began with Vatican II. An interesting question is, of course, how the SNC / PCID interprets Vatican II documents and their interpretations. The hermeneutical question in the Catholic Church does not seem to be entirely clear.¹²⁷ Bernard Sesboué affirms that conciliar and magisterial hermeneutics are not on the same advanced level as biblical hermeneutics in the Roman Catholic Church.¹²⁸ For SNC / PCID documentation the question of hermeneutics is important. “The principle of the unity of whole” means that SNC / PCID documentation cannot be separated from the whole theology of the Church, and hasty conclusions cannot be made based on it. In the light of the contents of the documents this is a rather slight danger because so much of it is directly based on Vatican II documentation and post-Vaticanum magisterial statements. “The principle of non-contradiction”, tightly linked to the precedent, means that no affirmation can be read in isolation, it must be “relativized” in the light of other affirmations, and set in the historical, political, and sociological context. That is why, through the whole study, I have often used long citations to show a larger context than necessitated by the item itself in question. Doctrinal hermeneutics are hermeneutics of hermeneutics. SNC / PCID documentation is exemplary in the sense that there is an evident and strong continuity (diachronic dimension) in the enlarging hermeneutical context. At the same time tensions, even some contradictions, begin occasionally to appear (synchronic dimension). These are due to the efforts to advance the interpretation of Catholic doctrine and must be understood in the framework of the hermeneutical task given to the Church.

¹²⁷ LG 25 (1966, 48) gives a hermeneutical principle as regards papal statements: “His [the Roman Pontiff’s] mind and will in the matter may be known chiefly either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking.” Citing this, “L’interprétation des dogmes” says: “Le sens précis de cette affirmation conciliaire a besoin encore d’une explication théologique plus poussée. Il serait souhaitable avant tout que, pour éviter que son autorité ne s’érousse inutilement, le Magistère de l’Eglise indique clairement lui-même à chaque fois la modalité et le degré d’obligation de ses déclarations.” *La Documentation Catholique*, 20 mai 1990, N° 2006, p. 494. See also *Alberigo* 2005, 687–688.

¹²⁸ “C’est un lieu commun de reconnaître que l’herméneutique conciliaire et magistériel est en retard sur l’herméneutique biblique.” *Sesboué* 2004, 325. See also pp. 326–373.—*Dulles* (1971), too, has dealt with the hermeneutics of dogmatic statements in the Roman Catholic Church; see his six principles on pp. 175–182.

The hermeneutical question is an important and difficult question, as can be seen, e.g., in the following SNC affirmation: “No matter how fully open they [the representatives of Catholicism] may be to mutual understanding, they must never yield on any point of doctrine for the sake of progress towards unity.”¹²⁹

¹²⁹ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 46.

CHAPTER TWO

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON A DIALOGIC ROMAN CATHOLIC ATTITUDE

Philosophy and theology in interaction

The fact that theology cannot define philosophy is an initial difficulty in establishing the relationship between theology and philosophy.¹ And yet, philosophy and theology were always closely intertwined in the early history of the Christian Church.² Starting from the writers of the New Testament, to the Fathers of the Church, through Justin, Origen,³ Augustine,⁴ Dionysius the Areopagite, Boethius, Thomas Aquinas,⁵ through the whole Middle Ages and modern times, theology and phi-

¹ *Fischella* 2000, 1075. *Dalferth* (1988, 19) affirms: “Thus theology began its career as a branch and integral part of philosophy; it originated with the cosmological speculations of natural philosophy and the philosophical critique of traditional mythology; and for a long time to come theology and philosophy remained a joint enterprise. Theology, then, has a rational root, and its main source is not religious tradition but philosophical reflection.” Cf. *Sesboué* (2001, 109) who says: “... on s’aperçoit qu’il existe entre elles [la philosophie et la théologie] une unité originaire qui constitue l’expérience humaine et se situe en deçà de la distinction formelle et scientifique entre les disciplines. ... Cette unité originaire engage une articulation entre philosophie et théologie, c’est-à-dire entre anthropologie philosophique (liée à l’état actuel de la conscience dans notre monde de culture) et anthropologie théologique.”

² “Theology being the reflex and systematic expression of faith that seek understanding, Christian reflection on the history of man’s salvation needed a philosophy.” *Letter* 2003, 918. Cf. “... sowohl der ‘Vollzug religiöser Rede vom Göttlichen oder von den Göttern’, wonach Theologie die im Kult vollzogene Götteransage, die Proklamation Gottes, die Predigt bedeutet... als auch, wie bei Plato, die kritische Kontrolle durch die Vernunft in der religiösen Rede von Gott (resp. 379a), also die vernunftgeleitete Erkenntnisbemühung um das Göttliche.” *Neuner* 2002, 286.

³ “... ‘faith needs to be strengthened by reasoning... starting from commonly held ideas worked out by Greek philosophy’ (*De principiis* 1.7.1; 4.1.1).” *Fischella* 2000, 1076.

⁴ “In Augustine faith and reason are thus two distinct values, but present and realized in the historicity of the believing subject.” *Fischella* 2000, 1077. The Christian originality of medieval philosophy can be said to start with Augustine.

⁵ “Sed contra est quod aliae scientiae dicuntur ancillae huius, Prov. IX: Misit ancillas suas vocare ad arcem.” ST 1.1.5. On Thomas Aquinas and the different ways of interpreting him in history, see, e.g., *Kerr* 2002.

losophy have stood in close relationship to each other, despite the initial tendency for Christians to denigrate philosophy and for philosophers to denigrate Christianity. However, the 5th century saw the first successful synthesis in the form of the Augustinian-Platonic current. Since 13th century Thomistic Aristotelianism, there has been an interest in philosophy for its own sake and not just as a simple tool in Christian theology. The 13th and 14th century witnessed the advent of the *via moderna*.

Modern times were ushered in by Enlightenment philosophy. Theologically, however, the 18th and 19th centuries were more or less barren, in spite of the theological renewal of the school of Tübingen (e.g. J.A. Möhler). The First Vatican Council (1869–1870) encouraged the faithful repetition of the tradition of the past,⁶ and Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) conferred by his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), which contains the expression “Christian philosophy” in its title,⁷ a privileged status upon the writings of Thomas Aquinas, establishing him as normative in matters of theology and philosophy. The result was that for most of the 20th century, neo-Thomism and the neoscholastic movement continued to be the dominant school in the field of philosophy. Neo-Thomism meant both the restoration of speculative theology and the historical study of Thomism and scholasticism.⁸

Nevertheless, the Catholic Church experienced tremendous interaction between philosophical currents and theological thinking in the 20th century, especially in the period immediately preceding Vatican II.

One recurrent theme in the anthropology of Vatican II is the dignity of the human person. ... Freedom is one of the hallmarks of human dignity. ... Human dignity and human freedom can therefore be regarded as the two pillars on which the entire anthropological framework of Vatican II rests. Accordingly, they are essential concepts in the Council’s teaching on dialogue. ... It was nevertheless with the so-called anthropological turn in the modern period, and especially through the input of the

⁶ It also confirmed that God can be known through the creation by the natural light of human reason: “Si quis dixerit, Deum unum et verum, creatorem et Dominum nostrum, per ea, quae facta sunt, naturali rationis humanae lumine certo cognosci non posse: anathema sit.” DS 3026.

⁷ *Aeterni Patris* is an encyclical of Pope Leo XIII “on the restoration of Christian philosophy”. “Its solid foundations having been thus laid, a perpetual and varied service is further required of philosophy, in order that sacred theology may receive and assume the nature, form, and genius of a true science.” *Aeterni Patris* 6. Cited in *Fisichella* 2000, 1077.

⁸ *Letter/Hill* 2003, 911. Cf. *Letter* (2003, 920) who says that scholasticism is a form of “Christianized Aristotelian metaphysics.”—It is to be noted that “Thomism” and “scholasticism” are broad labels that cover diverse eras and diverse currents of thought.

existentialist and personalist philosophers in the twentieth century, that the twin issues of human dignity and human freedom became of interest not just to some scholars, but to the ordinary members of the society as well.⁹

From the point of view of this study, only two of the above-mentioned philosophical currents are dealt here, namely existentialism and personalism, in order to explicate the theological position of the SNC / PCID.¹⁰ These two currents, which have emerged in Western thought in recent decades, have had a profound influence upon Christian theology, and they have created a new form of anthropocentrism whose correlative is a positivistic naturalism that neglects the unique ontological status and value of the human person in a world of things.¹¹

Existentialism and personalism

The great idea of existentialism is that individual human beings not only exist, they also understand; they are aware of their existence and also of its end, through death. The word “existentialism” can have two meanings.¹² Basically, it is an attitude towards human life, plac-

⁹ *Onah* 2002, 85–86.—GS 62 (1966, 269) says: “In pastoral care, appropriate use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology.”—*Optatam Totius*, Decree on Priestly Formation, states, among other things: “In the revision of ecclesiastical studies, the first object in view must be a *better integration of philosophy and theology*. . . . Students should also be helped to see the connections between philosophical argument and the mysteries of salvation, matters which are treated in theology under the superior light of faith.” OT 14, 15 1966, 449–451. (Emphasis added).

¹⁰ “Actually the first and perhaps the sole foundation which is necessarily presupposed in meeting and dialogue between the defenders of totally different religious systems, is a simple philosophy which is even unaware of itself, a *philosophy of existence* which recognizes in things, in the language and basic indications of knowledge and conscience their immediate and universal value.” *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 18. (Emphasis added).

¹¹ *Thornhill* 2003, 508.

¹² Considering the number of nuances in ‘existentialism’, it might be preferable to speak of philosophies of existence. Cf. *Cooper* 1999, 1: “None of the great existentialist tomes contains the word ‘existentialism’.” On the ambiguities of the term ‘existentialism’ and its relation to E. Husserl’s phenomenology, see *Cooper* 1999, 5–6. Good introductions to Husserl’s thinking are, e.g., *Dastur* 1999, and *Housset* 2000.—“Auf französische Existenzphilosophie... bezogen, umfaßt der E.[xistenzphilosophie] inhaltlich mehrere Positionen. Es handelt sich entweder um *existentielles* Philosophieren (besonders MARCEL, anfangs unabhängig von der deutschen Entwicklung) oder um eine von HEIDEGGER bestimmte *existenziale* Ontologie (SARTRE), wenn auch das Wort

ing special emphasis on the immediate, real-life experience of human beings. It also concerns itself with encounters with others, and it gains an understanding of their finitude. As a philosophical movement, existentialism grew, partly, out of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology ("Zu den Sachen selbst!"), which was a critical response to 19th century materialism and positivism.

Existentialism, understood as a philosophical movement, probably had its zenith in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Its roots may be traced back to Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), but its origins lie primarily in the writings of Søren A. Kierkegaard (1813–1855). He underlined the importance of individual decisions and an awareness of the limits of human existence. Using concepts and methods of Kierkegaard, both Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) took up the use of 'existence' from Kierkegaard. The Roman Catholic Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973) theorized a reflection that had access to metaproblem, to mystery, and also to the eternal.¹³ Basically, in existentialism 'existence' refers only to the kind of existence enjoyed by humans,¹⁴ and it refers only to those aspects which distinguish it from the being of everything else. This means that human beings are said to have a concern for themselves, and it also means that an individual is constantly in the process of becoming. A human being becomes truly existent when he or she lives an intensely conscious life in which he or she is vividly aware of all the exigencies, decisions, and problems of human life.¹⁵

'existential' statt des unscharfen 'existentiell' selten ist. ... Ein Drittes, eine 'philosophie de l'existence' als explizites Sprechen über Existenz nach Art von JASPERS, ist kaum ausgebildet (vgl. jedoch E. MOUNIERS Personalismus). Ein weiterer Einteilungsgesichtspunkt liegt in der christlichen (MARCEL) oder atheistischen Ausrichtung (der 'Humanismus' SARTRES)." *Hartmann* 1972, 850–851.

¹³ "Marcel makes a distinction between a problem and a mystery: the former is open to human solution, while the latter, as something beyond human comprehension, is a matter for faith." *Martin* 2003, 546. "To borrow the terminology of Gabriel Marcel, the Christian existentialist philosopher, in dialogue, in the level of the encounter of persons as persons we are in the realm of 'mystery'." *Nambiaparambil* 1979, 11. "Diese Ph.[ilosophie], die in Tagebuchaufzeichnungen und im Drama ihre genuine Form findet, stellt sich dar als 'Metakritik', die auf eine 'Metaproblematik' ausgeht, nämlich darauf, 'der menschlichen Erfahrung ihr ontologisches Gerüst wiederzugeben', und die sich in 'konkreten Annäherungen' an das 'ontologische Geheimnis' herantastet... Anfangs bezeichnet Marcel diese Versuche schlichtweg als 'Metaphysik' ..." *Waldenfels* 1989, 746. See also, e.g., *Marcel* 1977.

¹⁴ Other realities *are*, but the human being alone *exists*. In this sense existentialism is a philosophy of existence.

¹⁵ *Martin* 2003, 545.

The slogan of existentialism is: “‘Existence precedes essence.’”¹⁶ Existentialism seeks to discover how one exists as a true human being.

Existentialism puts a heavy emphasis on the person. “A person has a ‘concreteness’, ‘particularity’, and ‘uniqueness’ which makes it impossible to equate him / her with an aggregate of instantiated universals.”¹⁷ In some sense an existing person is always already beyond or ahead of himself or herself (always “on the way”, “*unterwegs*”) and ahead of whatever properties characterize him or her at a certain time.¹⁸ Because existence precedes essence and because there is no special “notion” of the human being, the result is that the human being is a stranger in the world.¹⁹ Thrown into the world, he or she does not know his or her origins (“*Geworfenheit*”), he or she is closed to the world, which has no other reality beyond and no God. He or she is haunted by *Angst*, i.e. an unexplained anxiety even though it is “anxiety about something”.²⁰ Human freedom, so heavily emphasized by existentialism, is, at the end, only freedom to death. Heidegger writes that “Being-towards-death” is essentially *Angst*.²¹

Heidegger argues in *Sein und Zeit* (1927) that we must accept our subjective world as given. The only proper questions concern our experienced relation to it, *Dasein*, ‘being there’, rather than Being in itself (“*Sein*”), except in so far as *Sein* refers to the ground of experienced reality. Heidegger also made a distinction between *existentiell* and *existential*, the former meaning roughly one’s personal existential in relation to the future, the latter concerning the more general question of the use of “existentialist” categories. For Heidegger, there is an important contrast between authentic and unauthentic experience. When confronted by their responsibilities, most people are inclined to retreat from anxiety into a situation of impersonal conformity. Authentic experience means living in explicit relation to the most obvious fact of human existence, that death is unavoidable. *Dasein* means for the human being that he or she has to accept his or her limitations as well as his or her free-

¹⁶ Cooper 1999, 3.

¹⁷ Cooper 1999, 4.

¹⁸ Cooper 1999, 4.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Camus’s *L’Etranger* (1942).

²⁰ “Kierkegaard... sees a link between *Angst* and both sin and faith. In *Angst*, a person dimly discerns his potential for sinning against God, but also his potential for making an ungrounded ‘leap of faith’.” Cooper 1999, 129.

²¹ Cooper 1999, 133.

dom, and see what he or she can achieve in the here and now.²² Perhaps because Heidegger used Christian concepts such as ‘fall’, ‘guilt’, and ‘freedom’, he has had a great influence on Christian theology in the 20th century.²³ Probably because Christian themes and concepts like faith and hope appeared in philosophy as a sort of contestation of an intuitive possession,²⁴ existentialism can be described as a vehicle through which Christian theology can be expressed.²⁵ However, Heidegger can be criticized for having the “new-era syndrome”, which is “a radical simplifying and compacting of previous philosophical approaches developed to articulate the divine-human relationship.”²⁶

Among all modern philosophical tendencies, it has often been noted that existentialism has had by far the most pronounced impact on both Catholic and Protestant theology.²⁷ One example is the work of Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), who developed a Christian existentialist account of human existence. Heidegger’s distinction between “unauthentic existence” and “authentic existence”, which Bultmann creatively reinterpreted in the light of the New Testament, is of great importance.²⁸ Bult-

²² *Brown* 1997, 437.

²³ Heidegger had a Catholic upbringing, and he was a great admirer of Luther, even though he always rejected any religious allegiance. On Heidegger, see, e.g., *Dubois* 2000 (on Heidegger’s relation to religion, see pp. 306–339). Cf. “Heidegger too rejects ‘any employment’ of the phenomena of guilt, shame and conscience ‘for proofs of God or for establishing an “immediate” consciousness of God’, seeing in them, rather, a sense of the final lack of justification for—the ‘null basis’ for—one’s projects in life.” *Cooper* 1999, 149.

²⁴ *Colette* 1999, 27.

²⁵ See *Revue internationale de philosophie*, no. 9, 1946, pp. 348–349, in which V.A. Bellezza presents an interesting classification of existential philosophers into right-wing (realistic) and left-wing (idealistic) philosophers. The former are divided into Protestants and Catholics, the latter into Thomists and mystics. Both wings seem to be heirs of S. Kierkegaard.

²⁶ *Duffy* 1992, 188.

²⁷ *Cooper* 1999, 145.—Is religious conviction incompatible with existentialism? For *Cooper* (1999, 149–150), there are three critical questions. “First, he [the Existentialist] will require more clarification than is apt to be provided by these authors on the precise sense in which phenomena like *Angst* ‘intimate’, ‘point to’ or ‘manifest’ matters of religious moment. ... Second, the Existentialist will seek assurance that the phenomena alleged to intimate the divine are the *same* phenomena with which he has been concerned. ... Finally, and unsurprisingly, the Existentialist will seek assurance that the religious intimations some authors find in the relevant phenomena are of a kind compatible with his general position.” It can be noted that, in general, for existentialists the setting in which human existence seeks its goal is the absence of God.

²⁸ *McGrath* 1997a, 224. Cf. *Cooper’s* (1999, 150) evaluation: “In other words: whether

mann tried to express his understanding of the meaning of the Gospel in terms borrowed from existentialist philosophy. This meant for him that in order to speak of God, one had to speak also of human being. The New Testament propositions are theologically significant only in so far as they speak of human existence. Therefore it can be argued that the content of the Gospel is a constant confrontation of the human being by God in his or her condition of historicity, i.e., the possibility of authentic existence in faith.²⁹ The human being has before himself or herself the possibility of decision; when this possibility is realized, the individual person exists authentically.

However, in adopting Heidegger's concepts of existence and history, Bultmann concentrated almost exclusively on the "now". The historicity of *Dasein* (Bultmann's description of human nature) is the very being of human beings insofar as it can be.³⁰ Decisive is that one's own existence is experienced in the light of kerygma. In comparison to that, it is not so very important whether Jesus's Passion, Resurrection, or Ascension are historical events.³¹ The main thing is the encounter between the human being and God at this moment.³² Also important is Bultmann's tendency to "demythologize", to move away from conceptions of God as a highly spectacular entity or person, seeking to focus the attention on the religious sense and the religious way of life.³³

Bultmann's ideas raise a critical question as to the effect of existentialism on theology, namely the relation of the human being to time and history.³⁴ The eschatological dimension disappears from theology if everything is said to be temporary, now, and nothing is certain except death. The consequence is that the unity of human existence, the doctrine of classical Christian theology, and the fact that this unity exists

or not there can be a 'religious existentialism'—a philosophical account in religious terms of the world, humans [sic] being and the relations between them—which is compatible with existentialism's 'best wisdom' remains a moot question."

²⁹ *Schepers* 2003, 544.

³⁰ *Schepers* 2003, 543.

³¹ "Whether or not the events represented in the Bible have objective historical validity does not really matter, because their representation has a function altogether different from putting one into contact with something that happened at a given moment in the history of the world." *Schepers* 2003, 544.

³² I am indebted here to reflections by Docent Dr. Risto A. Ahonen from the University of Helsinki.

³³ *Cooper* 1999, 147.

³⁴ It is symptomatic, in my opinion, that *Sein und Zeit* does not deal with *Zeit*, only with *Sein* (Heidegger's work was not completed).

only once are neglected or at least not taken into consideration seriously enough.

Basically, this criticism arises from the central axiom of existentialism that existence precedes essence.³⁵ This is exactly the criticism that Pope Pius XII addressed to existentialism in his encyclical letter *Humani Generis*:³⁶ “Such fictitious tenets of evolution which repudiate all that is absolute, firm and immutable, have paved the way for the new erroneous philosophy which, rivaling idealism, immanentism and pragmatism, has assumed the name of *existentialism*, since it concerns itself only with existence of individual things and *neglects all consideration of their immutable essences*.”³⁷

Existentialism and existential phenomenology are only a short step away from personalism, although ‘person’ is a fundamental concept in almost all philosophical endeavours.³⁸ ‘Personalism’ commonly designates a movement of some significance in the 19th century philosophy. “Personalism is a philosophy, it is not only an attitude. It is a philosophy, it is not a system.”³⁹ As a reaction to materialism, evolutionism, and idealism, personalism has taken various forms both in Europe and the U.S.A. Personalism is usually theistic, and places great value on personality as a supreme value and as the key notion that gives meaning to all of reality.⁴⁰

There was a considerable reaction against the crass atheist materialism of such 18th century thinkers as Claude A. Helvetius (1715–

³⁵ “... it [existentialism] has become in many of its adherents a denial of the relevance of any general and abstract truth concerning man, his nature, and his activity. Protesting against the artificiality and hypocrisy of much in bourgeois morality, it has become for some a repudiation of any and every standard of objective morality, including that of Christianity. Morality is said to be completely situational and entirely personal. ... the existentialists have so extolled the inwardness, the subjectivity, and the absolute freedom of the individual that social life becomes philosophically indefensible.” *Martin* 2003, 547.

³⁶ On August 12, 1950. Text in AAS 42 1950, 561–578.

³⁷ *Humani Generis* 6. (Emphasis added) Cf. *Humani Generis* 32: “No Catholic can doubt how false this is, especially where there is question of those fictitious theories they call immanentism, or idealism, or materialism, whether historic or dialectic, or even existentialism, whether atheistic or simply the type that denies the validity of the reason in the field of metaphysics.” See also *Humani Generis* 15. Cf. *Daniélou* 1946a, 15–17.

³⁸ On concept of ‘person’, see, e.g., *Heinrichs* 1996, and *Stock* 1996.

³⁹ “Le personalisme est une philosophie, il n’est pas seulement une attitude. Il est une philosophie, il n’est pas un système.” *Mounier* 2001, 3. (Tr. by RJ).

⁴⁰ *Mann/Eds.* 2003, 152.—There are certainly different currents of personalism. *Mounier* (2001, 4) says that he would prefer to speak of personalisms, in order to respect their diverse approaches.

1771) and Paul H.D. Holbach (1723–1789). Another line of reaction was directed against the determinism and reductionism of some followers of Isaac Newton. These reactions were against reductionistic systems that did not recognize any real distinction between the human being and the rest of nature. On the other hand, some followers of Charles Darwin tried to integrate the human person into the rest of nature in such a way that the human being ultimately lost his or her distinctive spiritual character. In this situation, personalists stressed the value of the human being as a person, a moral self, with freedom, dignity, and responsibility. “In stressing man’s dignity some of these thinkers tended to denigrate material things and treat them as mere appearances or flux without any substantial character. Others, particularly among the Americans, thought that the common identification of both man and God as persons places a limitation on God, and thus they spoke of God as ‘finite’.”⁴¹

Personalists were also against the absolutism inherent in the philosophy of Georg W.F. Hegel. According to Hegel, humans are mere phenomenal beings who lose their identities in such collectivities as the family, the community, and the state. As a reaction against such an absolutist tendency, personalists have developed a form of idealism that allows to the human being, the human self, a kind of uniqueness and autonomy. In personalism there is also an idea of communion participating in the creation of “I”. Interpersonality is understood to be *communio personarum*, in the relation between a human person and a personal God.

In America, prominent representatives of personalism have been, e.g., B.P. Bowne (1814–1910), G.H. Howison (1834–1916), R.T. Flewelling (1871–1960),⁴² A.C. Knudson (1873–1954), and E.S. Brightman (1884–1953). The core of their thinking is that God is a person and that all moral and ethical truth derives from the absolute value of the person. The term ‘personalism’ was first employed in this sense by Bowne in his *Personalism* (1908). In Europe, prominent representatives of personalism have been C.B. Renouvier (1815–1903), M. Blondel (1861–1949), E. Mounier (1905–1950),⁴³ and M. Nédoncelle (1905–1976)

⁴¹ Mann/Eds. 2003, 152.

⁴² Flewelling founded in 1919 a journal called “The Personalist”, which is a primary source for personalism in the U.S.A.

⁴³ In 1932 Mounier founded a journal called “Esprit”, which has become a source of materials for personalism in Europe. “Mounier states that the first experience of a person is the experience of the second person: the ‘you’ and therefore the ‘we’ comes

in France, and F. Ebner (1882–1931) and M. Buber (1878–1965)⁴⁴ in Germany. They all have embraced philosophies that stress the distinctive worth of human striving. Since the 1930s, personalists have been concerned with the problems of modern human beings seeking to retain their freedom and authentic spiritual character in the face of massive technology. This technology is more dominated by material considerations than by spiritual values. Existential philosophers such as G. Marcel, J.-P. Sartre (1905–1980), and N.A. Berdiaev (1874–1948) can also be included as personalists because they have taken a strong stand for human freedom against domination by the forces of a spiritually barren mass society. Also among personalists can be counted (neo-)Thomistic philosophers of freedom, such as J. Maritain (1882–1973), Y. Simon (1903–1961), and E. Gilson (1884–1978).

There are two ways to express the general idea of personalism.⁴⁵ The first is to start from the study of the objective universe in an effort to show that the personal mode of existence is the highest form of existence and that the evolution of pre-human nature converges to the creative moment when this achievement of the universe comes forth. The second is to live publicly the experience of the personal life, hoping to win over many of those who live like trees, animals, or mechanisms. Personalism can also be described in terms of three directions: towards the absolute being—God; towards the congenial being—one’s neighbour (cf. Ferdinand Ebner’s and Martin Buber’s dialogic personalism); and towards the outside non-human world, to which the human being, through the body, belongs.⁴⁶

before the ‘I’ or at least accompanies it. Mounier specifies that to struggle to discover the identity of human person means at the same time to struggle for the community where man has his being in communion with others.” *Mendis* 1999, 164.

⁴⁴ *Cooper* (1999, 8) mentions Martin Buber as “the author of existentialism’s most lyrical work... *I and Thou*...”

⁴⁵ I follow here *Mounier* 2001, 3–15.

⁴⁶ *Auer* 1965, 263–264. Cf. *Mendis* 1999, 164: “Martin Buber has the merit of having given more rigour to the dialogical concept of person. He has done this by countering the rapport that man has with things (*Ich-Es*) vis-a-vis [sic] the rapport that he entertains with others (*Ich-Du*). While the former assumes the character of possession and monopoly, the latter has essentially the character of dialogue. Buber admits that without the ‘it’ man cannot live. And yet, he who lives only with the ‘it’ is not a man.” *Cooper* (1999, 147) notes: “... for Buber, this [how men can be both free yet the creatures of an omniscient Creator] only means that I cannot and should not try to ‘escape the paradox that has to be lived’ in holding both that ‘I am given over for disposal’ and that ‘It depends on myself.’”

There is a paradox in personal existence. It is the most human form of existence, but it has to be continuously gained: even consciousness gains it only slowly, differentiates it from minerals, plants, and animals that weigh on us. The history of a person is parallel to the history of personalism because the person is not an object to be separated and looked at, but the centre of reorientation of the objective universe. Everybody has his or her own truth only in relation to all the others.⁴⁷

Nouvelle théologie

Existentialism and personalism did not leave modern theology intact. In 20th century theology, and Catholic theology in particular, in the French-speaking Catholic world the movement called *nouvelle théologie* profoundly influenced Roman Catholic theological thinking and has been one of the currents whose traces can be found also in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Vannier* (1999, 19) makes an important remark: “Si, de nos jours, la notion de personne relève de la sphere philosophique, à l’origine elle vient du domaine théologique et plus précisément de la théologie trinitaire.” Indeed, a Christian concept of person seems to be most proper in reference to personalism, and it goes back to Tertullian and the Trinitarian concept of God. “Ihm [dem Personalismus] liegt der theologische, erstmals bei Tertullian auftretende Personbegriff zugrunde. Auf Trinität und Inkarnation angewandt, indiziert dieser ein Paradox: die Dreiheit der göttlichen Personen in der einen Natur Gottes und die Einheit der göttlichen und der menschlichen Natur in der Person Jesu. Durch seine anthropologische Applikation hat das Christentum den Menschen in neuer Weise personal begriffen ...” *Theuissen* 1989, 340. *Faber* (1998, 670) notes: “Letzte Vollendung kann der Mensch nicht in einer Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung finden, sondern nur in einer Ich-Du-Beziehung.” *Auer* (1965, 261) says that there is a difference between Protestant and Catholic personalism: Protestants like E. Brunner and F. Gogarten represent an “understanding description” (“verstehende Beschreibung”) of general experienceable events, which makes a difference between person and non-person, whereas Catholics try to express being itself, that which is behind these events, as the reason and foundation.

⁴⁸ I mainly follow here *Gibellini* 1994, 186–240. Cf. *Blaser* 1995, 353–367.—On the *nouvelle théologie* in Catholic theology, see also, e.g., *Schoof* 1970, 175–227. I leave aside on purpose a great debate, especially virulent in France, at the beginning of the 20th century on the relations between history and dogma, between scientific critique and theology. This debate on modernism included names like A. Harnack, A. Loisy, P. Batiffol, M.-J. Lagrange, and M. Blondel.—It can be argued that—contrary to modern Protestant theology as represented by such “summit figures” as Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, Bonhoeffer, etc.—Catholic theology, at least in the 20th century, has been likened to a broad river that moves more rapidly only here and there. Another difference is that while much of the most significant work in the 20th century Protestant theology

In 1907 a new school of theology, led by Dominican fathers in the Thomistic tradition, was opened in Saulchoir, in the vicinity of the city of Tournai in Belgium. It became one of the centres of the renewal of Catholic theology at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1937–1939 the school was transferred to Etiolles, not far from Paris.⁴⁹ This school had among its professors such theologians as Ambroise Gardeil (1859–1931), Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–1990),⁵⁰ and Yves-Marie Congar (1905–1995), as well as philosophers like Pierre Mandonnet (1858–1936) and Antonin D. Sertillanges (1863–1948). The major work of Gardeil, *Le Donné révélé et la Théologie* (1910), traced the outlines of the methodology of theological and intellectual work in Saulchoir: the primacy of the given revelation (“*la primauté du donné révélé*”), acceptance of biblical and historical criticism, and open Thomism, presence vis-à-vis the problems of the time. It could have been described as a “progressive” current. Theology had to keep in touch with its living source, which is precisely the given revelation. Theology had a positive function, and the biblical and historical criticism could serve as its adjusted instruments to come

was published in German, Catholic theology has developed mainly in French-speaking parts of Europe as well as in Germany. In general, theologians have been more dependent on the Catholic concept of the Church, in which theology is more supervised by the Magisterium and more rooted in the community. Some of the most fruitful Catholic theological studies have emerged from the historical study of particular patristic or medieval sources. (*Gibellini* 1994, 173.)

⁴⁹ Since 1971 it has been in Paris.

⁵⁰ Chenu was heavily involved, among other things, in the movement of priest-workers in France as a consultant and theologian, together with Congar and other Dominicans. He defended them publicly, and when Rome decided to withdraw priest-workers from the factories in 1954, as their social involvement had led some of them to renounce their orders, he had to move from Paris to Rouen. He returned in 1959, when the Second Vatican Council was announced by John XXIII. Chenu tried to clarify the relation between events and faith, between the profane history of human terrestrial enterprise and the holy history of the liberation by Christ. Accordingly, material and technical progress, society, and history are places of the presence of the Gospel in time (in French: *Évangile dans le temps*). The history of the world reveals the plan of God, and events are the signs of evangelical implication. New values which emerge from the traces of humanity are material for the Gospel, for the real tradition and fermentation of the Word of God. Chenu, whose writings had a direct influence on the Second Vatican Council, could be characterized as a historian of theology and a militant theologian. The expression “the signs of the times” (*signa temporum*) is attached to Chenu (*Gibellini* 1994, 230–231). It was a phrase frequently used by John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963), and later it was used in GS 4 and UR 4. Pope John Paul II also used the expression (see, e.g., *John Paul II* 2003b, 335).

closer to its given revelation. Theology had to see a development of dogmas and a history of Christian doctrines. The theology of Saulchoir was thoroughly Thomistic, but at the same it wanted to philosophize on modern problems.⁵¹

In 1937 Chenu published a small book (*Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir*) in which he expressed the wish that theology would concentrate on real problems of the world and of Christianity. Among these problems he included mission expansion in the postcolonial era, the pluralism of human civilizations, the rediscovery of the greatness of Christian Orient hindered by Occidental Latinism, the desire towards union within the Christianity, the social restlessness caused by the access of popular masses to the public life, the engagement of lay people with a militant Church. However, this publication was added to the Index of forbidden books, as was *Essai sur le problème théologique* (1938), a book by another Dominican from Louvain, Louis Charlier.

But the Dominicans were not the only ones to be accused of semi-modernism, philosophical and theological relativism, dogmatic relativism, and subjectivism in the name of religious experience. The debate around the *nouvelle théologie* continued. The Jesuit school of Lyons-Fourvière was opened after the First World War on the hill of Fourvière in Lyons. It became a centre for the renewal of theological studies, as was shown by launching the prestigious series *Sources chrétiennes*, translations of patristic texts,⁵² created in 1942 by Jean Daniélou (1905–1974) and Henri de Lubac (1896–1991), and associated with Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988), Henri-Irénée Marrou (1904–1977) and Hugo Rahner (1900–1968), as well as with Henri Bouillard (1908–1981) and Gaston Fessard (1897–1978). The theological renewal fostered by French Jesuits can be found in the article *Les Orientations présentes de la Pensée religieuse*, published in the journal *Etudes* in April 1946 and signed by Jean Daniélou. He insisted in this article that there should be a return to the essential sources of the Christian thinking and contact with the currents of contemporary thinking in order to make the vision richer and wider, a contact with life. In fact, he sharply criticized neo-Thomism and scholastic theology, especially their inability to give

⁵¹ Milbank (2005, 62) notes that “the *nouvelle théologie* stood alongside and not apart from the revised neo-Thomism of Gilson, and, to a degree, even that of Maritain.”

⁵² The first work in this series was *Vie de Moïse* by Gregory of Nyssa, translated and commented by J. Daniélou (1942). By 2006, over 500 volumes had appeared in this remarkable corpus.

answers. “The notion of history is foreign to Thomism. On the contrary, the great patristic systems are orientated towards it...”⁵³

The relations between Dominicans and Jesuits remained tense.⁵⁴ However, rejecting modern theological speculations, the encyclical *Humani Generis* of Pius XII dispersed the groups of theologians both in Saulchoir and in Fourvière. It was not until the papacy of John XXIII (1958–1963) that the situation changed rapidly.⁵⁵ But already in the 1950s, in spite of unfavourable conditions, forces of renewal were set in action by the writings of, e.g., Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou, and Chenu. Karl Rahner (1904–1984) introduced an anthropological breakthrough in theology with his *Theological Investigations*,⁵⁶ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) emphasized the need to adopt a new kind of attitude towards the world, and Hans Küng (b. 1928) established a new frontier of ecumenism with his *Rechtfertigung* (1957).

The major work of Henri de Lubac,⁵⁷ *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme* (1938), stressed the social aspect of Catholicity: it is both total sociality and solidarity. The Church is catholic, not because of its geographical extension, but because it is for everybody and anybody. Nobody is born without Christ, as the grace of Christ is universal. The sacraments effect, establish, and enforce the social aspect of the community. There is a link between the doctrines of the Church and the Eucharist. This social aspect, however, does not diminish by any means the personal dimension: Christianity is the revelation of universal fraternity, but also the absolute value of each person. de Lubac noted that the old axiom “Outside the Church no salvation” means “You will be

⁵³ “Or la notion d’histoire est étrangère au thomisme. Au contraire, c’est sur elle que sont axés les grand systèmes patristiques...” *Daniélou* 1946a, 10. (Tr. by RJ).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., *Nichols* 2000. The complexity of the question was expressed very well by *M. Sales* in his preface to *Lubac* 1991 (III, n. 9): “Bien que la chose soit paradoxale, il n’est pas exagéré de dire que l’essentiel des difficultés que le P. de Lubac eut à subir de la part des théologiens (non du magistère lui-même), tant à l’intérieur qu’à l’extérieur de la Compagnie, vint de son attachement à mettre historiquement en lumière et doctrinalement en valeur la pensée de saint Thomas d’Aquin.”

⁵⁵ Pope John XXIII nominated de Lubac and Congar as experts to the Preparatory Theological Commission of the Second Vatican Council. Chenu, too, was present as a conciliar expert in the Second Vatican Council. de Lubac and Congar participated at Vatican II as consultants (*periti*), and de Lubac was nominated Cardinal in 1983, and Congar in 1994 (Daniélou in 1969). See, e.g., *Wittstadt* 1997, 494–509.

⁵⁶ *Schriften zur Theologie (Theological Investigations)*, 16 volumes between 1954 and 1984.

⁵⁷ On de Lubac, see, e.g., *Wagner* 2001.

saved through the mediation of the Church”.⁵⁸ And the Church will, one day, coincide with the Kingdom of God. For de Lubac, both symbolical patristic theology and dialectical theology of scholasticism are to fertilize each other in order to be inserted in the enlarged notion of catholicity.⁵⁹

It is important to note that in his *Surnaturel* (1946)⁶⁰ de Lubac laid solid foundations for the work of Vatican II. The main idea is that the human being is drawn by God, has a desire to see God, which is a natural desire to know the supernatural.⁶¹ The human being was created with a natural dynamism towards the supernatural. It is an inefficient natural desire of *donum perfectum*. The human desire to see God is an essential and natural desire, but also an absolute and humble desire. Human nature possesses only *potentia oboedientialis* vis-à-vis the supernatural, i.e., openness to elevation to the supernatural. The supernatural in itself is something *superadditum*, added and extrinsic to the natural order. Nature exists for grace, and de Lubac denies that grace is a mere *sequela creationis*.⁶² The nature of the finite spirit has a capacity (*capax Dei*) to

⁵⁸ Cf. “... et si l’on estime que malgré tout la formule ‘hors de l’Eglise point de salut’ rend un son bien rude, rien n’empêche de lui donner une forme positive et de dire, en s’adressant par la pensée à tout homme de bonne volonté, non pas: ‘hors de l’Eglise vous êtes damné’, mais: ‘c’est par l’Eglise, par l’Eglise seule que vous serez sauvé’. Car c’est par l’Eglise que le salut viendra, qu’il commence à venir pour l’humanité.” *Lubac* 2003, 197.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., *Wagner* 2001, 153–158.

⁶⁰ “This work was a shot heard throughout the Catholic theological community.” *Duffy* 1992, 50. “In ‘Surnaturel’ [1946] weist *Henri de Lubac* nach, daß die Problematik des desiderium naturale visionis, bzw. der darin vorausgesetzten natura eine innerhalb des konkreten Naturbegriffs der Patristik und Scholastik entstandene und zu rechtfertigende ist, daß sich dieses Denken somit je schon innerhalb der Voraussetzung der ergangenen Offenbarung und Gnade bewegt, der fides quaerens intellectum also, und daß die Übertragung der daraufhin geprägten Sätze auf eine hypothetische ‘natura pura’ am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts einen historischen Widersinn ergab.” *Balthasar* 1962, 306.

⁶¹ *Boulnois* 2002 has given a good summary of the concept ‘supernatural’.

⁶² Cf. *Lubac* 2000, 114: “*Haec sublimatio creaturae rationalis est supra naturale complementum*. Deux simple comparaisons peuvent nous aider à l’entendre. Même si l’on admet d’autre part que toute l’évolution cosmique avait pour fin, dans la pensée divine, l’apparition de l’homme, se croira-t-on obligé d’en conclure que cette apparition soit une simple *sequela creationis universi*? Ou bien encore, s’il est vrai que l’histoire entière d’Israël n’a de sens, en fin de compte, que par la venue de Jésus-Christ qu’elle prépare et à laquelle elle était tout ordonnée, y verrons-nous une raison pour contester que cette venue de Jésus-Christ ait été, par rapport même à Israël, nouveauté toute gratuite?” *Balthasar* (1962, 360) remarks: “Unter Berufung auf de Lubac stellt Schmaus die beiden, dialektisch sich ergänzenden Denkformen für die Gnade einander gegenüber:

receive a perfect present that comes to satisfy an essential desire.⁶³ “De Lubac soon realized that his position moved into a suspended middle in which he could not practice any philosophy without its transcendence into theology, but also no theology without its essential inner substructure of philosophy.”⁶⁴

The work of de Lubac had two dimensions: historical, because it sought to rediscover the authentic Catholic tradition; theoretical, because it wished to contribute to the elaboration of a Christian anthropology. This open and authentic catholicity also led him to study eastern religions (*Aspects du bouddhisme* I and II, 1951 and 1955; *La rencontre du bouddhisme et de l'Occident*, 1952). It can be argued that de Lubac dealt with non-Christian religions from the point of view of the Church and its meaning for salvation of humanity: in fact, non-Christians can find salvation because they are part of humanity, whose salvation is God's will.⁶⁵

die alte, patristisch-scholastische Meinung, die, in ihr Extrem verfolgt, ‘zu einer Verwischung der Grenzen führen kann’, und die moderne, die der Natur eine fast völlige Eigenständigkeit verleiht [bis zur Aufstellung eines *finis naturalis ultimus*]. Aber die Gefahr dieser zweiten Meinung ist nach Schmaus ‘unvergleichlich größer’ als die der ersten.”

⁶³ This is an argument against the neo-Thomists, who posited a state of “pure nature” (that is, without grace), in which a human being could live in purely natural happiness without reference to a supernatural end (*Iarnold* 1997, 565), shorn of any supernatural influence whatsoever.—It must be noted that Pope Pius XII had reacted strongly in 1950 against those who had reduced the notion of ‘pure nature’ to an unrealizable abstraction and had reiterated the truth that God can never be under any obligation to self-communication to intelligent beings: “Others destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say, cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision.” *Humani Generis* 26. Even though *Humani Generis* mentions no names, no particular books, some saw that the papal admonition was directed primarily at de Lubac. See, e.g., *Milbank* 2005, x.

⁶⁴ *Balthasar* 1991, 15.

⁶⁵ *Evers* 1974, 104. Cf. *Lubac* 2003, 194: “Par une extension du dogme de la communion des saints, il semble donc juste de penser que, bien qu’ils [les infidèles] ne soient pas eux-mêmes placés dans les conditions normales du salut, ils pourront néanmoins obtenir ce salut en vertu des liens mystérieux qui les unissent aux fidèles. Bref, *ils pourront être sauvés parce qu’ils font partie intégrante de l’humanité qui sera sauvée.*” (Emphasis added) Cf. *Lubac* 1946, 37: “... pour l’infidèle en général, les missions ne sont pas tant une affaire de vie ou de mort que de *plénitude de vie.*” (Emphasis added) It is noteworthy that de Lubac followed in the footsteps of Maurice Blondel, not those of Joseph Maréchal. “... de Lubac rejected Maréchal and Rahner’s (still neo-scholastic) view that the natural orientation to the supernatural discloses merely the possibility of grace and not already something of its actuality. He rightly saw that in Rahner there is no paradoxical

In conformity to the tradition of the *nouvelle théologie*, Jean Daniélou was a theologian and a historian of Christian antiquity. He emphasized the theme of history and its development by stages, and followed in the traces of the endeavour of the Protestant Oscar Cullmann (*Christ et temps* 1946) to interpret history theologically. But while Cullmann situated himself in the field of biblical theology, Daniélou's field was patristic theology. Daniélou used a typology or correspondence between the figures of the Old Testament and the reality of the New Testament. This is what Irenaeus did by his category of economy, which permitted him to confront Gnostic doctrines, thus introducing distance between the Old and the New Testament. Apparently Daniélou felt more comfortable in patristic theology than in scholastic theology.

For Daniélou, Christian theology is different because it introduces the concept of the Incarnation, which gives a meaning to the temporal. In the Greek mind, history is cyclical, in the Jewish mind history seems to be impeded, in modern thinking it is an indefinite flow, whereas the Christian concept of history covers the categories of event, progress, and end. The holy history, *histoire sainte*, takes place between two cosmic events: the creation and the new eschatological creation. It has its creative and resolute centre in Christ. It is a "total history", towards which all the others flow. Daniélou also distinguished several stages in the development of the holy history: cosmic religion, corresponding to cosmic alliance, which for him was the alliance with Noah. Biblical religion for him corresponded to the alliance with the people of Israel, from Abraham to John the Baptist. And, finally, the Christian religion brought a new alliance in Christ. The time of the Church is the time of mission.⁶⁶ Daniélou moved back and forth between a theology of mission and a theology of history.

reaching of the finite towards the supernatural, only a transcendentalist reworking of Cajetan's 'potential for obedience' on the one hand, and a reworking of Cajetan's grace-supplied natural desire for the supernatural (Rahner's 'supernatural existential') on the other." *Milbank* 2005, 64. Cf. "Si un christianisme implicite suffit au salut de qui n'en connaît point d'autre, pourquoi nous mettre en quête du christianisme explicite? Bref, si tout homme peut être sauvé par un *supernaturel anonymement possédé*, comment établirions-nous qu'il a le devoir de reconnaître expressément ce surnaturel dans la profession de foi chrétienne et dans la soumission à l'Eglise catholique?" *Lubac* 2003, 183. (Emphasis added).

⁶⁶ See, e.g., *Odasso* 2002, 78. Cf. *Daniélou* 1964.

In this context, Daniélou was very sensitive to the relations between Christianity and civilizations, as well as to those between Christianity and non-Christian religions. There were two attitudes towards the non-Christian religions. A positive attitude underlined the human and religious values expressed by non-Christian religions. Even if these religions are nevertheless insufficient or perhaps even defective, precisely their inadequacies show how they are destined to find their fulfilment in Christianity. A negative attitude, a rather Protestant one typically represented by Hendrik Kraemer, held that the non-Christian religions are not a preparation for the Gospel, but rather an obstacle to it. Daniélou himself was committed to the first position, and he was thus also able to speak of the “holy pagans”.⁶⁷ There are two movements of mission corresponding to the two movements of the incarnated Word: the descent of the Word into the history, and the ascent of the humanity assumed and transfigured. The relations between Christianity and non-Christian religions are historical and dramatic. Historical, because there is a continuity between them, but also dramatic because there is a discontinuity which cannot but exist between them. Christianity, for Daniélou, was the fulfilment of all religions.⁶⁸

Yves Congar⁶⁹ established and inaugurated the series *Unam Sanctam* with his work *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d'un 'oecuménisme' catholique* (1937). This series was to gather theological, historical, and ecumenical studies

⁶⁷ See Daniélou 1956. E.g. “Mais d’autre part il y a des hommes qui n’ont pas connu le Christ, parce qu’ils ont vécu avant lui ou que sa connaissance n’est pas parvenue jusqu’à eux, et qui sont sauvés. Et il y en a aussi qui ont été des saints. Ceci, l’Ecriture et la Tradition l’enseignent de façon unanime. Ils ne sont pas sauvés par les religions auxquelles ils ont appartenu. Car Bouddha ne sauve pas, Zoroastre ne sauve pas, Mahomet ne sauve pas. S’ils sont sauvés, c’est donc qu’ils ont été sauvés par le Christ qui seul sauve et qui seul sanctifie. Et s’ils ont été sauvés, c’est qu’ils ont déjà appartenu à l’Eglise, car il n’y a pas de salut en dehors de l’Eglise.” Daniélou 1956, 15–16. See also Daniélou 1946b, and Daniélou 1970.

⁶⁸ Evers (1974, 102) notes interestingly: “Der entscheidende Punkt, an dem sich Daniélou gegen die positive Einschätzung der nichtchristlichen Religionen als mögliche Heilswege wendet, liegt m. E. in der *Gnadenlehre*, in dem Verständnis des *Verhältnisses von Natur und Gnade*, sowie in dem Zueinander von Heils- und Profangeschichte.” (Emphasis added) Odasso (2002, 86), who speaks of the “tendenza Daniélou”, notes: “In realtà, la teoria del compimento è l’esito di una concezione teologica molto diffusa, costituita da alcuni elementi essenziali, perché espressione viva della Scrittura e della tradizione, e altri elementi che erano retaggio di una mentalità passata non ancora limpida e rinnovata.” On the “tendance Daniélou”, see also, e.g., Esteban Verastegui 1970.

⁶⁹ On Congar, see, e.g., Nichols 1994, and Cardinal Yves Congar 1999.

through which he proposed to renew ecclesiology.⁷⁰ After the drastic measures against the movement of priest-workers in 1954, Congar was forced to leave France, first to Jerusalem, then to Cambridge. However, by the end of 1955, after some two years of exile, he was back in France, in Strasbourg, teaching theology. The Second Vatican Council rehabilitated him.

For Congar, the central category of ecclesiology is the “people of God”. He names four notions in his article *Peut-on définir l’Église?* (1961), which are not definitions in the logical sense, but which describe the reality and mystery of the Church. The first is the category of the “people of God”, an expression that was adopted by *Lumen Gentium* (1964). The second is the category of “the body of Christ”, rediscovered in 1924–1925 and taken by the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* of Pius XII (1943); the third is the category of “society”, derived from philosophy, but qualified as “supernatural society”. The fourth category is “communion”, rediscovered in the 19th century by Friedrich Pilgram. This German Catholic envisioned the church as a *koinonia* in the form of *politeia*, a communion in the form of a society. Congar proposed a synthesis of the concepts of ‘people of God’ and ‘the body of Christ’, but he did not place much value on the concept of ‘society’.⁷¹

The concept of ‘people of God’ was adopted by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter II. The concept was introduced into Catholic theology by Congar in 1937 (*L’Église et son unité*, used later in his *Esquisses du mystère de l’Église* of 1941), by a German theologian M. Dominikus Koster in 1940, and by Lucien Cerfaux, a biblical scholar in Louvain, in 1942 (*La Théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul*). Congar was able to show the advantages of this concept: it has historical value because it shows the continuity between the Church and Israel, the Church as a living body advancing towards a goal set by God. It has anthropological value because the Church consists of human beings who are converted to the Gospel. It also has the value of historicity: even if the concept of ‘reform’ is difficult to apply to the Church as an institution, it is easily applied to the Church as a people of God. It has also an ecumeni-

⁷⁰ “Je décidai d’ouvrir une collection consacrée à servir le renouveau de l’ecclésiologie. Après quelques hésitations quant à l’éditeur et quant au titre, *La Vie intellectuelle* du 25 novembre 1935 annonçait la fondation, aux Editions du Cerf, de la collection ‘Unam Sanctam’: les mots, conservés tels quels, du *Credo*.” Congar 1974, 45–46. See also pp. 47–48. de Lubac’s *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme* was the third to appear in this series.

⁷¹ The article is inserted in Congar 1963, 21–44.

cal and missionary value because it allows dialogue, especially with the Churches of the Reformation. In addition, it has the value of dialogue because it allows confrontation with the philosophies of history.

Congar likes the expression “messianic people”, which appears two times in Chapter II of *Lumen Gentium* and which he repeats in his book *Un peuple messianique* (1975).⁷² The Church, being a messianic people, is a seed of unity and hope for the whole human race, and it has to have an historical effect. This historical effect can be seen immediately in that *Lumen Gentium* 15 and 16 include a discussion about non-Roman Christians and non-Christians.

Congar has also been one of the pioneers for ecumenism. His book *Chrétiens désunis* (1937) had an enormous influence before Vatican II and was certainly one of the background influences for *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism. Chapter I of the final version of the document is called “Catholic principles of ecumenism”, instead of “Principles of Catholic ecumenism”—which was exactly the sub-title of Congar’s book of 1937: *Principes d’un ‘oecuménisme’ catholique*. In 1937 the word “ecumenism” had to be put within quotation marks, because its use was not authorised.⁷³

⁷² “That messianic people has for its head Christ... So it is that this messianic people, although it does not actually include all men, and may more than once look like a small flock, is nonetheless a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race.” LG 9 1966, 25, 26.

⁷³ Congar said in 1964: “Je suis bien conscient des limites et même des défauts de *Chrétiens désunis*... J’étais alors trop proche encore d’un thomisme d’école, trop proche de l’étude que j’avais faite de Schleiermacher et du libéralisme protestant. J’ai parfois trop vite classé, catégorisé et jugé.” Congar 1974, 48. Congar (1974, 89–90) says that he had an influence “more or less” (“*tantôt peu tantôt davantage*”) by his participation in drafting SC, LG, UR, NA, DV, GS, DH, AG, and PO. Congar also had an influence on the theology of laity. In his book *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc* (1953), he describes lay people not as non-clergymen, but positively through their vocation and contribution for the mission of the Church. And the conciliar document *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, repeats these ideas: lay people are members of the people of God; they are different from the clergymen and members of religious orders; they are called to sanctify the lay aspects of life and animate temporal reality. Congar changes the old hierarchical type of thinking: Christ institutes the ministers, who then preside over the people of God, to a circular scheme: Christ, through his Spirit, animates the community, which is an embracing reality inside of which there are ministers who are at the service of the community.

“*Kerygmatic theology*”

Another current in the Catholic theology of the 20th century can be called “kerygmatic theology” (“*kerygmatische Theologie*”) or “theology of proclamation” (“*Verkündigungstheologie*”), developed mostly by Jesuits in the Faculty of Theology of Innsbruck, Austria in the 1930s by theologians like Josef A. Jungmann, Franz Lakner, Johannes B. Lotz, F. Dander, and H. Rahner. Like the *nouvelle théologie*, it, too, has profoundly influenced Roman Catholic theological thinking and been one of the currents whose traces can be found also in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

On the basis of the writings of the New Testament, kerygmatic theology stressed that the contents of faith were not primarily an object of speculative doctrine, but rather an object of official and solemn proclamation, as can be seen in the great kerygmatic discourses in the Acts of Apostles. Theology should understand itself to be ordained to proclamation and constitute a reflection on preaching.⁷⁴

The three perhaps most illustrative and influential theologians of this current were Romano Guardini (1885–1968),⁷⁵ Karl Rahner, the younger brother of H. Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar.⁷⁶ Guardini, professor of theology in Berlin, Tübingen, and Munich, was occupied by the concept of *Weltanschauung*, and especially Catholic *Weltanschauung*. This concept was oriented to the totality of being and values, and it was different from the sciences in the sense that they, through their specialisation, dealt only with a part of reality. But *Weltanschauung* was also different from metaphysics, because its totality is abstract, whereas the totality of *Weltanschauung* is a concrete totality: it studies the essence of the world in its concrete manifestations. The Christian

⁷⁴ *Sesboüé* 2001, 64.

⁷⁵ The German philosopher Max Scheler (1874–1928), an early proponent of phenomenology, had an undeniable influence on Guardini. See, e.g., *Gibellini* 1994, 247–248, 251. It is to be noted that Karol Wojtyła, as a young priest, chose Scheler as his subject for an academic dissertation. His interest in Scheler may be credited for the strong emphasis the Pope placed on ethics. *Dulles* (1999, 159) calls the Pope “a personalist philosopher”. *Waldenfels* (1989, 743–744) notes interestingly on Scheler: “Das entscheidende Sprungbrett ist die philosophische Anthropologie...” *Honnefelder* (1993, 724) says almost the same: “Für Scheler ist die philos.[ophische] A.[nthropologie] ‘Grundwissenschaft’ aller anderer Human-Wiss. ...” On Scheler, see, e.g., *Scherer* 1999.

⁷⁶ I mainly follow here *Gibellini* 1994, 241–289.

faith offers a vision of the concrete totality of the world. In fact, Guardini proposed an encounter of theology with the diversified world of culture. But how is it possible to encounter reality in its totality and at the same time in its concreteness? Guardini's answer is the following: rationalism and intuitionism are not possible because rationalism is abstract and unable to seize the concrete in its individuality; intuition is punctual and discontinuous, and does not assure fertile knowing. Catholic philosophy tries to find a way between rationalism and intuitionism, between abstract conceptualism and vitalistic intuitionism, and it finds this way in the concept of polar opposition ("Gegensatz"). Reality is complex and can be always observed from two sides, opposed but not contradictory. The oppositions remain distinct and connected, but always in tension. This idea expresses the conditions which make possible a cognitive access to the infinite richness of reality. Guardini's lectures on *Weltanschauung* can be divided into three types: systematic lectures, biblical lectures, and lectures which proposed interpretations of texts and of religious, philosophical, and poetical figures, from Buddha and Socrates to Rilke. As to the third group, the Christian humanist Guardini developed an inner discourse, which was a confrontation between two universes and two experiences, and he also developed existential theology. Guardini's main theological contribution was that he visited "humanity's library" and that he theologially interpreted the texts and figures of world literature. This brought sensitivity towards concrete reality to theology. Human life itself has a polar structure: life has a dynamic aspect, it is an action; but it has also a static aspect, it remains, it has a certain structure: thus, the first pair is action and structure. Life is chaotic, but it tends from chaos with no form to order with form: lacking form and having form are another pair. Life is made up of particular processes, but they tend towards a living totality: singularity and totality is the next pair. Life has its origin in creation, but it contains a discipline and a rule which maintain order: originality and rule is another pair. Guardini enumerates eight polar pairs, concerning human life.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *Gibellini* 1994, 247–253. Guardini's contribution to the liturgical movement was especially important.

Karl Rahner is the most important representative of what has been called the anthropological turn in theology.⁷⁸ Rahner,⁷⁹ who studied philosophy under Heidegger in Freiburg from 1934 to 1936, is the most famous exponent of a school of thought known as “transcendental Thomism”.⁸⁰ He seemed to fuse Thomism with central aspects of German idealism (Kantian Copernican revolution) and existentialism.⁸¹

⁷⁸ “Rahner, therefore, makes the modern turn to the subject, but all the while insisting that the human being in all aspects of its existence is referred to the absolute mystery, God.” *Duffy* 1992, 222. “Im kath. Raum erreicht diese Weise des Theologietreibens ihren Höhepunkt als ‘anthropologisch gewendete Theologie’ (so die Bez. seit Ende der fünfziger Jahre) in der *Transzendentaltheologie*, wie sie z. B. K. Rahner im Gefolge kant. (durch J. Maréchal vermittelten) Denkens grundgelegt hat.” *Greshake* 1993, 728. Rahner followed the thinking of the Belgian Jesuit philosopher Joseph Maréchal (1878–1944) on transcendental philosophy (transcendental Thomism). In his *Le point de départ de la métaphysique* (Paris: Félix Alcan 1922–1926, five volumes), Maréchal proposed a Kantian reading of Thomistic epistemology. “So it looks as though every act of knowledge on the Kantian scheme has as the transcendental condition of its possibility the transcending of a limit, and thus knowledge as a whole the transcending of all limits. But, Maréchal observes, this is very much what we mean by God.” *Brown* 1997, 438; cf. *Balthasar* 1962, 303. Rahner’s transcendental thinking was also influenced by Pierre Rousselot and Erich Przywara. Major Protestant theologians who contributed to this development include R. Bultmann with his existential theology, P. Tillich with his method of correlation, as well as G. Ebeling.

⁷⁹ On Rahner, see, e.g., *Vorgrimler* 1986, *DiNoia* 1994, *Dych* 2000, and *Sesboüé* 2001. Two of Rahner’s early works dealt with philosophical anthropology and philosophy of religion (*Geist in Welt* and *Hörer des Wortes*).—K. Rahner quotes the Scriptures very rarely, and he does not justify his position by referring to the message of the historical Jesus (see, e.g., *Ganoczy* 1978, 36).

⁸⁰ Another distinguished exponent of this school is B. Lonergan, who has argued that theology is less a discipline with its own nature and more a method of thought. On Lonergan, see, e.g., *Meynell* 1994.—On the relationship between Rahner and Heidegger, and Heidegger’s influence on Rahner, see, e.g., *Sheehan* (1987) who, among other things, cites Rahner saying (p. xi): “I might say that Catholic theology, as it is today, can no longer be thought of without Martin Heidegger, because even those who hope to go beyond him and ask questions different from his, nonetheless owe their origin to him.” *Sheehan* 1987 is a good elaboration of Rahner’s metaphysics of knowing. *Sesboüé* (2001, 67), cites Rahner saying: “Je dois confesser que je ne saurais philosopher transcendentalement si je n’avais pas étudié la philosophie de Maréchal et de Heidegger.” Undeniably Rahner is—with some limitations—a student of Heidegger.

⁸¹ *McGrath* 1997a, 110. *Vorgrimler* (1986, 61) notes: “This is where Rahner’s theological programme began, in the steps of Thomas, in conversation with Kant, German Idealism, Heidegger, but also guided by Ignatius and the significance which human senses have for him in relationship with God. This course led to the elements of a Christian anthropology, a theological doctrine of man.” Cf. *Williams* (1986, 19), commenting on Rahner’s *Spirit in the World*: “The foundations laid in *Spirit in the World* represent a bold attempt to interpret St Thomas’s insistence on the epistemological primacy of sense experience from a post-Kantian standpoint, reckoning with the irreversible shift in philosophy towards the critical analysis of subjectivity as the starting-point for dis-

The importance of transcendental philosophy in Rahner's theology can be traced back to his unsuccessful efforts to prepare himself for an academic career in philosophy (his doctoral thesis was not accepted).⁸² At any rate, Rahner's entire theology can be said to be a theology of nature and grace.

According to Rahner's analyses, we are living in a lay and pluralist society in which it has become more difficult to transmit the Christian truth; the enormous growth of every field of science has made it difficult for systematic theology to do synthetic work and yet, this is what especially systematic theology is supposed to do. Through the centuries, theological concepts have become too rigid, and they do not correspond to the new situation of life and culture of the modern human being. For this reason, theology needs a new method; it is not enough to know only faith: life must also be understood. Rahner says revealingly: "Christology is the end and beginning of anthropology. And this anthropology, when most thoroughly realized in Christology, is eternally theology."⁸³

Consequently, Rahner suggests an anthropological approach, which starts from the experience of the human being and asks how the Christian faith can correspond to that experience. It does not mean that faith is subordinated to experience, nor that faith is subjectively reduced, but that it tries to fill the gap between revelation and human experience. In fact, Rahner's approach can be called an anthropological-transcendental method. In experience a distinction must be made between a *a priori* experience and a *a posteriori* experience. The world of human experience is a world of a *a posteriori* experience, because it is acquired, categorical, it is reflected, thematised and classified in various manners. But underneath there is an *a priori* experience which is not acquired but always given with the human existence. It is also transcendental, given in an unreflected and non-thematic way, but which only makes possible the categorical reality, knowledge, action, and other human experiences. The contents of human experience are a *a posteriori*

cussion." *Duffy* (1992, 232–233) raises a crucial issue in Rahner's theology: "Rahner is caught between the subject-oriented approach of transcendental philosophy and the substance-oriented approach of the Thomism in his Catholic background. It is perhaps impossible to reconcile transcendental Thomism and the subjectivist principle (what we have called the turn to the subject)."

⁸² *Sesbotié* 2001, 66.

⁸³ *Rahner* 1966c, 117.

and categorical; the condition of the possibility of that experience is the *a priori* and transcendental dimension.

The human experience is not only experience of this or of that, but it is also an experience of finiteness, which returns to an infinite horizon; of the truth and responsibility, which returns to the absolute; of the radicalness of love and faithfulness, which returns to the non-conditioned. “The transcendental dimension of the human experience—in the exercise of the knowledge and freedom—is the opening of the finite spirit to the infinite.”⁸⁴ Rahner, contrary to Kant, who admitted only horizontal transcendentality, admits also vertical transcendentality that, like horizontal transcendentality, leading to the infinity of mystery, is the condition of the possibility of human experience. This transcendental philosophy is not a novelty from the point of view of classical philosophy; the novelty is to introduce the anthropological-transcendental method into theology.⁸⁵

Rahner describes grace as the supernatural existential, including a distinction between historical, categorical revelation and transcendental revelation.⁸⁶ The history of humanity is one unique history of salvation and also one unique history of revelation. Revelation that is transmitted by Christian preaching is historical, categorical revelation, but it serves the revelation that reaches everybody in his or her transcendental experience, i.e. transcendental revelation.

The human being responds by faith to the divine revelation (thematic or non-thematic). The human being responds positively by a non-thematic act of faith, when in the most intimate part of the human

⁸⁴ “La dimension transcendantale de l’expérience humaine—dans l’exercice de la connaissance et de la liberté—est l’ouverture de l’esprit fini à l’infini.” *Gibellini* 1994, 258. (Tr. by RJ).

⁸⁵ It should be noted that the “anthropological turn” concerns especially fundamental theology but does not ignore dogmatics, either.—One of the criticisms can be found in *Balthasar* 1966, Chapter II, entitled “La réduction anthropologique”. E.g., he writes (p. 47): “... Maurice Blondel et Joseph Maréchal, dont la pensée, certes non moderniste, ne peut cependant aboutir finalement qu’à une justification anthropologique de la révélation.” Apparently Rahner is the target here, without mentioning him by name (cf. *Sesboüé* 2001, 77).

⁸⁶ One of his motivations might have been a desire to resolve the dilemma created by the controversy surrounding de Lubac’s *Surnaturel*. A difference between de Lubac (*nouvelle théologie*) and Rahner (“kerygmatic theology”) is that de Lubac seems to reduce the gratuity of grace to that of creation, whereas for Rahner the gratuity of grace must be seen in the light of God’s revealed love and call to salvation in Christ (*Duffy* 1992, 14). However, it has been argued that both Rahner and de Lubac follow the anthropological thinking of Duns Scotus, adopted later by Molina (*Saarinen* 2003, 105).

being he or she responds affirmatively to existence—even if he or she does not know Christianity explicitly, or even refuses it. This “yes” to the positive sense of existence becomes, by grace (being the supernatural existential), acceptance, non-thematic and implicit, of the fundamental mystery of salvation that finds its historical and categorical unveiling in Christ. This “yes”, in the most intimate part of human being, given to existence, becomes an act of existential (and not categorical) faith, an exercise of “anonymous Christianity”. For Rahner, the Incarnation of God is the unique and highest instance of the essential completion of human reality and the absolute expression of anthropology, the study of the human being.⁸⁷ In fact, Rahner’s supernatural existential is situated between two diverse positions concerning the human ordination to grace. “One situates it in nature, which is so orientated by an immanent, unconditional, and constitutive desire or disposition that it infallibly calls for grace. The other places the ordination to grace is a totally extrinsic but gratuitous divine decree, relative to which human nature is no more than ‘open’ inasmuch as it is spirit naturally given to self-transcendence.”⁸⁸

Rahner’s method has consequences for the theology of religions, and he has become famous for his notion of “anonymous Christians”.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Kasper 1985, 18.—*Sesboüé* (2001, 96, n. 2) comments on Rahner’s method: “Il s’agit toujours de donner une interprétation anthropologiquement crédible d’affirmations doctrinales difficiles et pour lesquelles les thèses classiques faisaient appel à une forme d’intervention divine trop immédiate.”—Cf. *Williams* (1986, 17), commenting on Rahner’s position: “This means that we possess in advance a framework within which to understand Jesus Christ: a person who lives out unreservedly and wholeheartedly the response to an ‘infinite’ vocation to love and trust, who ‘hears the Word’ with no resistance or doubt, will be *the complete realisation of human potential*, and will thus express humanly the unconditional love of God himself, God’s total commitment to the world.” (Emphasis added).

⁸⁸ *Duffy* 1992, 91.

⁸⁹ Rahner used the terms ‘anonymous Christian’ and ‘anonymous Christianity’ for the first time in 1961, before Vatican II. See *Rahner* 1969a, especially pp. 131–134, *Rahner* 1969i, 8–11, 21, and *Rahner* 1969j. See also *Rahner* 1969d, where he develops a distinctive concept of salvation history on the basis of transcendental philosophy, and *Rahner* 1983b. For an introduction to Rahner’s ideas, see *Rahner* 1969f, *Rahner* 2004, and *Rahner* 2005. For other references, see *Dupuis* 1999, 414–415. See also, e.g., *Sesboüé* 2001, 148–155, and *Sesboüé* 1984, 523–531, *Dupuis* 1999, 143–149, *DiNoia* 1994, *Duffy* 1992, 85–114, 204–234, *Ruokanen* 1992, 29–33, *Sullivan* 1992, 171–174, *Wiles* 1992, 45–63, *Aubert* 1990b, 149, *Barnes* 1989, 51–56, *Barnes* 2002, 29–31, *D’Costa* 1986, 81–112, *Boutin* 1983, *Camps* 1983, 44–46, *Wagner* 1981, 33–35, *Evers* 1974, 107–117, *Schoof* 1970, 126–131.—Objections to Rahner’s theology are presented by, among others, *Caspar* 1987, *Taylor* 1986, *D’Costa* 1985, *Congar* 1984, and *Shepherd* 1969. The idea of ‘anonymous Christian’ is rejected also by H. Küng (*Küng* 1988b, 187–188; cf. *Knitter* 1995, 131) and

Rahner claims that every person, because of his or her humanity, concretely considered in the historical order present in the economy of salvation, can be an anonymous Christian, even if he or she is not explicitly a Christian. God wants to save everybody, and he offers a possibility of salvation to everybody (the supernatural existential). Rahner distinguishes between, on the one hand, explicit or thematic or categorical revelation, i.e. Christian revelation which expresses itself by concepts, and is historically transmitted by proclamation, and, on the other hand, implicit, non-thematic, or transcendental revelation, which reaches everyone in his or her transcendental experience. The idea of transcendental revelation can thus be applied also to the question of non-Christian religions in the sense that Rahner can see them as unofficial ways of transcendental revelation. As social entities they bear in themselves God's universal will to save.

Rahner's ideas, using theological axioms of sacramental theology, strongly influenced Vatican II documents. His ideas can be found, e.g., in *Lumen Gentium* 48 where it is stated that the Church is "the universal sacrament of salvation" and that salvation is open "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" (*Lumen Gentium* 16).⁹⁰ As Rahner's theology is marked by an

H.U. von Balthasar. H. de Lubac (see *Lubac* 1967, 120–163) and the later Balthasar accept the expression "anonymous Christian" (when speaking of individuals) but reject the concept of 'anonymous Christianity'. Rahner disagreed with that position: for him, both expressions together should be approved or rejected. See also *Gibellini* 1994, 264, *Fitzmaurice* 1992, 93, and *Sullivan* 1992, 175–176. It can be argued that with his theory of "anonymous Christians", Rahner is not far from the limits of the Church's official teaching. Cf. DS 375: "Qui enim fidem, qua in Deum credimus, dicunt esse naturalem, omnes eos, qui ab Ecclesia Christi alieni sunt, quodammodo fideles esse definiunt."—It is often said that Rahner did not take into consideration the principle of reciprocity: would a Christian willingly accept being called e.g. an "anonymous Muslim" or an "anonymous Jew"? See *Küng* 1988a, 203, and *Küng* 1988b, 236.

⁹⁰ It is worth mentioning that there seems to be a clear link between the theological anthropology of Vatican II and that of Rahner, who in 1960 first became a consultant in the commission for the discipline of the sacraments, and then in 1962 became an official theological consultant (*peritus*)—at the same time as about 190 other theologians—to the Second Vatican Council, with de Lubac and Congar, among others. Rahner was also a private adviser to Cardinal König at the council (see, e.g., *Fogarty* 1998, 93–94). In 1969 he was nominated to serve as a member of the Papal Theological Commission, but resigned before the end of his five-year-term. *Oesterreicher* (1969, 93) rightly states: "They [the considerations on the omnipresence of grace in *Nostra Aetate*] owe much to the work of Karl Rahner..." See also, e.g., *Rossano* 1979b, 91. "When the Vatican Council issued the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*... it realistically took its starting point from the existential

anthropocentric methodology, his approach has been criticized for its anthropocentrism and the risk of reductionism that it runs, i.e., that Christianity becomes humanism. However, most Catholic theology of the latter part of the 20th century reflects Rahner's thought, in one way or another, at least as to the question of the relationship between nature and grace.

One of those who have been reserved towards Rahner's theology is Hans Urs von Balthasar,⁹¹ who feared that Christianity would be "anthropologized" and for whom transcendental philosophy wears out the concept of the real, of that which is objective.⁹² von Balthasar himself studied under de Lubac in Lyons,⁹³ and under Guardini in Berlin. What is, then, the relation of von Balthasar's work to that of de Lubac? They are similar in the sense that their works occupy a "suspended middle",⁹⁴ and they articulate a 'non-ontology'. It can be argued that de Lubac was more strictly orthodox and more radically humanistic. Besides, "von Balthasar's account of the supernatural in his Barth book suggests a certain divergence from de Lubac and a kind of Germanic Protestant residue in the Francophile Swiss theologian."⁹⁵ However, von Balthasar may have somewhat compromised his common position with

religious quest that today as in the past springs up in the heart of man..." *Rossano* 1980, 17. *Sesboüé* (2001, 26, 105) notes that "il [Rahner] participa surtout à la préparation de *Lumen gentium* et de *Dei Verbum*, où l'on retrouve certaines de ses idées, et dans une certaine mesure à *Gaudium et spes*, la Constitution pourtant jugée par les Allemands 'trop française'." and that it was Rahner's idea that "ecclesiastical studies should begin with an introductory course of suitable duration." See OT 14. Cf. *Vorgrimler* 1986, 100. Cf. *Aydin* 2002, 86.

⁹¹ On von Balthasar, see, e.g., *The Analogy of Beauty* 1986, *Duffy* 1992, 115–134, *Riches* 1994, *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* 2004, and *Quash* 2005. von Balthasar was called Pope John Paul II's favourite theologian and the most cultured man in Europe. He died on June 26, 1988, just 2 days before he was to be elevated to cardinal by Pope John Paul II.

⁹² "... for von Balthasar Rahner has been the great theological opponent who makes faith inadmissibly easy, who adapts to the need of contemporaries, and trivializes the seriousness of God's history with humanity." *Vorgrimler* 1986, 124. "What Balthasar attacked in *Cordula* was Rahner's emphasis on the sense in which men and women are by virtue of their own inherent spiritual dynamism capable of apprehending the divine, of believing, hoping, and loving. ... he saw in Rahner's identification of such natural spiritual dynamism with the life of faith a fatal blurring of the distinction between men and women's apprehension of the divine and the divine self-revelation." *Quash* 2005, 117.

⁹³ Cf. *Balthasar* 1991.

⁹⁴ This apt phrase was used by von *Balthasar* (1991, 15) to describe de Lubac's theology. Cf. the title of *Milbank* 2005: *The Suspended Middle*.

⁹⁵ *Milbank* 2005, 66.

de Lubac in the “suspended middle” by being too Barthian and too Rahnerian.⁹⁶ In the domain of nature and grace, von Balthasar is closer to de Lubac than Rahner. According to von Balthasar, we cannot claim any special gratuity over and above that of creation, and the ordination to grace is the most important part that cannot be separated from the human constitution. If he were asked whether the supernatural existential adds a *desiderium naturale* or simply elevates the exocentricity of the human spirit, von Balthasar would opt for the latter alternative.⁹⁷ However, von Balthasar refrains from situating his thinking regarding nature and grace within any system. His approach can be called open-ended. “Fides quaerens is not intellectus inveniens. Grace and nature cannot be reduced to one level of being. For von Balthasar, this is not a case for agnosticism but a recognition of the limitations that necessarily hem in theology.”⁹⁸

von Balthasar wrote a series of studies on the Greek Fathers: Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, and Maximus the Confessor. For him, it was not a matter of adapting the Fathers to modern circumstances, but of going to the vital source of their spirit, to their fundamental and secret intuition in order to retrieve their creative capacity. von Balthasar claims that patristic, medieval and renaissance theology applied the cosmological approach, presenting Christianity as the fulfilment of the interpretation of the world of Antiquity. Christianity is credible because it presents itself as the unifying principle of all the fragments of wisdom of Antiquity. The theology of modern times applies the anthropological way: Christianity presents itself as the interpretation of the most intimate aspects of human existence. But for von Balthasar, both approaches are reductive because they take cosmos and human existence as the criteria for justification of Christianity, which, however, has in itself and proposes from itself its own justification. von Balthasar’s approach is the way of love. In Christian revelation there is an absolute love of God that, in Christ, makes itself, from itself, engage in encounter with human beings. And the absolute love of God is perceptible in itself; it has no need to be supported by the cosmos or by human beings.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ This is an argument of *Milbank* 2005, 67–77.

⁹⁷ *Duffy* 1992, 128, 134. Cf. *Webster* 2004, 249.

⁹⁸ *Duffy* 1992, 121, n. 12.

⁹⁹ These ideas can be found neatly expressed in *H.U. von Balthasar, L’amour seul est digne de foi* (originally in German: *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe*) (Paris: Editions Aubier-Montaigne 1966).

This position is illustrated by the trilogy of von Balthasar (1961–1987). The first part of the trilogy is entitled *Herrlichkeit: eine theologische Ästhetik* (1961–1969, seven volumes), in which he develops a theological esthetics (fundamental theology). This trilogy is an attempt to insert the logical aspect (*verum*) and the ethical aspect (*bonum*) into a new aspect, that of esthetics (*pulchrum*). Theological esthetics takes its criteria from the Revelation. It is even the essence of the Revelation. Faith believes, but at the same time it sees. Faith is not only *fides quaerens intellectum*, but *fides quaerens et inveniens intellectum*. It is a faith that believes and knows: it is *lumen fidei*, the light of God that shines in us, the interior light, and as such it has subjective evidence.

The second part of the trilogy, entitled *Theodramatik* (1973–1983, five volumes), deals with ethics and the good (dogmatic theology). In this part, the central principle is the relation between finite freedom and infinite freedom, in the context of creation. From the Christian point of view, history must be considered as a theodrama in which the figures are God, infinite freedom; the human being, finite freedom; and Christ, protagonist and the first producer of the universal drama. Through Christ and in Christ, a Christian is constituted as a theological person, through a process of election-vocation-mission. For von Balthasar, God is not only a spectator, he is also a co-actor in the world. The Father sends the Son and the Spirit, the Son implements the plan of salvation, the Spirit moves in the world. Only in Christ is the Trinity open and accessible. von Balthasar's discourse is Trinitarian: the economic Trinity takes the form of the immanent Trinity, which resembles the supporting foundation of the economic Trinity, but cannot be identified with it. The distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity, between the mission of the Son and the sending of the Spirit, and between intradivine *procession* and *spiratio*, guarantees God's engagement in world history and also his transcendence vis-à-vis history.

The third part, entitled *Theologik* (1985–1987, three volumes), deals with logic and truth, which the Father reveals in the Logos incarnate, and with the Spirit's role to enlighten through the centuries. This part contains a concluding synthesis and a methodological reflection. Jesus not only witnesses the truth, he is the truth in the sense that he is the Word of the Father made flesh in a historical concrete existence. He is the interpreter of the Father's truth, but also the interpreter through the Spirit, who introduces human beings to knowledge of the whole truth.

The biblical text which structures the trilogy of von Balthasar is John 1,14: “We have seen his *glory*, the glory of the one and only [Son], who came from the Father (1st part of the trilogy), full of *grace* (2nd part) and *truth* (3rd part).” Contrary to Rahner, who in the last years of his life paid increasing attention to Islam from the point of view of the Trinity, von Balthasar did not elaborate a theology of religions. The theme however, surfaces in many of his writings.¹⁰⁰

Hans Urs von Balthasar and Karl Rahner are said to have been the two most significant Roman Catholic theologians of the 20th century.¹⁰¹ To summarize Rahner and von Balthasar: Rahner’s theology is more anthropological, von Balthasar’s is more Trinitarian; Rahner’s theology is transcendental, von Balthasar’s is a theology of transcendentals. For Rahner, theology, being kerygmatic, must begin from transcendental anthropology, openness of the finite spirit to the mystery of God; for von Balthasar, the proper principle of Catholicism is objectivity, in that the Revelation has in itself its centre and it itself presents that centre. They work from two different perspectives: on the whole, Rahner’s theology expresses the demand to present Christian revelation from the fundamental instances of the human being; the perspective of von Balthasar is rigorously fixed to the proper figure of the Revelation, to the beauty, goodness, and truth which, through themselves, call to adherence and action.¹⁰² Radically different experiences of God lead these two men to different theological positions.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ See *Dupuis* 1999, 140–143. Cf., e.g., *Rahner* 1983c. *Dupuis* (1999, 143) summarizes von Balthasar’s position as follows: “... von Balthasar’s approach to the theology of religions consists of setting in sharp opposition ‘non-Christian’ religions and Christian revelation. The common substratum of both in human nature notwithstanding, both represent opposite attitudes and directions: from the human being to the One Absolute, on the one hand; from the living God to the human person, on the other. ‘Non-Christian’ and the Christian religion stand to each other as nature and the supernatural. One assumes and fulfills what is good in the other; it purifies it in order to transform it.”

¹⁰¹ E.g. *Kilby* 2004, 256. They represented two roads in two journals: *Concilium*, associated with Rahner, and *Communio*, founded by von Balthasar.

¹⁰² *Gibellini* 1994, 288–289. “The hidden God, he [von Balthasar] believed, is to be known not so much through categories derived from philosophy as through symbols which unfold God’s nature through their beauty and dramatic power as well as their truth...” *Yarnold* 1997, 569.

¹⁰³ “... the comparison sometimes drawn between Rahner as a Catholic Schleiermacher and Balthasar as a Catholic Barth is not entirely without merit. The view espoused here is that the unfortunate ecclesial-political capital frequently made of the supposed irreconcilability of these two instincts would be better invested in viewing them as two sides of a healthy dialectical tension...” *Murray* 2005, 269. *Kilby* (2004, 263)

A Trinitarian renaissance and a new emphasis on pneumatology

Rahner and von Balthasar have taken us to the doctrine of the Trinity, which is one of the most perplexing aspects of Christian theology.¹⁰⁴ In 1951, 1500 years after the Council of Chalcedon, Rahner urged theologians to give to the doctrine of the Trinity its central place, and gave his famous *Grundaxiom*, according to which the Trinity of the economy of salvation is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa.¹⁰⁵ He basically means

notes: “Both thinkers were trained in neo-scholasticism, and both found it inadequate, but they moved away from it in different directions—very crudely put, Rahner moved away in the direction of the subject, and Balthasar in the direction of the object.” Cf. *Milbank* 2005, 67.

¹⁰⁴ *Rahner* (2005, 142) is right when he notes that the doctrine of the Trinity “nicht ein subtiles theologisches Gedankenspiel ist, sondern eine Aussage, die gar nicht vermieden werden kann.”

¹⁰⁵ This “vice versa” has been widely discussed. “Die *Grundthese*, die diese Verbindung zwischen den Traktaten herstellt und die Trinität als Heilsmysterium für uns (in ihrer Wirklichkeit und nicht erst als Lehre) herausstellt, könnte so formuliert werden: ‘Die ‘ökonomische’ Trinität ist die ‘immanente’ Trinität und umgekehrt.’” *Rahner* 1978, 328. See also p. 336. Also in *Rahner* 1966a, 69; *Rahner* 1966b, 87. One of the most important contributions of Rahner to the theology of the Trinity is his article *Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise ‘De trinitate’* (*Rahner* 1966b). To put it crudely, Rahner’s thinking basically is that God in the economy of his self-communication cannot reveal himself to us as something other than he is “in himself” and “for himself” (*Werbick* 1995, 531, 533; see, e.g., *Rahner* 1966b, 96, 102). Cf. *Barth* (1985, 312): “Gott offenbart sich. Er offenbart sich durch sich selbst.” Barth considered God “as event, that event which is revelation, whose very structure is trinitarian: God is the subject (Father), the content (Son), and the very happening (Spirit) of revelation.” (*Richard/Hill/Eds.* 2003, 197.)—*Balthasar* (1978, 466) warns that in Rahner’s thesis “droht die immanente und ewige Trinität Gottes in der ökonomischen aufzugehen, klarer gesagt, Gott in den Weltprozess hinein verschlungen zu werden und nur durch diesen hindurch zu sich selbst zu kommen.” He also notes: “Deshalb muss ein Weg gefunden werden, die immanente Trinität so als den Grund des Weltprozesses (bis hin zur Kreuzigung) zu deuten, dass sie weder, wie bei Rahner, als ein formaler Selbstvermittlungsprozess Gottes erscheint, noch, wie bei Moltmann, als in den Weltprozess hineinverstrickt, dass sie vielmehr als jene ewige und absolute Selbsthingabe verstanden wird, die Gott schon in sich als die absolute Liebe erscheinen lässt, woraus sich erst die freie Selbsthingabe an die Welt als Liebe erklärt, ohne dass Gott zu seinem Selbstwerden (seiner ‘Selbstvermittlung’) des Weltprozesses und des Kreuzes bedürfte.” *Balthasar* 1980, 300. See also *Congar* 2002, 548–568, and *Sesboüe* 2001, 79–84.—*Moltmann* (1994, 165) notes: “Man kann dies wohl als die mystische Variante der idealistischen Lehre von der ‘trinitarischen’ Reflexionsstruktur des absoluten Subjektes ansehen. Der *idealistische Modalismus* Rahners führt von der Trinitätslehre wieder zurück zum *christlichen Monotheismus* des ‘einen einzigen Wesens, der Einzigkeit eines einen Bewußtseins und einer einzigen Freiheit Gottes’, der in der innersten Mitte des Daseins ‘eines einzelnen Menschen’ präsent ist.” *Richard/Hill/Eds.* (2003, 198) observe similarly: “Still, the Barthian/Rahnerian approach seemingly reintroduces a modalistic understanding of the Trinity. God is ultimately grasped as uni-personal; the plural term

that the way God is revealed and experienced in history corresponds to the way God actually is. The economy of salvation has a Trinitarian structure. The immanent Trinity is known in faith because the economic Trinity has been seen at work in the history of salvation.¹⁰⁶ The relationship between economy and immanence has been one of the main themes of the “Trinitarian renewal”.¹⁰⁷ The reasons for this renewal of Trinitarian theology are various. Philosophically, we have seen how existentialism and personalism have influenced the *nouvelle théologie* and “kerygmatic theology”. This has led to the development of biblical theology, a liturgical renewal, and increased interest in the Fathers of the Church.¹⁰⁸ And this has meant that in the development of Christian theology, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, the question of the Trinity has come up in a new way in the second half of the 20th century.¹⁰⁹

“If there are any absolute mysteries in the Christian faith, that of the Trinity is undoubtedly the most fundamental.”¹¹⁰ The term ‘Trinity’ cannot be found in the Bible, even though the concept can be found throughout it. However, in Christian theology it was Theophilus of Antioch (2nd century) who first applied the term ‘triad’ to the Godhead. In Christian theology, the One God exists in three persons, subsistences, hypostases, but there is no official definition of the terms ‘per-

‘persons’ (Greek: *hypostases*) in the confessional formula signifies ‘three distinct modes of existing’ (Barth), or ‘three distinct modes of subsisting’ (Rahner), of the one Godhead.”

¹⁰⁶ Rahner 1977b, 1766. Cf. Werbick 1995, 565, and Heim 2001, 60.

¹⁰⁷ Breuning 1970, 30.

¹⁰⁸ Breuning 1970, 28. Cf. Daniélou 1946a, 11. Forte (1989, 23) notes: “Ce retour [à la ‘patrie trinitaire’] est peut-être le défi le plus brûlant lancé à l’Eglise et à la théologie ...”

¹⁰⁹ The Trinitarian renaissance is due to the two perhaps most important theologians of the 20th century, Karl Barth, a Protestant, and Karl Rahner, a Roman Catholic. See, e.g., Jüngel 1965, Jüngel 1980, and Jüngel 1992, Rahner 1966b, Bourassa 1974, Lubac 1975, Duquoc 1976, and Duquoc 1978, Bracken 1979, Hill 1982, Jenson 1982, and Jenson 1997, Barth 1985, Boff 1988, O’Donnell 1988, Pannenberg 1988, Forte 1989, Braaten 1990, Kasper 1992, Lash 1992, *Confessing the One Faith* 1993, Peters 1993, Moltmann 1993, and Moltmann 1994, Thompson 1994, Torrance 1995, *Trinitarian Theology Today* 1995, Corbin 1997, Durwell 1997, *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age* 1997, *Trinity in Process* 1997, McGrath 1999, Bezaçon 1999, Moingt 1999, *Le Mystère de la Trinité* 1999, Vannier 1999, Cunningham 2000, Greshake 2001, *Knowing the Triune God* 2001, and Bobrinsky 2003. See also CCC 234, and CCC 237.

¹¹⁰ Rahner 1977a, 1757.—The concept of ‘trinity’ is very complex because it touches on the hermeneutics of the doctrine of the Trinity, where the issues of analogical speech and metaphysics arise. Theology can never free itself from metaphysics. Cf. Werbick 1995, 518.

sona, ‘*hypostasis*’, ‘*substantia*’, and no explanation is given of any distinction between ‘*persona*’ and ‘*hypostasis*’.¹¹¹ This may be one of the reasons why it is nowadays said that the Trinitarian mystery conveys the idea that the Supreme Being is “a gift, change, relation, love.”¹¹² The triune God is understood as love manifesting itself in total self-surrender. The Christian God is understood as a manifestation of love, because love, freedom and personality belong together. God can be known as such only through revelation, in faith.¹¹³ He cannot be known unless revealed by himself. His inmost Being is inaccessible to reason alone.¹¹⁴ Only in the *eschaton* will it be seen how the triune God has always been the real God.¹¹⁵ The Father reveals himself through the Son and through him reaches the human being in the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁶ Above all, he is the Father, who has no principle of origin. The Son is born of the substance of the Father (*generatio*) and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*spiratio*).¹¹⁷ These divine persons are not to be divided from one another in being or in operation. They form only one

¹¹¹ *Rahner* 1977a, 1757. Cf. *Moltmann* 1994, 187.

¹¹² *Wolinski* 1998, 1164. Cf. *Werbick* 1995, 500–511. *Rahner* (1966b, 96) states: “The one God imparts himself as absolute self-utterance and absolute gift of love.” *Balthasar* (1987, 150) notes: “... sei aber nochmals an bereits Errungenes erinnert: an die Je-Einmaligkeit des Personseins in Gott, an die Unmöglichkeit, sie (im kategorialen Sinn) zu zählen, schließlich an den (letztlich Richardschen) Gedanken, daß gemeinsame Liebe nicht ohne innere Frucht (...) sich vollendet.”—*Jüngel* (1980, 265) notes: “Die Trinitätslehre ist deshalb der unerläßlich schwierige Ausdruck der einfachen Wahrheit, daß Gott lebt, weil Gott *als Liebe lebt*. Daß Gott als Liebe lebendig ist, ist das Geheimnis seines Seins, das sich im Leben, Tod und Auferstehung Jesu Christi offenbart hat.” Cf. *Moltmann* 1994, 189.

¹¹³ “Gott erscheint darin als Liebe nicht in absoluter Ich-Bezogenheit, sondern in totaler Hingabe. Mit Hilfe einer Phänomenologie, die geistige Vorgänge als lebendige Polarität versteht, mehr noch wegen der Zusammengehörigkeit von Liebe, Freiheit und Personalität lernt sie Gott verstehen als *Ereignis von Liebe*. Daß er das wirklich ist, kann nur aus der Offenbarung erkannt werden; die T[rinität] bleibt somit das innerste und erste Geheimnis des Glaubens.” *Breuning* 1997, 519.

¹¹⁴ CCC 237.

¹¹⁵ “... so kann von Gottes Dreieinigkeit—dem Mysterium der ‘ursprünglichen’ göttlichen Beziehungsmächtigkeit—theologisch angemessen eigentlich nur im Hinblick auf das Zum-Ziel-Kommen dieser Beziehungsmächtigkeit im Eschaton gesprochen werden.” *Werbick* 1995, 570.

¹¹⁶ *Rahner* 1977b, 1768.

¹¹⁷ “*Der Vater—‘Quelle und Ursprung der ganzen Trinität’ ... zeugt in vollkommener Selbst- und Wesensmitteilung den Sohn... und haucht zusammen mit ihm den Heiligen Geist.*” *Werbick* 1995, 559.—The Eastern tradition of Christianity has not accepted the form that the Spirit proceeds “from the Father and the Son” (*ex Patre Filioque*). Nowadays a consensus is being sought in the use of the form “from the Father through the Son” (*Breuning* 1997, 519). See, e.g., *Garrigues* 1982.

principle of action *ad extra*.¹¹⁸ God is eternally Father in relation to his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to the Father.¹¹⁹

This Trinitarian renaissance affects also pneumatology. In fact, the pneumatological dimension of Christology was strongly emphasized in the theology just before Vatican II, especially by Y. Congar. The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.¹²⁰ The documents of Vatican II represent already a certain development of pneumatology.¹²¹ Where *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* are silent, *Ad Gentes* and *Gaudium et Spes* make direct references to it. *Ad Gentes* 4 recognizes the work of the Spirit in the world,¹²² even outside the Church.¹²³ *Gaudium et Spes* 22 is even more explicit in referring to the work of the Spirit in the lives of non-Christian persons outside the Church, whereas it does not speak of the presence of the Spirit in the non-Christian traditions.¹²⁴ The work of the Spirit is more clearly presented in *Gaudium et Spes* than in any other conciliar document.¹²⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* 92 is often called the magna carta of dialogue. This dialogue is based on the recognition of the Spirit's presence in the non-Christians and their daily experiences.¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ *Rahner* 1977a, 1758. He notes: "The element importing a distinction which intervenes between the original self-communicator and the term expressed and received must be designated as relative (relational). This follows from the identity of the essence (substance, nature)." *Rahner* 1977a, 1762.

¹¹⁹ CCC 240.

¹²⁰ Cf. "Insofern die universelle Wirksamkeit des Geistes von vornherein auf den Höhepunkt ihrer geschichtlichen Vermittlung ausgerichtet ist, das Christusergebnis—m.a.W.—die Finalursache der Geistmitteilung an die Welt ist, kann in aller Wahrheit gesagt werden, daß dieser Geist von vornherein und überall der Geist *Jesu Christi*, des mensch-gewordenen Logos Gottes, ist." *Rahner* 2005, 309. See also *Congar* 2002.

¹²¹ *Williams* (1997, 40) states: "And on a trinitarian view of God, the possibility of fully personal immanence along with personal transcendence and personal appearance is due to the reality of the personal being of the Holy Spirit alongside that of the Father and the Son."

¹²² AG 4 1966, 587: "To accomplish this goal, Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the Father. The Spirit was to carry out His saving work inwardly and to impel the Church toward her proper expansion. Doubtless, the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before Christ was glorified."

¹²³ AG 15 1966, 601: "The Holy Spirit, who calls all men to Christ by the seeds of the Word and by the preaching of the gospel, stirs up in their hearts the obedience of faith."

¹²⁴ GS 22 1966, 221–222: "All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, 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."

¹²⁵ See, e.g., GS 10, 11, 15, 22, 24, 26, 32, 37–39, 41, 45.

¹²⁶ GS 92 1966, 306–307: "We also turn our thoughts to all who acknowledge God,

Paul VI did not appear to place a special emphasis on pneumatology, whereas John Paul II did so in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*.¹²⁷ Through the encyclical¹²⁸ and some papal discourses,¹²⁹ he emphasized that the Spirit is present and active in the world, in the members of non-Christian religions, as well as in the religious traditions themselves. An authentic prayer, human values and wisdom, true dialogue and encounter with non-Christians, are all caused by the active presence of the Spirit. “It may be said that the singular contribution of Pope John Paul II to a ‘theology of religions’ consists in the emphasis with which he affirms the operative presence of the Spirit of God in the religious life of non-Christians and the religious traditions to which they belong.”¹³⁰

One of the key pneumatological speeches of the Pope was the discourse he pronounced to the members of the Roman Curia on December 22, 1986. It dealt with the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi,

and who preserve in their traditions precious elements of religion and humanity. We want frank conversation to compel us all to receive the inspirations of the Spirit faithfully and to measure up to them energetically. For our part, the desire for such dialogue, which can lead to truth through love alone, excludes no one, though an appropriate measure of prudence must undoubtedly be exercised.” Cf. GS 93 1966, 307: “... men throughout the world will be aroused to a lively hope—the gift of the Holy Spirit—that they will finally be caught up in peace and utter happiness in that fatherland radiant with the splendor of the Lord.”

¹²⁷ On March 4, 1979. Text in AAS 71 1979, 257–347.

¹²⁸ E.g. RH 6 (1979, 13) speaks of “the firm belief of the followers of the non-Christian religions”, which is “a belief that is also an effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body...”, and RH 12 (1979, 22) states: “It is a question of respecting everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit, which ‘blows where it wills.’”

¹²⁹ E.g. Message to the Peoples of Asia (Manila, February 21, 1981; text in AAS 73 1981, 391–398): “What seems to bring together and unite, in a particular way, Christians and the believers of other religions is an acknowledgment of the *need for prayer* as an expression of man’s spirituality directed toward the Absolute. Even when, for some, he is the Great Unknown, he nevertheless remains always in reality the same living God. We trust that wherever the human spirit opens itself in prayer to this Unknown God, an echo will be heard of the same Spirit who, knowing the limits and weakness of the human person, himself prays in us and on our behalf, ‘expressing our plea in a way that could never be put into words’ (Rm. 8:26). The intercession of the Spirit of God who prays in us and for us is the fruit of the mystery of the redemption of Christ, in which the all-embracing love of the Father has been shown to the world.” Cited in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 239–240. See also, e.g., Discourse to Representatives of the Various Religions of Japan (Tokyo, February 24, 1981), cited in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 242–245, and Discourse to Representatives of the Various Religions in India (Madras, February 5, 1986), cited in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 324–327.

¹³⁰ Dupuis 1999, 173.

which had taken place a couple of months before (October 27, 1986). The Pope explained, maybe even defended, the idea of the day, and showed the theological foundations for the event: unity of the human race, through creation and redemption, the Church as a sacrament for human unity, the orientation of non-Christians towards the unity of the people of God. More than Vatican II had done, he emphasized the presence of the Spirit in the religious life of members of other religious traditions.¹³¹

One of the most convincing manifestations of this pneumatological emphasis of John Paul II was his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*.¹³² In this encyclical the Pope spoke of the universal action of the Spirit, before the Christ-event and also outside of the Church. He explained the Christological contents and pneumatological dimension of salvation.¹³³ The encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*¹³⁴ also spoke of

¹³¹ "Every authentic prayer is under the influence of the Spirit 'who intercedes insistently for us... because we do not even know how to pray as we ought', but he prays in us 'with unutterable groanings' and the 'One who searches hearts knows what are the desires of the Spirit' (cf. *Rom* 8:26–27). We can indeed maintain that every authentic prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every person." *John Paul II* 1987f, 60–61. Cited also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 366. See an analysis of this speech in *Dupuis* 1987. The speech, often cited, can be regarded as John Paul II's major theological position in the field of the theology of religions.

¹³² On May 18, 1986. Text in AAS 76 1986, 809–900.

¹³³ "Through the Christological content of the event we have to reach the pneumatological dimension, seeing with the eyes of faith the *two thousand years of the action of the Spirit of truth...* 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. For this action has been exercised, in every place and at every time, indeed in every individual, according to the eternal plan of salvation, whereby this action was to be closely linked with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, which in its turn exercised its influence on those who believed in the future coming of Christ. ... Grace, therefore, bears within itself both a Christological aspect and a pneumatological one... The Second Vatican Council, centered primarily on the theme of the Church, reminds us of the Holy Spirit's activity also 'outside the visible body of the Church.'" DEV 53 1986, 90–91.

¹³⁴ On December 7, 1990. Text in AAS 83 1991, 249–340. RM 28 1994, 19: "The Spirit manifests himself in a special way in the Church and in her members. Nevertheless, his presence and activity are universal, limited neither by space nor time (DEV 53). ... The Spirit offers the human race 'the light and strength to respond to its highest calling' ... The Spirit, therefore, is at the very source of man's existential and religious questioning, a questioning which is occasioned not only by contingent situations but by the very structure of his being (DEV 54). The Spirit's presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions. Indeed, the Spirit is at the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history... Again, it is the Spirit who sows the

the presence of the Spirit in the religious tradition, linking Christology and pneumatology together.¹³⁵ In fact, *Redemptoris Missio* 28 developed the ideas of *Gaudium et Spes* 26 and 38 in the sense that John Paul II acknowledged that the Spirit's presence and activity in non-Christians religions has also structural and cultural dimensions, not only individual dimensions.

Dialogue and Proclamation has a section on a Christian approach to religious traditions. Paragraph 29 seems to go beyond whatever Church documents had previously stated about the role of the Spirit and the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ:

From this mystery of unity it follows that all men and women who are saved share, though differently, in the same mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ through his Spirit. Christians know this through their faith, while others remain unaware that Jesus Christ is the source of their salvation. The mystery of salvation reaches out to them, in a way known to God, through the invisible action of the Spirit of Christ. Concretely, it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their conscience that the members of other religions respond positively to God's invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their savior (cf. AG 3, 9, 11).¹³⁶

This passage shows well how Christology is intimately linked to pneumatology.¹³⁷ The whole question of the triune God in relation to the Christian theology of religions is of extreme importance.¹³⁸ Gavin

'seeds of the Word' present in various customs and cultures, preparing them for full maturity in Christ (LG 17; AG 3, 15)."

¹³⁵ "The encyclical [*Redemptoris Missio*] gives not only a Christological argument, but also a pneumatological one." Kasper 2001, 83. See Machado 2001, 89–90.

¹³⁶ DP 29 1994, 101. Dupuis (1994b, 137) considers this as a very "weighty statement" because it cannot be found before in the official documents of the central teaching authority. He also (1999, 178) states: "Undoubtedly, the statement is a guarded one... Nevertheless, a door seems to be timidly open here, for the first time, for the recognition on the part of the Church authority of a 'participated mediation' of religious traditions in the salvation of their members." Cf., however, D'Costa (2000, 102), who affirms: "He [Pope John Paul II] does not understand the documents [of Vatican II] to teach that non-Christian religions, *per se*, can be viewed as supernatural means to salvation."

¹³⁷ Kasper (1985, 267–268) has noted how pneumatological Christology can best show the unique and universal importance of Jesus Christ. He says: "A Christology in a pneumatological perspective is therefore what best enables us to combine both the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ. It can show how the Spirit who is operative in Christ in his fulness, is at work in varying degrees everywhere in the history of mankind, and also how Jesus Christ is the goal and head of all humanity."

¹³⁸ Panikkar 1973 was one of the first ones to pose the Trinity as a framework that

D'Costa says that Trinitarian theologizing and practice mean for the Church the following operations: "(a) learning about the Other, and viewing the Other as genuinely Other so that they do not become domesticated or negated; and (b) critical and constructive engagement with the Other", which operations are distinct and logically different, but mutually interdependent.¹³⁹ The interest in the Trinity can be thus seen also as a reaction to an encounter with the Other: in order to encounter the Other authentically, the Christian has to know who he or she is himself or herself, and who the trinitarian God is in whom he or she believes.

Summarizing remarks

It seems to be clear by now that in the 20th century, Roman Catholic theology became more existential and less formalistic and conceptualistic.¹⁴⁰ "Rather than an abstract concept of man's nature as such, theologians have begun with the concrete unity of man as he appears within history, situated within the one, actual and supernatural existential order. In accepting this direction, *theology has been clearly indebted to philosophical existentialism and phenomenology.*"¹⁴¹ As seen above, there is an undeniable existentialist and personalist influence on the theology of

Christians could use to relate to oriental religions. See *Cousins* 1970. *Barnes* (1989, 169) notes: "... christocentric and theocentric approaches find a resolution within a trinitarian theology of religions which is formed through the practice of dialogue." *D'Costa* (1986, 135) notes: "The Trinitarian theology of Christianity helps to explain why the presence of God's Spirit in other religions is the presence of Christ." Thus he supports a Trinitarian approach: "... a trinitarian approach actually attains pluralist goals [openness and tolerance] in taking difference and otherness utterly seriously." *D'Costa* 2000, 47.—On the Protestant side, e.g. *C. Braaten* (1992) and *W. Pannenberg* (1988) attempt to construct their theology of religions on a Trinitarian basis. *L. Newbigin*, too, speaks of "a trinitarian model" (*Newbigin* 1981, 16; see also *Newbigin* 1997, and *Newbigin* 1963). See also *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age* 1997, *Heim* 2001, *Ipygrave* 2003 and *Kärkkäinen* 2004 in general, *Jukko* 2004, *Jukko* 2001 as well as *Walters* 2002 in Christian-Muslim relations.—The reader is reminded that in the Roman Catholic Church, the year 1997 was devoted to the reflection on Christ, the Word of God; the year 1998 to the Holy Spirit and to his sanctifying presence; and the year 1999 to the perspective of God the Father. The order of the persons is to be noted.

¹³⁹ *D'Costa* 2000, 116.

¹⁴⁰ The intention of this section is to show the philosophical-theological interaction in the background of the documentation of the SNC/PCID. A purely philosophical analysis of the documentation is outside the scope of the present study.

¹⁴¹ *McFadden* 2003, 509. (Emphasis added).

the Vatican II, and in that way on the SNC/PCID as well. Through its emphasis on anthropology and on the human being as an existential person, as a “Thou”, the fundamental influence of these two philosophical currents can be found in SNC/PCID documentation.¹⁴²

Especially Pietro Rossano (Undersecretary 1967–1973, Secretary 1973–1982) was interested in and influenced by these philosophical currents.¹⁴³ Rossano, a biblical scholar, was well aware of the interaction between philosophy and theology in the 20th century, and he often, in the same speech, named some key persons.

The other, non-Christian, can be theoretically defined, from the point of view of anthropology, as a physical, cultural, religious identity; from the point of view of theology we can, by hypothesis, see in him a *homo corruptus*, an infidel, or rather, statically, a *homo naturalis* consisting of soul and body, or still, historically, a being created in Christ and moved by the Spirit of God, who has never existed *in pluribus naturalibus*, but who is a ‘hearer of the word’ (F. Ebner), gifted with a ‘supernatural or Christic existential’ (Rahner), i.e. a man elevated and illuminated existentially, in a transcendental way, by God who wants his redemption and calls him in Christ.¹⁴⁴

Dialogic thinkers, and especially Ferdinand Ebner, seem to be very important for Rossano, and Ebner is mentioned and quoted extensively elsewhere in the same article.¹⁴⁵ Dialogic philosophers found the

¹⁴² E.g. *Lubich* 1985, 15: “Notre foi dit que l’homme a été ‘créé à l’image et à la ressemblance’ de Dieu. Il est le ‘tu’ de Dieu...” *Festorazzi* 1970, 362: “The encounter with man starts off the dialogue of salvation, as a dynamic ‘I-Thou’ relationship.” See also *Festorazzi* 1970, 391.—Basically, the anthropological emphasis can be neatly expressed as follows: “Wer das Wort Gottes u. die Erlösung mit-teilt, muß nicht nur v. Gott wissen (Theologie), sondern auch v. Menschen, zu dem er gesandt ist (Anthropologie).” *Griesl* 1993, 734.

¹⁴³ “From a purely philosophical viewpoint, in the sphere of the dualistic vision of being, it can be demonstrated that intersubjective communication finds an unbreakable foundation in *Esse ipsum*, which, articulated in the *actus essendi* determines the emergence of the ‘I’ and the ‘thou’, of the subject and of the other, that is of the opposing and necessary poles of every dialogue and communication.” *Rossano* 1970e, 94. Existential-personalist and dialogic thinking are rather obvious.

¹⁴⁴ *Rossano* 1978b, 87–88.

¹⁴⁵ “Ainsi que l’expose F. Ebner: ‘Le royaume de Dieu est le réveil en l’homme de la vie spirituelle sortant de sa torpeur, c’est l’ouverture, dans les profondeurs de l’homme, du moi à son Toi. Le moi est l’élément spirituel en l’homme, mais il ne commence à vivre que dans son rapport au Toi. C’est pourquoi il cherche le Toi... Que cette recherche vienne à cesser complètement, il serait complètement mort. Le moi qui s’est ouvert à son vrai Toi est en Dieu et Dieu est en lui. Car Dieu est le vrai Toi du moi en l’homme. Une fois qu’il s’est ouvert en Dieu à son vrai Toi, le moi ne peut plus se fermer au Toi en l’homme’ (*Schriften* II, München, Kösel, 1963, 489–490).” *Rossano*

basis of their thinking in reaction to German idealism. “In place of a philosophy of Spirit with its covert tendency toward individualism and solipsism according to which the other becomes a subtle means of self-realization, these philosophers stress the immediacy of the presence of the Thou to the I as the primordial experience in which the person first discovers his or her identity.”¹⁴⁶ As can be seen in the citation, Rossano was also interested in religions as phenomena. During his time in the Secretariat for Non-Christians, manuals for encounters with different religions were produced.

The first key word to be noted in the passage cited is “anthropology”, which takes us immediately to the “anthropological turn”, seen above, and to Karl Rahner, who had suggested an anthropological approach which starts from the experience of the human being and asks how the Christian faith can correspond to that experience. Like Rahner, Rossano tries to fill the gap between revelation and human experience. For Rossano, anthropology is one of the pillars of interreligious dialogue.¹⁴⁷ The second key notion to be noted is “hearer of the word”, which takes us back to Ebner and Rahner.¹⁴⁸ Rahner describes the human person as a spirit in the world who is a hearer of the word, historical revelation of God that transcends him or her but has already left its imprint on the human person.¹⁴⁹ Another PCID document states: “To define the human person ontologically as ‘hearer of the Word’ therefore means to place him or her within the operative dynamic of love, bestowed and answered, which in Christian understanding has become visible in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate.”¹⁵⁰

1978b, 91. See also, e.g., *Selvadagi* 2003, 125. On Ebner, see, e.g., *Wucherer-Huldenfeld* 1986; *Langemeyer* 1995.

¹⁴⁶ *O'Donnell* 1988, 11. On dialogic thinkers, see, e.g., *Casper* 1967.

¹⁴⁷ *Zago* 2003, 30.

¹⁴⁸ *Rahner* 1969e. J.B. Metz writes in 1963 in the preface: “‘Hörer des Wortes’—diese biblische Bestimmung des Menschen angesichts der Offenbarung soll hier in einem religionsphilosophischen Entwurf eingeholt werden, der sich dem Denken des Thomas von Aquin nahe weiß, ohne die Ansätze und Probleme gegenwärtigen Philosophierens hinter sich zu lassen. Der Mensch wird dabei als jenes Seiende ansichtig, das nur geschichtlich zu sich selber findet (wie auch die Geschichte nur über den Menschen in ihr Wesen kommt) und das deshalb in die Geschichte hineinhorchen muß, um darin jenem daseinsgründenden und -erhellenden ‘Wort’ zu begegnen, auf das hin die seinsvernehmende Vernunft des Menschen je schon fragend eröffnet ist.” *Metz* 1969 in *Rahner* 1969e, 9–10. Cf. *Mannermaa* 1970a, and *Mannermaa* 1970b.

¹⁴⁹ *Rossano* 1982b, 295; *Gibellini* 1994, 255. Cf. *Rossano* 1970c, 228.

¹⁵⁰ *Fuss* 1999, 75.

The last key words to be noted in this passage are “supernatural existential”,¹⁵¹ “existentially” and “transcendental”, which take us directly to Rahner, whose method has one of its most brilliant applications in what is called “supernatural existential”. “Existential” is a word used by Heidegger to characterize existence in the being and in the understanding of that being. Rahner, however, speaks of grace as a supernatural existential. Grace is above all a supernatural reality, not merited, and freely given as a communication of God to his creation; but grace is always given with human existence, in order to constitute an *a priori* and a transcendental which accompany the historical future and an *a posteriori* in everybody’s life. Grace given is always present in the middle of every human existence. Here it can be seen how transcendental grace and human anthropology are tightly linked together. That is why Rahner’s approach can be called an anthropological-transcendental method.

It can be argued that, for Rossano, anthropology and ontology are correctives to the existentialist influence on his theology, even though, as all key notions cited show, the basic ideas can be traced back to existentialist and personalist philosophies. Sometimes this is expressed quite straightforwardly in PCID documentation: “Thus Christian personalism is the fundamental core to which we must refer in forming our answers.”¹⁵²

Another passage from Rossano shows, once again, the same sort of philosophical and theological thinking: “... it is enough to mention, among other things, the biblical and patristic studies on the economy of salvation, the appearing of a more conscious sense of man and his dignity, an increased historical-existential interest in the binominal natural-supernatural, the event of that what is called ‘dialogic thinking’ (*Dialogisches Denken*), and not least the studies on religions, the decline of colonialism and Occidental ethnocentrism.”¹⁵³ Existentialist personal-

¹⁵¹ Cf. *Rossano* 1974b, 168: “In a word, there are reflected in the religions all the components of Man’s fundamental religious experience, with its dynamism of natural forces and of supernatural existential, given by God as light and support to every human being in view of salvation.”

¹⁵² *Pacini* 1997, 129. Cf. *Masson* 1967. *Rossano* (1967, 140) states that the principal elements which have contributed to the emergence of dialogue in the Church are “*personalism*, the history of salvation, the reflection on the knowledge and human expression of truth...” (Emphasis added).

¹⁵³ “... il suffit de mentionner, entre autres, les études bibliques et patristiques sur l’économie du salut, l’émergence d’un sens plus aigu de l’homme et de sa dignité, un plus grand intérêt historico-existential pour le binôme naturel-supernaturel, l’événe-

ism,¹⁵⁴ anthropological emphasis, interest in religions as phenomena can be easily discerned, but also the idea of kerygmatic theology of the binomial between natural and supernatural and the emphasis of the *nouvelle théologie* on biblical and patristic studies, affecting the SNC and its secretary. As a matter of fact, the biblical and patristic studies have served from the beginning of the Secretariat for Non-Christians as an ideological basis for its functioning.¹⁵⁵ The anthropological, personalism-influenced approach has not stopped with the ministry of Rossano in the SNC / PCID in 1982, but has continued, though with somewhat less explicit influence.¹⁵⁶

ment de ce qu'on appelle la 'pensée dialogique' (*Dialogisches Denken*), et non en dernier les études sur les religions, le déclin du colonialisme et de l'ethnocentrisme occidental." Rossano 1978b, 88. (Tr. by RJ)—"*Das dialogische Denken*" is closely associated, among others, with F. Rosenzweig and his book *Stern der Erlösung* (1921).

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Rossano 1967, 137: "As a spiritual being man is person, that is, free and sovereign of his actions..."—Dialogic personalism is compatible with a theology of religions: "La vision chrétienne de la création, la relation Je-Tu, le personnalisme, sans perdre leur netteté sont entrés en relation de complémentarité et d'altérité avec les expériences non chrétiennes d'unité, d'absorption, une relation transcendant la personnalité." *Puthiadam* 1980, 143–144.

¹⁵⁵ "It was decided instead to build up an ideological base, drawn from biblical and patristic tradition and taking up the approach of the Council, a sum of solid indications on the situation of non-Christians before God and on the value of non-Christian religions..." Rossano 1979b, 93.

¹⁵⁶ *Festorazzi* (1970, 389) reminds us that these "problems [demythologisation, secularisation] are treated today in various ways, with solutions which are often very dissimilar, going from the radical reduction of theology to a simple anthropology..." (Emphasis added) Rahner's expressions (maybe even his theology) were not favoured by the first president of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, Cardinal Marella. *Marella* (1969a, 17 = 1969b, 18) says: "Je voudrais ajouter que l'épithète de chrétiens 'implicites', 'anonymes' ou 'inconscients', appliquée aux non-chrétiens, heurte leur sensibilité et expose ceux qui l'emploient au reproche d'annexion spirituelle."—Some explicit examples of personalist and anthropological emphases in the documentation of the SNC/PCID: "... it is an image of God not in isolation, but in a two-fold sexuality and, more generally, in its social nature, in its orientation towards a 'you', in the establishment of an 'us'. The biblical message about the creation of man and woman shows how the relational nature and the reciprocity affirmed in *Gen. 2* is mirrored and confirmed in the individuality and the singularity of man created in the image of God in *Gen. 1*. ... This essential relationality, imprinted in man and woman by God Himself, imposes on man the task of developing an *ethos* of the kingdom..." *Sanna* 1997, 47–48; "The person is, in fact, as such, an *individuum* in relation, a subject who, as a result of his freedom, conscience and intelligence, is open to others: to God, to man, to the created world in general." *Pacini* 1997, 128; "It is the man himself we are trying to discover, and as soon as we start classifying him and cataloguing him, he ceases to be somebody with whom we are talking, a real person of flesh and blood whom we are addressing, a thou, and becomes a third person or a category, an It." *Guidelines* 1969, 78; "Man is the 'you' of God and finds his fulfillment in his relationship with God ..." *Aquilina* 1989, 126; "It is the person that

Patristic influence can be easily seen in the documentation of the SNC/PCID. Some Church Fathers are often cited, especially Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria.¹⁵⁷ But this influence can be seen already in the documentation of Vatican II. *Nostra Aetate* adopts the vision and terminology of some early Church Fathers, and speaks of the presence in these traditions of “a ray of that Truth which enlightens all”.¹⁵⁸ Starting from the Letter to the Colossians and the prologue of the Gospel of John, the early Church Fathers dealt with themes that have become very important in the theology of religions. These are: the “seeds” sown by the Word of God in the nations,¹⁵⁹ covenant theology,¹⁶⁰ and Logos theology.¹⁶¹ Pope John Paul II repeated the same themes in his writings and speeches.¹⁶²

is put into the centre [in *Ad Gentes*].” *Jong* 2002, 130.—It is to be noted that the same language is adopted by some Muslims: “A relational dimension: man is characterized by a relational dimension i.e. linkage with God, his fellow human beings and the rest of creation.” *Balarabi* 1997, 142.

¹⁵⁷ The passages usually cited are: Justin Martyr: I *Apol.* 46:1–4; II *Apol.* 8,1–4; 10, 1–3; 13:3–6; Irenaeus: *Adv. Haer.* 3, 11,8; 4, 6,5–7; 4, 7,2; 4, 20,6–7; Clement of Alexandria: *Stromata* 1, 19,91,94; 5; 6, 8; 7, 2.

¹⁵⁸ DP 16 1994, 98, citing NA 2.

¹⁵⁹ “A number of Church Fathers take up the sapiential tradition reflected in the New Testament. In particular, writers of the second century and the first part of the third century such as Justin, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, either explicitly or in an equivalent way, speak about the ‘seeds’ sown by the Word of God in the nations.” DP 24 1994, 100. Cf. *Machado* 2001, 89–90: “*Semina Verbi*, an expression first used by some of the Church Fathers, is at the foundation of the Church’s theological doctrine with regard to interreligious dialogue. ... She [the Church] teaches that Christians become familiar with the religious traditions of others and ‘gladly and reverently [sic] (lay) bare the seeds of the World [sic] which lie hidden in them’ (*AG* 11).” Cf. *Obozji* 2002, 309.

¹⁶⁰ “... Irenaeus distinguishes four ‘covenants’ given by God to the human race: in Adam, in Noah, in Moses, and in Jesus Christ.” DP 25 1994, 100.

¹⁶¹ Cf., e.g., *Kasper* 2001, 83: “This New Testament teaching [Col. 1, John 1] was continued by the fathers of the church. They said that in all truth in the non-Christian religions too there are fragments of the truth (*logoi spermatikoi*), that appeared in all its fullness in Jesus Christ once and for all time.” *Guidelines* (1969, 136) notes: “The early Fathers were very much aware of the age-long story of the action of God’s grace throughout man’s history as well as in the hearts of Christian men and women. Perhaps we have somewhat lost sight, especially after the long period of apologetics in recent times, of this active presence of God at the heart of nations and cultures. We need to re-read certain of the Fathers, such as Justin, Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus, who can help us recover an awareness of the mysterious workings of grace outside the visible limits of the Church.”

¹⁶² In his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II wrote: “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’ ...” RH 11 1979, 20. Cf. also: “*We should recall in this regard*

A third statement by Rossano is, perhaps the most important and revealing:

But one should not forget the appearance and the success of the thinking called ‘Dialogic thinking’ (*Dialogisches Denken*), which defined itself as *neues Denken*, a new mode of thinking: it emphasized the person and the subject-man, which was sacrificed a long time in European culture by the excessively impersonal systems of idealism, Marxism, neo-positivism, and by the forms of scepticism of nihilist existentialism. In reaction to these systems, which reached their social and political culmination in European dictatorships, a group of thinkers of Christian or Jewish background, started to pay attention to the human being, to the individual person, to his or her “I-you” rapport, to his or her vocation of communion, to his or her constitutive relational essence (*Mit-sein*). It is enough to cite here Buber, Ebner, Rosenzweig, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel for philosophy, and Derbolav, Bollnow, Prohaska for pedagogy. The influence of this new form of thinking spread rapidly to theology, it was felt in the theology of K. Barth, E. Brunner, R. Guardini, shedding light on aspects previously hidden, such as the inherent presence of the divine action in everybody, radical openness to the other and to God, and vocation to communion. Men like Cardinals Bea, Journet, Bevilacqua, theologians like Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou, Mouroux, Hamer, Pavan, carried this thinking into the heart of the conciliar Church. This is the *humus* in which the roots of the encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* and the declaration *Nostra aetate* were planted.¹⁶³

that the first theological work entitled ‘Dialogue’ was significantly dedicated by the philosopher and martyr Justin to his encounter with Trypho the Jew in the second century.” *John Paul II* 1999b, 70; “Taking up the Council’s teaching from the first Encyclical Letter of my Pontificate, I have wished to recall the ancient doctrine formulated by the Fathers of the Church, which says that we must recognize ‘the seeds of the Word’ present and active in the various religions (*Ad gentes*, n. 11; *Lumen gentium*, n. 17).” *John Paul II* 1998b, 273 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 11. See also, e.g., *John Paul II* 1985b, 228; *John Paul II* 2001c, 20.

¹⁶³ “Mais il faut rappeler l’apparition et le succès de la pensée dite ‘Pensée dialogique’ (*Dialogisches Denken*), qui se définit aussi comme *neues Denken*, nouveau mode de penser: elle mettait l’accent sur la personne et sur le sujet-homme, longtemps sacrifié dans la culture européenne par les systèmes trop impersonnels de l’idéalisme, du marxisme, du néo-positivisme, et par les formes de scepticisme de l’existentialisme nihiliste. En réaction à ces systèmes, qui eurent un couronnement social et politique dans les dictatures européennes, un groupe de penseurs d’origine chrétienne ou juive commença à attirer l’attention sur l’homme, sur la personne, sur son rapport ‘je-tu’, sur sa vocation de communion, sur son statut constitutif de relation (*Mit-sein*). Il suffit de citer ici Buber, Ebner, Resenzweig [sic], Heidegger [sic], Jaspers, Marcel pour la philosophie, et Derbolav, Bollnow, Prohaska pour la pédagogie. L’influence de cette nouvelle forme de pensée ne devait pas tarder à se faire sentir aussi en théologie avec K. Barth, E. Bruner [sic], R. Guardini, mettant en lumière des aspects laissés auparavant dans l’ombre, comme l’inhérence de l’action divine en chaque homme, la radicale ouverture à l’autre et à Dieu, et la vocation à la communion. Des hommes comme les cardinaux Bea, Journet,

Essential elements of his thinking can be seen: dialogic personalism, existentialism, relations between philosophy and theology, theological anthropology, ecclesiology. He could have said: “It is in this *humus* in which the roots of the Secretariat for Non-Christians were planted, too.”¹⁶⁴ Strangely enough, he does not mention K. Rahner here.

But why, after all, has the existentialist-personalist approach had such a great influence on the theology of the SNC / PCID? There seem to be certain points of convergence between those philosophical currents and the Roman Catholic theological thinking of the 20th century. The first is that existentialism approaches human beings phenomenologically and dialogically. It starts with reality observed. A clear distinction is made between things and persons (thus, an emphasis on personalism). This seems to be also the approach of the apostle Paul: he is concerned with persons, not with things, and he emphasizes the unique position of human beings in relation to things. From this point of view, the existentialist-personalist approach seems to get along well with the emphasis on the biblical theology of creation and on anthropology.¹⁶⁵ The second point of convergence is a logical consequence. Existentialist-personalist philosophy recognizes that a person or an individual is changing all the time. Every new situation means also a new experience. A person cannot be defined by closed static terms, but he or she is a possibility determined by his or her decisions. A person exists authentically if the decisions actuate the possibilities in his or her being, but if he or she fails in that, he or she exists unauthentically. Basically, it

Bevilacqua, des théologiens comme Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou, Mouroux, Hamer, Pavan, portèrent cette pensée au coeur même de l’Eglise conciliaire. C’est dans cet *humus* que plongent les racines de l’encyclique *Ecclesiam suam* et de la Déclaration *Nostra aetate*.” *Rossano* 1990, 133. (Tr. by RJ).

¹⁶⁴ Other examples of Rossano and existentialist-personalist philosophy: “Il [le dialogue] introduisait, dans ce vocabulaire, la catégorie de la réciprocité, *du rapport existentiel ‘je-tu-nous’...*” *Rossano* 1990, 131 (Emphasis added); “L’autre n’est plus considéré comme un ‘objet de mission’ ... comme un ‘lui’ qui m’est indifférent, mais comme un ‘tu’ auquel je me réfère pour former un ‘nous’ de communion. Autrement dit, on passait de l’abstrait au concret, *de l’essentiel à l’existentiel*, de l’indifférence abstraite au rapport vivant et solidaire.” *Rossano* 1990, 132 (Emphasis added); “Voici que, sur ces religions, la Déclaration *Nostra aetate* s’exprimait en termes de sympathie, *existentiels et personalistes*, mettant l’accent sur le fonds commun d’humanité dont elles procèdent.” *Rossano* 1990, 132. (Emphasis added).

¹⁶⁵ *McFadden* (2003, 509) lists the following features in modern theological anthropology: 1) Man is a being-in-time in the sense that he experiences his own radical finitude; bounded by death, he perceives that he does not have any hold upon existence; 2) Man is historical or social; 3) Freedom is an essential prerequisite for human fulfillment, without which cultural advance is an illusory veneer; 4) Man is future-oriented.

concerns the relation between the classical philosophical concept of *esse*, and the modern philosophical emphasis on person. Now, this is entirely compatible with the theological, Aristotelian-Thomistic idea that the free human being is created for a purpose, for the Highest Good, and his or her duty is to strive, through good decisions, towards that purpose.¹⁶⁶ In Rossano's view, the human being, as a spiritual being, is a person that is free and sovereign with respect to his or her actions, and he or she has the right as well as the duty to make up his or her mind 'from within' and spontaneously.¹⁶⁷ Human beings are on the way, on a journey towards that purpose. They can also make bad decisions, as there is a reality of evil as well. Roman Catholic theology has made a synthesis of those modern philosophical currents and has used them in the theology of religions. There is an active interrelationship between philosophy and theology.¹⁶⁸ It can be added that Greek patristic theology—we have seen the renewed interest in it above—may lead rather to an existential than essential, a more real rather than speculative approach to the history of salvation.¹⁶⁹

So far, we have seen how the *nouvelle théologie* and "kerygmatic theology", especially Karl Rahner, as well as existentialism, personalism, and the pneumatological emphasis, in the framework of Trinitarian renaissance,¹⁷⁰ have influenced Vatican II and through Vatican II, both the SNC / PCID and John Paul II. There is, however, one final question to be dealt with.

Once again, we can cite Rossano to formulate this question:

At that time [1964] too, there was no homogeneous evaluation of the non-Christian religions on the part of Christian theologians. For centuries Catholic theology had only been interested in non-Christians un-

¹⁶⁶ Aristotelian thinking posits a Prime Mover, the First Principle, who has set everything into motion. He is the efficient cause, but at the same time the final cause because he is supremely "desirable".

¹⁶⁷ *Rossano* 1967, 137.

¹⁶⁸ "This commonality is seen *theologically*—indeed, all have God as their common origin and ultimate end; and *phenomenologically*—all seek in the different religions the answer to the arcane enigmas of the human condition." *Zago* 1987, 152. (Emphasis added); "Deux types de motivations sont indiquées dans ce texte conciliaire [NA 1], une de nature *ontologique* basée sur une vision théiste et l'autre de nature *existentielle* basée sur les questions fondamentales que se pose toute homme et sur sa soif innée de recherche." *Zago* 1999, 236. (Emphasis added).

¹⁶⁹ *Letter* 2003, 920. See also, e.g., *Rossano* 1970b, 87.

¹⁷⁰ *O'Donnell* (1988, 15) remarks: "Thus Buber's philosophy can be and has been a stimulus for Christian theologians to think of God's Being as community, but like Ebner's it does not as such reach a trinitarian God."

der the perspective of “de salute infidelium”. In apologetic tracts the salvific value and the supernatural origin of non-Christian religions was denied. ... As a result of the anthropological theology of K. Rahner there arose the explosive theories of non-Christians as “anonymous Christians” (A. Röper) and of the non-Christian religions as “ordinary ways of salvation” (Schlette). These last positions aroused perplexity and concern in missionary milieux, and some of the reactions were polemical. In this context the founding of the Secretariat for non-Christians appeared to indicate the taking up of a theological position, but what position?¹⁷¹

“What [theological] position?” Within the Christian theology of religions, three theological perspectives or paradigms¹⁷² vis-à-vis non-Christian religions can be distinguished in the 20th century: exclusivism, i.e. saving knowledge of God occurs only in Jesus Christ,¹⁷³ inclusivism, i.e. Christ is the means of God’s saving self-communication, even among those who do not profess him consciously, and pluralism, i.e. there are many parallel ways to God.¹⁷⁴ These perspectives are very broad typologies which try, at the risk of simplifying and overlapping, to cover most of the Christian attitudes to non-Christian religions. They have an indicative value and are not to be taken rigidly, even though basically they are mutually exclusive. The perspectives can be contested, or the typology can be reduced or widened.¹⁷⁵ Their useful-

¹⁷¹ *Rossano* 1979b, 91.

¹⁷² ‘Paradigm’ is understood here in a sense analogous to that of Thomas Kuhn, i.e., a whole set of methods and procedures dictated by a central problem-solving model.

¹⁷³ The Church’s attitude from the fifth century to the Middle Ages was basically that “outside the church there is no salvation”. The Council of Florence (1442) announced: “Firmiter credit, profitetur et praedicat, ‘nullos extra catholicam Ecclesiam existentes, non solum paganos’, sed nec Iudaeos aut haereticos atque schismaticos, aeternae vitae fieri posse participes, sed in ignem aeternum ituros, ‘qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius’ ...” DS 1351.

¹⁷⁴ One PCID criticism against pluralism is presented by *Duminuco* (1989, 91–92): “Pluralism thus proves to be a two-edged sword: for while it aims to respect the cultures, beliefs and values of others, it can result in a corrosive relativism and indifference which destroys faith commitment.” Cf. a Muslim view on pluralism: “As far as religious pluralism is concerned, Islam acknowledges the heavenly creeds that were revealed prior to it, and calls for the respect of their followers and the protection of the lives and property of these non-Muslims.” *Al-Abbadī* 1989, 116.—Another question is, of course, what is meant by “acknowledge” and what is the Islamic attitude towards non-revelational and non-monotheistic religions.

¹⁷⁵ A. Pieris has reduced all typologies of Christian approaches to other faiths in two models: the first is the “Christ-against-religion” model, i.e., neo-orthodox, evangelical, as well as Latin America liberation theologies, the second is the “Christ-of-religions” model, i.e. Catholic “anonymous Christians” theory, and India’s and the WCC cosmic Christology (*Pieris* 1983, 114–122). On this three-fold typology, see, e.g., *Lipner* 2002, *Race* 2001 and *Race* 1983, *D’Costa* 1986, *Knitter* 1995. For critical attitudes, see, e.g., *Barnes*

ness lies in the fact that they emphasize one or both of the two crucial Christian theological axioms: that salvation is given only in Christ by God, and that God wants the salvation of everybody.¹⁷⁶ The terminology¹⁷⁷ has been various, as no concept is totally univocal. Opinions go across different confessions, even though some generalizations can be presented.

What, then, has been the official position of Vatican II? Rossano continues: "The documents gave no precise indication."¹⁷⁸ So, the solution of the SNC / PCID was not to lay down any method, programme, or position, but to remain open and available to the bishops.¹⁷⁹ This, of course, has not meant that there was no theological position. However, at the same time it can be argued that Vatican II has probably been the most influential inclusivist factor in the Christian theology of religions through its official documents *Nostra Aetate*, *Lumen Gentium*, and *Ad*

1989, 29. See also *Heim* 1997, 4–6, 221. As a matter of fact, we can already speak of a kind of post-pluralism (see *Heim* 1997, 226), in the sense that real pluralism is to guarantee the differences and incompatibility of religions without an effort to create a unifying, levelling theory of their sameness. See, e.g., *Rescher* 2000. See also *DiNoia* 1990 and *DiNoia* 1998, *Clooney* 1991, *Fredericks* 1999, *D'Costa* 2000, and *Comeau* 2004. As to more elaborate typologies, J.P. Schineller presented already in 1976 four major categories: 1) ecclesiocentric universe, exclusive Christology; 2) Christocentric universe, inclusive Christology; 3) theocentric universe, normative Christology; and 4) theocentric universe, non-normative Christology. Ecclesiocentrism, Christocentrism and theocentrism represent paradigms or world-views. However, there are two theocentric positions. One gives a normative function to Jesus Christ in the order of relationships between God and humankind; in the other Jesus is one of many mediators (*Schineller* 1976). *Amato* (1994, 24–28) presents a five-fold typology: Christ "against" religions (exclusivist model), Christ "in" religions (inclusivist model), Christ "above" religions (normative model), Christ "with" other religions (pluralistic or relativistic model) and religions without Christ (liberation model). He obviously refers both to *Knitter* 1995 and to *Niebuhr* 1975. *Knitter* 2002 presents four major models: the replacement model, the fulfilment model, the mutuality model, and the acceptance model.

¹⁷⁶ *Rahner* (1969a, 122) states: "... if we wish to be Christians, we must profess belief in the universal and serious salvific purpose of God towards all men which is true even within the post-paradisean phase of salvation dominated by original sin." *Knitter* (1995, 121) remarks that from the patristic period to the 20th century there has always been a tension between two beliefs in the Roman Catholic Church: God's universal salvific will and the necessity of the church for salvation.

¹⁷⁷ See the discussion on terminology related to the Christian theology of religions in *Dupuis* 1999, 181–184.

¹⁷⁸ *Rossano* 1979b, 91. He continues: "Undoubtedly there were the renewed anthropology and ecclesiology of the Council, but these had yet to be assimilated to the Church. There was also the clear will of Paul VI to open the Church to communication with all men, but how was this communication to be brought about?" *Rossano* 1979b, 91.

¹⁷⁹ *Rossano* 1979b, 91.

Gentes. Even though they do not explicitly represent inclusivism (neither exclusivism nor pluralism), they do seem to signify a change in Roman Catholic theology from exclusivism to inclusivism.¹⁸⁰

Continuing in the same line that his predecessor Paul VI had followed, and especially founding his attitude towards non-Christians on the teaching of Vatican II,¹⁸¹ John Paul II may be said to be inclusivist,¹⁸² or “neoexclusivist”,¹⁸³ even though he cannot be easily classified, and his theological position has not been without contradictions.¹⁸⁴

Within inclusivism, there have been two mainline positions vis-à-vis non-Christian religions in Roman Catholic theology in the 20th century. Both positions affirm that seeds of spiritual and moral truths

¹⁸⁰ This seems to be linked to Rahner’s subtle shift from exclusivist ecclesiocentrism to inclusivist Christocentrism. *McGrath* (1997a, 536) remarks: “The distinction between Rahner and Vatican II can be summarized as follows. Rahner is both revelationally and soteriologically inclusive; Vatican II tends to be revelationally inclusive, yet soteriologically particularist.”—Cf. *Amato* 1994, 25; *Galembert* 1995, 64. A contrasting view is given, e.g., by *D’Costa* 2000, 109.

¹⁸¹ See, e.g., John Paul II’s high estimation of NA in his speech to the Bishops of Iran on their *Ad Limina* visit, Rome, December 3, 1994. Cited, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 532, and in *Fitzgerald* 1999b, 212.

¹⁸² “Avec Rahner, le point de vue de Jean-Paul II peut être désigné comme celui d’une christologie ‘inclusiviste’. On entend généralement par là le fait que Jésus Christ inclut les voies de salut de toutes les religions.” *Deneken* 1996, 178. Cf. the Jewish scholar *H. Kasimow* (1999, 7), who argues, like Deneken, that the Pope’s position seems to be similar to that of K. Rahner. See also *Maurice* 1995.

¹⁸³ This term is used by *Ayoub* (1999, 181): “But inasmuch as he [John Paul II] advocates interreligious dialogue, he may be considered a neoexclusivist. He is more aware of the diversity and richness of religious traditions than the ancient Church Fathers who first advocated this exclusivist doctrine [‘Extra ecclesiam nulla salus’]. But like them, he cannot accept genuine religious pluralism, because it compromises the Church’s mission to the nations.” See, e.g., the Pope’s letter to the Bishops of Asia, Rome, June 23, 1990, cited in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 437–438.—*Ayoub*’s view is shared by another Muslim, *Abu-Rabi* (1999, 199), who declares that the position of John Paul II on Islam “is politically and socially open, but theologically conservative. Salvation is to be sought inside the Church, and the only true Redeemer is Jesus Christ.” *Aydin* (2002, 71) notes: “For example, when the practical issues such as peace, justice, and human welfare are mentioned the Pope employs very positive statements. He even calls non-Christians brothers or sisters. But when theological issues are discussed, his attitude becomes rather negative. With regard to the question of salvation Pope John Paul II strongly argues that there is only one way to salvation and that it is the Christian way namely through Jesus Christ.” What the Muslim M. Aydin calls a “negative attitude” can be understood positively as the Pope’s conviction as a Christian theologian and the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁸⁴ *Camps* 2000, 167–168. Cf. *Kasimow*’s (1999, 5) viewpoint: “John Paul II... is a sophisticated theologian whose statements deserve very careful reading. Even so, they remain open to different interpretations.”

can be found outside Christianity. According to the “fulfilment theory”, “the various religions of humanity represent the human being’s innate desire for union with the Divine... Jesus Christ and Christianity, however, denote God’s personal response to this universal human aspiration. Thus, while all other religions are varied expressions of *homo naturaliter religiosus*, and so of ‘natural religion,’ only Christianity, as the divine response to the human quest for God, is ‘supernatural religion.’”¹⁸⁵ The other, opposite, position is called “theory of the presence of Christ in the religions” or “theory of Christ’s inclusive presence”. Dominant since the 1970s, it holds that the various religions of humankind represent God’s distinct interventions in salvation history. “However, these divine interventions in history are ordained to the decisive salvific event in Jesus Christ. As such, they played a positive role before the Christ-event as *praeparatio evangelica*; indeed, they keep, even today, a positive value in the order of salvation by virtue of the operative presence in them, and in some way through them, by the saving mystery of Jesus Christ.”¹⁸⁶ To put it briefly, inclusivism is often said to be the present position of the Roman Catholic Church, even though there has so far been no official Vatican document saying so. Vatican II seems to express an openness towards non-Christian religions when it acknowledges the presence of elements of “truth and grace” in them as a hidden presence of God’s action. Being inclusivist, it seems to support the perspective of the so-called “fulfilment theory”.¹⁸⁷ It continues to hold to Christ as the one Saviour and the constitutive cause of salvation. Consequently, it considers non-Christian religions already partially containing Christ’s grace, but views them as incomplete until fully incorporated into Christ and the Church.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Dupuis 1999, 132. A good example is given by Daniélou (1956, 26): “De même que les Juifs convertis voyaient à juste titre dans le christianisme non la destruction, mais *l’accomplissement de leur foi*, de même ces païens auront conscience, en adhérant au Christ, de ne pas renier le meilleur d’eux-mêmes, mais au contraire d’en trouver l’achèvement. Ceci signifiait que pour eux il y avait dans la tradition païenne, où ils avaient été élevés, des valeurs religieuses authentiques.” (Emphasis added).

¹⁸⁶ Dupuis 1999, 132. He continues (p. 133): “All religions, then, for more than one reason, are supernatural.”

¹⁸⁷ See, e.g., Ries 1987, 451; Aubert 1990a, 129.—Dupuis (1999, 134–137) affirms that J. Daniélou can be considered as the first Western theologian of the fulfilment theory. He also presents H. de Lubac and H.U. von Balthasar as representatives of the fulfilment theory (pp. 137–143). As representatives of the theory of Christ’s inclusive presence in the religions, he names K. Rahner, R. Panikkar, H. Küng, and G. Thils (pp. 143–157).

¹⁸⁸ Knitter 1984, 51.

As to the postconciliar period, there is a certain ambiguity. It is clear that the Roman Catholic Church's attitude to non-Christians is neither monolithic nor expressed in one single document. There are various overtones and possible interpretations in various documents. It is important to describe and analyse what is meant when it is said that the position of the Roman Catholic Church is inclusivist. Pope Paul VI seemed to be in favour of the inclusivist fulfilment theory. There are no excuses for Christians to abstain from proclaiming the Gospel to non-Christians. In his apostolic exhortation on evangelization in the modern world *Evangelii Nuntiandi*¹⁸⁹ (53) Paul VI summarizes the "fulfilment theory" in its classical form: "... neither respect and esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ. ... In other words, our religion effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship which the other religions do not succeed in doing, even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven."¹⁹⁰ Pope John Paul II, maybe more positive than his predecessor, has emphasized the universal active presence of the Spirit of God and of Christ,¹⁹¹ not only in individuals, as Vati-

¹⁸⁹ On December 8, 1975. Text in AAS 68 1976, 5–76.

¹⁹⁰ English translation in *Evangelization in the Modern World. Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi of His Holiness Pope Paul VI* (London: Catholic Truth Society 1990 [1976]), p. 24. Cited also (a slightly different translation) in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 82–83. It is strange that "the pope of dialogue" remains silent in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* on interreligious dialogue. *Sullivan* (1992, 187) proposes that J. Daniélou (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Daniélou* 1964) influenced the Pope's reflections on the significance of the non-Christian religions. There seems to have been two facets in Paul VI's thoughts: first, esteem for the spiritual and moral values found in non-Christian religions, and second, a sharp contrast between them and Christianity. He also urged Christians to work for the common good of all humankind and to promote better mutual understanding and friendship through dialogue. *Sullivan* (1992, 189) states: "... his [Paul VI's] description of the other religions as 'natural religious expressions' which 'do not succeed in establishing an authentic and living relationship with God' would suggest that he had little sympathy for the development of Catholic thinking about the salvific role of non-Christian religions..." Cf. *Paul VI* 1966, 13–14 = *Paul VI* 1967c, 56: "E le altre religioni? Sono sforzi, conati, tentativi, braccia levate verso il Cielo che cercano di arrivare, ma non corrispondono al gesto che Dio ha fatto per venire incontro all'uomo."

¹⁹¹ E.g. *Camps* 2000, 168. *Sullivan* (1992, 219, Note 18) pays attention to the fact that the Vatican II statement, which appears again and again in Pope John Paul II's writings and addresses, is the following passage in GS 22: "Quod non tantum pro christifidelibus valet, sed et pro omnibus hominibus bonae voluntatis in quorum corde gratia invisibili modo operatur. Cum enim pro omnibus mortuus sit Christus cumque vocatione hominis ultima revera una sit, scilicet divina, tenere debemus Spiritum Sanctum cunctis possibilitatem offerre ut, modo Deo cognito, huic paschali mysterio consocientur."—

can II underscored, but also in the religious traditions themselves—but even in this he has not clearly gone beyond the fulfilment theory.¹⁹² Emphasizing the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the world, he may be said to be closer to the theory of Christ's inclusive presence in the religions.

One PCID document “wards off ‘theocentric’ exclusivism, exceeds ‘christo-monism’, and avoids ‘pneumato-monism’. Kingdom, mission, and Church are structurally articulated. The Church clearly appears as a communion with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that is, people of God, body of Christ and temple of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹³ It is in this kind of Trinitarian framework in Christian-Muslim relations the Magisterium has underscored submission to the same God, one, personal, and creator,¹⁹⁴ which is important for dialogue with a religion like Islam, whose name itself means submission or surrender.

We will now take a closer look at how the theological positions described above—expressed or unexpressed—manifest themselves in the documentation of the SNC / PCID, within the framework of Roman Catholic theology of religions.

Cf. *Aubert* 1990a, 136: “Il n’y a pas d’avancée possible de la réflexion sur les relations de l’Eglise avec les religions non chrétiennes *sans un développement de la pneumatologie...*” (Emphasis added).

¹⁹² E.g. RM 5 1994, 8: “Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value *only* from Christ’s own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his.” *D’Costa* (2000, 114) remarks strikingly: “... if one were to retain and utilize the category of fulfilment in a very careful sense, then it is not only the other religions that are fulfilled in (and in one sense, radically transformed) their *preparatio* being completed through Christianity, but also Christianity itself that is fulfilled in receiving the gift of God that the Other might bear, self-consciously or not.”

¹⁹³ “Ainsi le Synode prévient l’exclusivisme ‘théocentrique’, dépasse le ‘christo-monisme’ et évite le ‘pneumato-monisme’. Royaume, Mission et Eglise sont structurellement articulés. L’Eglise apparaît clairement comme communion avec le Dieu Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit, c’est-à-dire peuple de Dieu, Corps du Christ et Temple du Saint-Esprit.” *Mbuka* 1995, 56. (Tr. by RJ).

¹⁹⁴ *Rossano* 1981b, 214 = *Rossano* 1982a, 22.

CHAPTER THREE

GOD AND HUMAN BEINGS

The anthropological turn in theology and its consequences

As seen above, anthropology was an important topic in Roman Catholic theology in the second half of the 20th century. Roman Catholic anthropology is above all theological; the theology of religions is based on a theological anthropology in which human beings created in the image of God stand at the centre and as the object of his love.¹ The major architect of this “anthropological turn” in theology was Karl Rahner. Walter Kasper is of the opinion that the basic formula of all Rahnerian theology is “to formulate Christology as a self-transcendent anthropology, and that anthropology in its turn as a deficient Christology.”² One of the clearest expressions of this anthropology in the documents of Vatican II is *Gaudium et Spes*, which begins with the following sentences: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men.”³ The ministries of Paul VI and John Paul I can be described a kind of period of reception and adoption of the anthropological ideas of Vati-

¹ *Rossano* 1979b, 103; *Sheard* 1987, 61–63. Cf. AG 39 and GS 62. “... transcendental theology was concerned not merely about the general question of the conditions of the possibility of Christian truth and its acceptance in belief; rather, this perspective was to be, from the very start, oriented toward the human being. Thus it would be bound up with an anthropocentric slant or orientation...” *Neufeld* 2000, 1082. Cf. the more Trinitarian remark of *Duval* 1989, 319: “L’image de Dieu dans l’homme est donc l’empreinte de la Trinité.”—On anthropology, see, e.g., *Haag* 1993, *Greshake* 1993, *Farrell* 2000, *Ladaria* 2000, and *McFadden* 2003.

² *Kasper* 1985, 49. See, e.g., *Gibellini* 1994, 253–270; *Langemeyer* 1997, 503.

³ GS 1 1966, 199–200. Cf. GS 41 1966, 240: “Whoever follows after Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man.” Cited, e.g., in *Sanna* 1997, 41. Cf. “... we are all humans who each day are in the process of becoming more human.” *Sheridan* 1989, 51.

can II. John Paul II said that “*to offend against man is, most certainly, to offend against God.*”⁴ In *Dialogue and Mission*, dialogue is given an anthropological foundation. The document says:

The Church opens itself to dialogue toward fidelity to man. ... As the human sciences have emphasized, in interpersonal dialogue one experiences one’s own limitations as well as the possibility of overcoming them. A person discovers that he does not possess the truth in a perfect and total way but can walk together with others toward that goal. Mutual affirmation, reciprocal correction, and fraternal exchange lead the partners in dialogue to an ever greater maturity which in turn generates interpersonal communion. Religious experiences and outlooks can themselves be purified and enriched in this process of encounter.⁵

In other SNC / PCID documents, the biblical concept of the ‘image of God’ is said to be present in the heritage of religions, and can be accepted with a rational and philosophical vision of human beings because the starting point of experiencing the sacred is common to all people from all civilizations and cultures. Because they share the common experience of the sacred, they also share a common anthropological concept based on it.⁶ Because a human being is created in the “image of God”, he or she has intelligence, conscience, and freedom, and God is part of his or her self-comprehension.⁷ The echoes of personalism are clear, but they are specifically in a Christian framework, because the concept of ‘person’ is primarily related to God, and only secondarily and by way of analogy to human beings. The Church represents an anthropology of the person which, at the same time, is respectful of human dignity and open to transcendence. “The Person leads to the person, theology leads to anthropology.”⁸ John Paul II’s

⁴ *John Paul II* 2002a, 91.

⁵ DM 21.—Here we notice a teleological emphasis, i.e. a person walks towards the truth, i.e., towards God.

⁶ *Sanna* 1997, 42. Cf. *Galenzoga* (1989, 110) who calls “man as a religious being in search of God.”

⁷ “*Gaudium et Spes*, in providing an outline of Christian anthropology concentrated on the theme of the image of God, dedicates the first chapter of its first section to the dignity of the human person and connects to it the bodily and spiritual composition of man, his intelligence, with which he shares in the light of God’s mind, his conscience, considered man’s most secret core and sanctuary, where he is alone with God, and his freedom, an exceptional sign of his having been created in God’s image.” *Sanna* 1997, 43.

⁸ *Sanna* 1997, 44, 50. “It is precisely the theological dimension of person that prevents man from being considered ‘in one dimension only’, from being reduced to

project of a new evangelization was based on an anthropological idea that the Christian is a person who is successfully realized, who opens his or her doors to Christ, and consequently, to every human being.⁹ But this anthropological turn returns back from philosophical fundamentals to theology, and more precisely, to Christology, because human beings were created in Christ, who was the perfect image of God. So, for Christian anthropology, in order to be persons, human beings must become integrated in Christ.¹⁰

One of the consequences of the anthropological turn is that all humanity becomes a shared unity,¹¹ with its joys and sorrows. It also issues a challenge to work for a better humanity, a better world, in genuine cooperation. Religions should place themselves at the service of humanity. Especially for Christians and Muslims, who make up roughly one half of the world's population, mutual cooperation is needed for the benefit of the whole of humanity. In fact, the goal towards which Christians and Muslims must move in all their various encounters is collaboration.¹² John Paul II said in Kenya in 1985:

Humanity has many needs. Foremost are *the social needs*: the need for just, honest and efficient government; the need to respect and defend human rights without any discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic group, religion, age, social class or sex; the right to live and raise one's family in peace, without fear that their physical and moral well-being will be menaced. In the face of all these human needs—spiritual, material and social—the religions of the world cannot remain passive. The great needs of our brothers and sisters are an urgent plea for a generous response in love, calling for mutual and effective collaboration.¹³

just a biological program, to an object of experimentation and treatment.” *Sanna* 1997, 44.

⁹ “The fact that the Wojtylian project of *new evangelization* envisages renewing the Christian fabric of human society through the renovation of the fabric of the ecclesial community, indirectly reveals his anthropological conviction that the Christian is the successfully realized person, and that only by starting from above and opening the door to Christ can the doors be opened to man, to every man.” *Sanna* 1997, 44.

¹⁰ *Sanna* 1997, 47.

¹¹ “... even within nature, created by God, there exists this imprint which can only be Divine: unity. The unity of all things, perhaps hidden by their apparent multiplicity and great variety. Unity seems to be ‘a sign of the times’: science cries out for it, nature moves towards it, nations and peoples try hard to achieve it. The world tends towards unity: this is its destiny, or better, this is God’s plan for it. And not only for our own planet, but for the whole cosmos.” *Aquilina* 1989, 125.

¹² *Michel* 1986, 190.

¹³ *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 296.

What should this interreligious collaboration, exhorted emphatically by *Nostra Aetate* 2,¹⁴ intend to achieve? John Paul II characterized the problems of humanity in his discourse to young Muslim people in Casablanca in 1985: "... a more human, more just, and more fraternal world will be able to be born, a world where each one can find his place in dignity and freedom. ... I wish that you may be able to help in thus building a world where God may have first place in order to aid and to save mankind. On this path, you are assured of the esteem and the collaboration of your Catholic brothers and sisters..."¹⁵ He referred to frontiers and divisions between men, to misunderstandings between the generations, to "generation gaps", to racism, wars and injustice, as well as to famine, waste, and unemployment. The Pope called these "dramatic evils", which touch all people, particularly young people, in the whole world.¹⁶ The anthropological and sociological emphases of the Pope's discourse in Casablanca in 1985 seem to be clear, even though he also emphasized the importance of theological reflection on the doctrinal foundations of interreligious dialogue.¹⁷

Concerning the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986, John Paul II called on all world religions to contribute to the birth of a more human, more just, and more fraternal world.¹⁸ Already in Nigeria in 1982 he said that if Christians and Muslims joined hands in the name of God they could accomplish much good,¹⁹ and invited Muslims to cooperate with Christians in various fields of social and societal life.

¹⁴ NA 2 1966, 662–663: "The Church therefore has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture."

¹⁵ *John Paul II* 1985e, 253, 256. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 301, 304.

¹⁶ *John Paul II* 1985e, 252. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 300.

¹⁷ *Žago* (1986, 178–179) states: "... Casablanca met aussi l'accent sur les différences dans les croyances respectives, surtout au sujet du Christ (n. 10), et développe non seulement la théologie (discours sur Dieu) commune (nn. 2, 4) mais appelle aussi l'attention sur l'anthropologie (nn. 5, 6, 8, 9) et la sociologie (nn. 5–8) communes; il évoque la situation du monde un et pluraliste (n. 7), avec les exigences concrètes de la collaboration et du dialogue (nn. 4–5, 7)." (Emphasis added) E.g. in his address to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Rome, November 13, 1992, John Paul II said: "This leads to a further point: the importance of theological reflection on the doctrinal foundations of the Church's efforts to promote interreligious dialogue." *John Paul II* 1993a, 8. Cited also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 500, and *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue* 1999, 41.

¹⁸ *John Paul II* 1987a, 23. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 342.

¹⁹ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 44.

In his speeches, the Pope proposed collaboration, particularly in socio-economic problems, and in cultural and human issues. For the Pope, the goal towards which Christians and Muslims must move in all their various encounters is cooperation and collaboration.²⁰ He also took up concrete questions raised by Christians and Muslims who live together: Christian women married to Muslim men; the participation of Muslims in Catholic action and student groups; the spiritual benefits that can accrue to Christian residents in Muslim lands; the role of Catholic women in dialogue with Muslims.²¹

An interesting feature in his speeches during his visits to Africa and Asia is the emphasis on traditional ways of life which include cooperation and brotherhood, which are key words in papal terminology. In other words, John Paul II seems to attach dialogue also to the cultural elements of society,²² because religion often represents the transcendent dimension of a culture.²³ Indeed, there seems to be a close connection between religions, religious faith, and culture.²⁴ Cooperation between Christians and Muslims is strongly emphasized because of their common religious heritage, faith in One Creator God.

Common humanity and its problems, as well as exhortations to cooperation are continuously mentioned also in SNC / PCID messages to Muslims for the end of Ramadan.²⁵ Even though SNC / PCID doc-

²⁰ Michel 1986, 190. Michel (1986, 184) notes: "In particular he [the Pope] cites the exhortation of *Nostra Aetate* that Christians and Muslims should together 'promote social justice, moral values, peace and liberty for all people' ..." Cf. Michel 1985, 187.

²¹ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 47. Cf. *El-Mawla* 1997, 90: "Women and men in Islam are not equal but made of the same substance because 'rib' in Hebrew as well as in Arabic means the same nature and the same mix." (Emphasis added).

²² See *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 20–27, 41–45. For Africa: see, e.g., what the Pope said to representatives of the Muslims of Cameroon in 1985: "We are all invited to unceasingly rediscover the most beautiful aspect of the traditions of the African peoples." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 291. For Asia: see, e.g., the Pope's speech to the people of Bangladesh in 1986, cited in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 354–355.

²³ "... l'expression religieuse est si profondément intégrée que la religion représente souvent la dimension transcendante de la culture elle-même." *John Paul II* 1997, 288.

²⁴ *John Paul II* 2000f, 163.

²⁵ "For this is indeed an opportunity for us to encounter one another simply as believers... and to contact one another in what is most basic to our common humanity, where fraternity and solidarity have their roots." *Cuoq* 2000e, 16; "... Muslims and Christians should take their place, more than anyone, in the construction and consolidation of a better world for humanity." *Pignedoli* 2000d, 29–30; "Conscious of our differences, let us work together with mutual respect for each other's convictions... so that we can build a world of justice and mercy, in which man can give glory to God the Creator." *Jadot* 2000b, 33; "Thus we are ready, dear friends, to join our efforts to yours... to place ourselves together at the service of anxious, wounded, and frustrated

umentation and all of Vatican II documentation mention ethics only a few times, there are two ethical domains²⁶ which seem to be essential in SNC / PCID documentation in the framework of Christian-Muslim relations. The first is the rights of individual human beings, the dignity of human beings.²⁷ Vatican II produced *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Declaration on Religious Freedom, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* deals with the social duty of religion and the right to religious freedom.²⁸ Besides emphasizing the importance of cooperation and common projects, John Paul II did not fail to remind Christian audiences especially of the importance of paying attention to human dignity in

humanity, and to work together to maintain religious values in our modern civilization which is often overly preoccupied with worldly goals and well-being.” *Arinze* 2000a, 36–37; “Only if we commit ourselves to true cooperation can there be a hope of peace.” *Arinze* 2000h, 52; “... God has given us duties towards our neighbour and generally to human society.” *Arinze* 2000i, 54; “It is in the family that the individual is first nourished with that divine love and compassion which the person in turn is invited to show towards others in striving to make the entire human race God’s family on earth.” *Arinze* 2000j, 56; “As members of the one human family, we could work in solidarity to help those in need.” *Arinze* 2000j, 57; “But this supposes... mutual forgiveness from the bottom of the heart, true reconciliation and a common commitment to building a better world for future generations.” *Arinze* 2000l, 61; “How can we commit ourselves to the service of humanity, to every person and to the whole person, on the basis of our faith in God?” *Arinze* 2000m, 63; “How sad it is when Muslims and Christians, who are part of the one human family, ignore one another ...” *Arinze* 2000n, 64; “Such dialogue ... could lead naturally to collaboration in the fields already mentioned.” *Arinze* 2001; “This implies the ability to recognize that we all belong to one human family, and so to see our fellow human beings as our brothers and sisters.” *Fitzgerald* 2003b. Cf. *Farias* 1984, 89: “Because we belong to kindred communities of faith, there are many areas in which Christians and Muslims can come together for action to foster the welfare of men and women in society. Because both Christians and Muslims believe in God who is good and absolute, we can join together to defend and promote moral values—justice, truthfulness, honesty, and other moral and human values without which no society can function in peace and harmony.” *Coughlan* (1980, 86) says: “The group spoke of faith in the one, true God as the rock on which both Christianity and Islam rest.”

²⁶ Ethics seems to be a common ground between SNC/PCID and pluralistically oriented theology of religions, represented by e.g. J. Hick and P. Knitter (see *D’Costa* 2000, 30). Cf. the comments of *Nasr* 1998, 130–131.

²⁷ Cf. *Borrmans* 2002a, 60: “Si la Déclaration *Nostra Aetate* parle peu d’éthique ‘commune’ et invite très vite aux collaborations nécessaires, le magistère de Jean Paul II, à la suite de celui de Paul VI, en a développé les fondements et les modalités. L’éminente dignité de l’homme est sans cesse rappelée...”—One entire PCID publication deals with this theme, namely *Human Dignity*. Acts of a Christian-Muslim Colloquium, organized jointly by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research Al Albait Foundation (Amman, Jordan) (Amman [Jordan], 2–4 December 1997).

²⁸ CCC 2104–2109.

such actions. In 1979 in Turkey the Pope emphasized the common faith of the spiritual descendants of Abraham, which can serve as a foundation for the dignity, brotherhood, and freedom of human beings as well as a principle of uprightness for moral conduct and life in society. However, John Paul II mentioned, almost unnoticed, in subordinated clauses, two conditions: when this faith is lived sincerely and when it penetrates life.²⁹ In 1985 to young Moroccan Muslims he emphasized obedience to God and the love for human beings. These two should lead to respect for human rights. For the Pope, the human rights are the expression of God's will and the demands of human nature, created by God.³⁰ As he said to the Christian participants of *Journées Romaines* in 1989: "... you ask yourselves about the possibility of arriving at a common project of society with Muslims. A sound agreement on the qualities of life in society can only be based on respect for the human being, the image of God, on respect for human dignity and rights, and also on disinterested service of the whole person in a concrete solidarity."³¹

²⁹ "Faith in God, professed by the spiritual descendants of Abraham—Christians, Muslims and Jews—when it is lived sincerely, when it penetrates life, is a certain foundation of the dignity, brotherhood and freedom of men and a principle of uprightness for moral conduct and life in society." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 220–221. The Pope also referred to the rights of human beings in the framework of Christian-Muslim dialogue: "Because of this faith that we have in God, Christianity and Islam have *many things in common*... and above all a sacred respect for the dignity of man, which is at the foundation of the basic rights of every human being, including the right to life of the unborn child." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 251; "Thus humanity is invested with a great dignity which can never be taken from it. Every man and every woman has the rights that belong to them as a direct result of their human condition, and we have the duty to exercise these rights in a responsible way for the good of everyone." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 290; "...the need to respect and defend human rights without any discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic group, religion, age, social class or sex..." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 296; "... I express the fervent hope and prayer that your country [Bangladesh] may go steadily forward:—in respect for the dignity of every individual ..." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 355; "... our actions must be founded upon a respect for the inalienable dignity and freedom of the human person created and loved by God." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 428–429; "The origin and divine destiny of the human person are the basis of his or her dignity. No one has the right to spurn another human being, especially one who is weaker. There is no justification for discrimination based on race, creed, sex or social situation. Every person is to be respected." *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 475.

³⁰ *John Paul II* 1985e, 252. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 300.

³¹ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 81. On *Journées Romaines*, see, e.g., *Borrman* 2004b, *Kaulig* 2004, 189–288, and *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 80–81. *Arinze* (2000b, 38–39) said in 1985: "To recall but a few of the possible fields of action, I would mention the defence of the rights of man, especially those of minorities..." Cf. *Arinze* 2001: "Next comes *the dignity of the human person* and the rights which flow from it; these we must

In this connection it is very noteworthy that John Paul II did not hide the difficulties in Christian-Muslim relations as to the rights of human beings or to the freedom of religion. He said to the diplomatic corps in 1985 that the domain of religious liberty must also include a reciprocity, an equality of treatment. The Pope said that he could understand the astonishment and the feeling of frustration of Christians who welcome non-Christians to Europe, give them the possibility of exercising their worship, and then see themselves forbidden all exercise of Christian worship in such countries where these non-Christians are in the majority and have made their faith the State religion.³² In 1999 he was even clearer in his address to the diplomatic corps: "In other regions, *where Islam is the majority religion*, one still has to deplore the grave forms of discrimination of which the followers of other religions are victims. There is even one country where Christian worship is totally forbidden and where possession of a Bible is a crime punishable by law."³³

The second ethical domain is peace, especially since the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986.³⁴ John Paul II identified develop-

promote for all." (Emphasis added)—A Muslim, Mohamed Hajoui-Taalibi, responded to the visit of the Pope in Morocco: "In the course of this visit, the two spiritual leaders will treat the great problems which humanity faces: the problem of peace, of detente, of cooperation between nations, of dialogue between religions, civilizations and cultures. The whole Moroccan people, with His Majesty the King at their head, hopes that this visit will be the beginning of a new age of mutual cooperation between Muslims and Christians for the benefit of the whole of humanity." *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 63.—John Paul II said to Muslims of Senegal in 1992: "In dialogue, we who believe in the goodness of God have a special duty to address the problems of our people and search together for solutions which can make modern society more just, more humane, more respectful of the human freedom, rights, and dignity of each individual." Cited in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 125.

³² *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 282.

³³ *John Paul II* 1999c, 284–285. Without any doubt the Pope was referring here to Saudi Arabia. It is to be noted that the both speeches were given to diplomats, not to religious leaders. See *Borrmans* 2004a, 19.

³⁴ "... there exists another dimension of peace and another way of promoting it which is not a result of negotiations, political compromises or economic bargainings." *John Paul II* 1987b, 29. The importance of the Assisi meeting for interreligious dialogue can hardly be overestimated. *Ceffré* (1987, 4) notes: "Pour la première fois dans l'histoire religieuse de l'humanité, on peut parler d'un véritable dialogue entre les grandes religions du monde." Cf. *Assise, dix ans après* 1996, *Arinze* 1997, and *Amell* 1998. *Ries* (1987, 408–409, 422–423) places Assisi in connection with the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, September 11–27, 1893. See *Kuschel* 1995, 247. *Fitzgerald* (1999b, 208) states that the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi was no doubt "the most important initiative the Pope has taken in the field of interreligious relations". The

ment with peace.³⁵ This emphasis on peace can be seen as part of a world-wide concern in interreligious encounters. Peace, of course, is a complex concept.³⁶ It can be argued that the Roman Catholic teaching of peace is founded on the complementary virtues of justice and charity.³⁷ Basically, peace has its sources in God,³⁸ whose name must become increasingly what it is: God's name is a name of peace as well as a summons to peace.³⁹ In his concluding remarks on the occasion

significance of this meeting in the Roman Catholic theology seems to be that it showed that dialogue and encounter could take place also on the spiritual level, as a common God-experience. The Pope himself said to the Roman Curia in Rome (December 22, 1986): "The event of Assisi can thus be considered as a visible illustration, a concrete example, a catechesis, intelligible to all, of what is presupposed and signified by the commitment to ecumenism and to the interreligious dialogue which was recommended and promoted by the Second Vatican Council." *John Paul II* 1987f, 58. Cited also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 363.—A more precise voice can be heard in *Boestflug* (1996, 290): "... ce [la rencontre d'Assise] ne fut pas, à proprement parler, une rencontre entre religions, puisque la participation de chacune a été doublement conditionnée, par l'envoi d'une invitation sélective et par son acceptation: mais une rencontre libre entre des responsables religieux, à l'initiative de l'un d'entre eux, chacun assumant le risque attaché au fait de venir à Assise en passant par Rome."—Two PCID documents deal specifically with peace: *Peace: a Single Goal and a Shared Intention* (2002), and *Spiritual Resources of the Religions for Peace* (2003).

³⁵ *Fuček* 2000, 579. Cf. *Anastasios* 2002, 46: "Today, we must also include another critical word, a 'surname' for peace—And that is *development*. How is it possible to have peace without justice and development?"

³⁶ GS 78 1966, 290: "Peace is not merely the absence of war. ... Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice." *Curran* 2003, 48: "... it [peace] is the tranquil composure of soul that an individual experiences in the absence of a strong conflict of urge or desire between different elements of his own being." Cf. PD 118 2005, 119.

³⁷ "... peace is the work of justice impelled by charity to a full recognition and implementation of human rights." *Wright* 1967, 41–42. GS 77 (1966, 290) states that "this Council fervently desires to summon Christians to cooperate with all men in making secure among themselves a peace based on justice and love, and in setting up agencies of peace." Cf. *Machado* 2002b, 7: "The Holy Father... spoke of the two 'pillars' of peace, namely, commitment to *justice* and readiness to *forgive*." Cf. *John Paul II* 2002a, 90, and *John Paul II* 2002b, 38.—In the "Common Commitment to Peace" (*Peace: a Single Goal* 2002), peace and justice are strongly linked together: "... peace without justice is no true peace." (p. 93); "... peace and justice are inseparable, and that peace in justice is the only path which humanity can take towards a future of hope." (p. 94)—A Muslim writer adds another element to peace: "... a world dominated by love and peace based on justice and *the right of self-determination of peoples*. ... a peace based on justice and *the right of peoples to self-determination*." *El-Assad* 1992, 14. (Emphasis added)—On human rights set in the interreligious context of ethics, see, e.g., *Concilium* 228 1990 (editorial by *H. Küng* and *J. Moltmann*), the theme of which is "L'éthique des grandes religions et les droits de l'homme".

³⁸ *John Paul II* 2002a, 91.

³⁹ *John Paul II* 2001d, 47.

of the Day of Prayer for Peace 2002, Cardinal Arinze noted how various religions may have different conceptions of peace: “The speakers have underlined many of their requirements for peace from the point of view of their religions, especially: justice, mutual respect and acceptance, respect for human life, solidarity, willingness to share, no one to dominate, whether [sic] individuals or nations, respect for other religions, thanksgiving to God and thanksgiving to one another, self control...”⁴⁰

Peace is also precisely one specific area which has often been mentioned in Christian-Muslim relations. The fostering of peace is a theme already mentioned in *Nostra Aetate* 3 and often repeated by John Paul II. In 1979 the Pope said to the Catholic Community of Ankara that it was urgent to recognize and develop spiritual bonds which unite Christians and Muslims to preserve and promote together peace, liberty, social justice, and moral values. This would happen for the benefit of all human beings, as the Second Vatican Council had called upon Christians to act.⁴¹ In Casablanca in 1985 he said that the world desires unity and peace. Paradoxically, at the same time it experiences thousands of tensions and conflicts. Believers should favour friendship and union between all human beings who form, on earth, only one community.⁴² Concerning the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986 John Paul II affirmed that even though the world religions have often been the causes of division, they all have a decisive role to play in the building of world peace. The Pope said that the gift which all humanity needs the most for survival is peace.⁴³ In Rome in 1986 John Paul II stated that he was praying for real peace in justice.⁴⁴ In Rome in 1994 he said: “*Religion and peace go together: to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction.*”⁴⁵ Peace is seen as a fundamental value for

⁴⁰ Arinze 2002b, 77. Cf. Arinze 2002e.—A critical observer might ask: in the light of these words, is the title of the 2002 PCID publication *Peace: a Single Goal and a Shared Intention* fully appropriate? Peace is certainly a *shared* intention, but is it really a *single* goal for all religions?

⁴¹ *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 220.

⁴² John Paul II 1985c, 250. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 299. Cf. Cassidy 2005, 232.

⁴³ John Paul II 1987a, 23. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 341–342.

⁴⁴ “C’est ma prière fervente que la paix véritable dans la justice soit bientôt rétablie dans votre région [Iran].” *La Documentation Catholique*, N° 1932, 18 janvier 1987, p. 82. The original English text is in *L’Osservatore Romano*, October 17, 1986.

⁴⁵ The Pope’s address to the participants in the Sixth Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) at the Synod Hall, Rome, November 3, 1994, cited in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 530. Cited also in Arinze 1998, 90. The World Conference on Religion and Peace can be seen as an active expression of this Vatican

every religion,⁴⁶ and a mission of religion today to build peace in the world.⁴⁷ In fact, religions are indispensable for peace,⁴⁸ because they are at the service of peace.⁴⁹

The reason for these strong exhortations to peace seems to be the Pope's theological and anthropological conviction that the human being is rational, has free will, and thus is capable of choosing peace instead of war. For the Pope, peace is something good on the human level, on the rational and moral level. Peace is "the fruit" of free will. Free will is guided by reason towards the common good to be achieved.⁵⁰ The Pope's idea of the human being striving towards the Good is very clear.⁵¹ For Muslims, too, to be in the service for the common good is a suitable goal.⁵²

In his address to Muslims for the end of Ramadan in 1991, John Paul II explained how peace has several dimensions: it means peace with the Creator, with the universe, within the human family, and in the hearts of individuals.⁵³ In 1992 the Pope said to the Muslims of Senegal that Christians and Muslims have a special duty to work for peace. This means collaboration in building the social structures, on the national and international level, and reduction of tensions as well as prevention of tensions from escalating into violent conflict.⁵⁴ The African bishops said in their message to Muslims in 1994 that they wished to collaborate with Muslims, everywhere in Africa, in working

theological emphasis. See also *Arinze's* viewpoint (1998, 84): "Among the values shared between Christianity and Islam, peace deserves special mention."

⁴⁶ "Peace is also a fundamental sacred value for every religion." *Machado* 2002b, 5.

⁴⁷ *Machado* 2002b, 9.

⁴⁸ *Arinze* 2002a, 13.

⁴⁹ *John Paul II* 2002a, 90.

⁵⁰ *John Paul II* 1987g, 74. Cf. "Common Commitment to Peace" in *Peace: a Single Goal* (2002, 93): "Gathered here in Assisi, we have reflected together on peace, a gift of God and a common good of all mankind." (Emphasis added).

⁵¹ Cf. "Human beings are naturally drawn to peace." *Machado* 2002b, 5. (Emphasis added).

⁵² "... we can emphasize the links and ties, the like-mindedness that we have developed at least in the service of common good and of human dignity." *El Hassan bin Talal* 1997, 10.

⁵³ "It is the way of peace: a union of peace with our Creator expressed in doing his will; peace within the whole created universe, by using its benefits wisely and for the good of all; peace within the human family, by working together to build strong bonds of justice, fraternity, and harmony within our societies; peace in the hearts of all individuals, who know from whom they have come, why they are on this earth, and to whom they will one day return." *John Paul II* 2000k, 50.

⁵⁴ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 125.

for peace and justice, giving glory to God.⁵⁵ Cardinal Arinze said in 1985: “To recall but a few of the possible fields of action, I would mention... peace and disarmament, cooperation to overcome hunger in the world, assistance to refugees and serious efforts to enable the return to their homelands.”⁵⁶ In the messages to Muslims for the end of Ramadan, peace as a theme has been repeated almost every year,⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 132.

⁵⁶ *Arinze* 2000b, 38–39.

⁵⁷ E.g. “... may your feast be the omen of a new age of peace and human reconciliation in this dialogue between one brother to a brother found again.” *Cuoq* 2000a, 9; “More than ever our world has need of an ideal to put an end to wars, to reduce tensions and to promote peace and brotherhood.” *Cuoq* 2000b, 11; “... there is more resourcefulness in each one of us than we thought, to work for peace and economic development in justice and fairness.” *Cuoq* 2000c, 12; “That God... give us permanent, true and just peace, which we need since many years.” *Pignedoli* 2000a, 20; “... while you see peace and concord established in our world.” *Pignedoli* 2000b, 22; “This peace, which each of you sincerely desires, is at the same time a basic requirement of our religion.” *Pignedoli* 2000c, 23; “... praying that you may be enriched with its [the Fast’s] spiritual values and that it may help you, together with the Christians, to promote peace in the world.” *Pignedoli* 2000d, 30; “... we all feel called... to make every effort to maintain spiritual values and to vindicate the higher goods of justice and peace.” *Pignedoli* 2000e, 31; “... our good wishes for you revolve about the concept of peace which is both the universal hope of the human family and a religious value for all of us...” *Arinze* 2000c, 40; “To obtain this peace, prayer is needed as an essential requisite, but we also need to be witnesses to peace through our actions.” *Arinze* 2000d, 43; “... as the peoples of the Middle East move slowly on the painful path to a lasting and just peace.” *Arinze* 2000h, 52; “...we ask God the Beneficent and Giver of all good gifts to grant us, Muslims and Christians alike, and indeed all people, the strength to commit ourselves anew to this work of building peace through interreligious dialogue and collaboration.” *Arinze* 2000h, 53; “There are numerous ‘signs of hope’: the growing solidarity among people in our time, especially with the poor and destitute, the desire for justice and peace...” *Arinze* 2000n, 64; “Social justice, peace and freedom are also major values that are necessary for a life worthy of human beings...” *Arinze* 2001; “You are well aware, dear friends, how acute has become the question of *peace* in our world today. ... In bringing about peace, and maintaining it, *religions* have an important role to play...” *Fitzgerald* 2002b (the PCID message 2002 to Muslims is entitled *Christians and Muslims and the Ways to Peace*); “... I should like to share with you some reflections, and it would seem appropriate to centre these on the need to construct peace.” *Fitzgerald* 2003b (the message of 2003 to Muslims is entitled *Constructing Peace Today*).—Sometimes the address of peace is directed to a specific group, as *Akashah* 2002b, 253: “Les chrétiens du Liban sont appelés à être artisans et prophètes de la paix, et dans les relations interreligieuses, à développer ce sens de la paix comme un élément fondamental du dialogue fraternel, notamment par des gestes concrets de paix, de pardon, à l’exemple de nombreux saints.”—A Muslim states: “In a nutshell the word peace itself and reference to it in the Holy Qur’an figure more than 160 times. This only goes to prove that Islam is the religion of peace.” *Sheweitah* 2002, 72. This way of reasoning seems not to be very valid: the frequency of a term does not define its use in the textual discourse,

and in the Tripoli Seminar on the Islamic-Christian dialogue in 1976 peace, connected to human rights, was also one theme in the final declaration.⁵⁸

But not only religion and peace, but also peace and prayer are joined in SNC / PCID documentation. Peace is seen as a gift of God.⁵⁹ This does not mean a passive attitude, but rather believers' attitude of prayer and collaboration for peace.⁶⁰ John Paul II said in Assisi 2002: "If peace is God's gift and has its source in him, where are we to seek it and how can we build it, if not in a deep and intimate relationship with God? To build the peace of order, justice and freedom requires, therefore, a *priority commitment to prayer*, which is openness, listening, dialogue and finally union with God, the prime wellspring of true peace."⁶¹ All people of religion should come together to pray for this gift of peace. Doing this, they attest that peace is a gift of God which surpasses human efforts. In fact, John Paul II added a Christological dimension when he said that peace is a gift of God in Jesus Christ, and an ecclesiological dimension when he said that the Church is called to be the effective sign and means of reconciliation and peace.⁶² There will not be lasting peace without prayer, which is an important agent of peace and an essential requisite for the obtainment of peace.⁶³

and does not prove anything of substance. In the Qur'an the word *salam*, "peace", is most frequently used as a form of salutation (*Arendonk* 1995, 915).

⁵⁸ "The two parties affirm that the promotion of Peace is part of the mission of Religion." B 31 1976, 18.

⁵⁹ E.g. *John Paul II* 1987a, 23. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 341–342. See also, e.g., *John Paul II* 2003a, 307, *John Paul II* 2005f, 28, and *Machado* 2002b, 5. This idea is confirmed, e.g., by *Ainadou* 2002, 81 (African traditional religion): "But I recognize in the first place that peace is a gift of God to us."

⁶⁰ "In this situation believers have an urgent responsibility to *pray and work together for peace*." *John Paul II* 1993a, 8.

⁶¹ *John Paul II* 2002d, 47. Citing the same passage, *Fitzgerald* (2003b) says: "To these four pillars [of peace] I would be inclined to add a fifth, namely *prayer*." See also, e.g., *John Paul II* 2004d, 155.

⁶² "Our faith teaches us that peace is a gift of God in Jesus Christ, a gift which should express itself in prayer to him who holds the destinies of all peoples in his hands. ... The Church is herself called to be the effective sign and means of reconciliation and peace for the human family." *John Paul II* 1987c, 34, 35.

⁶³ *Arinze* 2000d, 43. Cf. *John Paul II* 2002c, 43: "It [the gathering of prayer for peace in Assisi] shares the same goal: to pray for peace, which is above all a gift to be implored from God with fervent and trusting insistence." Also in *Machado* 2002b, 7. Cf. *Fitzgerald* 2002b: "Christians and Muslims, we believe that peace is above all a gift from God. This is why our two communities *pray for peace*; it is something they are always called to do." *Arinze* (2002b, 77) concludes that requirements for peace should be put together

Faith in the one Creator God

It is often said that the doctrine of God may be one of the most difficult issues in Christian-Muslim encounters. On the one hand, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, or the tri-unity of God, usually appears irrational and gratuitous to Muslims. On the other hand, the Islamic doctrine of God's unity (*tawhid*) is incomplete to most Christians because it excludes Christ.⁶⁴ It is a well-known idea that there is no deity but God in Islam. God is absolutely one and unique.⁶⁵ This idea appeared early in the Meccan period of Muhammad, marking the contrast between the belief of Muslims and of pagans who worshipped not only Allah as creator, but also other deities.⁶⁶ It is another well-known fact that the Qur'an claims that Muslims and Christians have the same God, who is one: "We believe in that which hath been revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One" (Sura 29:46), and that it obviously criticizes the Trinity or tritheism.⁶⁷ For Muslims, God's oneness cannot be reconciled with the Trinity, which for them is nothing else than tritheism. So, finally Christians are really not monotheists, but "associators", i.e., they have committed the sin of *shirk*, associating (other deities with God).⁶⁸

Throughout history, Muslims have accused Christians of worshipping three gods, which in Islam is the worst possible sin, *shirk*. Keep-

"in the attitude of the human person towards God, prayer."—I will come back to interreligious prayer in Chapter Six below.

⁶⁴ Hoover 2004, 1.

⁶⁵ There are philosophical and epistemological problems in this affirmation (*tawhid*), especially concerning the so-called attributes of God and his essence, the eternal existence of the Qur'an, and the relation between revelation and transcendence.—Cf. Sura 112 and what the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) says about God in DS 800 and DS 806.

⁶⁶ Watt 1983, 49.—*Allah* in Arabic simply means "God". Not only Muslims, but also Arabic-speaking Christians use it in reference to God.

⁶⁷ Watt (1983, 50) is of the opinion, to refer to Sura 5:73, that Islam does not directly criticize in this verse the doctrine of the Trinity, and he may be right. However, he does not refer on this occasion to the Qur'anic teaching of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Cf. Watt 1967. Anyway, following the example of Muhammad, who did not say anything about God *ad intra*, Muslims do not want to go further than their prophet.

⁶⁸ *al-Attas* (1998, 119) notes: "According to Islam the paramount vital doctrines of Western Christianity such as the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption and other details of dogma connected with them are all cultural creations which are categorically denied by the Holy Qur'an as divinely inspired." *Teissier* (1989, 106) says: "Si la Trinité et l'Incarnation Rédemptrice sont révélées par Dieu lui-même, comme le pense les chrétiens, l'Islam s'effondre en tant que Parole sur Dieu et sur l'homme."

ing in mind this essential problem in Christian-Muslim relations, it is no wonder that there is a heavy emphasis on the unicity of God in SNC / PCID documentation, especially during the ministry of John Paul II, even though Paul VI also mentioned the one (and same) God of Christians and Muslims.⁶⁹ This is a Christian response to Muslim accusations of *shirk*.

Probably the most famous speech to the Muslims by any pope so far has been the message of John Paul II to young Muslims in the stadium of Casablanca on August 19, 1985.⁷⁰ It is also the longest and most comprehensive speech that the Pope ever delivered to Muslims.⁷¹ The visit in Morocco was the Pope's first official visit in an Islamic country, and also the first time that he spoke to such a large Muslim audience (approx. 80,000 youths). Pope John Paul II began his speech by referring to "the mystery of God". He said:

We believe in the same God, the one God, the living God, the God who created the world and brings his creatures to their perfection. It is therefore towards this God that my thought goes and that my heart rises: it is of God himself that, above all, I wish to speak with you; of him,

⁶⁹ ES 107 notes: "Circa nos deinde circulum itidem amplissimum prospectamus, qui a nobis est minus longinquus. Eo imprimis homines comprehenduntur, qui Deum unum et summum adorant, quem nos quoque colimus. Mentionem scilicet inicimus de filiis gentis Iudaeae, reverentia et amore nostro sane dignis, qui eam retinent religionem, quam Veteris Testamenti propriam esse dicimus; deinde de iis, qui Deum adorant religionis forma, quae monotheismus dicitur, maxime ea qua Mahometani sunt astricti; quos propter ea quae in eorum cultu vera sunt et probanda, merito admiramur; ac demum de sectatoribus ampliarum religionum Africanarum et Asiaticarum." AAS 56 1964, 654–655. There is an interesting discrepancy between the English-language and the French-language text of the speech given by Paul VI to the Ambassador of Pakistan in 1972. In the English version he said: "We would also like you to know that the Church recognises the riches of the Islamic faith—a faith that binds us to *the one God*." *Paul VI* 1972b, 2 (English edition), whereas in the French version he said: "Nous aimerions aussi que vous sachiez que l'Eglise est consciente des richesses de la foi Islamique—une foi qui nous rattache tous *au seul et même Dieu*." *Paul VI* 1972c, 2 (French edition; emphasis added).

⁷⁰ This speech can be found e.g. in B 60 1985, 249–257 (English), and in *Islamochristiana* 11 1985, 193–200 (French) and 201–208 (English). *Seminarium* published a special number, containing a detailed analysis and pastoral commentary of the speech, entitled *Ioannes Paulus II et Islamismus*, anno XXXVIII, Ianuario-Martio 1986.—*Zago* (1986, 177) considers the Pope's visit to Casablanca as "a new start for Christian-Muslim dialogue" ("Casablanca: pour un nouveau départ du dialogue islamo-chrétien"), and *Ries* (1987, 414) as "the summit of all the [Christian-Muslim] encounters" ("sommets de toutes les rencontres"). *Fitzgerald* (1999b, 208) states that the Pope's speech in Casablanca "has proved to be one of his most important talks to Muslims". See also *Mohammed* 1999, 80.

⁷¹ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 66.

because it is in him that we believe, you Muslims and we Catholics. ... First of all, I invoke the Most High, the all-powerful God who is our creator. He is the origin of all life, as he is at the source of all that is good, of all that is beautiful, of all that is holy.⁷²

The speech is often referred to as a model of Christian-Muslim dialogue, and Cardinal Arinze cited it in 1996 and 2000 in his messages to Muslims for the end of Ramadan.⁷³ The theme of God's unicity and sameness came up several times in the speeches of John Paul II to Muslims and Christians.⁷⁴

But not only is God one; he is also Creator. In Christian theology God creates by wisdom and love, he creates *ex nihilo*, and he creates an ordered and good world.⁷⁵ This can be seen already in the speech cited above. He is the God "who created the world and brings his creatures to their perfection" and "who is our creator." The Pope placed an anthropocentric emphasis on creation and on the dominion which human beings exercise.⁷⁶ John Paul II said to the government and religious leaders in Nigeria in 1982 that Christians and Muslims lived under the sun of the one merciful God. They both believe in one God who is the Creator of all.⁷⁷ This faith in a Creator God is shared

⁷² *John Paul II* 1985e, 249, 250. The first phrase is repeated by the Pope in *John Paul II* 1999c, 85, and *John Paul II* 1999g, 303. Arinze cited it in his introduction to the discourse of the Pope in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 66–67.

⁷³ Arinze 2000, 60, and Arinze 2000p, 68. Especially the latter citation concerns God's unicity and the Trinity.

⁷⁴ E.g. *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 72: "As I have often said in other meetings with Muslims, your God and ours is one and the same, and we are brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham." Cited also, e.g., in *Islamochristiana* 11 1985, 3, and *John Paul II* 1985a, 222. Cited in French in *Kayitakibga* 1986, 202. Other examples of "one God": "Nous croyons les uns et les autres en un seul Dieu, Créateur de l'homme." *John Paul II* 1982, 20; "The spiritual ties between Muslims and Christians, especially in their common belief in God who is one, merciful and almighty, and who has revealed himself to man, are a sound foundation..." *John Paul II* 1986a, 5; "Chrétiens et Musulmans, nous croyons en Dieu, Créateur de l'homme et de l'univers tout entier, nous l'adorons et nous nous efforçons de nous soumettre à sa volonté." *John Paul II* 1992d, 17; "As Christians and Muslims, we share belief in 'the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 16)." *John Paul II* 1998c, 276; "I also cherish memories of my meeting with the most important representatives of Islam, with whom I wanted to stress the importance of the spiritual bonds linking Christians and Muslims: faith in the one merciful God..." *John Paul II* 1998e, 279.

⁷⁵ CCC 293–301. Cf. Ehr/Eds. 2003, 342–343. In Christian theology, creation is a work of the whole Trinity. Cf. *Adv. Haer.* IV, 20, 1,3,4; *Adv. Haer.* V, 1,3.

⁷⁶ Irwin 1996, 81.

⁷⁷ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 42. Cf. *John Paul II* 2002a, 89: "We praise God,

by Muslims, too.⁷⁸ Especially important is the fact that God has created the human being in his image, and, as a consequence, humankind as one human family. Being created by the one God means that all are members of the same great family, with God as Father⁷⁹ and thus brothers and sisters one with another.⁸⁰ As a matter of fact, the Pope often called himself the brother of Muslims, and Muslims his brothers, too. He said to Muslims in Bangladesh in 1986: “I thank the Most High God for enabling me to make this visit *as a brother*: a brother in our common humanity, a brother in our adoration of the ‘one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, who has made heaven and earth, and has spoken to men’; a brother in human solidarity, listening

the Creator and Lord of the universe...” Also *John Paul II* 1984a, 25: “We also have the desire that, honouring as Lord the Creator of all things, our example may serve to help others in the search for God ...” See also *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 33.

⁷⁸ According to Sura 2:30, God created the human being to be a free agent, capable of taking decisions independently, to be his *khalifa* (“deputy”, or “representative”) on earth.—*Rossano* (1979a, 17) notes: “... L’homme, dans l’islam et dans le christianisme, est au centre de la création.”

⁷⁹ Classical Islam would not describe God as “Father”, because this would, according to Islam, imply a physical act by God, with a woman or with a goddess. This would be inadmissible anthropomorphism. See, e.g., *Lagarde* 1999. *Waardenburg* (1979, 262) notes: “In particular the idea of a father-son relationship within God was revolting to Muslim thought; logically God would become contingent by the concept of *tawallud* (procreation).” *Becker* (2002, 41) states, citing Fr Chessel: “...it is compassion that directs our attention to what we can consider the most important and most beautiful names of God: “the *Compassionate*” for Muslims, and “*Father*” for Christians”. However, there is an interesting statement by an Albanian Muslim, *R. Bardhi* (2002, 75): “Dear participants in this meeting [Forum of Religious Representatives], brothers in believing the same God, Whose children are all of us.” There are at least three interesting observations: first, the universal brotherhood, second, the belief in the same God in a forum of religious representatives (e.g. Buddhists, Hinduists, traditional religions, etc.), and third, being the children of God.

⁸⁰ “Je vous appelle ‘frères’, parce que Dieu notre Créateur nous a faits membres d’une même famille humaine...” *John Paul II* 1985c, 231. “We are all children of the same God, members of the great family of man.” *John Paul II* 1985d, 236; “Those who pray together discover that they are pilgrims and seekers of the same goal, brothers and sisters who share responsibility for the same human family, children of the same God and Father.” *John Paul II* 1986b, 149; “Since all human beings have been created by God, and all are members of the one human family, we have a duty to come to the aid of all.” *John Paul II* 1993b, 13. “We believe that Christians and Muslims are children of one and the same God who desires us to live like brothers and sisters of each other.” Pastoral Recommendations, Varanasi Consultation, 4 December 1983, no. 5. Cited in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 114. *Aydin* (2002, 84) concludes that this sort of address “theologically implies that the Pope acknowledges that Muslims are on the right way in their faiths.”

to the voice of humanity crying out all over the world for dignity, justice and peace.”⁸¹ The Creator God is the solid basis for human fraternity.⁸²

The idea of the human family, of God being the Father and of all humans being brothers and sisters is not, of course, a novelty. In Vatican II documentation it is especially *Gaudium et Spes* that repeats these ideas. Already in the Preface it is stated that “this Council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with the entire human family with which it is bound up... It offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs.”⁸³ Probably the most compact expression of this is the following phrase in *Gaudium et Spes*: “Since God the Father is the origin and purpose of all men, we are all called to be brothers.”⁸⁴ The same ideas were at work in the elaboration of *Nostra Aetate*, especially concerning Muslims.⁸⁵ Pope Paul VI said in India in 1965 that human beings are all members of one family, “the family of God”, and that they are children of one human family.⁸⁶

⁸¹ *John Paul II* 1989a, 20. To Latin Bishops of the Arab region during an “ad limina” visit to Rome in 1989: “Le dialogue avec les frères et les soeurs musulmans se fonde sur le fait que Dieu est le Père commun de toute la famille humaine. Son plan envers la création embrasse la vie et le bien-être de toutes les personnes.” *John Paul II* 1989b, 144. To Representatives of Muslims of the Philippines in 1981: “Dear brothers... I deliberately address you as ‘brothers’, that is certainly what we are, because we are members of the same human family, whose efforts, whether people realize it or not, tend towards God and the truth that comes from Him. But we are especially brothers in God, who created us and whom we are trying to reach, in our own ways, through faith, prayer and worship, through the keeping of his law and through submission to his designs.” *John Paul II* 1981b, 9. Cited also in *Michel* 1985, 186, *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 23, and *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 235. To Muslims of Cameroon in 1985: “I call you brothers because that is what God, our Creator, has made us, members of the one human family who are called to stand before Him in worship and in obedience.” *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 42. Cf. *Michel* 1986, 184.

⁸² *John Paul II* 1996c, 15: “The Declaration [*Nostra aetate*] recalls that God is the firm foundation of human family...” Cf. *John Paul II* 1998a, 12: “The second [principle] is the fundamental unity of the human race, which takes its origin from the one God, the Creator...” *John Paul II* 1998d, 278: “The Creator of the one great human family to which we all belong desires that we bear witness to the divine image in every human being by respecting each person...”

⁸³ GS 3 1966, 201. Cf. “God, who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” GS 24 1966, 223.

⁸⁴ GS 92 1966, 307. Cf. B 55 1984, 47: “We believe that Christians and Muslims are children of one and the same God who desires us to live like brothers and sisters of each one.” (Message of the Varanasi Consultation, FABC).

⁸⁵ See *Borrmans* 2000, 102. Cf. *Fitzgerald* 2005a, 190.

⁸⁶ *Paul VI* 1967a, 26; *Paul VI* 1967b, 27 = *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 127.

From the beginning of its existence, besides quoting John Paul II's respective statements, the SNC / PCID has repeated the idea of God being the One Creator God. *Guidelines* (1969) states that both Christians and Muslims affirm that God is One, Living, the Creator—Arabic words *wahid*, *hayy*, *khaliq* are cited—who speaks to human beings through prophets in order to lead them to eternal salvation.⁸⁷ The SNC official responsible for Islam from 1965 to 1974, J.-M. Cuoq, mentioned the idea of creation, common faith, and belief in the same God, and the universal brotherhood in his message to Muslims for the end of Ramadan in 1967.⁸⁸ In their messages to Muslims Archbishop Jadot and especially Cardinal Arinze have repeated this idea almost every year.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Guidelines* 1969, 3.

⁸⁸ “We would like that through them you would feel us close to you... by *our common faith in the Almighty and Merciful God.*” Cuoq 2000a, 8; “For you, as for us, this friendship has its roots in *our common faith in God.*” Cuoq 2000b, 10; “... it [our duty] is that of brotherhood, not a closed brotherhood but open to all, a *universal brotherhood.*” Cuoq 2000c, 13; “*This common faith in God...* is the basis of our mutual relations.” Cuoq 2000d, 14; “... we are all the creation of *the same God, and made out of the same clay.*” Cuoq 2000e, 16; “Would you not agree... to make an appeal to *our common faith in God?*” Cuoq 2000e, 16; “Since we all share belief in *the same God...*” Cuoq 2000e, 17. (Emphasis added)—Cf. *Aquilina* 1989, 126: “We all believe in God. He is the basis of universal brotherhood.”

⁸⁹ “... we can build a world of justice and mercy, in which man can give glory to *God the Creator.*” Jadot 2000b, 33; “Praying that *the One and Merciful God* whom we all serve...” Jadot 2000c, 34; “Please accept, therefore, *as brothers before the one God*, the greetings on the Feast...” Jadot 2000d, 35; “We place our confidence in *the One God...*” Arinze 2000a, 37; “... we confess with conviction that your God and ours is *the one true God...*” Arinze 2000b, 38; “We Christians, who according to the tenets and practice of our faith strive to conform our lives to the will of *the one God*, rejoice with you and join in your praise and thanksgiving to *the Creator.*” Arinze 2000c, 40; “Since peace... can only be attained by living and acting in accord with the guidance and power of *our Divine Creator*...” Arinze 2000c, 41; “May our respective religious feasts... open our hearts more and more to *our Creator.*” Arinze 2000d, 43; “*This faith in the One God, Living and True, a faith* which is the heritage of all the spiritual children of Abraham, the father of believers, unites us as brothers and sisters in God...” Arinze 2000e, 44; “Our Council... took the initiative... in order to express our friendship, to emphasize the brotherhood uniting those who believe in *the one, living and true God...*” Arinze 2000f, 46; “In effect, sacrifice and obedience remind us of the primacy of spiritual values such as detachment from material things, solidarity, and submission to *the Creator...*” Arinze 2000g, 47; “During this time, we have been standing before God as two communities of believers, offering the homage and worship due to *the One Creator, Sustainer, and Final Goal of all human life.*” Arinze 2000i, 54; “To those who believe that *God is one, Creator of all*, it follows that *the human family is one.*” Arinze 2000i, 55; “*God, the Creator*, associates human beings in the continuation of the human race.” Arinze 2000j, 56; “... we do not always faithfully fulfil the role to which *the Creator* has appointed us.” Arinze 2000k, 59; “Following the example of Abraham, Jews, Christians and Muslims strive to give to God the place in their lives which is His due as *Fount and Origin, Master and Guide, and Ultimate Destiny of all beings.*” Arinze 2000m, 62; “*The faithful adorers of the One God* are called to be in the world

Archbishop Fitzgerald has followed the same line in his messages to Muslims.⁹⁰

The idea of God as Creator and Father of all is tightly linked to the fraternity of human beings, as images of God, in SNC / PCID documentation. All human beings are the children of the Father. This Father has created them according to his own image, and he tends to their destinies with his sincere love.⁹¹ Similarly, the Message of African Bishops to Muslims (Synod of Bishops, May 6, 1994) states that the living God, who is the creator of the heaven and earth and who is also the Lord of history, is also the Father of the one great human family, to which all people belong as members. Christians and Muslims are bound to give to one another the best there is in their faith in God, their common Father.⁹² The theological basis of all human dignity is the idea of the human being created in the image of God.⁹³

Divine revelation requires a response from human beings. Both Christianity and Islam affirm that the positive human response to divine revelation is faith.⁹⁴ If Christians and Muslims are described as believers, as human beings having religious faith in one Creator God, there must be some kind of social institution or structure that gives an outward expression of their monotheistic faith. Religious life must

the artisans of a civilisation founded on the perennial values..." *Arinze* 2001. (Emphasis added) Cf. *Arinze* 2004, 290.

⁹⁰ "As believers in the One God we see it as our duty to strive to bring about peace." *Fitzgerald* 2002b; "... human beings... are called to fulfill the will of God, the Creator of all, who is the Absolute Truth. ... we are united with you in prayer to the Almighty and Merciful God. ... May the Good God give all of us the strength..." *Fitzgerald* 2003b; "... I wish to assure you of my prayers to the Almighty and Merciful God..." *Fitzgerald* 2004b.

⁹¹ *Ajaiy* 1997, 67. Cf. *Aquilina* 1989, 127: "He, the creator, is the father of his creatures, and we, men and women of all the world, are his children, all of us members of the same human family and hence brothers and sisters."

⁹² *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 132.

⁹³ "At the very core of this theological foundation is the idea of man as *image of God*." *Sanna* 1997, 43. Also, e.g., *Ajaiy* 1997, 68: "Christian faith strongly emphasizes everybody's dignity and the unity of mankind, where God created every human being—man and woman—according to His own image and mode."

⁹⁴ In Roman Catholic theology, faith is a theological virtue enabling the mind to assent to God's revelation of the Word of God himself. Faith basically is "a firm persuasion whereby a person assents to truths that are not seen and cannot be proved but are taken on trust in the reliability of another." (*Urdamoz/Eds.* 2003, 596). Faith is supernatural, i.e., the virtue of faith and its acts are possible for the human being only by the grace of God (*Jonsen* 2003, 595).—In Islam, three elements concur in an act of faith: internal conviction, verbal expression, and the performance of the prescribed works (*Gardet* 1971, 1170).

express itself in various religious symbols, rites, and practices. These symbols, rites, and practices are necessary for the nurture of religious life, because they serve as expression and support of the aspirations of the human spirit. Without religious practice, there cannot be religious life.⁹⁵ According to *Nostra Aetate* 1, religions are systems in which people look for answers to their existential questions. This religious quest is described as a universal psychological constant of all humans.⁹⁶ Religions are seen as a part of creation, reality belonging to the creating act of God. A religious sense is described as being an existential component of human nature. Behind all the questions and answers lies the great plan of God for mankind, the centre of which is Christ, “in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18–19).”⁹⁷ In spite of differences, everybody must be respected. Reverence and love must be extended even to enemies.⁹⁸ However, it is not obvious whether the religions aim at the same ends, at the same salvation.⁹⁹ SNC / PCID documentation does not directly answer this question.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ *Rossano* 1970a, 65. Cf. *Dupuis* 1999, 317. They echo Rahner’s positive view of religions: “Every religion which exists in the world is—just like all cultural possibilities and actualities of other people—a question posed, and a possibility offered, to every person.” *Rahner* 1969a, 117.

⁹⁶ *Rossano* 1982b, 293. “Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart: What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what intent? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgment, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us?” NA 1 1966, 661.

⁹⁷ NA 2 1966, 662.

⁹⁸ GS 28 (1966, 227) says: “Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political, and religious matters, too.”

⁹⁹ “Every religion... point [sic] out different ways and courses for reaching the terminal state of salvation, which does not seem altogether homogeneous.” *Rossano* 1978a, 30–31.—*Heim* 2001 proposes a Christian theology of religious ends, based on the Trinity. This theology considers whether there are any authentic religious ends besides Christian salvation.

¹⁰⁰ “The religions in history are thus seen to be in a continual process of transformation... and at best, under the action of the Spirit of Christ active in their adherents. As for their salvific function, namely whether they are or are not paths to salvation, there is no doubt that ‘grace and truth’ are given through Jesus Christ and by his Spirit (cf. *Jn* 1:17). Everything would lead one to conclude, however, that these reach or may reach the heart of men through the visible, experiential signs of the various religions.” *Rossano* 1980, 23–24 = *Rossano* 1981a, 102–103.

John Paul II spoke also of the religious differences as going back to a “human fact”. Religious differences should be overcome “in progress towards the realization of the mighty plan of unity which dominates the creation.”¹⁰¹ He did not deal with the status of the founders of religions; however, he mentioned founders when speaking of the presence of the Spirit in humanity’s religious quest. He said in the General Audience on September 9, 1998, that at the origins of religions are founders who achieved a deep religious experience, with the help of God’s Spirit. This experience was transmitted to others and found expression in various religious acts and practices.¹⁰² According to Cardinal Arinze, religions seek to answer the fundamental questions which concern human existence.¹⁰³ Most of the world religions deal with the fundamental themes of “dying and rising, of suffering, love and compassion and of life after death”.¹⁰⁴ These are part of every human experience. Different religious beliefs are a mystery belonging to God.¹⁰⁵ However, the SNC / PCID does not take a stand on the question of whether different religions are to be considered *de iure*, entirely willed by God, or *de facto*, something only permitted by God. This is one of the essential issues concerning religious pluralism in the world.

On the Muslim side, the starting point is the fact that both Muslims and Christians are followers of the one religion which worships the one and the same God.¹⁰⁶ “The most outstanding characteristic of the message of religions is perhaps the universal love based on the general moral code of humanity that aims at openness to world cultures and

¹⁰¹ *John Paul II* 1987f, 56–57. Also, e.g., in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 362. Cf. *Michel* 1986, 186–187, 190–191.

¹⁰² “It must be first kept in mind that every quest of the human spirit for truth and goodness, and in the last analysis for God, is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The various religions arose precisely from this primordial human openness to God. At their origins we often find founders who, with the help of God’s Spirit, achieved a deeper religious experience. Handed on to others, this experience took form in the doctrines, rites and precepts of the various religions.” John Paul II in the General Audience on September 9, 1998. This discourse can be found in http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1998/documents (August 2005). It can be found in French in *La Documentation Catholique*, N° 2190, 18 octobre 1998, pp. 859–860.

¹⁰³ “The religions seek to provide answers to the fundamental questions which concern human existence on earth and beyond the grave.” *Arinze* 1995, 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Sheridan* 1989, 52.

¹⁰⁵ “... let us overcome the difficulties of which we are all aware in order to work together... by respecting persons who profess different beliefs and whose mystery belongs to God.” *Arinze* 2000b, 39.

¹⁰⁶ *Sharif* 1990, 10.—*Michel* (1983a, 33) remarks about Islam: “In his primordial nature (*fitrah*), mankind is good and oriented towards God.”

thoughts and the common elevated notions of humanity and human progress.”¹⁰⁷ Religion is also seen as a kind of medicine which can help solve human problems.¹⁰⁸ It is also a concept of human history.¹⁰⁹

In SNC/PCID documentation, including papal statements, belief in one God is taken for granted. It can be argued that in SNC/PCID documentation the most important and the most explicit motivation for Christians’ dialogue with Muslims is their common faith in one God, the God of Abraham. SNC/PCID documentation speaks, beginning with Paul VI and especially John Paul II, of the believers in one God and about the faith of Muslims and Christians in the same God.¹¹⁰ *Guidelines* (1969) states that the faith in one, self-subsisting and merciful God is undoubtedly the deepest and strongest link uniting Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and it also rejects the view of certain Westerners that Allah is not truly God.¹¹¹ This raises the question of the contents of ‘faith’ and ‘God’. What does it mean to have ‘faith in (the one) God’? Is Christian faith the same as Muslim faith, as normally affirmed? At least in one way Christian faith and Muslim faith are similar, if not the same, if we consider the following Bible verse: “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ *Jarradat* 1994, 77. This citation is noteworthy in the sense that it could have been uttered by a Christian as well: ‘universal love’, ‘moral code’ (or law), ‘humanity and human progress’ are all terms frequently used by Christian theologians.

¹⁰⁸ “In fact, religion is the most appropriate medicine that can cure the chronic disease and abnormalities the modern families have been suffering from.” *Islam & Islam* 1995, 74.

¹⁰⁹ “Religion, in other words, is a conception of human history based on unity and monotheism, and the diversification in human life is but an indication of a cosmic law which regulates every diversity.” *Ghweil* 1990, 20.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Küng* 1988a, 202. See also *Kayitakibga* 1986, 202–203. Cf. *Michel* 1985, 185: “It is precisely this shared faith which is the foundation of dialogue and cooperation between Christians and Muslims.” Cf. *Moingt* 1987, 105: “... c’est une position abstraite de dire que tous les cultes s’adressent au même dieu, quoique ce soit un seul et même Dieu, celui de Jésus-Christ, qui reçoit les prières de tous les hommes, d’où qu’elles viennent.”

¹¹¹ *Guidelines* 1969, 53, 139.

¹¹² AG 7 (1966, 593) states: “Therefore, though 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), yet a necessity lies upon the Church (cf. 1 Cor. 9:16), and at the same time a sacred duty, to preach the gospel.” It is interesting to note that in SNC/PCID documentation there is no reference to Thomas Aquinas’s interpretation of Hebrews 11:6. He thought that faith in the one mediator could be implicitly included in the faith in one God. “Since the economy of salvation includes Christ as mediator of salvation for mankind, St. Thomas understood faith in God as ‘rewarder’ (faith in

The Islamic creed makes it possible to have faith which comprises these biblical, Judeo-Christian conditions.¹¹³

Here, it is useful to remember that a distinction has been traditionally made in Christian theology between the act of faith and content of faith. Two Latin terms are used to express this distinction. The term *fides qua creditur* (literally, “the faith by which it is believed”) refers to the act of trust and assent which is core of Christian belief: the faith by which one believes. The other term, *fides quae creditur* (“the faith which is believed”), refers to the specific content of Christian faith, expressed in various creeds, confessions, doctrines, and statements of faith: the faith that one believes.

The Roman Catholic—especially the Aristotelian-Thomistic—notion of faith has interesting features. Thomas Aquinas seemed to adopt rather a philosophical approach to faith, and to regard faith as relating to propositions about God (to believe means *credere Deum, Deo, in Deum*): “Now to believe is an act of mind assenting to the divine truth by virtue of the command of the will as this is moved by God through grace; in this way the act stands under the control of free will and is directed towards God.”¹¹⁴ He also related faith to evidence, and his notion of faith related to God himself, not to Christ.¹¹⁵ However, Thomas refuted any Semi-Pelagian tendencies by appealing to *instinctus fidei*, which is the starting point for the act of faith, and is a dynamism of the human spirit itself. It must be emphasized that this instinct of faith is also the instinct of the third Person of the Trinity, of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁶

That Aristotelian-Thomistic arguments still are strong in Roman Catholic theology can be seen, e.g., in the following statement of Cardinal Arinze: “Only God is a necessary Being.”¹¹⁷ This is Thomas

divine providence) implicitly to include faith in Christ.” *Sullivan* 1992, 49. Cf. *Amato* 1994, 22. See also *Waltz* 1976. Cf. *Caspar* 1970b, 35–36, Note 15.

¹¹³ Cf. *Küng* 1987, 87–88. Cf. *Barnes*’s (1989, 127) definition of faith: “Faith, in other words, is that fundamental acknowledgement of creatureliness in the face of whatever one takes to be transcendent; it represents the human response to the transcendent dimension in religion. It is present, and may be recognized, in all religions.” In this sense, Christian and Muslim faith can be said to be the same. Barnes, however, does not treat the question of the object/contents of faith (*fides quae creditur*).

¹¹⁴ “Ipsium autem credere est actus intellectus assentientis veritati divinae ex imperio voluntatis a Deo motae per gratiam, et sic subjacet libero arbitrio in ordine ad Deum.” ST 2a2ae.2.9.resp.

¹¹⁵ *McGrath* 1997a, 157.

¹¹⁶ See, e.g., *Super Evangelium Joannis*, ch. 14, lect. 6; ST 3.36.5; *In IV Sent.*, d. 13, q. 1, a. 2, sol 1.

¹¹⁷ *Arinze* 1996a, 5.

Aquinas's third way, one of the "Five Ways" arguing from the effects of nature to their cause in God its creator (ST 1.2.3). The third way concerns the existence of contingent beings. Contingent human beings are the effects of a series of causation. If this series is traced back to its origin, the original cause can be only someone whose existence is necessary, i.e., God.¹¹⁸ It becomes immediately clear that, from the point of view of *fides qua creditur*, this kind of faith is very similar to the Islamic concept of 'faith' in the sense that it basically is an assent to the basic creed that there is no god but God, which is a proposition about God—and other gods. Also, from the point of view of *fides quae creditur*, the identity of 'God' can be questioned: Christians and Muslims are believers certainly, but in which God? They both agree that God is one, but do Christians and Muslims have the same God?¹¹⁹ It might be preferable to ask what kind of God is revealed in Christianity and Islam. When Cardinal Arinze speaks about the common elements in Christian and Islamic faiths,¹²⁰ does he mean the act of believing, or the content of the Christian and Islamic faith? He seems to be referring to the act of believing, to the shared elements of faith, leaving the question of the identity of God aside.

There are only very few reflections on the essence of 'faith' or 'belief' by Christians or Muslims in SNC / PCID documentation. One PCID document notes that deeply rooted faith conveys basic assumptions about life, and helps to form a coherent world view.¹²¹ One Muslim states that faith and obedience to God must be combined with the Qur'anic belief in prophets, in holy books, and metaphysics. Sound faith helps human beings to understand that Islam is the last of the revealed religions.¹²² Another Muslim states that belief is a psychological action deeply seated in one's psyche.¹²³ This psychological concept fits well with the Islamic idea that there is no contradiction between science

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Physics* VIII, 6. Aristotelian influence can be seen also in a Muslim statement (*El-Zuhaili* 1989, 62): "Intricacy, beauty and precision cannot possibly be casual. *There has always been a cause.*" (Emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ This question is of extreme complexity and can be treated from many points of view. However, one approach is not to answer the question. See, e.g., *Pannenberg* 1998, 103. Cf. *Brown* 1994, 39.

¹²⁰ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 66. Cf. *Michel* 1985, 186: "If the ultimate basis for dialogue and respect between Christians and Muslims is the shared elements of faith in the one and the same God..."

¹²¹ *Duminuco* 1989, 94.

¹²² *El-Zuhaili* 1989, 64.

¹²³ *El-Tall* 1996, 96.

and religion, or between religion, civilization, and progress.¹²⁴ As a matter of fact, science is subordinated in some statements to the Qur'an or Islam,¹²⁵ or science is made to prove the existence of God.¹²⁶

It is important to note here that the faith in the same, one, Creator God in SNC / PCID documentation itself is not the same faith in Christianity and Islam. John Paul II said in 1999: "In this sense, i.e., with reference to the one divine substance, there is significant correspondence between Christianity and Islam. However, this correspondence must not let us forget the difference between the two religions. We know that the unity of God is expressed in the mystery of the three divine Persons."¹²⁷ Obviously the Pope did not want to leave aside the Trinitarian character of the Christian God, even when he started with that which is common: "As Christians and Muslims, we share belief in 'the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 16). Though we differ in the way we understand this One God, we are nevertheless akin in our efforts to know and follow his will."¹²⁸ Cardinal

¹²⁴ *El-Assad* 1996, 8–9.

¹²⁵ "Yet he [the believer] has believed that plants are created by God also and mate and procreate. Man has learnt this from the Quran before it was discovered by science." *El-Tall* 1996, 109. "Hence, medicine, chemistry, biology, astronomy, philosophy, education, engineering, mathematics, languages and others are all considered by Islam as religious sciences." *El-Khayyat* 1989, 71. The tendency of showing Islam above anything scientific, political, humanitarian or economic, can be found in some other statements as well: "With regard to prohibition of obstructing the work of those carrying out humanitarian tasks, Islam was well ahead of many humanitarian measures arrived at by signatories of Geneva Conventions..." *Khayyat* 1997, 62. This is based on the so-called scientific interpretation of the Qur'an (*at-tafsir al-ilmî*). The idea is that only the development of modern sciences has permitted the right understanding of the Qur'an to come forward. Cf. *Kamel* 1989, 23: "Thus, faith in Islam is intuition, reconciliation between human thinking and existence, and interaction between religion and science..."—*Guidelines* (1969, 99) refers to the capacity of Islam "to absorb scientific and technical progress. As a matter of fact the effort has been marked at times by somewhat naive apologetics and superficial harmonisation of the Qur'an with scientific discoveries."

¹²⁶ "While in the modern age, science has provided solid evidence which asserts the existence of God, His greatness and power." *El-Zuhaili* 1989, 61. He states further (p. 63): "The spread of Islam was based upon science."

¹²⁷ *John Paul II* 1999c, 87 = *John Paul II* 1999g, 304. Cf. *John Paul II* 1992b, 12: "Il est vrai, je l'ai dit à Casablanca, que 'la loyauté exige aussi que nous reconnaissons et respections nos différences. La plus fondamentale est évidemment le regard que nous portons sur la personne et l'oeuvre de Jésus de Nazareth' (n. 10). Pour les Chrétiens, c'est Lui qui nous fait connaître Dieu comme Père, c'est de Lui que nous recevons l'Esprit, c'est ainsi par Lui que nous entrons dans l'intimité de Dieu. Nous croyons qu'Il est Seigneur et Sauveur."

¹²⁸ *John Paul II* 1998c, 276.

Arinze refers to the triune God, when he says that in Christianity, the oneness of God is not lived in isolation, but rather in a communion of life and love. This communion of life and love is the inscrutable mystery of the Trinity.¹²⁹ Sometimes John Paul II mentioned only the Christological aspect, as in the 1985 discourse to young Moroccan Muslims, in which he noted that the fundamental difference between Christians and Muslims lies in their different view of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth.¹³⁰ The Trinitarian setting comes forth also in other PCID documents: "... we Christians are careful to point out that our *understanding* of the One God differs clearly from Islamic monotheism. We as Christians cannot separate the concept of God as Creator from that of Jesus as God who entered into human history as Saviour, and from God as Spirit the Lord, the Giver of Life."¹³¹ As the Qur'an (Sura 4:157) denies Jesus's death on the cross and consequently his resurrection from the dead,¹³² at least this part of faith cannot be the same.¹³³ However, it has been argued that the Trinity and Incarnation are by no means contradictory to the Muslims' affirmation that God is absolutely One, but that they presuppose it and are rooted in it.¹³⁴

Besides the Trinitarian setting of Christian faith, the word "understand", mentioned also in the citation above, is another key term. It echoes the famous axiom of Anselm of Canterbury, *fides quaerens intellec-*

¹²⁹ Arinze 2000p, 68.—Heim (2001, 233) notes: "It is this dimension of relational communion that is excluded in Muslim rejection of Trinity, incarnation, and human 'association' with the divine life."

¹³⁰ John Paul II 1985e, 256. Cited in French in John Paul II 1992b, 12. Arinze (2000d, 42) addresses Muslims as "brothers and sisters", but refers to the "fundamental differences between us with regard to the Mystery of God..."

¹³¹ Ellul 1990, 13.

¹³² There is a lot of literature—with differing views—on Jesus in the context of Islam. See, e.g., Zwemer 1921, Hayek 1959, Michaud 1960, Khoury 1968, Räsänen 1971 and Räsänen 1980, Anawati 1978, Ayoub 1980, Caspar 1982, Cragg 1985, Arnaldez 1988, Robinson 1991a, Parrinder 1995, Leirvik 1999, Bauschke 2001, Gorder 2003, 64–113, and Wimmer/Leimgruber 2005, 199–215.—One of the most prominent Muslim philosophers and historians of our time, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, states (Nasr 1987, 100): "Now, Islam will never accept that its Christology is false." According to another Muslim response (Abu-Rabi 1999, 198): "Theologically, even the most open-minded Muslims cannot accept the claim that Christ, and not God, is the Redeemer and that Christ, 'the Redeemer, is present with grace in every human encounter, to liberate us from our selfishness and to make us love one another as he has loved us.' In addition, Muslims cannot accept the claim, however positively made, that 'no salvation exists outside of the Catholic Church.'"

¹³³ Cf. Caspar (1966a, 123) who remarks: "En réalité, le point focal et la nature même de la foi en Dieu dans l'Islam et dans le Christianisme sont radicalement différents."

¹³⁴ Gardet 1970, 336.

tum, “faith seeking understanding”. Anselm appealed to reason in matters of theology (“*Credo ut intelligam*”, Prosl. c. I), and appreciated also the role of logic. Vatican I held that it was possible for men and women to come to a knowledge of a creator God through the use of reason.¹³⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* 29 declares that “all men possess a rational soul and are created in God’s likeness ...”¹³⁶ Indeed, it is argued that Vatican II has an approach that appeals to human reason, and then solicits a profession of faith.¹³⁷ It should also be recalled that John Paul II wrote an encyclical specifically on the relations between faith and reason, *Fides et Ratio*,¹³⁸ in which he declared that God has furnished sufficient external signs to render the assent of faith reasonable. One PCID document says that faith is the process of understanding which seeks further understanding.¹³⁹

The emphasis on reason is compatible with the Islamic concept of human beings and their faith, because through reason they became God’s vice-regent on the earth.¹⁴⁰ Knowledge of universal phenomena constitutes one of the most important ways of confirming belief in God in Islamic thinking.¹⁴¹ The Islamic faith in the human intellect and reason goes much further than the Roman Catholic concept: “A proof that we all are human beings, created to be in harmony with the world,

¹³⁵ D’Costa 2000, 103. He continues (p. 103): “... in this respect, one does not have to impute supernatural salvific status to Islam as a religion, *per se*, by virtue of this belief.”

¹³⁶ GS 29 1966, 227.

¹³⁷ *Onah* 2002, 93. Cf. DH 2 1966, 679: “The Synod further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known through *the revealed Word of God and by reason itself*.” (Emphasis added).

¹³⁸ On September 14, 1998. Text in AAS 91 1999, 5–88. In this encyclical the Pope did not say anything about Islam or Muslim philosophers. The name of the encyclical refers to Vatican I, which distinguished two orders of knowledge: natural knowledge called *ratio*, and supernatural knowledge called *fides* (Jonsen 2003, 594–595). Cf. *John Paul II* 2005e, 24: “An essential element of the Church’s dialogue with contemporary society must also be a correct presentation, in catechesis and preaching, of the relationship between *faith and reason*.”

¹³⁹ *Sheridan* 1989, 56. On this occasion PCID documentation repeats the interaction between theology and philosophy.

¹⁴⁰ *El-Talebi* 1997, 23 (a Muslim). “It [the second principle of *Da’wah*] stems from the great faith that Islam has in human reason, a faculty considered to be the most significant of the gifts of God to man.” *Nasseef* 1987, 281 (a Muslim). Cf. *Khawaldeh* 1992, 101 (a Muslim): “Islam never leaves woman surrounded by questions *without supplying her with a sensible answer*.” (Emphasis added) *Bacha* (1967, 179) notes: “Islam has always shown due respect for reason in matters of faith.”

¹⁴¹ *Al-Abbadi* 1996, 20. See also, e.g., *Abd el-Shakour* 1985, 72–73, 75, and *El-Khayyat* 1989, 85.

is the fact that *we have intellect and reason to learn from our mistakes and never repeat them.*"¹⁴²

When Christians and Muslims say "God", they do not say exactly the same thing. As we have seen, according to SNC / PCID documentation God is the same, but who is this God? The final declaration of the Tripoli Seminar on the Christian-Muslim dialogue in 1976 affirms: "They [the two parties] affirmed the convergence of the two Religions in belief in God, One and Unique, in spite of the difference in their respective conceptions of God."¹⁴³ One answer is that he is the same God if God is spoken of as such as he is. It is to the same God, who is unique and creator, to whom Christians and Muslims talk, even if they do not know him in the same way.¹⁴⁴ This is the attitude in the letter of Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085) to the Muslim king al-Nasir of Mauritania (today an eastern province of Algeria): "[Christians and Muslims,] we believe and confess one God, but in different ways."¹⁴⁵ In any case, it must be said that the doctrinal concept of God is not identical in Christianity and Islam.

It can be argued that the similar way of describing the deities in Christianity and Islam does not establish their identity. In other words, the concepts of God in Christianity and in Islam are not the ultimate criteria of God. "Christians do not start out with an idea of God which they find that Jesus lives up to. They start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and discover through revelation what God

¹⁴² Mehmed 2002, 56. (Emphasis added) Cf. "The move away from religious rational [sic] has caused an emptiness in the objectivity of the mind, and has caused difficulties in the salvation [sic: solution] of sociological, political and economic problems faced by us today, whether rich or poor, Christians or Moslems." *Bani Hani* 1996, 171.—*Caspar* (1968, 71) says: "Using the language of Christian theology, one could say that *the Moslem faith is reasonable but it is not rational.*"

¹⁴³ B 31 1976, 16. Cf. *Kéryell* (2002, 302), quoting J. Jomier: "Musulmans et chrétiens croient profondément en un seul Dieu, Lui rendent un culte et cherchent à Le connaître en esprit et en vérité. Mais leur conception de ce Dieu unique est si différente qu'il est difficile de dire que c'est vraiment du même Dieu qu'ils parlent."

¹⁴⁴ "C'est au même Dieu, au Dieu unique et créateur, que nous nous adressons, même si nous ne le connaissons pas de la même façon." *L'Eglise et l'Islam* 1995, 12.

¹⁴⁵ "... unum Deum, licet diverso modo, credimus et confitemur ..." PL 148, 452 (S. Gregorii VII Epistola ad Anzir regem Mauritaniae). *Basetti-Sani* (1967a, 131) comments on the letter: "Furthermore, this letter affirms not only explicitly that Christians and Muslims adore the same God in a different manner but also that the distribution of supernatural illuminating grace which came from Jesus Christ also resides among pious Muslim souls". The importance of this letter can be seen in the fact that the Pope cited it in his message to Muslims for the end of Ramadan in 1991 (*John Paul II* 2000k, 50). It is also cited in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 4.

is like. Similarly the Muslim starts with the Qur'an as the revelation of Allah and discovers through the Qur'an how to think and speak about Allah."¹⁴⁶

At least it can be said that the God of Christianity and Islam (and Judaism) is a God who wants to communicate, who has a message to transmit, even though the experiences of God in this respect are vastly different:

It is clear that the God of Islam who abrogates the Law of Moses and relativizes the covenant with Israel cannot be the God of the Jews. He cannot in any way either be the God of the Christians since he unveils the error which belief in the Trinity and the incarnation—without which there is no Christianity—necessarily constitutes for every Muslim. On this level the three monotheisms cannot but exclude each other. But the Jew believes that God spoke through the Bible; the Christian believes that through his Word made flesh God speaks in the Gospels; the Muslim believes that God speaks in the Qur'an, or even that the Qur'an is his eternal Word.¹⁴⁷

Theological dialogue is thus always confronted with fundamental differences. However, one approach may go beyond the doctrinal, conceptual, and semantic differences of 'faith' and 'God'. It is often affirmed that a genuine encounter between faiths can only happen on the level of mystical or contemplative traditions,¹⁴⁸ when all that is conceptual is left behind. In other words, if faith is understood as a mystical experience, as an interpersonal communion between God and human beings, then, at this level of faith lived by the mystics, Christianity and Islam can be said to converge.¹⁴⁹ Christian-Muslim dialogue aims to find the lines of convergence of spirituality.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ *Lochhead* 1988, 36.

¹⁴⁷ *Dupuis* 1999, 261; English translation of *Arnaldez* 1991, 116.

¹⁴⁸ On Islamic mysticism, see, e.g., *Nicholson* 1967 and *Nicholson* 1979, *Arberry* 1972, *Massignon* 1975 = *Massignon* 1982, *Stoddart* 1985, and *Schimmel* 1986.

¹⁴⁹ E.g. *Dupuis* 1999, 261–262, *Knitter* 1995, 48–50, 141, *Fitzmaurice* 1992, 101, *Arnaldez* 1991, 116–117, *Couvreux* 1990, 193–194, *Caspar* 1983, 65, and *Race* 1983, 60, 62. Cf. *Blockhausen* 1999, 334. See also *Griffiths* (1991, 52–59), who argues that there are at least three major types of mystical experiences (see especially pp. 54–55). *Tracy* (1990, 103) states: "I remain convinced that one signal opportunity for Christian theology as a result of serious religious dialogue is the retrieval of the great Christian mystical traditions..."

¹⁵⁰ "... we must try to discover with our Muslim friends the lines of convergence... Of course, we cannot yet see how our separate ways will ever meet. ... It is precisely this convergence that a spirituality for Muslim-Christian dialogue will do its best to encourage, as a manner of sharing in a Mystery which is greater than us all, in anticipation of that day when all believers will be One." *Guidelines* 1969, 158.

At least as such, Christianity and Islam aim in the same direction, as something thought of and identified as ‘God’ without conceptual identity.¹⁵¹ However, as there is a possibility that everything becomes blurred in a subjective relativity,¹⁵² SNC / PCID documentation does not approve mystical experience as the origin of various religions.¹⁵³ This is so probably because even in Islamic mysticism, e.g. Sufism, the concept of God makes it impossible for God’s transcendence to be bridged by his immanence.

The faith of Abraham

Besides faith in one Creator God, Abraham and his faith in one God, including his obedience to God, is another common point for Christians and Muslims (and Jews).¹⁵⁴ The core of Islam is its credo that there is no deity but Allah, God (*la ilaha illa llahu*). The Qur’an sees Islam as parallel to other religions, including Judaism (founded by Moses) and Christianity (founded by Jesus), and as identical with Abraham’s religion. Muslims emphasize their allegiance to Abraham. Jews and Christians have deviated from this pure monotheistic religion of Abraham in many ways. Nevertheless, the God who gave revelations to Moses and Jesus is the same God who revealed the Qur’an to Muhammad and is now worshipped by Muslims.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Meister Eckhart OP says: “All things become to thee pure God, because in all things thou seest nothing but pure God. Like one who looks long into the sun—what he afterwards may see is seen full of the sun.” Cited in *Otto* 1987, 209, and in *Robinson* 1979, 26. (Pope John XXII in his bull *In agro dominico* (March 27, 1329) condemned seventeen of Eckhart’s propositions as heretical, and eleven as ill-sounding, rash, and suspected of heresy. See DS 950–980.)

¹⁵² “Cependant, les mystiques ont souvent inspiré une certaine méfiance aux théologiens, sans parler du Magistère, et cette expérience n’a pas les mêmes finalités anthropologiques suivant qu’elle vise l’union à Dieu ou le vide.” *Deneken* 1996, 191.

¹⁵³ “At all events we must reject the opinion which sees in mystical experience the origin of the various religions or believes that it can discover in this their superior or transcendental unity.” *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 22.

¹⁵⁴ “... this reference to the God of Abraham, and above all Abraham’s attitude of faith in submitting [sic] himself to the paradoxical will of God, are values common to both religions.” *Guidelines* 1969, 59. Cf. *Michel* 1996, 237: “For us, first and foremost, Muslims are fellow believers who claim, like us, spiritual descent from the faith of Abraham in the One God.” Concerning Abraham, *Basetti-Sani* (1967b, 196) says: “... Islam remains, in a certain sense, the ‘original religion of Abraham,’ before Sinai and before Pentecost.” See also, e.g., *Küschel* 1995.

¹⁵⁵ *Watt* 1983, 45.

Muhammad exhorted people to become members of a new, true and original religion and to have Abraham's faith in the one and unique God. For him, Abraham was the father of all believers and the founder or reformer of the monotheistic Ka'ba cult.¹⁵⁶ The faith of Abraham and the Islamic faith are said to converge.¹⁵⁷ Abraham is a biblical¹⁵⁸ and Qur'anic¹⁵⁹ person often referred to when talking about the same roots of Christianity and Islam and their monotheism. In Islam, Abraham is *hanif*, the perfect believer.¹⁶⁰ Abraham is far more often mentioned in the Qur'an than Jesus (245 Qur'anic verses in 25 suras speak of him, whereas only 93 verses in 15 suras speak of Jesus).¹⁶¹ In the Qur'an there is even one sura, Sura 14, which bears the name of Abraham.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ *Paret* 1971, 980. The Qur'an states that Abraham—together with Ishmael—rebuild the Ka'ba at Mecca (Sura 2:125–128).

¹⁵⁷ See, e.g., *Talbi* 1979. In the Qur'an, Abraham and Ishmael prayed that God would make their descendants a great nation to which God would send a messenger who would recite God's revelation: "Our Lord! And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow." (Sura 2:129). Muslims interpret this passage to refer to Muhammad.—Cf. what the Roman Catholic theologian and Islamic specialist *Y. Moubarac* says (1970, 431): "Nach diesem Text aus dem Koran (Sura 2, 132)... ist der islamische Abrahamismus von seinem Gründer aus seinen Kindern ohne Unterschied, bevorzugt aber Jakob, vermacht worden. Eine solche Formulierung ist weit entfernt davon, ihn zum Privileg der Nachkommen Isaels, d. h. der Araber, zu machen, und schließt die Juden in keiner Weise aus."

¹⁵⁸ On Abraham, see, e.g., *Martin-Achard* 1977 and *Berger* 1977. See also the passage in *Guidelines* 1969, 58–59.

¹⁵⁹ See Sura 2:124–136; 3:33, 95; 4:54, 125; 16:120; 57:26; 60:4. See especially Sura 22:78: "He hath chosen you and hath not laid upon you in religion any hardship; the faith of your father Abraham (is yours). He hath named you Muslims of old time and in this (Scripture), that the messenger may be a witness against you, and that ye may be witnesses against mankind." Cf. Sura 19:41: "And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Abraham. Lo! he was a saint, a Prophet." Abraham (Ibrahim) is an important prophet in Islam, like Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus. On Abraham's importance in Islam see, e.g., *Moubarac* 1958, *Paret* 1971, *Hjärpe* 1977, and *Wimmer/Leimgruber* 2005, 110–123. Sura 3:67–68 states: "Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah), and he was not of the idolaters. Lo! those of mankind who have the best claim to Abraham are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who believe (with him); and Allah is the Protecting Friend of the believers." See the Muslim al-Baydawi's (famous Qur'an exegete, d. 1286 or later) exegesis of this passage in *Gätje* 1976, 99–100, and G. Parrinder's comments on the same passage in *Parrinder* 1995, 154.

¹⁶⁰ On *hanif*, see, e.g., *Watt* 1971.

¹⁶¹ E.g. *L'Eglise et l'Islam* 1995, 15, Note 28, *Amato* 1994, 19, and *Küschel* 1995, 142.

¹⁶² Since the days of Louis Massignon, Abraham has been the object of several Roman Catholic theologians' study. For Massignon, as for many, Islam is the gathering

Consequently, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are often spoken of as three “Abrahamic” faiths or religions.¹⁶³ In Vatican II documentation, *Nostra Aetate* 3 speaks of Abraham: “They [the Moslems] strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His [God’s] inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself.”¹⁶⁴ In *Lumen Gentium* 16, too, it is said that the Muslims profess “to hold the faith of Abraham.”¹⁶⁵ The faith of Abraham is a theme to which many SNC / PCID documents refer, and often in connection with a reference to *Nostra Aetate* 3.¹⁶⁶ John Paul II followed conciliar statements, but he seems to have somewhat clarified the position. As a matter of fact, he referred to Abraham in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*.¹⁶⁷ In SNC / PCID documentation, the Pope referred to this

of excluded people, heirs of Hagar and Ishmael. Islam is an Abrahamic schism, antecedent to the Decalogue founding Judaism, and to Pentecost founding Christianity (see, e.g., *Se Comprendre* N° 04/05—Mai 2004: Dialogue d’entendants ou de sourds? Débat autour de Louis Massignon; *Griffith* 1997, and *Robinson* 1991b).

¹⁶³ “Chrétiens et Musulmans, avec ceux qui suivent la religion judaïque, appartiennent à ce qu’il est convenu d’appeler [sic] ‘la tradition abrahamique’. Dans nos traditions respectives, Abraham est appelé ‘l’ami intime de Dieu’ (en arabe *al-khalīl*).” *John Paul II* 1992b, 9; “Pilgrimage to holy places is a feature common to many religious traditions, especially to the three Abrahamic religions.” *John Paul II* 2000h, 180; “We all know that real peace can only be achieved if there is a new attitude of understanding and respect between the peoples of the region, between the followers of the three Abrahamic religions.” *John Paul II* 2001f, 167–168.

¹⁶⁴ NA 3 1966, 663. In Latin: “... cuius occultis etiam decretis toto animo se submittere student, sicut Deo se submitit Abraham ad quem fides islamica libenter sese refert.” John Paul II cited this passage in his discourse to the Catholic community of Ankara in 1979. See also *John Paul II* 1985b, 229.—This passage should be linked to the following paragraph, no. 4: “She [the Church] professes that all who believe in Christ, Abraham’s sons according to faith (cf. Gal. 3:7), are included in the same patriarch’s call...” NA 4 1966, 664.

¹⁶⁵ LG 16 1966, 35. In Latin: “... Musulmanos, qui fidem Abrahae se tenere profitentes...”—In Vatican II documentation, it is important to note that Abraham is mentioned also in the framework of God’s plan of salvation: “Then, at the time He had appointed, He called Abraham in order to make of him a great nation (cf. Gen 12:2).” DV 3 1966, 112–113. Abraham is also mentioned as an example for Catholic priests to follow: “For the leaders of the People of God must walk by faith, following the example of the faithful Abraham, who in faith...” PO 22 1966, 575.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. the Message of Special assembly for Africa of Bishops’ synod in 1994: “Nous assurons nos frères musulmans qui se réfèrent volontiers à la foi d’Abraham (cf. NA 3) ...” Cited in B 87 1994, 209.

¹⁶⁷ On March 4, 1979. Text in AAS 71 1979, 257–324. RH 11: “It [the Council] also expressed its esteem for the believers of Islam, whose faith also looks to Abraham.” English text in *Redemptor Hominis: The Redeemer of Man. Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II* (in English by Pauline Books & Media, Boston 1979), p. 20. Also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 88.

part of his encyclical also in his discourse to Catholic community of Ankara (November 29, 1979), saying that the Muslims have the faith of Abraham in the only, all-powerful and merciful God.¹⁶⁸ In this discourse he also referred to *Nostra Aetate* 3 and *Lumen Gentium* 16. In his speech to the participants at the Ecumenical Encounter in Lisbon on May 14, 1982, the Pope said that Abraham, who is the common ancestor of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, teaches everyone to follow the way of mercy and of love.¹⁶⁹ In 1985 he said to the participants in the colloquium on holiness in Christianity and Islam that the God of Christians and Muslims is one and the same, and they are brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham.¹⁷⁰ The same idea is repeated in his famous speech to young Muslims in Morocco in 1985: “For us [Christians and Muslims], Abraham is a very model of faith in God, of submission to his will and of confidence in his goodness.”¹⁷¹ Abraham was for John Paul II also a model of seeking to do God’s will in all things.¹⁷² In 2000, he said: “Together with us, Jews and Muslims also look to the person of Abraham as a model of unconditional submission to the will of God.”¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ “They have, therefore, like you, the faith of Abraham in the only all-powerful and merciful God.” *John Paul II* 1980a, 3. Also in *Michel* 1985, 184, and in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 220. John Paul II also said: “Faith in God, which the spiritual descendants of Abraham, Christians, Moslems and Jews, profess, when it is lived sincerely so that it penetrates life, is an assured foundation of the dignity, the brotherhood and the freedom of men and a principle of recitade [sic] for moral conduct and life in society.” *John Paul II* 1980a, 3–4. Also in *Michel* 1985, 184, and *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 220–221.

¹⁶⁹ *John Paul II* 1984a, 26. Also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 257.

¹⁷⁰ *John Paul II* 1985a, 222. Also in *Islamochristiana* 11 1985, 3. Cf. *Michel* 1986, 184.

¹⁷¹ *John Paul II* 1985e, 249. Also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 297.

¹⁷² *John Paul II* 1992c, 16: “Like the Patriarch Abraham, we are all pilgrims on the path of seeking to do God’s will in everything.” Cf. *John Paul II* 1996a, 5: “Christians cannot forget that many Muslims try to imitate the faith of Abraham and live the demands of the Decalogue.”

¹⁷³ *John Paul II* 2000e, 160. Cf. *John Paul II* 1999c, 84, 85 = *John Paul II* 1999g, 303: “Muslims, like Jews and Christians, see the figure of Abraham as a model of unconditional submission to the decrees of God (*Nostra aetate*, n. 3). Following Abraham’s example, the faithful strive to give God his rightful place in their lives... Along the path marked out by Abraham in his submission to the divine will, we find his descendant, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, who is also devoutly invoked by Muslims, especially in popular piety.” In 1991 to the participants in a Christian-Jewish-Muslim meeting: “In fact, all the believers of these three religions refer back to Abraham, *pater omnium credentium* (cf. Rom 4:11), for whom they have a profound respect, although in different ways.” *John Paul II* 1991, 314. *Michel* (1986, 185) remarks: “An important element in the faith of Christians and Muslims, which unites them with their Jewish brothers (...), is their spiritual attachment to Abraham (...).”

It has been argued that one of the Pope's guiding lines for Christian-Muslim relations is the descent of Abraham.¹⁷⁴ For John Paul II, an important element in the relations between Christians and Muslims is their spiritual attachment to Abraham. He is the model of faith, submission to his will, and confidence in his goodness. He is the common ancestor, together with the Jews, who teaches them to live in love and mercy. He is also the archetype of migrant believers, who bring their faith and worship to distant lands. In each case a parallel is drawn by the Pope between the Islamic self-understanding as descendants of Abraham and that of Christians.¹⁷⁵

In addition to the aspect of Abraham's faith, the great hospitality of Abraham is also occasionally linked to the service of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Speaking in 1981 in Pakistan to the President of Pakistan, John Paul II said that one of the characteristics of Abraham was his great hospitality, for example when he received three guests at the oak of Mamre.¹⁷⁶ The idea is that Christians and Muslims should receive and welcome each other in the same way that Abraham welcomed three foreign visitors to his house (Genesis 18). In fact, God revealed himself to Abraham in this act of hospitality.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, *Dialogue and Mission* 29 states that dialogue "implies concern, respect and hospitality towards the other."

¹⁷⁴ Zago 1986, 175.—In *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994 the Pope mentions Abraham in his discourses in pp. 21, 30 (twice), and 31. See also pp. 66–67, 102, 105.

¹⁷⁵ Michel 1985, 184; Michel 1986, 185. Cardinal Arinze states: "In his talk [message to the Moroccan youths], the Pope treated two themes which form the cornerstone of his approach to Muslims: the common elements in Christian and Islamic faiths join Christians and Muslims into a fellowship of believers in God and, secondly, their common heritage as spiritual descendants of Abraham forms a strong basis for religious dialogue between the two." *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 66–67. Cf. *John Paul II* 1985b, 229: "Among the non-Christian religions, the religion of the *followers of Muhamet* deserves special attention by reason of its *monotheistic* character and its link with *the faith of Abraham*, whom St Paul described as the 'father... of our (Christian) faith' (cf. Rm 4:16)." —Borrmans (2002a, 58) notes: "Jean Paul II fait souvent référence à Abraham en son dialogue, mais en des formulations qui insistent sur une 'parenté spirituelle'."

¹⁷⁶ "One of the salient characteristics of Abraham—to whose faith Christians, Muslims and Jews alike eagerly link their own—was his great spirit of hospitality, as displayed in a particular way when he welcomed [sic] three guests at the Oak of Mamre (cf. *Gen* 18, 1 ff.)." *John Paul II* 1981a, 3.—Rossano (1981b, 212) refers to the same message of the Pope. The passage is also cited in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 21.

¹⁷⁷ This biblical passage has served in Christian theology as a veiled reference to the mystery of the triune Godhead. Note, e.g., the title of Moingt 1999: *Les Trois Visiteurs*. Cf. Augustine's *De Trinitate* II,10,19–11,21.

As a whole, SNC / PCID documentation approves the idea of Christians and Muslims having faith in the same God as Abraham; they are thus spiritually brothers. Christians and Muslims are said to have in common a whole religious tradition which goes back to Abraham, the father of all believers, a friend of God.¹⁷⁸ SNC / PCID documents seem to use vaguely, without questioning, the concept of 'Abraham', 'Abraham's sons' or 'Abraham's children'.¹⁷⁹ *Guidelines* (1990, 113) defines Islam as "a faith in which the Abrahamic model of faith and submission to God is upheld in all of its implications." However, although Abraham seems to be a good starting point for Christian-Muslim encounters, at least three critical questions remain.

The first critical question is: how essential is Abraham to Christians? Is he really at the heart of the Christian doctrine? What is the place of Abraham in the Bible? The life of Abraham is told in Genesis 11–25, but he is a figure referred to throughout the Bible, both the Old and the New Testament. In the New Testament, especially Paul reflects

¹⁷⁸ E.g. "... when dealing with Islam because we invoke in common the patriarch Abraham, 'Our Father in the Faith', as Christians call him, 'God's friend', as the Muslims say..." *Guidelines* 1969, 30–31; "... the relationship with Islam, with which she [the Church] is linked by the faith of Abraham and the prophets..." *Rossano* 1980, 29 = *Rossano* 1981a, 108; "This belief [in one, living, merciful God] was held and practised first and foremost by our common forefather Abraham (the *hanif*, see Q. 2:135)..." *Ellul* 1990, 14; "For us, first and foremost, Muslims are fellow believers who claim, like us, spiritual descent from the faith of Abraham in the One God." *Michel* 1996, 237; "Similar esteem is also shown towards '... the believers of Islam whose faith also looks to Abraham', our father in the faith." *Poupard* 2002, 167.

¹⁷⁹ E.g. "Le patrimoine spirituel commun aux fils d'Abraham est très riche; il offre des sujets extrêmement nombreux aux réflexions que peuvent engager entre eux chrétiens, juifs et musulmans." *Duval* 1989, 321. The message of the Asian Bishops' Consultation on "Christian Presence Among Muslims in Asia" in Varanasi in 1983 states: "Muslims and Christians have many things in common. Our religious heritage as children of Abraham and our common human concerns force us to establish ever closer ties." Cited in B 55 1984, 39; "...faith, common to the spiritual sons of Abraham, which is for you [Muslims] as for us the sure foundation of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom." *Jadot* 2000a, 32; "This faith in the One God, Living and True, a faith which is the heritage of all the spiritual children of Abraham, the father of believers, unites us as brothers and sisters in God..." *Arinze* 2000e, 44; "Muslims and Christians, we define ourselves as 'believers' and, together with Jews, we see in Abraham a model for our faith." *Arinze* 2000m, 62.—A Muslim states: "If the children of Abraham [referring to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity] have torn each other apart for so long down the centuries and the millenniums, the time has come when wisdom and the sincerity of faith must get the better of violence..." *Niasse* 2002, 65. Another Muslim comment: "L'Héritage Abrahamique est là pour nous inciter à réfléchir sur notre modeste condition pour atteindre la plénitude de notre Foi donc à un humanisme spirituel devant servir l'homme et à travers lui la collectivité." *Rahal* 1989, 46.

upon 'Abraham' and 'children of Abraham' in Galatians 3 and 4, and Romans 4. He writes, e.g. in Galatians 3:6: "Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.'" For Paul, the true children of Abraham are those who are his children by faith. In fact, it seems that in Galatians Paul claims that only Christians are truly children of Abraham, the status of Christians as children of God being the argument for being children of Abraham.¹⁸⁰ In the light of this exegetical analysis, the whole concept of 'Abrahamic religions', at least if it is understood to mean physical descent, becomes rather questionable as a starting point for interreligious dialogue.¹⁸¹

The second critical question is whether the Abraham of Islam is the same as the Abraham of Christianity (or of Judaism). Every Christian who has read the Qur'an notices that the Qur'anic Abraham is not exactly the biblical Abraham, and every Muslim who has read the Bible notices that the biblical Abraham is not exactly the Qur'anic Abraham. The name is the same, but the contents are at least partly different. If 'Abraham' is not the same concept in these two traditions, the idea of the common Abrahamic heritage is not as clear as normally presumed. Has the concept of 'Abraham' been modified, even constructed, to suit interreligious dialogue? The answer seems to be affirmative.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ I owe this insight to Professor Anneli Aejmelaesus (University of Helsinki) in the Finnish Journal of Theology *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 5/2004, 446–453.—Cf. *Kasper* 2002, 291: "According to Biblical witness, Abraham is our common father in faith."—On the one hand, the Qur'an says that Muslims are those who are the closest in faith to Abraham (see Sura 3:68). On the other hand, it does not say that Muslims *only* are the children of Abraham.

¹⁸¹ An important comment is made by *Borrmans* (2000, 113): "... le lien historique des musulmans avec Ismaël n'est pas prouvé, ceux-ci ne s'appellent ni fils d'Ismaël ni fils d'Abraham et l'Islam comme tel ne saurait être considéré comme partie intégrante de la révélation judéo-chrétienne." *Caspar* (1976, 5) is right when he says, referring to NA 3: "Abraham is not the genealogical ancestor, the father according to the flesh, of Muslims; for that has no religious value at all, even prescindng from the historical aspect. But he is their father in faith, as a type and model of a heroic submission, with an active and confident faith, in the paradoxical will of God who asked him for the sacrifice of the son of the promise (cf. Qur'an 37:99–113). It is in this sense that Abraham is the father of all the believers; it is in this sense that he is the common father of Jews, Christians and Muslims."

¹⁸² This is the opinion of *Waardenburg* (1998, 101): "Cependant, au regard de la recherche historique, il s'agit là d'une construction de synthèse historique, voire mythique, sans confirmation factuelle. A partir de l'élaboration d'une généalogie rattachée à un passé lointain et légendaire, on a voulu, avec les meilleures intentions sans doute, jeter un pont entre les trois religions. En fait, les liens privilégiés que celles-ci prétendent entretenir avec Abraham servent le plus souvent à s'approprier le personnage."—Cf. *Dupuis* 1999, 255. See also *Geffré* 1983, 26–28, *Michel* 1986, 185, and *Küng* 1988a, 197.

The third critical question is the method of the lowest common denominator. If in Christian-Muslim dialogue the importance of Abraham is only his faith and his obedience to God's command to sacrifice his son, the Christian side is reducing its own tradition. Of course, faith and obedience are important, but at least as important are Abraham's call and covenant relationship with God, and his role in the history of salvation.¹⁸³

Created human beings on a journey towards God

In the Christian tradition God has created out of love (*creatio ex amore Dei*), and people alone are created in God's image and belong to God, even after they disobeyed God and were punished. The image and likeness of God in the human being is the basis for the ontological and dynamic, and therefore interpersonal and dialogic relation of the human person to God as his or her origin and end.¹⁸⁴ The first human being, Adam, was created as more than a mere human being, because he had received from God the free gift of preternatural and supernatural prerogatives.¹⁸⁵ The first humans were to work upon nature, and if they worked in ways consonant with their own and creation's natures, their work would perfect material creation and themselves, and the image of God would thus be perfected with the help of grace by all their actions. The human being was to grow by helping nature grow.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Cf. DV 3. *Moubarac* (1970, 432–433) comments succinctly on the relation between Abraham's experience and Muhammad's experience: "Noch tiefer hat sich Mohammed in Abraham aufgrund einer gemeinsamen religiösen Lebenslage wiedererkannt. Es ist die des Menschen in der Wüste, fremd in der Welt und allein vor Gott. ... Der Islam wurde nicht im Frieden der Wohnung des Vaters geboren, und er ist nicht dafür geschaffen, im Hause der legitimen Frau zu bleiben. 'Der Islam ist in der Fremde geboren', sagt der Hadith, 'und er wird als Fremder enden; selig sind die, die sich zu diesem Schicksal unter Fremden bekennen.' Diese Betrachtungsweise der Verheißung und des Erbes Abrahams als Bedingung geistiger Existenz ist nicht nur für den Islam interessant."

¹⁸⁴ *Rossano* 1982b, 294.

¹⁸⁵ In Roman Catholic theology, human beings received supernatural gifts of grace and virtue in creation. They were not created in a fully developed state; there were almost unlimited potentials left to exploit and bring to fruition. Human beings were also, under God, lords and builders of creation. "Knowing God by faith and seeing Him revealed in creation, man was able to grow in likeness to God both by contemplating God and by all his operations upon the world in which he lived." *Corley* 2003, 93.

¹⁸⁶ *Corley* 2003, 93; *Ladaria* 2000, 27.

The creation means, as seen above, that all human beings belong to one worldwide community, to the one family of God on earth. But the God who created human beings and is their origin is also their destiny. Human beings are all on a journey towards the Highest Good, i.e., God.¹⁸⁷ As *Nostra Aetate* 1 says: “For all peoples comprise a single community, and have a single origin, since God made the whole race of men dwell over the entire face of the earth (cf. Acts 17:26). One also is their final goal: God.”¹⁸⁸ This Aristotelian-Thomistic emphasis is strong in SNC/PCID documentation. Pope Paul VI said in 1968 that the Secretariat for Non-Christians had found the specific and categorical object of its activity, to know the religious human being, “veritable base of our fraternity”, that the human being who “by inward instinct” (the words of Thomas Aquinas), is deeply orientated towards God and seeks him, even if unconsciously.¹⁸⁹ Besides referring to Thomas Aquinas, the Pope also quoted from Augustine’s *Confessions* (1.1).¹⁹⁰ The idea that a

¹⁸⁷ This idea was presented clearly by Thomas Aquinas, who was himself strongly influenced by Aristotle. “Every cause must direct its effects toward their proper end. Since the order of ends is according to the order of agents or movers, it is necessary that a man be converted to his ultimate end by the action of the first mover. Since God is the first mover, all things are converted to Him as to their last end by His own action (*Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae, 109.6).” *Irwin/Eds.* 2003, 240.—Note the name of the 1999 PCID publication: *Journeying Together*. In the publication it is said: “Everybody has been created in him [Jesus] and through him, and everything is moving towards him.” (p. 107)—*Rossano* (1971a, 41) notes: “L’histoire démontre que l’humanité est en marche et que l’esprit humain s’exprime dans une continuelle interrogation dialectique sur les réalités et les expériences toujours identiques mais toujours nouvelles auxquelles il doit chaque jour s’affronter.”

¹⁸⁸ NA 1 1966, 660–661. Also GS 41 1966, 240: “Since it has been entrusted to the Church to reveal the mystery of God, who is the ultimate goal of man [*mysterium Dei, qui est ultimus finis hominis*]...” Cf. “... ‘God, the beginning and end of all things [*Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem*], can be known with certainty from created reality by the light of human reason’ (cf. Rom. 1:20)...” DV 6 1966, 114.

¹⁸⁹ *Paul VI* 1968a, 115. In 1969 *Paul VI* (1969, 1) said: “Toute aspiration à la perfection est une tendance vers Dieu (Cf. *S. Th.* 1, 6, 2 ad 2...)”

¹⁹⁰ “A marvellous discovery: we are essentially destined for a personal relationship with God. Let us recall the ever quoted words of St. Augustine: ‘Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart will never rest until it rests in Thee’ (*Conf.* 1, 1). To deprive man of this goal would clip the wings of this spirit, lowering his stature to the level of beings without spiritual souls, deceive his supreme aspirations with objects of insufficient dimensions, feed his religious hunger with food that increases it, but cannot satisfy it (cf. *S. Th.*, *Contra Gentes*, III, 25).” *Paul VI* 1973, 7. Cf. *John Paul II* 1987f, 55–56.—Even though there is a strong Augustinian influence in SNC/PCID documentation, allusions to Augustine and his works are rather rare. A footnote of DP 25 refers to Augustine’s *Retract.*, 1, 13, 3; cf. *Enarr. in Ps. 118* (*Sermo* 29,9), 142, 3. Cf. “... St. Augustine, who, when considering the unity of the history of salvation and the

human being is a *homo religiosus* who inherently looks for his or her goal serves as a basis for interreligious encounters.

In 1971 Paul VI spoke in very Aristotelian-Thomistic terms that nothing is firm nor stable. Nothing can explain, by itself, what it is and why it exists. Nothing explains where it comes from or where it is going to. Everything, when grasped in its deepest being, refers to some principle, to some purpose outside itself. Everything is a way and a ladder. There exists a tiring and blessed journey called religion.¹⁹¹ The Pope seems to combine Thomas Aquinas's Five Ways, but he specifically identifies the motion towards the purpose of everything as 'religion'. But what kind of religion? The Pope continues: "It is natural religion, if reached with the effort of our being, predisposed to this incipient and indistinct meeting; supernatural religion, if to the longing of man the seeker, the thirsty pilgrim, there replies from that mystery, no longer completely unknown and empty, a living Voice, infinitely living: 'I exist!', the voice of God opening the conversation with man, the conversation of faith, of 'superlife', the conversation of the kingdom of God."¹⁹²

Pope John Paul II continued on the same track. In his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* he said that there is only one single goal to which the deepest aspiration of the human spirit is directed. It is expressed in the quest for God and for the full dimension or full meaning of its humanity and human life. This happens through its tending towards God.¹⁹³ In his speech to young Moroccan Muslims in 1985 he said that Christians and Muslims know that human beings and peoples have one and the same origin and final goal: the God who has made them and who waits for them. God will gather them together.¹⁹⁴ He said in India

universal influence of the Word, maintains that the 'vera religio' has never really failed in mankind even if it has been expressed '*aliis tunc nominibus et signis, aliis autem nunc*' (cf. Ep. 102, PL 33, 374-375)." *Rossano* 1978a, 35.—That Augustine made the idea of truth central in his philosophy is not mentioned in the SNC/PCID documents.

¹⁹¹ *Paul VI* 1972a, 2.

¹⁹² *Paul VI* 1972a, 2. This citation has an existentialist tone.—Paul VI emphasized the sharp distinction between natural religions and the supernatural religion of Jesus in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1974), in which he wrote: "Even in the face of natural religious expressions most worthy of esteem, the Church finds support in the fact that the religion of Jesus, which she proclaims through evangelization, objectively places man in relation with the plan of God, with his living presence and with his action; she thus causes an encounter with the mystery of divine paternity that bends over towards humanity." EN 53 1990, 24.

¹⁹³ RH 11 1979, 20. Cited in *John Paul II* 1998b, 273 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 11-12.

¹⁹⁴ *John Paul II* 1985e, 250. In 1985 John Paul II said to representatives of Islam in

in 1999 that human beings “by inward instinct” are deeply orientated towards God and seek him from the depths of their being (quoting ST 3.60.5.3).¹⁹⁵ Especially on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986, the speeches of Pope John Paul II were informed by the idea that God is the origin and destiny of human beings on the way towards him. In his concluding address in Assisi he said: “Could it be otherwise, since all men and women in this world have a common nature, a common origin and a common destiny? ... Either we learn to walk together in peace and harmony, or we drift apart and ruin ourselves and others. We hope that this pilgrimage to Assisi has taught us anew to be aware of the common origin and common destiny of humanity.”¹⁹⁶

It is noteworthy that in this interreligious assembly John Paul II did not define the common origin and the common destiny, the “transcendent goal”, which is set for humanity. He did that, in fact, a bit later, in his Christmas address to the Roman Curia.

The one God in whom we believe, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Most Holy Trinity, created man and woman with a particular attention, according to the narrative in Genesis (cf. *Gen* 1:26ff.; 2:7, 18–24). This affirmation contains and communicates a profound truth: the unity of the divine origin of all the human family, of every man and woman, which is reflected in the unity of the divine image which each one bears in himself (cf. *Gen* 1:26) and *per se* gives the orientation to a common goal (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 1).¹⁹⁷

Cameroon: “Car Dieu est l’origine et la fin de notre vie...” *John Paul II* 1985c, 233. In 1990 he said to an interreligious group in Tanzania: “... as we strive to bear witness to the transcendent mystery that conscience tells us is the only answer to the deepest longings of the human heart.” *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 90.

¹⁹⁵ *John Paul II* 2000b, 48.

¹⁹⁶ *John Paul II* 1987d, 40, 41. He continued (p. 41): “Let us see in it [this pilgrimage to Assisi] an anticipation of what God would like the developing history of humanity to be: a fraternal journey in which we accompany one another towards the transcendent goal which he sets for us.” Also in DP 79 1991, 246. John Paul II said in 2000: “At the beginning of the new millennium, if we are to hasten this promising journey, we must not slacken our pace. You know well that dialogue does not ignore real differences, but neither does it deny our common state as pilgrims bound for a new heaven and a new earth.” *John Paul II* 2001a, 12.

¹⁹⁷ *John Paul II* 1987f, 55. The Pope continues with an Augustine citation: “‘You have made us for yourself, O Lord’, exclaims St Augustine, in the fullness of his maturity as a thinker, ‘and our heart has no rest, until it rests in you’ (*Conf.* 1).” *John Paul II* 1987f, 55–56. Cf. *Rossano* 1981b, 214: “Obvious in all the documents of the magisterium is the well-considered intention of emphasising what is in common, following the lead of *Nostra aetate* (no. 1).”—Cf. *Ehr/Eds.* 2003, 344: “By linking the work of creation to that of

In this discourse, it can be argued, the Pope summarized the theological foundations of the SNC/PCID. The elements are the same as seen above: one unique God who is emphatically set in a Trinitarian framework, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the triune God in whom Christians believe. The One God is also Creator God. He has created everybody as one human family, and this divine creation has left traces of God in every human being.¹⁹⁸ But God is not only the origin of human beings, he is also the goal of the human being: he is the Highest Good, the only necessary Being, the transcendent goal towards which all human beings strive, even if they are not aware of it.¹⁹⁹ It is noteworthy that the Pope did not mention sin or take a stand on the question of the image of God and/or likeness of God, a question that has been the subject of different interpretations in Christian theology ever since the early patristic period, and especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, with the Pelagian controversy.²⁰⁰

In his address at the conclusion of the Plenary Assembly of 1984 of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, John Paul II linked interreligious dialogue and collaboration together with transcendent goal of human life and authentic human growth. Interreligious dialogue fulfils an important need for all religious traditions and all believers. They are called more than ever to collaborate so that “every person can reach his transcendent goal and realize his authentic growth”.²⁰¹ *Dia-*

salvation, the Old Testament prepared the way for the New, which introduced Christ and thus the Blessed Trinity into the total picture of the divine action in this world. Scripture compels one to say that it is essential to the Christian doctrine of creation to face the mystery of the Trinity. Christ is presented as mediator already in creation, and not only in the work of Redemption.”

¹⁹⁸ Strangely enough, the vestige doctrine (*vestigia trinitatis*), a reflection of the Trinity throughout the universe, is not a common theme in SNC/PCID documentation. *Rossano* (1970c, 226) notes: “For this reason it is natural... to discover in the world and in man a reflection of God and *something like an imprint* of his greatness.” (Emphasis added).

¹⁹⁹ In view of Thomistic influences on Pope John Paul II’s statements, *Irwin’s* remark (1996, 84) sounds strange: “One contribution which John Paul II himself has made to contemporary Catholic teaching is his frequent move away from a strictly Thomistic philosophical and theological tradition as the basis of his thought.” He seems to refer to the whole theological structure in the thinking of John Paul II, not specifically to his thinking on non-Christian religions.

²⁰⁰ One of the first publications of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, *L’espérance qui est en nous*, which is a brief presentation of the Catholic faith, states (1967, 17): “Cela [la faute de l’homme] ne signifie pas que l’homme et le monde soient devenus intrinsèquement mauvais; ils sont toujours créatures de Dieu et donc fondamentalement ‘bons’.”

²⁰¹ *John Paul II* 1984c, 122. *Benedict XVI* (2005g, 270) links the common good and God

logue and Proclamation 79 declares that in promoting Gospel values in a spirit of emulation and of respect for the mystery of God, religious people, Christians and non-Christians alike, discover that they are companions on the common path which humanity is called to tread.²⁰²

Other SNC / PCID documentation follows the same line. The Aristotelian-Thomistic idea of (created) human beings going towards the Highest Good is evident in the publications. Human beings are on a journey towards God, or the Principle.²⁰³ It must be noted, however, that the relationship between the Aristotelian ‘God’ and the human being is asymmetric: the human being desires and looks for God, the Supreme Good, whereas God in Aristotelianism does not need human beings and is indifferent towards them.²⁰⁴ Thomas Aquinas is referred to in the same way as the two popes did.²⁰⁵ Human beings develop in their ascension, and this ascension towards the goal is a sign of the

as the transcendent goal of creation: “Car le bien commun n’est pas un simple bien-être socio-économique. Il revêt aussi une dimension transcendante, parce que Dieu est la fin ultime de ses creatures.”

²⁰² DP 79 1994, 115.

²⁰³ “... God who created all and is our final goal.” *Arinze* 1992, 5; “... the interior journey towards God is the way on which we find each other as pilgrims, journeying side by side.” *Becker* 2002, 42; “Mais le dialogue est surtout une exigence de notre fidélité à Dieu, créateur et fin de tous les hommes, juge et débordant de miséricorde envers tous.” *Zago* 1986, 181; “Man continually transcends everything in the pursuit and realization of his own becoming—forever on the road in his journey towards God—man’s very condition is part of creation which can reach beyond itself, and by being transformed into God himself be a revelation in time of the very essence of God.” *Sheridan* 1989, 50; “... tout être humain perçoit dans son coeur, sous l’inspiration de l’Esprit de Dieu, un appel à retourner au Principe et au But son existence...” *Coda* 1999, 227.

²⁰⁴ *Dalferth* (1988, 29) notes: “... this [Aristotelian] model leads to a totally self-contained divinity which perpetually actualizes its essence independently of any relations to anything outside itself...”

²⁰⁵ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 12: “Christian tradition has made its own the expression of Tertullian ‘anima naturaliter Christiana’, while St. Thomas in the *Summa* against the Gentiles (III, 119) writes: ‘Homo etiam quodam naturali instinctu se obligatum sentit ut Deo suo modo reverentiam impendat, a quo est sui esse et omnis boni principium’ (Cfr. also S. Th. III, q. 6, art. 5, ad 3: ‘interiori instinctu’).” *Marella* (1969a, 3 = 1969b, 5), citing Paul VI: “Le Secrétariat a trouvé de plus en plus clairement l’objet spécifique et formel de son activité, à savoir l’homme religieux, véritable fondement de notre fraternité, cet homme qui, *interiori instinctu*—pour adopter les mots de saint Thomas (*S. Th.*, III, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3)—est orienté profondément vers Dieu et le cherche, même inconsciemment, *non passibus corporalibus*—pour reprendre les paroles du Docteur angélique—*sed affectibus mentis* (*S. Th.*, I, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5) ...” Also, e.g., *Nambiarambil* 1979, 13; *Rossano* 1974b, 168.

greatness of the human being, intrinsically open to the supernatural, and tending towards it.²⁰⁶ This orientation is sometimes clearly set in a framework of Christian personalism: “Man, in fact, is and becomes the image and likeness of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons... in its social nature, in its orientation towards a ‘you’, in the establishment of an ‘us’.”²⁰⁷ Being a communion of persons, the journey is thus common to human beings, making them co-pilgrims. In SNC / PCID messages to Muslims for the end of Ramadan the idea of going or journeying towards God comes up only occasionally.²⁰⁸ *Guidelines* (1969) mentions that human beings are by their very nature free and oriented towards a greater goal than

²⁰⁶ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 11: “In other words, man is intrinsically open to the supernatural and tends towards it...” There are other examples in SNC/PCID documentation: *L’espérance qui est en nous* 1967, 15: “Dieu est à l’origine de tous les êtres qui se développent suivant une échelle ascendante.” P. 16: “La grandeur de l’homme est de pouvoir perfectionner la création et de l’acheminer vers Dieu, sa fin et son Seigneur.” P. 25: “Alors l’humanité atteindra en Dieu sa destinée et la gloire pour laquelle elle est créée.” *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 12: “... every genuine and salutary religious act which proceeds from the human soul is sustained by an intervention of the Divine Spirit and constitutes an expectation of Christ and an implicit invocation directed towards him...” *Guidelines* 1969, 32: “Perhaps, without his [a Muslim] realising it, he is already oriented towards the People of God, not in spite of Islam, but because he has taken his stand on truths to be believed and to be put into practice...” Cf. *Dion* 1982, 232.

²⁰⁷ *Sanna* 1997, 47–48. “Thus according to the Christian conception of as created in the image and likeness of God, man is, by nature, directed towards God, and only together with God can he be truly a man.” *Sanna* 1997, 51. Cf. “By his nature man is a social being who, unless he relates to others, can neither live nor develop... we need others to become fully ourselves.” *Sheridan* 1989, 50. The influence of personalism is obvious.

²⁰⁸ “It seems to us that as we journey together *towards Him* we are closer than at any time in our existence.” *Cuoq* 2000b, 10. (Emphasis added) “We can also place confidence in the human person who is able, by God’s grace, to begin a new stage *on the path which leads us back to Him.*” *Arinze* 2000a, 37. (Emphasis added) “If life can be imagined as a *pilgrimage towards God*, religious feasts become moments of rest when we are invited to take stock, gather strength, and renew our determination to continue on the prescribed *path.*” *Arinze* 2000j, 56. (Emphasis added) Cf. *Isizoh* 2003, 366: “They [many religions in Africa] *work together* in projects of common concern and they *walk together* as pilgrims towards Truth.”—A striking example of the use of the same vocabulary but with different meanings in PCID documentation is given by *El-Hassan Bin Talal* (2002, 19): “Peace is the condition in which people are moving together towards the same goal; it is the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining agreements. It is a shared comprehension of the goals that must be achieved and a shared process of working towards them.” Obviously the term ‘goal’ is not understood (only) as something transcendental, but something with more immanent.

themselves.²⁰⁹ The idea of human beings' return to God is also shared by the Qur'anic message.²¹⁰

But how is this journey possible? How do human beings succeed in their striving towards God? Are there any supports or obstacles on the journey? These are questions which lead us to deal with the issue of natural law and sin in the lives of human beings.

Natural law and sin

According to Catholic theology, in their striving towards the good, human beings have at their disposal natural law, which is implanted and present in all of creation, and written in the heart of every person. The human conscience tells human beings what is right and what is wrong and it pushes them to give up evil and turn towards good, even the Highest Good. In universal form primarily, natural law expresses the fundamental inclinations of human nature formulated with little or no discursive reasoning, by reason in a judgment naturally made. This law is natural on two counts: (1) it is law discovered by reason, not so much made by it; and (2) all human beings naturally know the most universal precepts expressed in natural law. Understood in this way, natural law is clearly a fundamental principle for directing human acts.²¹¹ Thomas Aquinas stated that natural law "is nothing other than the light of understanding infused in us by God, whereby we understand what must be done and what must be avoided. God gave this light and this law to man at creation".²¹²

Universal natural law was an important point of contact in Roman Catholic theology between Christians and non-Christians already in the 1960s.²¹³ The documents of Vatican II speak of natural law.²¹⁴ The

²⁰⁹ *Guidelines* 1969, 120.

²¹⁰ E.g. Sura 6:60, 72, and Sura 10:46.

²¹¹ *Oesterle/O'Donohoe* 2003, 171.

²¹² St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Praeceptis Caritatis* and *De Decem Legis Praeceptis*. Cited by *Völlmer & Völlmer* 1995, 86. On natural law and Thomas Aquinas, see, e.g., *Kerr* 2002, 97–113.

²¹³ *Sheard* 1987, 37.—On 'natural law', see, e.g., "Natural law" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Second Edition) 2003, Volume 10, pp. 179–203.

²¹⁴ See, e.g., GS 16, 79, and DH 3 1966, 680: "Further light is shed on the subject if one considers that the highest norm of human life is the divine law—eternal, objective, and universal—whereby God orders, directs, and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love."

idea is that there is a natural moral order. In following it, one is led to a form of natural fulfilment. The order and its fulfilment are transformed and elevated to a supernatural state of order by God's grace. God directs humankind to the supernatural goal of divine life. Natural law is a basis for dialogue, since there are common moral principles that all human beings can recognize and which they all share. On this natural level, dialogue can be grounded on the natural law present in creation.²¹⁵ "The natural law is immutable, permanent throughout history. The rules that express it remain substantially valid. It is a necessary foundation for the erection of moral rules and civil law."²¹⁶

According to SNC / PCID documentation, natural law can be found by human beings because it is inscribed in their hearts (Romans 2:15).²¹⁷ It helps them to make good moral choices and pursue the real good. It prohibits the destruction of human life.²¹⁸ It also relates non-Christian religions to the Gospel.²¹⁹ John Paul II said in 2000: "The Ten Commandments are not imposed arbitrarily by a tyrannous Lord. They were written in stone; but, before that, they had been written in the hearts of human beings as a universal moral law, valid in any time and any place. Today, as always, the ten 'words' of the Law supply the only real basis for the life of human beings, societies and nations."²²⁰ The

Cf. DH 7. Also, IM 6 (1966, 322) states: "Only the moral order touches man in his total nature as God's reasoning creature, summoned heavenwards. If this order is fully and faithfully respected, it leads a man to a rich measure of fulfilment and happiness."

²¹⁵ Sheard 1987, 37. Cf. *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 29, 34.

²¹⁶ CCC 1979.

²¹⁷ E.g. Ajaiby 1997, 67.

²¹⁸ Völlmer & Völlmer 1995, 89, 91.

²¹⁹ "But since acceptance of the Gospel presupposes in man a religious soul to be raised up, purified and enlightened, and a fundamental moral rectitude, for this reason the non-Christian religions in their primary and authentic elements, as an expression of man's aptitude for religion and of the moral law inscribed in his heart, can be considered as ways ordained by God beforehand in view of salvation and of the Church, to which the spiritual gifts of peoples lead, as was announced by the prophets." *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 9. See also p. 15.

²²⁰ "Les dix commandements ne sont pas imposés arbitrairement par un Seigneur tyrannique. Ils ont été écrits dans la pierre; mais, avant cela, ils ont été écrits dans le coeur de l'homme comme la loi morale universelle, valable en tout temps et en tout lieu. Aujourd'hui comme toujours, les dix 'paroles' de la Loi fournissent les seules véritables bases pour la vie des personnes, des sociétés et des nations." Borrmans 2002a, 61. (Tr. by RJ)—See also VS 13. Cf. *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 21: "... according to Judaeo-Christian tradition the divine and the revealed law of the love of neighbour, without which there is no salvation... is no more than the recollection, the

Pope seemed to imply that the Ten Commandments are, at the same time, the expression of natural law and of eternal law. According to the Pope, international law (or any law) has to be law which is in conformity with the principles of natural law and of moral law. They are always binding upon conflicting parties and in the various questions under dispute.²²¹ The Pope made a distinction between natural law and moral law, the latter of which seems to refer to eternal law, which is more fundamental than natural law. Eternal law is more fundamental: it can be arrived at by reason alone, though usually indirectly. Eternal law is the ultimate source of all law as well as the ultimate directive principle of all acts and motions of creatures to their proper ends. It is not the law given through revelation.²²² Natural law expresses “the fundamental inclinations of human nature formulated by reason”.²²³ As natural law is inscribed in the human heart, it is the best foundation for interreligious cooperation.²²⁴ The longing for peace expresses itself in the fact that people desire order and tranquillity, they have an attitude of readiness to help others, they want to cooperate and share with others, based on mutual respect. These are values that originate in natural law and are propounded by the world’s religions.²²⁵ For the Pope, natural law is an important and urgent topic.²²⁶

explicit rendering and the supernaturally revealed plenitude of the natural law which is engraved in the hearts of all men...”

²²¹ *John Paul II* 1999e, 284. Cf. CCC 1980: “The Old Law is the first stage of revealed law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments.”

²²² *Oesterle/O'Donohoe* 2003, 172.

²²³ *Oesterle/O'Donohoe* 2003, 171.

²²⁴ “The best foundation for such [interreligious] co-operation is the moral law inscribed in the human heart, which is mankind’s common treasure and a fundamental meeting point between peoples of different cultures and religious traditions.” *John Paul II* 2001h, 176. Cf. *Humbertclaude* 1969, 82.

²²⁵ *John Paul II* 1992a, 3.

²²⁶ “Another important and urgent topic I would like to call to your attention is that of natural moral law. This law belongs to the great heritage of human wisdom. Revelation, with its light, has contributed to further purifying and developing it. Natural law, in itself accessible to every rational creature, points to the first essential norms that regulate moral life. On the basis of this law it is possible to construct a platform of shared values around which can be developed a constructive dialogue with all people of good will and, more generally, with secular society.” *John Paul II* 2004c, 36. Cf. *Benedict XVI* 2005c, 167–168: “... there is a great need today to recover a vision of the mutual relationship between civil law and moral law which, as well as being proposed by the Christian tradition, is also part of the patrimony of the great juridical traditions of humanity.”

The idea of moral law, or of a moral order, is also familiar to Muslim thinking.²²⁷ For a Muslim, the true servants of God will have wisdom in them. They will unite in spite of their different religions in order to achieve a life in which values are based on God's laws, on the preservation of peace, tolerance, and mutual respect.²²⁸ A moral order with religious inspiration should be the basis for a civilized world.²²⁹ People should understand basic laws and surrender themselves to them.²³⁰ For some Muslims, the law means nothing else than Islamic law.²³¹ A natural moral law, expressed by the Ten Commandments, can be found, in its major elements, in the Qur'an. But it is presented as a positive divine law, without any distinction between diverse moral or juridical precepts.²³² However, SNC / PCID documentation lacks a discussion of the meaning of 'natural law' or 'moral law' in the framework of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Maybe the fact that in the Islamic religion law and obedience have such an important place—Islam is both a faith and a law—has rendered Christians' discussion of natural law with Muslims superfluous. Besides, the fact that there was no revealed law in the teachings, sayings, and actions of Jesus can be used by Muslims as a proof of Christianity's weakness.²³³ "Islam criticizes Christianity for not having a Divine Law, a *Shar'iah*, in the strict sense of the term, and does not understand why Christianity did not follow Mosaic Law or bring a law of its own."²³⁴

Natural law is not completely obscured despite aberrations or sin.²³⁵ Sin, according to Christian theology, can be defined as a word, deed

²²⁷ *Guidelines* 1969, 144: "Christians insist on the Covenant between God and mankind, while Muslims put the emphasis on the Law."

²²⁸ *Mehmed* 2002, 56.

²²⁹ "Therefore, a civilized world should be modelled and built on a moral order with religious inspiration..." *Islam & Islam* 1995, 74.

²³⁰ *Ghazel* 1990, 17: "... their [people's] lives submit to basic laws by which their welfare can be achieved if they only understand these laws and 'surrender' themselves and their lives to them."

²³¹ *Bardhi* 2002, 75: "Bektashism aims at this mission [to install upon the Earth God's Will] applying the Islamic Law in a mystic, tolerant way..."

²³² *Gardet* 2002, 143.

²³³ E.g. "The fact that Christianity also had no revealed Law (*shari'ah*) expressed in the teachings, sayings and model actions (i.e., *sunnah*) of Jesus (on whom be Peace!) is itself a most significant indication that Christianity began as a new religion not intended as such by its presumed founder, nor authorized as such by the God Who sent him." *al-Attas* 1998, 119.

²³⁴ *Nasr* 1998, 130.

²³⁵ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 21: "... natural law which is engraved in the hearts of all men and is not completely obscured despite certain aberrations."

or desire contrary to the eternal law of God.²³⁶ It is also “an act contrary to reason. It wounds man’s nature and injures human solidarity.”²³⁷ Through sin human beings lost the supernatural endowments of human nature, for the first human beings themselves as well as for all their descendants.²³⁸ Roman Catholic doctrine refuses to admit a total destruction of nature by original sin, but it does not minimize the damage that sin has done to human nature.²³⁹ Human beings could not attain the eternal destiny ordained by God, even though their destiny remained.²⁴⁰ As they have fallen, human beings do not know God and do not love God in a right way.

However, the question of sin, of losing the supernatural endowments, is not often mentioned in SNC / PCID documentation.²⁴¹ In 1985 John Paul II did not hide the effects of sin on a human being’s life when addressing to young Moroccan Muslims, but he placed more emphasis

²³⁶ Corley 2003, 94.

²³⁷ CCC 1872.

²³⁸ “The sin mars but does not destroy the human image of God; sin deprives it of some of its pristine gifts.” Fichtner 1967, 613. “Through sin man’s similitude to God (grace) was lost and the image of God (nature) was wounded, thus making a distinction between similitude and image.” Dhavamony 1998, 763.

²³⁹ See, e.g., DS 371, and DS 400. Cf. CCC 1874.

²⁴⁰ Corley 2003, 93–94.

²⁴¹ In the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* the only references to sin are: “What is goodness and what is sin?” NA 1 1966, 661, and “... Christ in His boundless love freely underwent His passion and death because of the sins of all men, so that all might attain salvation.” NA 4 1966, 667. However, the question of sin and its consequences is very present in *Gaudium et Spes* (e.g. GS 2, 13–18, 22, 25, 37, 39–41, 58, 78).—In SNC/PCID documentation, there are two longer passages on sin (both are entire paragraphs), one whole chapter, and one part of a book. The first one is in *Journeying Together* 1999, 107: “Human beings were created for friendship [sic] with [sic] God. Sin, however, broke this relationship. The light of divine Revelation illumines the reality of sin and particularly of the sin committed at mankind’s origins. Sin is disobedience toward God, lack of trust in his goodness and an abuse of that freedom which God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another. The whole of the human race is implicated in the sin of Adam which brings death as its fruit.” The second one is Cantore 1992, 36: “The answer to the question of the origin of evil is found in the third chapter of Genesis where we read that the first couple doubted the veracity of the word of God, thus breaking the original relationship of trust of the creature towards his Creator. In refusing to accept one’s proper reality as a creature and in the falsity which overturns their relationship with God, there lies the *sin* of man and woman. And so sin enters the world with its chain of consequences. It is not only that *man and woman are now afraid of God*, but *they are no longer in harmony with themselves, with one another, nor with nature*. Biblical man, who had well experienced such evil, has described it in its most typical and basic aspects.” The whole chapter is Greco 1970, and the part of the book is Part IV, “Good and Evil in the Religions” in *Religions: Fundamental Themes* 1970, 395–599.

on repentance and mercy: “When man returns to him [God], repentant and contrite, after having strayed away into the disorder of sin and the works of death. [sic] God then reveals himself as the One who pardons and shows mercy.”²⁴² For the Pope, even though the creation is good, because of sin the earth is a land of suffering.²⁴³ In 1990 he strongly exhorted Catholic Christians to recognize the effects of their original and personal sin.²⁴⁴ In this situation, Christians should invoke God as the Father of Jesus who died on the cross for their sins and has risen in glory.²⁴⁵ *Dialogue and Proclamation* does not emphasize the reality of evil in the world. It has instead an optimistic view of human beings in their religions, but then takes up the topic of evil: “For sin has been at work in the world, and so religious traditions, notwithstanding their positive values, reflect the limitations of the human spirit, sometimes inclined to choose evil.”²⁴⁶ Jesus Christ has delivered mankind from sin and allows it to have a complete relationship with God.²⁴⁷ In the messages to Muslims for the end of Ramadan, sin is occasionally mentioned, especially by Cardinal Arinze.²⁴⁸ He has also stated that in

²⁴² *John Paul II* 1985e, 250. *Arinze* (2000, 66) has wished for a more merciful cooperation of between Christians and Muslims: “Is there not here [showing mercy to one’s neighbour] a wide field for collaboration between Christians and Muslims which needs to be developed?”

²⁴³ *John Paul II* 1987h, 94: “The earth... is unfortunately, because of man’s sin, a land of suffering.”

²⁴⁴ The Pope’s message on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary celebration of the World Day of Peace on January 1, 1990: “The commitment of believers to a healthy environment for everyone stems directly from their belief in God the Creator, from their recognition of the effects of original and personal sin, and from the certainty of having been redeemed by Christ.” *Religion and the Use of the Earth’s Resources* 1996, 151. Cf. *Sabbah* 1989, 42: “Moreover, man who is the object of trust is a sinner and capable of error. He has a tendency towards evil, just as he is capable of doing good. His nature from the beginning has been wounded by original sin ...”

²⁴⁵ *John Paul II* 1987h, 95.—RM 55 (1994, 35) affirms that religions are the main and essential expressions of spiritual riches. Nevertheless, they also contain gaps, insufficiencies, and errors.

²⁴⁶ DP 31 1994, 102.

²⁴⁷ *Pacini* 1997, 128. Cf. “Often confronted with sin and human error, this challenge [to remember the trust which God has placed upon His people] placed before us is, nevertheless, in the process of being met through human responsibility.” B 81 1992, 393.

²⁴⁸ “We come to God humbly, in full awareness of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and ask God’s mercy for our failings.” *Arinze* 2000i, 54; “... the believer proclaims the nobility of the Most High, humiliates himself before Him and asks forgiveness for his sins.” *Arinze* 2000k, 58; “The time of fasting is a privileged period for asking pardon for sins committed and seeking to be reconciled with God.” *Arinze* 2000l, 60; “The Bible speaks of the human person as one who experiences temptation and sin. The human heart is inclined to pride, to hardness, to duplicity (cf *Proverbs* 21:4; *Job* 41:16; *Psalms*

order to have peace, the first battle is often against the evil that is in human beings.²⁴⁹ In fact, in PCID relations with Muslims, Arinze seems to have paid close attention to the inherent differences between the two religions. He said in 1997, referring to the lack of self-criticism on the Muslim side: “Christians are taught by their religion to examine their conscience each day, especially in the evening, to accept responsibility for any wrongs they may have done, and to repent and beg God for forgiveness. ... I would like to ask my Muslim friends whether in Islam there is a similar practice.”²⁵⁰

Guidelines (1969) states that sin stops up the ears of Christians and Muslims and makes them less attentive to the divine call.²⁵¹ The condition from which the human being strives towards God is not a condition of being insufficient, but it is a condition of sin.²⁵² However, in spite of sin, human beings still strive towards the Highest Good (i.e., God), though it is impossible for them to find the right direction if God does not restore their will and re-direct it.²⁵³ In spite of sin entering into the human heart and into the institutions of society, grace abounds.²⁵⁴ In spite of sin, God has continued to love human beings, through the incarnation of his eternal word.²⁵⁵

In Islam, humanity is not inherently fallen. People are born good by nature²⁵⁶ and they are born believers. Individuals do not need salvation or redemption from a general concept of original sin because there

11:3).” *Arinze* 2001. It is striking in this passage that there is no mention of Genesis 3, which Christian theology would almost automatically expect.

²⁴⁹ *Arinze* 1997, 207.

²⁵⁰ *Arinze* 1998, 86.

²⁵¹ *Guidelines* 1969, 146.

²⁵² “... parce que l’*homo religiosus* qui s’adresse à Dieu ne le fait pas seulement à partir d’une condition d’insuffisance radicale, comme nous l’avons dit plus haut en parlant de la religion en général, mais à partir d’une condition de péché.” *Gioia* 1996, 358. “According to classic Catholic terminology, Man is a being ‘wounded’ by sin and he carries in himself, more or less obviously, a secret inclination to rebel against God and turn into himself, however we like to call it.” *Rossano* 1974b, 169.

²⁵³ Cf. *Galenzoga* 1989, 111: “Finally, we have to discover again the power of symbols in our own respective religious traditions... our commitment to bring about His Reign and our confession of our radical inadequacy to bring about His Kingdom.” Cf. *Fernandes* 1985, 37: “In the heart of every man there is a peace movement, a search for harmony as the only real task of life; there is a will to live in brotherhood; there is a thirst we must mutually intensify for justice and peace, for living and growing together as brothers and sisters in the one family of man.”

²⁵⁴ *Zago* 1984, 267.

²⁵⁵ *Sabbah* 1989, 40.

²⁵⁶ E.g. Sura 30:30. Cf. Romans 3:23. In Islam, there is a theological principle of

never was any original sin.²⁵⁷ The intellect (*al-'aql*) leads human beings into truth. In Islam, the evil act (*khata'*, or *dhanb*) is essentially disobedience (*ma'siya*),²⁵⁸ or disorder, the opposite of learning and wisdom.²⁵⁹ Sin can be said to be everything which encroaches on the rights of God and human beings as defined in the Qur'an and as God, through the revealed law, has instructed the Muslim community to observe.²⁶⁰ However, not all disobedience of God's law is equally serious, because there are "great offences" (*kaba'ir*) and "small offences" (*sagha'ir*).²⁶¹ The division is not very clear, and the criteria vary. One distinction given is the material content of the acts. Certain offences are unanimously called "great": apostasy from the faith and injurious language with regard to Muhammad, fornication and adultery, sins against nature, murder, usury, and black magic. It is important to note, too, that only "great" or "serious" offences are liable to punishment in the next world. In fact, there is one "great offence" distinct from all the others: the sin of infidelity (*kuf'r* or *shirk*), which means the deliberate refusal or repudiation of Islam. "This is the only offence that God could never forgive: the denial of God's Uniqueness (*shirk*). *Kuf'r* or *shirk* goes much further than disobedience. It is the revolt which declares at an end the covenant God has granted to Adam's race."²⁶² The human being who commits a *kuf'r* or a *shirk* refuses to admit that there is no other divinity than

the sinlessness (*isma*) of the prophets. They remain unblemished, because once God forgives their sins they continue as his messengers.

²⁵⁷ "... in Sunnite Islam there is no connection whatsoever between God's pardon and man's repentance. There is pardon when the offence is effaced without repentance, and repentance in itself cancels the need for God's pardon—it is sufficient that it be accepted by God." *Gelot* 1970, 551.

²⁵⁸ "Man is, in essence, inclined to do good, but he has to strive to resist evil and confront it." *Al-Abbadī* 1989, 116. There are three additional examples of the Muslim points of view on sin in SNC/PCID documentation: 1) "According to Islam, it was not the female who urged Adam to eat the fruit of [sic] the forbidden tree but it was the devil who did that." *Khayyat* 1992, 23. (Cf. *Borrmans* 1992, 118: "For us Christians, if Eve took the initiative of sinning while the man Adam was in immediate agreement (thus, equality in sin)..."); 2) "He [Prophet Muhammad] said that the most mortal sins in the world are three in number: (a) to associate anyone with God, (b) to disobey parents and (c) to give false evidence." *Islam & Islam* 1995, 73; and 3) "Le mal est aussi en chacun de nous, et chacun est appelé à le combattre." *Lahbabi* 1976, 179.

²⁵⁹ Other Qur'anic terms which have the meaning of 'sin' are *zulm* (Sura 6:82), *ithm* (2:182), *jurm* (20:74), *fasad* (2:205), *fisq* (5:3), and *dalal* (3:164) (*Lagarde* 1984, 3–4).

²⁶⁰ *Gelot* 1970, 537.

²⁶¹ *Gardet* 2002, 145: "... ce serait un contresens que de traduire ces termes, comme l'ont fait trop d'Occidentaux, par 'péchés mortels' et 'péchés véniels'."

²⁶² *Gelot* 1970, 537–538, 539.

God and rejects all faith in God's word, i.e., Qur'an. *Kufr* or *shirk* thus necessarily affects his or her eternal salvation.²⁶³ It is interesting to note that there is a detail which corresponds to a tenet of Christian theology. In Islam, evil actions are imputable to the human being alone, whereas good actions, which lead to God and involve the will, are accomplished only through the mercy of God.²⁶⁴

Summarizing remarks

In SNC / PCID documentation it is evident that God or the Absolute is at the centre of any religion and that religion is an answer to the search for the Ultimate and the Absolute inscribed in the heart of every human being.²⁶⁵ As long as the theo-logical emphasis rests on the first person of the Christian God, One God the Creator and Father²⁶⁶ (even though "father" is not really accepted on the Muslim side) and the anthro-pological emphasis rests on the human being and his or her experiences, Christians and Muslims have a great deal in common.²⁶⁷ As long as there is no profound analysis of what we mean when we say 'God', 'faith in one God', 'created human being' etc., Christian-Muslim dialogue rests on a safe level. Each side understands the terms in the way they understand them in their own traditions, and the theological or dogmatic differences are put aside.²⁶⁸ However, it can be argued that theological and dogmatic issues do matter in Christian-Muslim

²⁶³ *Gelot* 1970, 539. "*Shirk* is the worst form of disbelief. ... the Kur'an states in fact, twice, that God can pardon all sins save one, that of associationism..." *Gimaret* 1997, 485–486. The Muslim *El-Zuhaili* (1989, 61) states: "For polytheism is a serious threat which can bring corruption, destruction, fear and restlessness to the world. On the other hand, the belief in the Oneness of God makes man feel happy and contented in this life and the hereafter." It is interesting to note the following: "In later centuries Islamic theologians held that no Muslim would go eternally to hell, provided he had not committed the sin of *shirk*, 'associating (other deities with God)'. This favourable treatment of Muslims is often connected with the doctrine that Muhammad has a right of intercession (*shafa'a*) for the members of his community." *Watt* 1983, 122.

²⁶⁴ *Gardet* 1970, 351. See Sura 4:79, and Sura 76:29–30.

²⁶⁵ *Rossano* 1970c, 219–220.

²⁶⁶ John Paul II gave a clear theological explanation to the use of the expression "father" in interreligious dialogue: "Reference to the common 'fatherhood' of God will therefore not prove vaguely universalistic, but will be lived by Christians with full knowledge of that saving dialogue which comes through the mediation of Jesus and the action of his Spirit." *John Paul II* 1999f, 295–296.

²⁶⁷ Cf. *Aydin* 2002, 51. See, e.g., PD 120 2005, 273–274.

²⁶⁸ Cf. "... I would like to make it clear that these theological differences are not the

relations, as was recorded in an International seminar on “Western Perception of Muslims: Muslim Perception of the West” in 1997: “Also, several interfaith dialogues between Christians and Muslims have been held in a cordial and respectful atmosphere, albeit *with limited success*, because of the *irreconcilable positions of the two parties on basic dogmatic issues*.”²⁶⁹

Common humanity, due to creation, makes (or should make) Christians and Muslims share their common responsibilities, and undeniably they are both orientated towards transcendence, God the Creator and One.²⁷⁰ The link between common origin through creation, mutual affinity, faith in one God and common work or action is repeated throughout SNC / PCID documentation. The combination of divine origin, the goodness of creation, and common faith in one God should not leave Christians and Muslims inactive, but lead them to work together, to build up a better or a more humane world, to foster “social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom”.²⁷¹ Indeed, social issues become important in Christian-Muslim dialogue.²⁷² On that level of dialogue, the major question is thus no longer: “Who is God, in whom we both believe?”; instead the Christian-Muslim relations are seen in the context of the common work for the good of human beings. There is a tendency in Christian-Muslim dialogue—in fact in any inter-religious dialogue between Christians and non-Christians—that practically orientated emphases are more important than the question of faith in one God, or religious and theological issues in general.²⁷³ Car-

concern, [sic] of those of us committed to meeting other believers.” *El Hassan bin Talal* 1997, 5. Cf. *El Hassan bin Talal* 1997, 7.

²⁶⁹ B 97 1998, 116. (Emphasis added).

²⁷⁰ “It behooves us Christians to realize that the Muslim is oriented to God, not in spite of Islam but because of it, since he has taken his stand on truths to be believed and to be put in practice, which Islamic tradition has transmitted to him.” *Dion* 1982, 232. Cf. *Guidelines* 1969, 32.

²⁷¹ “Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.” NA 3 1966, 663.

²⁷² “It is in taking an activist approach to *social issues* that Christian and Muslim cooperation can best serve humanity.” *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 43. (Emphasis added).

²⁷³ In 1985 *Arinze* (1985b, 136–137) said: “Christians and non Christians should continue initiatives to share religious experience and to work together to promote justice, peace, human development, nation building, racial harmony and relaxation of social

dinal Arinze said in 1995 that the promotion of human values is on the permanent agenda for Christian-Muslim collaboration. This is so because justice, peace, honesty in private and public life, harmony between peoples, and development in its many forms are not values that just happen.²⁷⁴ There is basically no reflection about the meaning of 'values' in SNC / PCID documentation.²⁷⁵ Religions seem to be reduced to mere sociological systems which can be phenomenologically observed.²⁷⁶ Islam is regarded as a religious system which Mus-

tensions. When this happens in sincerity, trust and respect are gradually built up, and the climate is better prepared for direct discussion of mutual religious beliefs and practices, *a step which should not be postponed indefinitely.*" (Emphasis added).

²⁷⁴ Arinze 1996b, 30. He also says (Arinze 2000q, 30): "... it is urgent and necessary to limit ourselves to reflect on what action we could take in the face of some pressing problems or challenges in our world. Therefore let us leave aside speculative discussion however enriching it might be." Cf. *Benedict XVI* 2005g, 270.—This tendency is obvious throughout Christian-Muslim dialogue meetings, e.g.: "... [les musulmans] embrassaient davantage toutes les dimensions de la coexistence et de la collaboration entre Chrétiens et Musulmans, y compris les domaines de la culture et de la politique." *Bormans* 1975, 201. *Rossano* (1981b, 214) describes the theological foundations of Christian-Muslim dialogue as follows: "There is a dominant theme: submission to the same one personal Creator God, recognized both by the Koran (Sura 29.45: 'our God and your God are one God and we are subject to him') and by the magisterium of Vatican II ('nobiscum Deum adorant', *L.G.* 16), establishes a bond of 'brotherhood' upon which is based a similar vision of man, the foundations of ethics and a joint mission for the service of man and the glory of God, the promoting of good and the removing of evil, to use the terminology of the Koran (cf. Sura 3.110)."

²⁷⁵ An exception is *Duminuco* (1989, 96), who says: "A value literally means something which has a price, something dear, precious or worthwhile, and hence something that one is ready to suffer or sacrifice for, which gives one a reason to live and, if need be, a reason to die. Values, then, bring to life the dimension of meaning. ... Values provide motives. They identify a person, give one a face, a name and a character. ... Values are central to one's own life..." Cf. a Muslim statement: "The alternative is based on the 'Muslim-Christian dialogue' as a civilizational and historical need and necessity to formulate a common value system which re-draws the features of our sound personality on the basis of human dignity." *El-Mawla* 1997, 99.

²⁷⁶ Cf. the remark of *Lee* (2004, 83) about an International Inter-faith Peace Forum: "Religions were considered principally *from a sociological point of view* as an important source for conflict transformation. There was no sign of any major concern from the participants with regard to the distinctiveness and commonality of respective religious traditions in tackling the themes. The tone and color of the gathering were rather monotonous and univocal, especially in analyzing the current situation of the world, so that the *religious identities of the participants hardly became known.*" (Emphasis added) Cf. a Muslim opinion: "... comparative religious studies should not be conducted from a secular perspective, with the researcher treating religion as if it were a simple social phenomenon; rather, religion is to be approached as a divine inspiration which one is to follow and in which he is to believe." *Al-Abadi* 1989, 114.

lims follow during their lives. *Guidelines* (1990, 113) regards Islam as “a monotheistic and prophetic religion having ties—not yet well defined—with the Judeo-Christian tradition”.

However, how solid is this anthropological idea of human experience common to all humanity?²⁷⁷ Its main advantage in the Christian theology of religions is its emphasis on the idea that all the world religions are basically human responses to the same religious experience. The Christian contribution in that case means that it tries to understand this common human experience, which is the basis of all the religious experiences of non-Christian religions. Further, another advantage is that if human beings share a common human experience, the Christian theology of religions can deal with this experience, no matter whether people regard it as religious experience or are not even aware of it. As we have seen, this idea is expressed in many SNC / PCID documents based on Vatican II and later papal statements. In this way, as a matter of fact, the common starting point between Christians and non-Christian religions is not an agreement on the nature of God or the Supreme Reality, Allah, Jahveh, etc., but human experience. However, John Paul II himself spoke about “the futility of a purely anthropocentric humanism”.²⁷⁸

The critical point is that there is very little empirical evidence of a common human experience in human history or culture. The idea is easily postulated, but it is very difficult to substantiate or verify it, and it is obviously inaccurate. ‘Common religious experience’ is a vague idea. In his book *The Nature of Doctrine* (1984), George Lindbeck presents a detailed argument against the idea that common human

²⁷⁷ I follow here *McGrath* 1997a, 226–227.—The following statement of *Rossano* (1970a, 27–28) is a good example: “If, therefore, we go down into the depths of man, despite the variety of religious expressions and structures, we reach the *humus* from which the religious question proceeds. At the basis of religions is the religious man, before objective religious formations comes the personal and subjective dimension of religion. Psychological, ethnological and sociological research are coming ever more to recognise the presence of this original space in man. Beyond the systems and even the spiritual contrasts between East and West, and together with the differences between religion and religion, there is a historically constant disposition which orientates man in a specific way and tends to express itself in religious forms.”

²⁷⁸ “The contacts of ours, dialogue, the appreciation of the undeniable treasures of spirituality in every religion, Christian fellowship and, when it is possible, prayer in common, can bring together the efforts to dispel the illusion of constructing a new world without God and the futility of a purely anthropocentric humanism.” The Pope’s discourse to an interreligious gathering in Lisbon on May 14, 1982. Cited in *Michel* 1985, 182.

experience could serve as a basis for theology. He distinguishes three general types of theories of doctrine. The first, called the cognitive-propositionalist theory, lays stress upon the cognitive aspects of religion. The experiential-expressive theory interprets doctrines as non-cognitive symbols of inner human feelings or attitudes. The third is the cultural-linguistic approach to religion. In this approach religions may be compared to languages, with religious doctrines functioning as grammatical rules. The experiential-expressive theory considers religions public, culturally conditioned manifestations and affirmations of pre-linguistic forms of consciousness, attitudes, and feelings. There exists a common human religious experience, which every religion tries to express. The order is: experience first, theology second. Exactly this order is commonly suggested by contemporary interreligious dialogue. The various religions are seen as diverse expressions of a common core experience. However, one wonders whether a combination of deductive and inductive methods would be better.²⁷⁹

We have noticed that one important aspect is the question of the nature of religious and doctrinal language. SNC / PCID documentation uses words which are common in many non-Christian religions, and especially in Islam, which is a monotheistic religion. However, it can be rightly asked what kind of monotheism Islam represents.²⁸⁰ Such concepts as ‘God’, ‘faith’, ‘human being’, and ‘creation’ seem to be accepted by others as far as they have their own reference in their own religious language.²⁸¹ A strong indication of this way of using language is John Paul II’s often-used word “brother” (and “sister”) when addressing non-Christians. In Vatican II documents there is only one men-

²⁷⁹ Specifically in the Christian theology of religions, e.g. *Dupuis* (1999, 17) seems to be trying to find a third way between cognitive-propositionalist and experiential-expressive approaches when he says: “In a situation such as this, the preferable methodology would seem to be a combination of the deductive and inductive methods.”

²⁸⁰ This is the opinion of *Geffré* (1991, 69) when he says that “je demeure persuadé que la confession d’un unique Dieu par tous les fils d’Abraham ne nous autorise pas à parler d’un unique monothéisme. Nous sommes bien en présence de *trois monothéismes spécifiquement différents. C’est pourquoi on peut mal comprendre l’affirmation de Jean-Paul II* dans son discours au stade de Casablanca du 21 août 1985: ‘Nous (chrétiens et musulmans) croyons au même Dieu.’” (Emphasis added).

²⁸¹ *Claverie* (1997, 196) notes: “Dans le monde musulman, on apprend que l’on a les mêmes mots pour dire les choses de Dieu. ... Or, on s’aperçoit en vivant avec les gens que les mots n’ont pas le même sens, parce qu’ils ne sont pas portés par la même expérience spirituelle. Il y a urgence au-jourd’hui [sic] à donner aux mots leur sens; nous sommes en pleine équivoque.” (Emphasis added) Cf. *Cuoq* 1966, 26; *Deillon* 1980, 124.

tion of “brother” in the sense of a non-Christian person,²⁸² whereas in postconciliar SNC / PCID documents it is a frequent way of addressing non-Christians. Another question is how receptive non-Christians are to such terms as ‘brother’—the term is used by Muslims among themselves—or to ‘Muslim-Christian ecumenism’ used by some Christians.²⁸³ And not all Roman Catholic theologians or priests engaged in Christian-Muslim encounters use the word “brother” when speaking of Muslims.²⁸⁴ The concept of ‘ecumenism’ should be, in spite of the possible extensive uses of the term, understood by Christians only in its standard theological context. The extensive uses of ‘ecumenism’ seem to be not only in the framework of interreligious encounters, but also in the framework of the unity of all mankind. In Vatican II documents as well as in the papal and most of SNC / PCID statements ‘ecumenism’, understood to be a movement towards unity among various Christian Churches, and ‘interreligious encounters’ or ‘interreligious dialogue’, are distinctly two separate items.²⁸⁵ Every now and then the theme of semantic differences of outwardly same expressions in interreligious dialogue comes up in SNC / PCID documents.²⁸⁶ SNC / PCID

²⁸² “Since God the Father is the origin and purpose of all men, we are all called to be brothers.” GS 92 1966, 307.

²⁸³ “Le colloque international qui vient de se tenir en Tunisie, du 11 au 17 novembre dernier, constitue une nouvelle étape dans la voie de *l’œcuménisme islamo-chrétien*...” *Lelong* 1975, 196. (Emphasis added) The use of the term ‘ecumenical’ is not limited only to Christians: “With regard to Islam... it is an ecumenical religion...” *Niasse* 2002, 65 (a Muslim). *Nasr* (1998, 134), too, speaks of Muslims’ “veritable ecumenical encounter with Christianity”. It is clear that there is a contamination of Islamic vocabulary by Christian terms.—Cf. *Rossano* 1974b, 164: “... one of the principal phenomena of the cultural life of this second half of the 20th century is cultural ecumenism, in which the great component of the religions is included.”

²⁸⁴ E.g. *Claverie* 1986, 28: “Les questions que je me pose et que je pose à mes frères chrétiens et à mes amis musulmans, sont plus nombreuses que les affirmations...” (Emphasis added)—Pierre Claverie, the Bishop of Oran in Algeria, was killed by a bomb in 1996.

²⁸⁵ See, e.g., *John Paul II* 1983, 203; *John Paul II* 1987f, 58; *John Paul II* 2004b, 18; *Arinze* 1987a, 142, and *Žago* 1987, 150. See also *Fitzgerald* 2005b, 72.

²⁸⁶ A good example is the Asian Bishops’ Consultation on “Christian Presence Among Muslims in Asia” (in B 55 1984, 42): “We must be aware, however, that apparent convergences, based sometimes on different understandings of the same term (e.g. *nabi* ‘prophet’) can in reality conceal divergent concepts.” See also, e.g., the paper presented by the Vatican delegation in the conversation between the Indonesian Delegation and that of the Secretariat for Non-Christians in B 37 1978, 11. Cf. *Humbertclaude* 1968b, 103, and *Sabanegh* 1980, 38. “La première [remarque] concerne l’imprécision de notre langage quand nous parlons d’Islam: de quel Islam s’agit-il?” *Sabanegh* 1980, 47. See also *Humbertclaude* 1972, 386.

documentation recognizes the linguistic and semantic difficulty in theological dialogue. "One of the greatest difficulties in this domain [religious dialogue] is the ambiguity which arises from the use of words which assume a very different meaning according as they are applied to one religion or another; words such as 'God', 'person', 'sin', and so forth."²⁸⁷ This makes religious and theological dialogue very difficult. It is affirmed that the most difficult form of dialogue may be the dialogue involving the content of the Christian and Muslim religions. It is true that Christians and Muslims often use the same terms but in different senses.²⁸⁸ These terms and expressions are in urgent need of clarification.

The need to use inclusive vocabulary is very human and understandable. Even so, it seems to be clear that every religious community develops its own language, whose meaning is not immediately apparent to those outside. This also explains the conflicting character of categorical assertions and the differences in descriptions of 'God'. They are real, but they do not determine the reference (the reality behind the language). It is secured by the causal-historical relations which link the speaker with the intended referent.²⁸⁹ "Religions are cultural frameworks or mediums which give rise to a vocabulary and precede inner experience."²⁹⁰

The issue of natural law is also very interesting and revealing, because it shows the Roman Catholic interest in the mutual relation between faith and reason and how Catholic theology is interested in God's activity in the world through the nature of things and in particu-

²⁸⁷ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 46. Cf. B 55 1984, 42.

²⁸⁸ *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 69.

²⁸⁹ *Wiles* 1992, 36–40. *El Hassan bin Talal* (1997, 5) notes: "... the difference between the Islamic and Christian stands on this question [the right of human beings to dignity], lies essentially in the theological idiom in which the concept of human dignity is articulated." He seems to be saying that on the universal level there are concepts whose existence is agreed on by the two parties but referred to, or described, in a different way by Christians and Muslims.

²⁹⁰ *McGrath* 1997b, 117.—Sometimes the will to show the similarity of Islam and Christianity leads to statements like the following: "J'ajouterais aussi que Muhammad—Que la bénédiction de Dieu et son salut soient sur lui!—et le Christ—Que la paix soit sur lui!" [sic]—ont été unis par les espoirs et les douleurs. Chacun d'eux fut exilé et pourchassé, chacun dut émigrer, fut victime du mal, versa son sang, pratiqua le renoncement, mena une vie de pauvreté et de simplicité..." *Abd el-Shakour* 1985, 83.—The reader might ask which Muhammad and which Christ is this? And why, if they are equal and "united", are they not addressed with the same formula?

lar, through the nature of the human being. This, of course, leads to the question of what happened when the first human being fell, i.e., what effect did the original sin have on human nature. According to Roman Catholic theology, human nature was not totally deformed by original sin. The human intellect and will are capable of constructing a natural theology and a moral philosophy. Natural law is in no way irrelevant in modern discussion. John Paul II is among those who seemed to pay special attention to the metaphysically founded Thomistic natural law in his encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor*²⁹¹ and *Fides et Ratio*.²⁹²

In Christian-Muslim encounters this means that natural law is a convenient tool because it is “reasonable” and governs the human being’s ordering towards goals that are proportionate to his or her nature. It does not demand more than the use of one’s own natural abilities. Anthropologically speaking, natural law helps to clarify, on the one hand, what is universal and invariable in human nature and, on the other hand, what is conditioned by the circumstances of cultural development.²⁹³ Eternal law directs human beings towards a supernatural end, which is actually disproportionate to any finite nature. However, there the idea is always present that the natural inclination to virtue is diminished by sin. That is why full knowledge of—and robust conformity to—natural law implies the aid of revelation and grace.²⁹⁴

The question of *unde malum* is an interesting one, though not essential in SNC / PCID documentation. There is a section in *Religions: Fundamental Themes* entitled “Good and Evil in the Religions”, dealing with the question of evil and sin, and one specific chapter for “Good and Evil in Islam”. Once again, it has to be noted that the very concept of evil and sin is very different in Christianity and in Islam. Sin in Islam belongs more to a rational than to a religious order of the world.²⁹⁵ It is not a substantial theological problem. Ultimately, the definition of evil in Islam is disobedience to God’s law.²⁹⁶ The free acts of human

²⁹¹ On August 6, 1993. Text in AAS 85 1993, 1133–1228. Cf. *Dulles* 1999.

²⁹² *Brown/Long* 2003, 185.

²⁹³ *Wassmer/Long* 2003, 195.—“In the Christian tradition... this norm [the ‘Golden Rule’] has been considered as the synthesis of the entire natural law...” *Rossano* 1970d, 598.

²⁹⁴ *Wassmer/Long* 2003, 195.

²⁹⁵ *Lagarde* 1984, 5.

²⁹⁶ *Gelot* 1970, 536.

beings are always set in the context of the possibility of divine retribution. Contrary to Christianity, sin in Islam does not affect one's relation to God.²⁹⁷

The distinction between 'natural' and 'supernatural' seems to be very important. Paul VI made a clear distinction between natural and supernatural religion, i.e. between Christianity and other religious traditions. John Paul II also made a clear distinction between other religions and Christianity: "... Jesus does not in fact merely speak 'in the name of God' like the Prophets, but he is God himself speaking in his Eternal Word made flesh. Here we touch upon *the essential point by which Christianity differs from all the other religions*, by which *man's search for God* has been expressed from earliest times."²⁹⁸ In classical Christian theology the supernatural, which becomes historically tangible and visible in Christianity, surpasses all natural religions. The latter are human-made, a human being's striving towards the Infinite, whereas Christianity is God-centred: it is given by God, it is the descent of the Father through Christ and it is turned towards him.²⁹⁹ However, the distinction between natural and supernatural religion is perhaps not as simple as this definition makes it appear, because the concept of concrete human nature must be built up from diverse sources: sensation, intelligence, self-consciousness, and history. And besides, total fulfilment must await the *eschaton*—the last page of the human history has yet to be written. Theologically, all human beings have been led in a supernatural order, which has affected them within and without. Consequently, when studying human nature, one studies it always somehow supernaturalized. To know the supernatural as such and to delineate it against the natural is beyond unaided reason. There is a need of revelation.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Gorder (2003, 131) notes: "Both the New Testament and the Qur'an acknowledge that Jesus was pure (*zakiyy*) and without sin (Surah 19:19; 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5). Christians should ask Muslims if there is any significance within Islam to this 'faultlessness' (to use Pickthall's translation of *zakiyy*) of Jesus."

²⁹⁸ John Paul II 1995, 123 = TMA 6. Cf. Kishi 1969, 34, 35: "... parce que la Révélation chrétienne est une réalité d'ordre surnaturel, la vérité dans les autres religions est une réalité d'ordre naturel. ... La compréhension de l'Absolu dépasse les limites de l'intelligence naturelle. ... L'intelligence naturelle ne peut comprendre l'Absolu, Dieu lui-même. Cette incompréhensibilité de l'Absolu n'est pas autre chose que l'intuition de l'appartenance de Dieu à l'ordre *surnaturel*."

²⁹⁹ Kenny 2003, 617. "In the strictest technical sense, the supernatural (1) connotes (2) the Self-gift (3) of the Three-Personed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (4) to a personal being (5) out of love and friendship." Kenny 2003, 621.

³⁰⁰ Kenny 2003, 619. Cf. John Paul II 2005e, 24: "... the new evangelization calls for an

One important aspect of the theology of religions and interreligious dialogue seems to be somewhat unclear in SNC / PCID documentation: the nature and importance of truth. The foundation of theological fundamentals is a difficult issue for this specific reason, because ultimately it is also a question of truth. Existentialists in general reject objective and universal truth as superficial and of no personal value, because truth is practical and subjective, in the real sense of the word. “Real truth reveals itself to man only in and as the exercise of his liberty of accepting himself in the authentic human situation. Hence real truth is personal truth: the truth by which one lives and to which one commits oneself.”³⁰¹ The SNC / PCID certainly does not reject the idea of universal and objective truth (see, e.g., John Paul II’s speech to the Roman Curia in 1986),³⁰² but it does seem to adopt the existentialist position as a dialogic approach: “Dialogue is not merely an appeal from the heart; it is first and foremost an act of an understanding. ... There can be no true meeting of hearts without truth.”³⁰³ So, the idea seems to be that if there are divergences, these are in the expressions of truth.³⁰⁴ Interestingly, the issue of verifying the truth is not taken up, as the veracity would play no role. The question of truth is a hot potato, tossed quickly from one hand to another in an interreligious encounter. Nobody wants to hold it. However, this means that the notion of truth is reduced to a private option.³⁰⁵

unambiguous presentation of faith as a *supernatural virtue* by which we are united to God and become *sharers in his own knowledge*, in response to his revealed word.”

³⁰¹ O’Farrell 2003, 223.

³⁰² “Les catholiques, cependant, sont invités par le Concile à tenir compte du principe de la ‘hiérarchie des vérités’ (pour donner plus d’importance à ce qui est le plus central) et au principe de la distinction entre vérité objective et son expression historique.” Sartori 1985, 159, n. 5.—Cf. Sabbah 1989, 43: “As far as truth itself is concerned, however many convictions may be, there is no place for concessions or for trying to reconcile contradictions. ... There can be no relativity in truth; it is an absolute: it either exists or does not exist.” Zago 1987, 154: “The greatest difficulty and most notable opposition stem from the fear of syncretism, that is, mixing Christianity with other confessions, truth with error.” Cf. LG 12 1966, 29: “The body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One (cf. Jn. 2:20, 27), cannot err in matters of belief.”

³⁰³ *Guidelines* 1969, 117.—It is to be noted that, once again, we meet the concept of ‘understanding’ connected to faith.

³⁰⁴ Sabbah 1989, 43.

³⁰⁵ Deneken 1996, 190.

The Christian understanding of truth is that God is the truth,³⁰⁶ but also that the truth is God's revelation. There is thus a relationship between, first, what God is perfectly and truly, and that it determines the being of all things according to his idea of them (ontological truth); second, that he understands fully his own being and that of all other things (logical truth), and thirdly, that God manifests himself to human beings in divine revelation (moral truth). Christian truth is firmly rooted in history, which, however, it transcends. It is clear, from the Christian point of view, that the Christic mystery is complete and completely true. However, the experience of the mystery and the way that Christians live their Christian lives are incomplete and admit of progress. In this belief, the truth is never complete or full; it is always only approximately reached and wholly given only in the *eschaton*.³⁰⁷ When the truth of revelation is rooted in history and at the same time transcends it, understanding becomes important. The hermeneutical issue of the relation between faith and understanding is essential for the search for truth in Christianity.³⁰⁸

The question of what 'truth' is, is also a question of what language is: what is meant by 'truth'? John Paul II said in 2004 that full adherence to the Catholic truth does not curtail human freedom. This adherence exalts it and urges it towards fulfilment in love.³⁰⁹ This statement illustrates a somewhat vague use of the adjective "Catholic".³¹⁰ Does it mean only the truth of the Roman Catholic Church, or the universal, all-inclusive truth? Both interpretations seem to be at the same time valid, especially when keeping in mind the Roman Catholic idea of

³⁰⁶ E.g. *John Paul II* 2005g, 32.

³⁰⁷ Cf. DV 8 1966, 116: "For, as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her."

³⁰⁸ *Wagner* 1981, 94, and *Latourelle* 2000, 327.

³⁰⁹ *John Paul II* 2004c, 35. Cf. *John Paul II* 2005c, 17: "Indeed, there exists an indissoluble bond between peace and truth that must be recognized if men and women are to live in freedom, justice and security."

³¹⁰ The same kind of ambiguity can be found in *Poupard* (2002, 169): "This indeed is the message of '*Redemptor Hominis*': to create a new culture that is *fully human, because it is Catholic*, a culture that allows man to be truly and fully human, because it permits him to realise his own vocation of being fashioned in the image of God, an image that is indelibly stamped on his heart and on his spirit in truth and love..." (Emphasis added) That the word "catholic" is to be understood in both senses, is confirmed by *Duminuco* (1989, 101): "In this context, we remember that we are part of a Church which is Catholic with a capital and a small 'c'." Cf. "This is a *universal* prelude to a real *catholic* initiative by Pope John Paul II." *Etchegaray* 2000, 19. (Emphasis added).

the hierarchy of truths.³¹¹ This shows the importance of language in the interreligious encounters.³¹² As one PCID document states: “But all religions are not equal, nor equally true.”³¹³

In *Nostra Aetate* 2 it is clearly said that there are reflections of rays of the Truth in other religious traditions as well. Nevertheless, the Church “proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself...”³¹⁴ This means that truths found in non-Christian religions are never more than the Truth found in Jesus Christ. *Dignitatis Humanae* 3 puts together eternal divine law and truth in an interesting way: “Man has been made by God to participate in this [divine] law, with the result that, under the gentle disposition of divine Providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth.”³¹⁵ John Paul II said in 1998 that “the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of coming into contact, in a way known to God, with the paschal mystery (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 22). This possibility is achieved through sincere, inward adherence to the

³¹¹ UR 11 1966, 354. Cf. CCC 90, and CCC 234.

³¹² See *Tracy* 1990, 43.

³¹³ *Onah* 2002, 108. Cf. *Küng* (1988b, 254) who notes, recognizing the positive values of non-Christian religions: “The other religions are not simply untrue, but neither are they unconditionally true, but *conditionally* (‘with reservations’ or whatever) *true religions*, which, so far as they do not contradict the Christian message on decisive points, can by all means complete, correct, and enrich the Christian religion.”

³¹⁴ NA 2 1966, 662. In Latin: “Ecclesia catholica nihil eorum, quae in his religionibus *vera* et sancta sunt reicit. Sincera cum observantia considerat illos modos agendi et vivendi, illa praecepta et doctrinas, quae, quamvis ab iis quae ipsa tenet et proponit in multis discrepent, haud raro referunt tamen radium illius *Veritatis*, quae illuminat omnes homines. Annuntiat vero et annuntiare tenetur indesinenter Christum, qui est ‘via, *veritas* et vita’ (Io. 14, 6), in quo homines plenitudinem vitae religiosae inveniunt, in quo Deus omnia Sibi reconciliavit.” (Emphasis added)—*D’Costa* (2000, 104) emphasizes the difference between *vera* and *Veritatis*: *veritas* is used only twice in all Vatican II documentation to refer to truth outside the revealed Christian Truth: in NA 2 and in AG 9. He concludes (p. 104) that “truths found in non-Christian religions, it is implied, are never more nor can they be, than the Truth found in Christ”.

³¹⁵ DH 3 1966, 680. The passage continues: “Hence every man has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious, in order that he may with prudence form for himself right and true judgments of conscience, with the use of all suitable means.” DH 3 1966, 680. In Latin: “Huius suae legis Deus hominem participem reddit, ita ut homo, providentia divina suaviter disponente, *veritatem* incommutabilem magis magisque agnoscere possit. Quapropter unusquisque officium ideoque et ius habet *veritatem* in re religiosa quaerendi ut sibi, mediis adhibitis idoneis, recta et vera conscientiae iudicia prudenter efformet.” (Emphasis added).

Truth, generous self-giving to one's neighbour and the search for the Absolute inspired by the Spirit of God."³¹⁶

This citation shows how the existential element of the human being becomes important, because faith, "inward adherence to the Truth", is in fact also an internalization of the truth. There is thus a strong link between faith and praxis.³¹⁷ This is an anthropological emphasis, even though in SNC/PCID documentation there is no doubt about the truth: Jesus Christ. So, it is to be noted that in Roman Catholic theology there is an interrelation between theological anthropology and Christology, which is its culmination.³¹⁸ But Christology always has a soteriological nature, and it cannot be detached from pneumatology. That is the reason why Chapter Four will concentrate on the question of revelation and, consequently, salvation.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ *John Paul II* 1998b, 274 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 15. In his discourse in the General Audience on September 16, 1998, John Paul II linked together the Spirit and truth. The Pope quoted Thomas Aquinas saying that no spirit can be "so darkened as not to participate in some way in the divine light. In fact, every known truth from any source is totally due to this 'light which shines in the darkness', since every truth, no matter who utters it, comes from the Holy Spirit (*Super Ioannem*, 1, 5 lect. 3, n. 103)." See http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1998/documents (August 2005). The discourse is in French in *La Documentation Catholique*, N° 2190, 18 octobre 1998, pp. 861–862.

³¹⁷ *Wagner* 1981, 93–94.

³¹⁸ See, e.g., *Commission Théologique Internationale* 1981, and *Commission Théologique Internationale* 1983.

³¹⁹ The fact that revelation and salvation are intimately bound together is shown, e.g., by the Preface of *Dei Verbum* (DV 1 1966, 111): "Therefore, following in the footsteps of the Councils of Trent and of First Vatican, this present Council wishes to set forth authentic teaching about *divine revelation* and about how it is handed on, so that *by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe*; by believing, it may hope; and by hoping, it may love." (Emphasis added).

CHAPTER FOUR

CHRIST AND HIS SPIRIT

Revelation: personal or literal?

It is clear that Christianity and Islam do not have the same concept of revelation. The biblical concept of revelation is first of all the act of God, which is seen in the progressive unfolding of his plan of salvation in Christ. God manifests and communicates himself to people. He also calls the Church into being, and invites the response of assent and obedience. Secondly, it is the truth that is made known by God's unfolding plan.¹ Even though medieval or modern notions of revelations cannot be found explicitly stated in the Bible,² revelation in the Old Testament can be considered to mean that the hidden God reveals himself through his word and through his entrance into history. Revelation in the New Testament means God's word in Jesus Christ, the action of the Spirit of truth, and, eventually, the human response, faith.³ The New Testament designates Jesus—without using any technical theological terms like 'revelation', or 'special revelation'—as the supreme revelation of God.⁴

Before Vatican II, the Roman Catholic idea of revelation was largely understood as propositional, eternal truths. This led many Catholics to believe that if they intellectually acknowledged the propositions—"deposit of faith"—to be true, they would arrive at salvation. Vatican II began to speak of revelation in more interpersonal terms.⁵ Chapter I

¹ Jensen 2003, 187.

² McGrath 1997a, 182.

³ Jensen 2003, 187. Dalferth (1988, 159) defines 'revelation' as follows: "The central idea of the Christian concept of revelation is therefore that *in Christ and through the Spirit God identifies himself as Creative Love to the receiver* by establishing an existential relationship with him or her."

⁴ Dulles 1983, 155, 177.

⁵ Bevans 1992, 9, and Urdanoz/Eds. 2003, 595. "Theologians using the tools of personalist philosophy objected to a primarily intellectual description of faith. The Second Vatican Council, reiterating the doctrine of Vatican I, emphasized that faith is a response of the whole person to God's free revelation (*Dei Verbum* 5)." Urdanoz/Eds.

of *Dei Verbum* is entitled “Revelation itself”. It says that the “plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity” and that “Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through His whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself: through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth.”⁶ *Dei Verbum* clearly distinguishes the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ (DV 4) from its written transmission in the New Testament record (DV 7).⁷ In Christianity, the fullness of revelation is not the written word of the New Testament, it is the person of Jesus Christ. Revelation in Christianity is personal and dynamic, it is an invitation to communion.⁸ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states clearly: “Still, the Christian faith is not a ‘religion of the book’. Christianity is the religion of the ‘Word’ of God, a word which is ‘not a written and mute word, but the Word which is incarnate and living’. If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, ‘open [our] minds to understand

2003, 595–596. Cf. “Faith response to this revelation then appeared not as assent to propositions on the basis of authority (truth as *adaequatio*), but as existential encounter with the God who unveils himself to men (truth as *aletheia*).” *Letter/Hill* 2003, 914.

⁶ DV 2 1966, 112, and DV 4 1966, 113. See also DV 7. *Fuss* (1999, 71) notes: “The dogmatic constitution *Dei verbum* of the Second Vatican Council which appears to summarize the traditional teaching of the Church, shows in reality three important innovations: a full recognition of the human contribution in the composition of Scripture, substitution of the apologetic term ‘inerrancy’ by the more positive notion of ‘salvific truth’, and emphasis on the role of Scripture in the general economy of salvation linking the Bible more closely to the mystery of the Eternal Word.” See especially DV 12 and DV 13.

⁷ Cf. *Fuss* 1999, 69: “As Jesus Christ is the *universale concretum*, the historical focus of God’s universal presence, the books witnessing to him can be considered the *universale concretum* of universal revelation, too.”

⁸ Cf. *Gonçalves* 1997, 390: “In Christian theology, the communion of love that marks the Trinitarian life is the model and the ultimate basis of the inter-personal encounter and of union between human beings who are created in the likeness of God.”—In other words, Christians and Muslims do not have the same relation with their respective scriptures. On this theme, see, e.g., *GRIC* 1989. *McGrath* (1997a, 183) states strikingly: “In its developed sense, ‘revelation’ does not mean merely the transmission of a body of knowledge, but the personal self-disclosure of God within history. God has taken the initiative through a process of self-disclosure, which reaches its climax and fulfillment in the history of Jesus of Nazareth. This point has been stressed in the twentieth century by writers influenced by various types of personalist philosophies—such as Friedrich Gogarten, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Emanuel Hirsch. ... Revelation takes a personal form.” Cf. *Ploux* 2004, 77–78.

the Scriptures.”⁹ Here we see once again how one slogan used in Christian-Muslim dialogue is not really accurate: Christianity is often described as a “religion of the book”, but considered from its own self-understanding it is not a religion of the book, it is more a “religion of the person”.

Pope John Paul II often spoke about revelation, but he did not always mention *how* God reveals himself. In 1980 he said to leaders of Muslim community in Kenya that the relationship of reciprocal esteem and the mutual desire for authentic service to humanity urge Christians and Muslims to joint commitments in promoting peace, social justice, moral values, and all the true freedoms of human beings. God has made people in his image and likeness, and God has revealed himself to them.¹⁰ Addressing Christians, he could be very clear about the difference between the Christian revelation and non-Christian religions. For the Pope, the various non-Christian religions are the expression of a human quest, whereas the Christian faith is based on Revelation on God’s part. The question of revelation is thus the essential difference between Christianity and non-Christian religions, even though there are some similarities between them.¹¹ Sometimes John Paul II, addressing Muslims, implicitly seemed to refer to Christ, as he did in Morocco 1985: “When man returns to him [God], repentant and contrite, after having strayed away into the disorder of sin and the works of death. [sic] God then reveals himself as the One who pardons and shows mercy.”¹² It is obvious that “the One who pardons and shows mercy” is God, but could as well characterize Jesus Christ. However, in Assisi in 1986 there was no ambiguity in the Pope’s declaration when he stated that peace depends basically on God, and that Christians believe that God has revealed himself in Christ.¹³ Christ is the place where

⁹ CCC 108 (square brackets in the original). Cited also (slightly modified) in *Fuss* 1999, 76.—See also, e.g., *Scriptures in Dialogue* 2004.

¹⁰ *John Paul* 1980b, 148. He continues (p. 148): “It is in this perspective that our meeting today offers us much hope.” The question of how God has revealed himself is left open.

¹¹ *John Paul II* 1985b, 227. Cf. *John Paul II* 1986a, 5: “The spiritual ties between Muslims and Christians, especially in their common belief in God who is one, merciful and almighty, and who has revealed himself to man, are a sound foundation for fostering mutual understanding and for joint efforts aimed at preserving and promoting peace, freedom, social justice and moral values. ... Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and obscurity...”

¹² *John Paul II* 1985e, 250.

¹³ *John Paul II* 1987d, 40.

our human reason comes to its limits; we cannot go further without faith. When confronted with Christ, our philosophy stops; it cannot go further without theology that explains the mystery of the Incarnation. Christ marks the place where human religions and Christian revelation take separate paths: only in Christ has the divine Revelation taken place definitively, once and for all. This is why Pope John Paul II has insisted that

we must define our terms. That “religious sense”, that is the *religious knowledge* of God on the part of people, goes back to the *rational knowledge* of which man is capable through his natural powers, as we have seen when we spoke about that. At the same time it is distinguished from the *purely rational speculations* by philosophers and thinkers on the subject of the existence of God. It involves the whole person and becomes in him a life force. It is distinguished above all from Christian faith as knowledge based on Revelation and a knowing response to the gift of God present and at work in Jesus Christ. I repeat that this necessary distinction does not exclude a similarity and an agreement in positive values...¹⁴

In Islam, revelation is thought to be the guidance which can be received through objective reflection on nature (Sura 2:164; 3:190; 30:23–25), as well as through logic and inference, as in the study of history (Sura 20:128).¹⁵ Revelation began with the history of the human race. But—and here we come to the second part of the Muslim credo: “and Muhammad is his prophet”¹⁶—special revelation is given to the prophets up to Muhammad, who is “the Seal of the Prophets” (Sura 33:40).¹⁷

¹⁴ John Paul II 1985b, 228.

¹⁵ Cf. Hoover 2004, 4: “... Muslims usually do not derive their doctrine of God inductively or empirically from divine revelation in the Qur’an and the Prophetic Tradition (*sunna*). Rather, they give their fundamental doctrines a universal foundation, a basis in something common to all humanity.”

¹⁶ On Muhammad and Christians, see, e.g., Cragg 1984, and Braun 2004.—What place can be given to Muhammad and the Qur’an in Christian theology? Troll (2003, 65–66) seems to be right when he says: “Aus allen diesen Gründen verdienen Muhammad und der Koran größte Aufmerksamkeit seitens der christlichen Theologie, die jedoch—andererseits—Muhammad *theologisch* kaum als Propheten bezeichnen wird, noch vom Koran als ‘dem (oder auch nur: einem) Wort Gottes’ sprechen kann. Würde christliche Theologie dies tun, käme dies implizit einer Leugnung der grundlegenden Aussagen des christlichen Glaubens gleich, die in den Gründungsdokumenten der Kirche verankert sind und deren Sinn ausmachen.”—Cf. what the Muslim *M. Aydin* (2000, 55) states: “Further, taking into account the similarities between Muhammad and the Old Testament Prophets gives Christians the opportunity to acknowledge Muhammad as a Prophet without downgrading their own religious beliefs, since they are not comparing him with Jesus Christ.”

¹⁷ Mohammed 1999, 55.—Cf. Michel 1996, 232: “As such, an important aspect of

Muhammad was human, but blessed among men. There was no trace of divinity in him. In fact, his place in Islam could be compared to the place of Mary, blessed among women, in Christianity. Mary, a virgin, produced a Son, whereas Muhammad, “unlettered”, produced a book.¹⁸ *Nostra Aetate* 3 mentions Mary: “They [the Moslems] also honor Mary, His virgin mother; at times they call on her, too, with devotion.”¹⁹ In SNC / PCID documentation Mary is mentioned occasionally, but is not really a central figure.²⁰

The centre of Islam is not a person but a book, the Qur’an.²¹ Islam is often called “a religion of the book”. Islamic revelation was the passing of the Word of God into the Qur’anic text. Muhammad is important insofar as he was the channel of the transmission of God’s Word, but he had no initiative in the revelation.²² According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad was receiving God’s words over some 20 years, sometimes with long intervals. He transmitted the text, dictated from above, faithfully, word by word, to his companions, who reported it in writing, thus forming the official text of the Qur’an. The almightiness and uniqueness of God are affirmed, God is the one who communicates his will from outside to human beings.²³ The position of Muham-

Islamic spirituality is the imitation of Muhammad. Muhammad is understood in the Qur’an not only as the Messenger who brought the Qur’an, but also as its first hearer. He is seen as the model Muslim whose life was shaped to the smallest detail by the Qur’anic message. He is their friend and mentor who will intercede for them on Judgment Day.”

¹⁸ *Mohammed* 1999, 7.

¹⁹ NA 3 1966, 663.

²⁰ John Paul II relates Abraham and Mary in the following way: “Along the path marked out by Abraham in his submission to the divine will, we find his descendant, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, who is also devoutly invoked by Muslims, especially in popular piety.” *John Paul II* 1999c, 85 = *John Paul II* 1999g, 303. The Virgin Mary is also mentioned, e.g., in *L’espérance qui est en nous* 1967, 21–22; *Guidelines* 1969, 148; *Borrmans* 1992, 118; *Recognize the spiritual bonds* 1994, 7; *Arinze* 2000e, 44; *Colin* 2005, 305–306. Cf. B 55 1984, 48 (Message of the Varanasi Consultation, FABC): “Mary, whom Christians consider Mother and model, and about whom the Quran says: ‘God has chosen you above all women’, could be promoted as the patroness of the unity and fellowship which should exist between Christians and Muslims.” The Virgin Mary could be a common ground for conversation and understanding between Christians and Muslims. See, e.g., *Smith & Haddad* 1989. In the Qur’an, Sura 19 is entitled “Mary”.

²¹ *Guidelines* 1969, 43.

²² *Caspar* 1980, 39.

²³ “Because the Qur’an records the words dictated to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel, the dictation is divine rather than human speech (Q 9:6); it has a significance for Muslims similar to that of the Logos in Christianity. Worthy of note here is the fact

mad in Islamic monotheism could be compared to concentric circles. The inner circle contains Muhammad and his message, surrounded by the circle of Qur'anic prophets and prophethoods. Then another, wider circle contains all the other prophethoods and "warners" (Sura 35:24), and the widest circle is that of intuition.²⁴ Muhammad believed that he was restoring the primordial monotheism, the religion of God, revealed from the beginning of human history. God ordained to him the same religion as he ordained to Abraham and Noah, Moses, and Jesus.

In Islam, the history of revelation flows into the Qur'anic revelation, which brings it to a culmination. The Qur'an is said to predate Muhammad. In Islam, the Qur'an is the special revelation of God.²⁵ There is in heaven an exact copy of the Qur'an. Its content was there before creation. The question whether the Qur'an is eternal or created is difficult for Muslims. If the Qur'an is eternal, there are two non-created entities: God and his word. If, however, the Qur'an is created, how can Muslims claim that the speech of God is not created?²⁶ Be that as it may, for Muslims the Qur'an is infallible.

that the only miracle that the Qur'an admits to is that of the Qur'an itself, an inimitable scripture in perfect Arabic that no human being, least of all an unlettered person, as Muhammad was (Q 7:157), could emulate (Q 2:23–24)." *Mohammed* 1999, 57. See also, e.g., *Chafii* 1983, 6–13; *Caspar* 1980, 45.

²⁴ *Kamel* 1989, 23.

²⁵ The Arabic word "*wahy*" ("inspiration") means the revelation given to and transmitted by the prophets, especially Muhammad. Another key term in Arabic is "*tanzil*" (lit. "sending down"). It is to be noted, too, that in Islam there is no salvation-historical perspective. All the prophets brought basically the same message. Cf. Sura 4:163–165: "Lo! We inspire thee as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as we imparted unto David the Psalms; And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee; and Allah spake directly unto Moses; Messengers of good cheer and of warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise."

²⁶ See, e.g., *Cuoq* 1972, 45. He notes (p. 46, n. 1): "It is important to bear in mind the classical Islamic doctrine of the divine attributes, which, according to them, are distinct from the divine essence (something denied by the Mu'tazilites). This distinction allows them to affirm that the Qur'an, the Word of God, is not God. One should notice the difference: for Islam, the Word of God, *Kalam*, is a subsistant [sic] attribute, while for Christians It is a subsistant [sic] relationship in God, a Divine Person, the Word. *So it would seem difficult to draw a parallel, as some do, between the Word made flesh in the Incarnation and the Word of God made Book, Kitab, in Islam: we are faced with two different orders of things.*" (Emphasis added).

The Word of God contained in this book, the Qur'an, is primary: revelation is closed.²⁷ That revelation is closed also means the pre-eminence of the Qur'an: because everything is in the Qur'an, everything must be explained by the Qur'an.²⁸ "... the Qur'an, conversely to the Bible, presents itself as a relatively sudden and direct irruption of the Word of God in the history of human beings. Muslim tradition and theology are therefore pretty naturally led to see in the Qur'an the Word of God itself rather than consider the personal, cultural and social conditionings [of the Qur'an]."²⁹

Besides reflecting the obligation to believe and to submit oneself to the Qur'an, to God, to his will,³⁰ revelation in Islam is basically a legal code through which God legislates over all human affairs.³¹ Islam demands above all obedience and religious action, not theological analysis. It affirms that God did not reveal himself in the Qur'an, but only

²⁷ *Rahner* (1969c, 49), when discussing the question of revelation being closed with death of the last apostles, remarks: "Now there is nothing more to come: no new age, no other aion, no fresh plan of salvation, but only the unveiling of what is already 'here' as God's presence at the end of a human time stretched out to breaking-point: the Last and eternally the latest, newest day. It is because the definitive Reality which resolves history proper is already here that Revelation is 'closed'. Closed, because open to the concealed presence of divine plenitude in Christ." A bit further (p. 49) he continues, giving ample space for interreligious dialogue: "That Revelation has been closed is a positive and not a negative statement, a pure *Amen*, a conclusion which includes everything and excludes nothing of the divine plenitude, conclusion as fulfilled presence of an all-embracing plenitude." See also *Rahner* 1983a.

²⁸ Cf. Sura 2:2: "This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil)." *Guidelines* (1969, 57) says the same idea in other words: "... it [the Qur'an] abrogates and absorbs all the others [Scriptures] by recapitulating them."

²⁹ "... le Coran, à l'inverse de la Bible, se présente comme une irruption relativement soudaine et directe de la Parole de Dieu dans l'histoire des hommes. La tradition et la théologie musulmanes seront donc, assez naturellement, portées à voir dans le Coran la Parole même de Dieu, plus qu'à tenir compte des conditionnements personnels, culturels et sociaux." *Caspar* 1980, 43. (Tr. by RJ).

³⁰ The purpose of Qur'anic revelation is mentioned in Sura 6:19: "Say: Allah is witness between you and me. And this Qur'an hath been inspired in me, that I may warn therewith you and whomsoever it may reach".

³¹ *Mohammed* 1999, 30. Cf. *Gardet* 1984, 317–318. According to *E.I. J. Rosenthal* (*Political Thought in Medieval Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1958, p. 116), revelation for Muslims is "not simply a direct communication between God and man, not only a transmission of right beliefs and convictions, a dialogue between a personal God of love, of justice and of mercy and man whom he has created in his image; it is also and above all a valid and binding code for man, who must live in society and be politically organized in a state in order to fulfil his destiny. In short, it is the law of the ideal state".

his law. Therefore, humanity has to obey and observe God's law.³² In Islam, God is not the Father of humanity but the Sovereign Ruler of the universe.

Pope John Paul II said in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*: "Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value *only* from Christ's own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his."³³ There are at least two ways of trying to find an answer to the question of the acceptability of "participated forms of mediation". The first answer would be to refer to creation, to the created world and culture, and try to discover modalities of God's action in the world through creation and through culture and history. This approach, in fact, comes very close to the anthropological turn and Rahner's transcendental Thomism.³⁴ The second approach would be to try to observe the action and the "fruits" of the Holy Spirit in the non-Christian religions³⁵ and

³² *El-Assad* (1992, 12) refers to the Qur'an as the guidance of Muslims. The Qur'an exhorts them to conduct dialogue with an "open mind, in good faith and in a manner characterized by properly using kind words that eventually lead to clear perception and mutual understanding."

³³ RM 5 1994, 8.

³⁴ It also comes very close to Hans Küng's ideas. *Küng* (1988b, 228–256) has distinguished between three successive, rather abstract criteria for religions: 1) the human element as a general ethical criterion, 2) the canonical as a general religious criterion, and 3) the specifically Christian criterion. Küng neatly combines all three criteria around Jesus of Nazareth: "For Christian faith the specifically Christian criterion coincides not only with the general religious criterion of the origins, but finally with the general ethical criterion of the human element. The spiral endures. For what is the purpose—as a consequence of the proclaiming of the Kingdom and Will of God—aimed at in the Sermon on the Mount and all of Jesus' behavior? Nothing more or less than a new, true humanity: the Sabbath, the commandments for the sake of man, and not the other way round." (p. 252)—At least two critical remarks can be addressed to Küng's attempt, and especially to his Christology. First, his Christology deviates from historical reality and especially from the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. Second, for Küng, the historical person of Jesus is, according to Küng's subjective idealism, the concrete expression of human spontaneous value experience, but no more.—*Kasper* (2001, 81) says strikingly: "For the proponent of the theory of religious pluralism, the criterion for distinguishing and judging is not theoretical but ethical and practical."

³⁵ E.g. GS 22 (1966, 222) says: "... we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God [*modo Deo cognito*] offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery." The question of the Holy Spirit's activities in non-Christian religions is of the greatest importance. On this subject, see, e.g., *Küm* 2003. On the Spirit(s) in the New Testament, see, e.g., *Schweizer* 1989. *Troll* (2003, 66) says: "So gilt: die Geschichte der Religionen ist nicht nur vom Heiligen Geist geprägt. So wie die Geschichte im allgemeinen ist auch die Geschichte der

how these may challenge the way in which Christianity understands and practices the “fruits of the Spirit”. This means that when asking about God’s revelation in non-Christian religions, it is not only propositional truths but also the ways of life proposed in those religions that must be considered. The idea is that human actions can be used by God to bring about his Kingdom.³⁶ John Paul II said in *Redemptoris Missio* that the Kingdom of God is not a concept or a doctrine, it is above all else a person, Jesus of Nazareth. The Kingdom cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church.³⁷ Then he said: “It is true that the inchoate reality of the Kingdom can also be found beyond the confines of the Church among peoples everywhere, to the extent that they live ‘Gospel values’ and are open to the working of the Spirit who breathes when and where he wills (cf. Jn 3:8).”³⁸

From the point of view of Christian theology of religions, the crucial question is whether God has revealed himself in non-Christian religions. In other words, the question which remains is the following: is there revelation within other religions, especially within Islam? An appropriate answer seems to be given by Gavin D’Costa when he suggests that the answer to this question must be both positive and negative. The *a priori* negation and affirmation must remain in unresolved tension. For D’Costa, the tension can be then controlled, adjusted, and determined by *a posteriori* contacts and encounters with specific religions.³⁹

It seems to be that there is, indeed, a dialectical tension between the role and value of non-Christian religions and the implications of the Christian revelation in regard to the possibility of revelation outside the

Religionen, einschließlich des gelebten Christentums, gezeichnet von den ‘Geistern’ der Ablehnung des klar erkannten Guten, von faulen Kompromissen, von Heuchelei, Ungerechtigkeit und Verbrechen (...), also von totaler oder teilweiser Verweigerung gegenüber der Berufung zur Vollkommenheit und Heiligkeit. Dies betrifft nicht nur die empirische Ebene religiöser Praxis, sondern beeinflusst auch die normative Dimension der Religionen, d.h. ihre Lehren und Gesetze, zumal sie nicht das vom christlichen Glauben vermittelte Charisma des Bewusstseins der Gegenwart und Führung durch den auferstandenen Jesus Christus im Heiligen Geist haben.”

³⁶ D’Costa 1994, 155.

³⁷ RM 18 1994, 14.

³⁸ RM 20 1994, 15.

³⁹ D’Costa 1994, 149. He continues (pp. 152–153): “My main point is one of principle: that the affirmative ‘yes’, must also now contain within it a qualifying question in order to take into account the way in which human sinfulness and the overall context of a religion may obscure revelation, which in its hiddenness allows for and respects human freedom.”

Church. “This dialectical tension indicates the reason why the question of whether other religions have salvific structures is secondary to the question of whether we can find revelation within the world religions. And in answering this latter question, it is clear that the former remains a possibility, but one which can never be unambiguously affirmed.”⁴⁰ SNC / PCID documentation seems to be in the middle of this dialectical tension, without really answering explicitly either of those two questions.⁴¹ The same triune God is active both in creation and in non-Christian religions. The heavy emphasis placed in SNC / PCID documentation on theology of creation is certainly one attempt to answer the theological challenge of non-Christian religions. Creation, created world, culture, and history are given an important place in this answer because they are the theatre of the triune God’s presence in the world. The other response to this challenge is to look for the action of the triune God in non-Christian religions.

Theology of the Logos and semina verbi

In a certain way, the Christian Church is not today in a new or unknown situation vis-à-vis non-Christian religions. Christianity has met the challenge of other religions, of other doctrines, practically from its beginning. Christianity has had to define itself in relation to the partners it has encountered. The crucial question has always been: What does Christ mean to the world? What newness does he bring to it?⁴² In the early centuries, this encounter took the form of the theology of the Logos.⁴³ Already Philo Judaeus had accepted the

⁴⁰ D’Costa 1994, 164.

⁴¹ Rossano (1978a, 35) asks pertinent questions: “... the experience of interfaith urges theological questions such as like: whether any ‘revelation’ or divine enlightenment exists among the non-Christian religions and their sacred books, and what the relationship of this is to Christian revelation; whether or not they respond to a design of God, and whether and to what extent they may be considered legitimate ways of salvation; what relation does exist between the ethic and religious achievements of mankind and the mystery of Christ which is present in human history?”—As to the Qur’an, *John Paul II* (1994, 92) said the following: “Whoever knows the Old and the New Testaments, and then reads the Koran, clearly sees the *process by which it completely reduces Divine Revelation.*”

⁴² Dupuis 1999, 56.

⁴³ The question of why Christ was called “Logos” in the Gospel of John is beyond the scope of this study. On ‘logos’, see, e.g., *Stead* 1991, *Crossan* 2003, and *Peter* 2003. The concept goes at least as far back as the time of Heraclitus (5th century B.C.). Stoics used

doctrine of ideas in the mind of God and combined it with the Jewish thought expressed in the Books of Wisdom that saw God's wisdom as a mysterious, possibly personal, entity who in the beginning assisted God in creation. Philo translated the word "*dabar*" by the Greek word "*logos*", identifying the notion of knowledge or wisdom with the Hebrew concept of God's power, or word.⁴⁴ Three early Church Fathers, often cited in SNC/PCID documentation, distinguished successive ages of the universe in terms of successive stages in the self-manifestation of the divine Logos. These theologians, with others like-minded, laid the foundation for a theology of history.⁴⁵ Their vision and terminology were also adopted by *Nostra Aetate*, *Ad Gentes*, and *Lumen Gentium*.⁴⁶

The first of these is Justin Martyr (c. 100 – c. 165), a philosopher and perhaps the most important of the Greek apologists and the most positive of them towards Greek philosophy. The appeal to reason was one that both philosophers and Christians could share. In *First Apology*, he argues that traces of Christian truth were also present in the works of great pagan writers. According to his doctrine of *logos spermatikos*, God had prepared his final revelation in Christ through hints of its truth in classical philosophy. Justin emphasizes the cosmological function of the Logos.⁴⁷ For Justin, "Logos" means the Son in his relation to the

it as well as Philo Judaeus (?20 B.C. – ?54 A.D.), and some remote disciples of Plato. "The Greco-philosophic concept was a combination of the Logos of Heraclitus and the Stoics with the idea world of Plato; it is no wonder that the Logos theory of Philo defies organization into perfectly coherent unity." *Peter* 2003, 759. "The Stoics employed logos for the fiery rational principle that formed the universe, while the Neoplatonists defined logos as 'a power (*dynamis*) that represents a higher principle in action on a lower plane.'" *Murphy* 2003, 966.

⁴⁴ *Murphy* 2003, 966.

⁴⁵ I generally follow here *Dupuis* 1999, 57–70. Two other important Church Fathers worth mentioning, but not to be dealt with in this study, are Origen (e.g. *Contra Celsum*) and Augustine (e.g. *De Civitate Dei*). On the three theologians in question, see also, e.g., *Camphenhausen* 1959, 12–39, *Daniélou* 1990, *Luneau* 1964, *Luneau* 1967, *Chadwick* 1966, *Lubac* 1967, *Ries* 1987, *Fédou* 1992, and *Sesboüé* 2004, 38–44.—*Bray* (1997, 11) notes: "They [Apologists] were evangelists rather than diplomats, and their primary objective was to win converts to the Christian faith..."

⁴⁶ "... radium illius Veritatis, quae illuminat omnes homines." NA 2; "... laete et reverenter detegant semina Verbi in eis latentia..." AG 11; "Opera autem sua efficit ut quidquid boni in corde menteque hominum vel in propriis ritibus et culturis populorum seminum invenitur..." LG 17. Cf. DP 16 1994, 98, in which these passages are cited.

⁴⁷ There are, however, some difficulties in interpreting Justin. "Die Hauptschwierigkeit für die Interpreten war, daß Justin einerseits den Logos spermatikos göttlich nennt (2. Apol. 13), andererseits aber die 'Logos-Keime' als etwas rein Menschliches, vom göttlichen Logos Unterschiedenes beschreibt. Da er den Logos mit Christus identifiziert, stellt sich die Frage, wie er im einzelnen das Verhältnis zwischen dem Logos

cosmos. The Father acts through the Son, and all divine manifestations take place through him. God's manifestation is not limited to the Christian dispensation. Justin is prepared to say that people everywhere have lived in accordance with the Logos and deserve to be called Christians: "... and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious."⁴⁸

However, the key to Justin's thinking is that there is a differentiated participation of the Logos: all people share in him; this participation is not a simple human faculty, because it is the Logos of God. In everybody a seed of the Logos (*sperma tou logou*)⁴⁹ may be found, because the "Logos-sower" (*spermatikos logos*) has sown in all, but others have received from him only partially, whereas those to whom Logos has revealed himself in the incarnation have received his complete manifestation. "The Logos which he attributes to all people is not the 'product of human reason,' but a participation in the person of the Word, from whom all truth, however partial and uncertain, is derived: that of which we all have partaken is 'the *dunamis* of the ineffable Father, not just a product of human reason' (2 *Apol.* X, 8)."⁵⁰ This means that religious truth and righteous conduct come to all people through a personal manifestation of the eternal Logos, fully manifested in Christ.⁵¹

= Christus, dem Logos spermatikos und den Logos-Keimen begreift." (*Barnard* 1978, 378).—Justin may have known the Gospel of John. Compare the following passage in I *Apol.* 32,10 to John 1,14: "... και υιός ο λόγος ἐστίν· ὃς τίνα τρόπον σαρκοποιηθεὶς ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν, ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς ἐροῦμεν." (*Munier* 1995, 76.)

⁴⁸ I *Apol.* 46,3. English translation in "The Ante-Nicene Fathers" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B Eerdmans Publishing Company 1985 [1967]), Volume I, p. 178. The Greek text begins as follows: "και οἱ μετὰ λόγου βίωσαντες χριστιανοὶ εἰσι..." (*Munier* 1995, 94). μετὰ λόγου, "reasonably", could be translated also "in accordance with the Logos", cf. *Dupuis* 1999, 58.

⁴⁹ The expression σπέρμα του λόγου alludes to stoicism. "Il est clair que les expressions employées viennent du stoïcisme. Pour celui-ci le Logos est le feu immanent principe de toute raison et dont la raison de chaque homme est un aspect." *Daniélou* 1990, 44. The Logos sows the intelligence with seeds which do not lead to perfection without the unique Word incarnated.—See also *Stead* 1991, 441.

⁵⁰ *Dupuis* 1999, 59. The Greek text in question is as follows: "... ἐπειδὴ δύναμις ἐστὶ τοῦ ἀδόξητου πατρὸς καὶ οὐχὶ ἀνθρωπείου λόγου κατασκευή." (*Munier* 1995, 138).

⁵¹ *Dupuis* (1999, 60) makes an interesting remark: "It may be asked if this is not, but for the expression, the theology of 'anonymous Christianity', even eighteen centuries

The second great theologian is Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130 – c. 200), who continued Justin's work on the theology of Logos. The fundamental principle of Irenaeus's theology is *visibile patris filius*. The Son is the visible manifestation, revelation, the knowability of the Father, who is and remains through all economies in the unknown; only in the Son he is manifested: "Through the Son who is in the Father and who was in him the Father, the God 'who is' [cf. Ex. 3:8] manifested himself, the Father giving witness to the Son and the Son announcing the Father (*Adv. Haer.* III, 6, 2...)." ⁵² Irenaeus thinks that the human being's knowledge of God is already a response to a personal divine initiative; it means acknowledging God as the infinite person who addresses himself to the human beings. The creation itself is part of God's historical and personal manifestation.

For Irenaeus, after the creation, all the Old Testament theophanies are applied to the Word; they are theophanies insofar as they are also Logophanies. In other words, the Word of God has never ceased to be present among the human beings. The Word was active as well in creation as in redemption. Irenaeus distinguishes four covenants: one through Adam, one through Noah,⁵³ one through Moses, and one through Christ (*Adv. Haer.* III, 11, 8);⁵⁴ the common denominator is the

before K. Rahner." He also mentions (p. 60) that Justin develops in his writings a "history of Logos" which is a "history of salvation". Justin's expression "seeds of the Word" can be found in Vatican II document AG 11: "... familiares sint cum eorum traditionibus nationalibus et religiosis; laete et reverenter detegant *semina Verbi* in eis latentia... ut ipsi dialogo sincero et patienti discant, quas divitas Deus munificus Gentibus dispensaverit..." and in AG 15: "Spiritus Sanctus, qui omnes homines per *semina Verbi* praedicationemque Evangelii ad Christum vocat et in cordibus obsequium fidei suscitatur..." (Emphasis added).

⁵² *Dupuis* 1999, 61. The Latin text is as follows: "Per Filium itaque qui est in Patre et habet in se Patrem, is qui est manifestatus est Deus, Patre testimonium perhibente Filio et Filio adnuntiante Patrem." *Sources chrétiennes* 211, 70. Cf. *Adv. Haer.* IV, 6,6: "... omnes viderunt in Filio Patrem: invisibile etenim Filii Pater, visibile autem Patris Filius." *Sources chrétiennes* 100**, 448, 450.

⁵³ "Hugo Rahner estime que l'héritage de la théologie juive de l'arche de Noé s'est trouvé transposé à l'Eglise comme communauté de salut et qu'il appartient aux plus anciens éléments de la théologie des Ier et IIe siècles." *Sesboüé* 2004, 37. Cf. *Dupuis* 1999, 32–36.

⁵⁴ The Latin text is as follows: "Et propter hoc quattuor data sunt testamenta humano generi: unum quidem ante cataclysmum sub Adam; secundum uero post cataclysmum sub Noe; tertium uero legislatio sub Moyse; quartum uero quod renouat hominem et recapitulat in se omnia, quod est per Euangelium, eleuans et pennigerans homines in caeleste regnum." *Sources chrétiennes* 211, 168, 170. Cf. *Diarrha* 1997, 104–105.

Logos operative in each one of them. The universal revelatory task of the Logos makes him present in humankind from the beginning. “For if in the old dispensation the Logos in a certain sense was already made visible—visible to the mind, in as far as he is the revelation, the manifestation, of the Father (*visibile Patris*)—then to the eyes of the flesh he became visible only by his advent in the flesh. Irenaeus distinguishes two ways of visibility of the Word. . . . The assumption of human flesh constitutes the decisive mission of the Son, the climax of the Father’s manifestation through the visibility of the Logos.”⁵⁵ The action of Christ going and preaching (see 1 Peter 3,19–20) was aimed at preaching the good news of salvation to those who had lived before incarnation.⁵⁶

The third Church Father to be dealt with in this context is Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215). He emphasizes the term ‘Logos’ more than Justin or Irenaeus, but basically his Christology is the same as that of Irenaeus. All personal manifestation of the Father happens through the Logos: “It remains that we understand, then, the Unknown, by divine grace, and by the word alone that proceeds from Him...”⁵⁷ Clement distinguishes two levels of knowing the action of the Word: the first level means that a common knowledge of God can be acquired through the use of reason. It is accessible to all and can be called natural, whereas at the second level the personal action of the Logos initiates people into the secrets of God, inaccessible to reason. Everybody can be saved according to the knowledge they are given: “For it was suitable to the divine administration, that those possessed of greater worth in righteousness, and whose life had been pre-eminent, on repenting of their transgressions, though found in another place, yet being confessedly of the number of the People of God Almighty, should be saved, each one according to his individual knowledge.”⁵⁸ The text is close to the later notion in Catholic theology of “implicit faith”.

⁵⁵ Dupuis 1999, 65, 66.—Irenaeus’s understanding of the Godhead is thus the most complete and the most Trinitarian before that of Tertullian.

⁵⁶ *Adv. Haer.* III,19,3; IV,22,1; V,31,2.

⁵⁷ *Strom.* V,12,82. English translation in “The Ante-Nicene Fathers” (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B Eerdmans Publishing Company 1967), Volume II, p. 464. The Greek text is as follows: “Λείπεται δὴ θεία χάριτι καὶ μόνῳ τῷ παρ’ αὐτοῦ λόγῳ τὸ ἄγνωστον νοεῖν...” *Sources chrétiennes* 278, 160.

⁵⁸ *Strom.* VI,6,45. English translation in “The Ante-Nicene Fathers” (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B Eerdmans Publishing Company 1967), Volume II, p. 490. The Greek text is as follows: “Τοῦτι γὰρ ἔπρεπεν τῇ θεῖα οἰκονομίᾳ τοὺς ἄξιαν μᾶλλον ἐσχηκότας ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ προηγουμένως βεβιωκότας ἐπὶ τε τοῖς πλημμεληθεῖσι μετανοηκότας, ἅν

For Clement, philosophy comes from God.⁵⁹ It is, for the Greek world, parallel, if not in everything equal (the Greek word “*diatheke*” basically means “testament”) to the Jewish economy of the law. According to Clement, both were designed by God to lead people to Christ: “For, having furnished the one with the commandments, and the other with philosophy, He shut up unbelief to the Advent. Whence every one who believes not is without excuse. For by a different process of advancement, both Greek and Barbarian, He leads to the perfection which is by faith.”⁶⁰ Clement does not hesitate to say that philosophy is a covenant made by God with people, a stepping-stone to the philosophy of Christ. But, as is true of the law of the Jews, the function of philosophy is only a transitional one. Philosophy loses its *raison d’être* in Christ’s advent. Philosophy is only a partial knowledge, whereas Christ alone is the whole truth. Philosophy can prepare for the message of Jesus Christ. From the point of view of the relationship between philosophy and theology in the Roman Catholic Church seen above, Clement of Alexandria fits perfectly into the schema.

One final remark before turning to SNC/PCID documentation. The three Fathers—Justin with his Logos-sower, Irenaeus with his Logos-revealer, and Clement with his covenantal Logos—unanimously adopted a kind of “continuity-in-discontinuity” attitude (Jacques Dupuis’s word). That is, on the one hand they recognized the action of God in Greek philosophy and in human history, due to the universal active presence of the Word of God; in other words, they made reference to a manifestation of God in the Logos even before the incarnation, throughout history and from creation. On the other hand they all emphasized that there was entire newness in the incarnation, God’s advent in human flesh. The manifestation of God in the Logos culminated in his becoming a human being in Jesus Christ. Irenaeus said in a very lapidary formula: *omnem novitatem attulit semetipsum afferens* (*Adv.*

ἐν ἄλλῳ τόπῳ τύχῳσιν ἐξομολογούμενοι, ἐν τοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ ὄντας τοῦ παντοκράτορος κατὰ τὴν οἰκειάν ἐκάστου γνῶσιν σωθῆναι.” *Sources chrétiennes* 446, 152, 154.

⁵⁹ E.g. *Strom.* VI,5,42. The Greek text begins as follows: “Πρὸς δὲ καὶ ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς θεὸς ἀμφοῖν ταῖν διαθήκων χορηγός, ὁ καὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς φιλοσοφίας δοτὴρ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, δι’ ἧς ὁ παντοκράτωρ παρ’ Ἕλλησι δοξάζεται, παρέστησεν.” *Sources chrétiennes* 446, 146.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* VII,2,11. English translation in “The Ante-Nicene Fathers” (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1967), Volume II, p. 526. The Greek text is as follows: “Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἐντολάς, τοῖς δὲ φιλοσοφίαν παρασχῶν συνέκλεισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν, ὅτε ἀναπολόγητός ἐστι πᾶς ὁ μὴ πιστεύσας. Ἄγει γὰρ ἐξ ἐκατέρως προκοπῆς Ἑλληνικῆς τε καὶ βαρβάρου ἐπὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως τελείωσιν.” *Sources chrétiennes* 428, 64.

Haer. IV, 34,1). Admitting this unresolved tension, there is no need to go further with these patristic theologians.⁶¹

John Paul II referred to these theologians and their theology of Logos in his discourses. In 1985—the same year when he gave his famous message to young Muslims in Morocco—he said, speaking of religious knowledge of God and mentioning explicitly Justin: “... right from the early centuries of Christianity they loved to see the ineffable presence of the Word in human minds and in achievements of culture and civilization: ‘All the writers, in fact, through the inborn seed of the *Logos* (Word) implanted in them, were capable of a dim glimpse of reality’, reveals St Justin (II, 13, 3), who with other Fathers did not hesitate to see in philosophy a kind of ‘minor revelation’.”⁶² In 1986, in his Christmas address to the Roman Curia, the Pope combined the creation through the Word and the provision of eternal life to those who search for salvation: “The dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* declares that ‘God, who creates and conserves all things by his Word, provides men with constant evidence of himself... and he has never ceased to take care of the human race, for he wishes to give eternal life to all who seek salvation through perseverance in doing good’ (*Dei Verbum*, 3).”⁶³ In 1998 the accent of his speech was more on the “seeds of the Word” and “seeds of truth”: “... I have wished to recall the ancient doctrine formulated by the Fathers of the Church, which says that we must recognize ‘the seeds of the Word’ present and active in the various religions (*Ad gentes*, n. 11; *Lumen gentium*, n. 17). ... The ‘seeds of truth’ present and active in the various religious traditions are a reflection of the unique Word of God...”⁶⁴ For John Paul II there actually are explicit elements within non-Christian religions which may

⁶¹ See, e.g., the discussion in *Dupuis* 1999, 70–77.

⁶² *John Paul II* 1985b, 228. The Greek text is as follows: “οἱ γὰρ συγγραφεῖς πάντες διὰ τῆς ἐνοούσης ἐμφύτου τοῦ λόγου σποράς ἀμυδροῶς ἐδύναντο ὁρᾶν τὰ ὄντα.” (II *Apol.* 13, 5 in *Munier* 1995, 142.)

⁶³ *John Paul II* 1987f, 56. The Latin text of DV 3 is as follows: “Deus, per Verbum omnia creans (cf. Io. 1,3) et conservans, in rebus creatis perenne sui testimonium hominibus praebet (cf. Rom. 1, 19–20)... et sine intermissione generis humani curam egit, ut omnibus qui secundum patientiam boni operis salutem quaerunt, vitam aeternam daret (cf. Rom. 2, 6–7).” Cf. *John Paul II* 2005g, 31.

⁶⁴ *John Paul II* 1998b, 273 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 12. Cf. *John Paul II* 2003b, 335. The Pope began both speeches with citations from *Nostra Aetate* (NA 1, NA 2). He mentioned Justin also in his discourse in his General Audience on September 16, 1998, referring to II *Apol.* 10, 1–3. See [http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1998/documents](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1998/documents (August 2005)) (August 2005). The discourse is in French in *La Documentation Catholique*, N° 2190, 18 octobre 1998, pp. 861–862.

be used by the Spirit in mediating grace. He noted: “In another passage the Council says that the Holy Spirit works effectively even outside the visible structure of the Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 13), making use of these very *semina Verbi*, that constitute a kind of *common soteriological root present in all religions*.”⁶⁵ The Pope also mentioned Irenaeus and his doctrine of four covenants of God with humanity. In 2000 John Paul II said in his General Audience, having already made allusion to God’s covenant in Noah, that the covenants in Adam, Noah, and Moses aim at the fullness of Christ, whereas the covenant in Christ brings grace into perfection.⁶⁶ There is a strong Christological emphasis here. Christ is *realiter* the fulfilment of God’s covenant with humankind. Another possibility concerning Irenaeus’s four covenants would be to say that the first two covenants (Adam, Noah) are universal and express God’s dialogue with human beings through history. The third covenant (Moses) concerns Israel and serves as a historical preparation for God’s final manifestation in Christ, in whom God’s action finds its climax. The presence of God in history culminates in Jesus Christ.⁶⁷

In SNC/PCID documentation, John Paul II is not the only one who speaks about the theology of the Logos and early Church Fathers, especially about Justin and Irenaeus. *Guidelines* (1969, 136) invites us “to re-read certain of the Fathers, such as Justin, Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus, who can help us recover an awareness of the mysterious workings of grace outside the visible limits of the Church.” In fact, the *semina verbi* are at the theological foundation of Church’s doctrine with regard to any interreligious dialogue.⁶⁸ We encounter again some

⁶⁵ *John Paul II* 1994, 81.

⁶⁶ “In this connection St. Irenaeus recalls that God established four covenants with humanity: in Adam, Noah, Moses and Christ (cf. *Adversus Haereses*, 3, 11, 8). The first three aim in spirit at the fullness of Christ and mark the stages of God’s dialogue with his creatures, an encounter of disclosure and love, of enlightenment and grace, which the Son gathers in unity, seals in truth and brings to perfection.” *John Paul II* 2001c, 20.—The Pope also referred to Justin in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, which emphasizes the hidden working of the truth. Cf. *VS* 94 1993, 142–143: “In this witness to the absoluteness of the moral good *Christians are not alone*: they are supported by the moral sense present in peoples and by the great religious and sapiential traditions of East and West, from which the interior and mysterious workings of God’s Spirit are not absent. ... As Saint Justin put it, ‘the Stoics, at least in their teachings on ethics, demonstrated wisdom, thanks to the seed of the Word present in all peoples, and we know that those who followed their doctrines met with hatred and were killed.’” The citation is from *II Apol.* 8, 1.

⁶⁷ *Dupuis* 1999, 78.

⁶⁸ *Machado* 2001, 89. Cf. *Colin* 1998, 334: “Non pour nous en emparer mais pour y

of their basic ideas: truth in non-Christian religions is attributed to the Word of God (Christ),⁶⁹ and there are plenty of these seeds of the Word, *semina verbi*, in the creation.⁷⁰ “Justin has no hesitation in saying that ‘those who have lived according to the Word are Christians’, and he places in this category of men a series of philosophers, Greeks and others.”⁷¹ Before the incarnation, there was only a partial revelation of truth, but the fullness is given only to Christians.⁷² However, this does not signify that Christians lay exclusive claim to all truth, but a conscious participation in the totality of the revealed truth, the visible expression of which is the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus Christ.

The Fathers are said to have worked within the unifying principle of the cosmos or creation, the implications of the Mystery of the Logos. The basic idea was that what God offers to humanity in Christ, namely the Word, is the only reality in which all truth can be both sought and discovered.⁷³ Because the seeds of the Word are sown in the entire human race, the divine image can be found in all human beings; however, it can be obscured or distorted.⁷⁴ In fact, the theology of the Logos, especially that of Justin, is carefully explained in PCID documentation:

In an attempt to integrate his search for ultimate truth in various philosophical schools of his time, St. Justin Martyr (2nd cent. A.D.) has developed a theology of the “divine seminal word” in three interrelated terms: The *Logos*, identified with Christ, the *Logos spermatikos* (seminal word) of divine character, and the seeds of the Logos (*sperma tou logou*) implanted in human nature, yet by themselves unable to develop their supernatural

[dans des autres religions] reconnaître les traces du Verbe, les *semina Verbi* dont parlaient déjà Justin et Irénée.”

⁶⁹ In the final statement of BIRA II ([Asian] Bishops’ Institutes on Interreligious Affairs), in a footnote no. 3: “St. Justin Martyr attributed all truths in non-Christian religions to the Word of God (Christ).” Cited in B 43 1980, 89.

⁷⁰ “Saint Justin, palestinien du IIe siècle, enseigne que la création est riche de ‘semences du Verbe.’” *Duval* 1989, 319.

⁷¹ *Humbertclaude* 1971, 102, referring to I *Apol.* 46.

⁷² *Fuss* (1999, 77) cites II *Apol.* 13,4: “Whatever has been uttered well among all men, belongs to us Christians.” The Greek text is as follows: “ὅσα οὖν παρὰ πᾶσι καλῶς εἰρηται, ἡμῶν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐστί...” (*Munier* 1995, 142.)

⁷³ *Machado* 2001, 89. He continues (p. 89): “In the first part of the third century Justin Martyr speaks about the ‘seeds’ sown by the *Logos* in the religious traditions of the world. Through the incarnation the manifestation of the *Logos* becomes complete (I *Apol.* 46,1–4; 2 *Apol.* 8, 1; 10:1–3; 13:4–6). For Irenaeus, the Son, the visible manifestation of the Father, has revealed himself to mankind ‘from the beginning’; yet the incarnation brings about something entirely new (*Adv. Haer.*, 4,6,5–7; 4,7,2; 4,20,6–7).”

⁷⁴ *Machado* 2001, 90, referring to II *Apol.* 8,1.

nature. In these threefold manifestations, the *Logos* is the supreme mediator who grants human participation in divine knowledge because as the eternal Word of the Father he is always present in human history even prior to his incarnation.⁷⁵

As to the SNC / PCID and the theology of the *Logos*, there are at least four remarks to be made. The first is that the implications of this theology for interreligious and Christian-Muslim dialogue are far-reaching. "The seeds of the Word of God, the Word Creator, are working in him [a human brother], as said in the past by St Justin and more recently, Vatican II."⁷⁶ The non-Christian is seen through the theology of the creation, and in him or her and his or her religion there are *semina verbi*, traces of truth, which create a common starting point for dialogue and common action. This gives an openness and honesty to interreligious dialogue when the Christian is constantly on the lookout for traces of God's Word among human beings.⁷⁷ Of course, it also makes the Christian partner vulnerable. If his or her counterpart refuses to open up, there is nothing to be done. Dialogue becomes difficult, maybe even impossible.

The second remark is more general. It seems that the situation today of both the Roman Catholic Church and, at least to some extent, all Christianity is similar to that of the early Church in the first centuries A.D. Secularization, globalization, and the fact that many non-Christian religions are firmly rooted in Western countries have required Christian theology to entirely reconsider its basic concepts. It is not wrong to say that Christian theology is urgently called to rethink Chris-

⁷⁵ *Fuss* 1999, 76. Justin is the only Church Father to whom Fuss devotes an entire section. In DP 24 (1994, 100), too, these ideas of patristic theologians can be found. "In particular, writers of the second century and the first part of the third century such as Justin, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, either explicitly or in an equivalent way, speak about the 'seeds' sown by the Word of God in the nations. Thus it can be said that for them, prior to and outside the Christian dispensation, God has already, in an incomplete way, manifested himself. This manifestation of the *Logos* is an adumbration of the full revelation in Jesus Christ to which it points." Cited also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 616–617. A footnote refers to the following works: 1 *Apol.* 46,1–4; 2 *Apol.* 8,1; 10:1–3; 13:4–6; *Adv. Haer.* 4, 6, 5–7; 4, 7, 2; 4, 20, 6–7; *Stromata*, 1, 5; 6, 8; 7, 2). The following footnote in DP refers to *Adv. Haer.*, 3, 11, 8.

⁷⁶ "Je suis en face d'un frère humain créé comme moi à l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu, appelé à voir Dieu, c'est-à-dire objet d'une vocation divine, et de ce fait habité par le désir du Mystère Absolu qui est Dieu. Les semences du Verbe de Dieu, du Verbe créateur, agissent en lui, comme le disait autrefois saint Justin et plus récemment Vatican II." *Sesboüé* 1993, 283. (Tr. by RJ).

⁷⁷ *Guidelines* 1969, 137.

tology, doctrine concerning Christ—not only Christology of the Church Fathers, but also Christology of the New Testament.⁷⁸ Christology in the context of interreligious dialogue cannot be ignored, either.⁷⁹ From the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, it can be said that some individual theologians can go much further in their speculative theology than the classical Christology adopted by the Church would permit (which in itself is nothing new in the history of the Church). John Paul II was well aware of these theologies.⁸⁰ In his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*⁸¹ the Pope exhorted the Synod concerning Asia “to illustrate and explain more fully the truth that Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and the sole Redeemer of

⁷⁸ See, e.g., *Scripture and Christology* 1986. At least three PCID documents express this idea: “Entrés en dialogue avec l’Hindouisme, le Bouddhisme ou l’Islam... nous nous sommes senti invités à revisiter les grandes affirmations de notre christologie: celles du Nouveau Testament et celles des Pères.” *Colin* 1998, 334; “... there is ‘something of crisis’ throughout the world in Christology...” *Pell* 2002, 286. Also “Findings of an Exploratory Consultation on Interreligious Prayer”, cited in PD 93 (1996, 373–378), states: “Holding fast to the centrality of Christ, we urge careful theological reflection on our understanding of the uniqueness and universality of Christ.” (p. 377) The consultation was held in Bangalore, India. Cf. “Serious theology today has to ask itself the place of the other religions in God’s plan of salvation, while holding fast to the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour of all humanity.” *Arinze* 1997, 208. Cf. *Duquoc* (2002, 17) who says: “Ainsi, le changement d’attitude à l’égard des autres religions qui s’est peu à peu affermi depuis Vatican II ne relève pas d’une décision éthique ou stratégique seulement, elle implique une réévaluation doctrinale du point nodal du christianisme, la christologie.”

⁷⁹ See, e.g., *Kuschel* 1991; *Waldenfels* 2002.

⁸⁰ “In recent years a mentality has arisen in theological and ecclesial circles that tends to relativize Christ’s revelation and his unique and universal mediation of salvation, as well as to diminish the need for Christ’s Church as the universal sacrament of salvation.” *John Paul II* 2000d, 157.—This implies a tension concerning the relations between the Magisterium and the role of the theology and theologians (*magisterium cathedrae pastoralis* and *magisterium cathedrae magistralis*) which is beyond the scope of this study. However, see DV 10 1966, 117–118: “The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted *exclusively* to the living teaching office of the Church [*soli vivo Ecclesiae Magisterio concreditum est*], whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on...” (Emphasis added) See also *Mysterium ecclesiae* (AAS 65 1973, 396–408; DS 4530–4541; the French text is in *La Documentation Catholique*, 15 juillet 1973, N° 1636, pp. 664–671). This declaration was given after the publication of Hans Küng’s book *Unfelhbar?: eine Anfrage* (Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag 1970), contesting the infallibility of the Church. In the “Note” (p. 671) Küng is mentioned by name. Cf. “La vocation ecclésiastique du théologien” (*La Documentation Catholique*, 15 juillet 1990, N° 2010, pp. 693–701), “L’interprétation des dogmes” (*La Documentation Catholique*, 20 mai 1990, N° 2006, pp. 489–502), *Sullivan* 2000, and *Sullivan* 2002.

⁸¹ On November 10, 1994. Text in AAS 87 1995, 5–41.

the world, to be clearly distinguished from the founders of other great religions.”⁸² This exhortation can be seen a sign of concern that the Pope had regarding the continent of Asia.⁸³ The unique salvific role and position of Jesus Christ is clearly expressed in this letter.

The theology of the Logos was born in dialogue with the surrounding Greek culture. The Early Church Fathers, witnesses of the Christian faith (Justin and Irenaeus died as martyrs), laid the theological foundation for this dialogue. They were in a minority position in society. All this seems very similar to the modern-day situation of Christianity in many parts of the world. The emperors Constantine (?280–337 A.D.) and Theodosius (?346–395 A.D.) made Christianity the official religion of the empire, but at that time it no longer had any reason to be very interested in dialogue with the surrounding Greek culture. At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, Christianity is being forced to be interested.

The third remark is a question that arises immediately out of the writings of the Early Church Fathers: what is the theological significance of the presence of *semina verbi* outside the Christian dispensation? To start with, it seems that, according to the Fathers, philosophy and human wisdom effected by the Word of God did not lose their role in Christ’s incarnation; their role continued until a point of time when those who were outside the Christian dispensation would be challenged by the Gospel. The idea of this “broad” promulgation of the Gospel was later abandoned by the Church, but recovered recently.⁸⁴ The views seem to go from the one end of the spectrum to the other.⁸⁵ To explain the distinction between the pre-Christian and the Christian regimes of grace, Yves Congar said: “The thought of the ancient Fathers could, I believe, be expressed in the following terms in conformity with Pauline categories: between the faithful or the saints before Christ and our-

⁸² TMA 38 1994, 52; *John Paul II* 1995, 125.

⁸³ In SNC/PCID documents of Asian origin there is, e.g., the following, rather ambiguous statement: “Through this commitment [to Jesus Christ] we proclaim the total liberation of all peoples. In the mysterious and providential plan of God, Islam possesses a salvific and liberating purpose. ... Thus the genuine beliefs and practices of Muslims form the vehicles of God’s favour to them and constitute the basis of their human communion and action.” Message of the Varanasi Consultation (FABC Office of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs and that of Mission) B 55 1984, 40. What is meant here by “the mysterious and providential plan of God”? And what are “the genuine beliefs and practices”?

⁸⁴ *Dupuis* 1999, 74.

⁸⁵ See the discussion in *Dupuis* 1999, 74–77.

selves, grace is the same—that is: there is one and the same project (propos) of grace, one and the same process of salvation gratuitously bestowed; but there is a difference in the spiritual gifts bestowed in keeping with that grace.”⁸⁶ It can be argued that the theology of the Logos was the beginning of the Christian argument for the inclusivist position.⁸⁷

The fourth remark concerns exactly salvation. It is evident in SNC/PCID documentation that Christology cannot be detached from soteriology. This Christological emphasis is clear: “He [Jesus Christ] is the unique mediator between God and humankind. Everything has been created in him and through him, and everything is moving towards him. This unique mediation of Christ is connected with the universal salvific will of God. Only in Jesus Christ can human beings be saved.”⁸⁸ Soteriology is basically a Christological matter.⁸⁹

Salvation is Christological

The New Testament is explicit: faith is needed for salvation (Hebr 11:6). It affirms that salvation is in Jesus Christ only (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5). It also insists on the necessity of faith and baptism (Jn 3:5; Mk 16:15–16; Acts 2:37–41). The salvific role of the Church is implied through the necessity of faith and baptism. In 1 Pet 3:18–22 there is a comparison between those who were saved by the ark of Noah and those who pass through the waters of baptism. Later on, Christian writers saw through this text the Church as the “ark of salvation” and began to think that outside the ark of the Church there is no salvation. However, there is also the famous passage of 1 Tim 2:4: “[God our Saviour] ... wants

⁸⁶ Dupuis 1999, 77, citing Y. Congar, “Ecclesia ab Abel”, pp. 80–81, in: “*Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche: Festschrift für Karl Adam*”. Ed. M Reding, Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag 1952, pp. 79–108.

⁸⁷ Dalferth 1988, 66.

⁸⁸ *Journeying Together* 1999, 107. Cf. RH 7, and Poupard 2002, 156: “Jesus Christ is not only the way, He is the only way that leads to salvation because He is the unique and Universal Saviour of all mankind.”

⁸⁹ Sometimes the link between anthropology, Christology and soteriology is emphasized: “Christology, in actual fact, makes a significant contribution to anthropology not only as far as the understanding of man is concerned but also regarding his salvation as person. ... Hence he is not simply a being that is open to the transcendence of the mystery of God, but is instead, first of all, a Christocentric being because he is historically defined as person on account of his relationship to Christ.” Sanna 1997, 46, 47.

all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” The following verse links the salvation to Jesus Christ. Faith is necessary for salvation.⁹⁰ However, because Christ brings people to salvation through his mystical body, i.e., the Church, the way of salvation is principally through the Church.⁹¹

Cyprian (d. 258) is famous for writing: “There can be no salvation for anyone except in the Church” or, “There is no salvation outside the Church”.⁹² Francis Sullivan affirms that these words—in Latin *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*⁹³—were not addressed to the people who were pagans at that time. Cyprian judged Christian heretics and schismatics who were guilty of their separation from the Church, but it cannot be said whether he would have judged pagans guilty of their failure to accept the Gospel and to enter the Church.⁹⁴ Later on, the idea developed through the writings of Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Prosper of Aquitaine, to arrive at Fulgentius of Ruspe (468–533), a follower of Augustine and also a North African Bishop. He applied the axiom “outside the Church no salvation” to pagans and Jews in its most rigid form: “Most firmly hold and by no means doubt, that not only all pagans, but also all Jews, and all heretics and schismatics who die outside the Catholic Church, will go to the

⁹⁰ Cf. DS 1532: “... quia ‘fides est humanae salutis initium’, fundamentum et radix omnis iustificationis, ‘sine qua impossibile est placere Deo’ [Hbr 11,6]...” (Council of Trent); DS 3012: “Quoniam vero ‘sine fide impossibile est placere Deo’ [Hbr 11,6] et ad filiorum eius consortium pervenire, ideo nemini unquam sine illa contigit iustificatio, nec ullus, nisi in ea ‘perseveraverit usque in finem’ [Mt 10,22; 24,13], vitam aeternam assequetur. Ut autem officio veram fidem amplectendi in eaque constanter perseverandi satisfacere possemus, Deus per Filium suum unigenitum Ecclesiam instituit...” (Vatican I).

⁹¹ “Et puisque le Christ opère le salut au moyen de son Corps mystique qui est l’Eglise, la voie du salut est essentiellement liée à l’Eglise.” *John Paul II* 1996b, 10. “Pour agir, la grâce salvifique requiert une adhésion, une coopération, un *oui* au don divin: cette adhésion est, au moins implicitement, orientée vers le Christ et l’Eglise. On peut donc dire aussi: *sine Ecclesia nulla salus*— ‘sans l’Eglise, point de salut’ ...” *John Paul II* 1996b, 11.

⁹² *Epist.* 4, 4; *Epist. ad Iubaianum* 73:21, cited in English in *Dupuis* 1999, 88.—*Sullivan* (1992, 18) cites a letter of Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch in Syria: “Be not deceived, my brethren: if anyone follows a maker of schism, he does not inherit the Kingdom of God; if anyone walks in strange doctrine he has no part in the passion.” On this axiom, see, e.g., *Capéran* 1934, *Congar* 1963, 417–444, *Sullivan* 1992, and *Sesboüé* 2004.

⁹³ Cf. “Au contraire, nous devons affirmer que la voie du salut passe toujours par le Christ, et qu’il revient donc à l’Eglise et à ses missionnaires de le faire connaître et aimer en tout temps, en tout lieu et dans toutes les cultures. Hors du Christ, ‘point de salut’.” *John Paul II* 1996b, 9.

⁹⁴ *Sullivan* 1992, 22–23.

eternal fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels.” Concerning heretics and schismatics, he wrote: “Hold most firmly and do not doubt that anyone baptized outside the Catholic Church cannot come to eternal life if before the end of his life one does not return and become incorporated into the Catholic Church. For the apostle says: ‘If I have all faith and know all mysteries, but do not have charity, I am nothing’ [see 1 Cor 13:2]. And we read that also in the days of the flood no one could be saved outside the ark.”⁹⁵

This formula can be found almost verbatim nine hundred years later in the Decree for the Copts of the General Council of Florence (February 4, 1442). This is the first official Church document in which mention is made of pagans and Jews, together with heretics and schismatics, connected with the axiom “outside the Church no salvation”: “[The Holy Roman Church] ... firmly believes, professes and preaches that ‘no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans’, but also Jews, heretics and schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the ‘eternal fire prepared for the devil and its angels’ [Mt 25:41], unless before the end of their life they are joined to it. ... ‘And no one can be saved... unless one remains in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church.’”⁹⁶ It is to be noted that this statement was given 50 years *before* the discovery of America in 1492.

⁹⁵ *De fide ad Petrum* 38, 37; PL 65: 704, 703, cited in English in *Dupuis* 1999, 92.—In his bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302), Pope Boniface VIII emphasized that, in order to obtain salvation, one had not only to be a member of the Church, but also to acknowledge papal authority: “That there is only one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church we are compelled by faith to believe and hold, and we firmly believe in her and sincerely confess her, outside of whom there is neither salvation nor remission of sins... Furthermore we declare, state and define that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of all human beings that they submit to the Roman Pontiff.” DS 870, DS 875. English translation in *The Christian Faith* 2001, 305.

⁹⁶ DS 1351: “Firmiter credit, profitetur et praedicat, ‘nullos extra catholicam Ecclesiam existentes, non solum paganos’, sed nec Iudaeos aut haereticos atque schismaticos, aeternae vitae fieri posse participes, sed in ignem aeternum ituros, ‘qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius’ [Mt 25,41], nisi ante finem vitae eidem fuerint aggregati ... ‘Neminemque... posse salvari, nisi in catholicae Ecclesiae gremio et unitate permanserit.’” English translation, e.g., in *Dupuis* 1999, 95–96, and in *The Christian Faith* 2001, 421.—From the point of view of Christian-Muslim relations, *Dupuis* (1999, 99) is of the opinion that Muslims were included among the ‘heretics’ of the text, even though they are not explicitly mentioned. “L’axiome *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*— ‘hors de l’Eglise point de salut’—, énoncé par saint Cyprien (*Epist.* 73, 21; *PL* 1123 AB), appartient à la tradition chrétienne et a été introduit dans le IVe Concile de Latran (*DS* 802), dans la bulle *Unam Sanctam* de Boniface VIII (*DS* 870) et dans le Concile de Florence (*Decretum pro Jacobitis*, *DS* 1351).” *John Paul II* 1996b, 10. Cf. *DS* 792. See also *Kasper* 2001, 84.

This axiom has been the subject of doctrinal disputes.⁹⁷ In the 20th century, there was the famous letter of Pope Pius XII against the Jesuit Father Leonard Feeney (1949), who had insisted on upholding the axiom in its rigid form. The letter seemed to imply a change in the interpretation of the axiom⁹⁸ that was later confirmed by Vatican II. The negative tone of the axiom was converted to a positive message: the Church is “a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind.” (LG 1) The Church is “an instrument for the redemption of all” (LG 9), “is necessary for salvation” (LG 14), and “is the all-embracing means of salvation” (UR 3).⁹⁹ Recently, John Paul II continued this positive interpretation of the axiom. He said in 2001 that the declaration *Dominus Iesus*¹⁰⁰ shows how the axiom does not deny salvation to non-Christians, but points to its ultimate source in Christ, who is the meeting point of God and the human being.¹⁰¹ For John Paul II, salvation is always a Christological, pneumatological—and thus ecclesiological—matter, however positive the effects of other religious traditions are.¹⁰² The *Catechism of*

⁹⁷ One important text of the 19th century is the allocution *Singulari Quadam* (1854) of Pope Pius IX: “It must, of course, be held as a matter of faith that outside the apostolic Roman Church no one can be saved, that the Church is the only ark of salvation, and that whoever does not enter it will perish in the flood. On the other hand, it must likewise be held as certain that those who live in ignorance of the true religion, if such ignorance be invincible, are not subject to any guilt in this matter before the eyes of the Lord. But then, who would dare to set limits to this ignorance, taking into consideration the natural differences of people, lands, native talents, and so many other factors?” *The Christian Faith* 2001, 311 and 424.

⁹⁸ See DS 3866–3873; *The Christian Faith* 2001, 328–330. Father Feeney was excommunicated on February 4, 1953. See AAS 45 1953, 100. Especially important is DS 3868: “Neque enim in praecepto tantummodo dedit Salvator, ut omnes gentes intrarent Ecclesiam, sed statuit quoque Ecclesiam medium esse salutis, sine quo nemo intrare valeat regnum gloriae caelestis.” and DS 3872: “Quibus verbis providentibus tam eos reprobant, qui omnes solo voto implicito Ecclesiae adhaerentes a salute aeterna excludunt, quam eos, qui falso asserunt, homines in omni religione aequaliter salvari posse.”—In 1943 Pope Pius XII wrote in *Mystici Corporis* 103 (AAS 35 1943, 243): “... quandoquidem, etiamsi incerto quodam desiderio ac voto ad mysticum Redemptoris Corpus ordinentur, tot tamen tantisque caelestibus muneribus adiumentisque carent, quibus in Catholica solummodo Ecclesia frui licet.” Cf. *Rahner* 1969g.

⁹⁹ “For it is through Christ’s Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained.” UR 3 1966, 346.

¹⁰⁰ On August 6, 2000, by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Text in AAS 92 2000, 742–765.

¹⁰¹ *John Paul II* 2001b, 13.

¹⁰² “Les religions peuvent exercer une influence positive sur la destinée de ceux qui en font partie et en suivent les directives avec la sincérité de cœur. Mais si l’action

the Catholic Church, too, emphasizes explicitly the positive formulation of the axiom.¹⁰³

Other SNC / PCID documentation follows this positively toned line. Salvation is possible only through Christ and through the Church, participating mysteriously with him in this divine plan.¹⁰⁴ The Church is necessary for salvation;¹⁰⁵ however, the divine will is to save all people. Thus, the question is left open for those who do not belong to the Church.¹⁰⁶ Paul VI said in 1968:

décisive pour le salut est l'oeuvre de l'Esprit Saint, nous devons reconnaître que l'homme reçoit son salut uniquement du Christ, par l'Esprit Saint." *John Paul II* 1996b, 11. Cf. *John Paul II* 1996b, 10.

¹⁰³ "Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is His Body." CCC 846. Cf. *Lubac* 1967, 152–153: "Que la grâce du Christ agisse en dehors de l'Eglise visible, de sa doctrine et de ses sacrements, c'est là une vérité reconnue depuis toujours,—quoiqu'elle ait parfois subi de regrettables éclipses. Le célèbre axiome 'extra Ecclesiam nulla salus' n'avait pas à l'origine, chez les Pères de l'Eglise, le sens général que plusieurs aujourd'hui encore s'imaginent: il visait, dans des situations très concrètes, le cas des fauteurs de schisme, de révolte ou de trahison." And *Congar* (1984, 85) states: "... de même que *Lumen Gentium* n° 16 et *Ad Gentes Divinitus* n° 7 disent autre chose que 'Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus' au sens où on a entendu, pendant des siècles, cet axiome faussement clair." (Emphasis added).

¹⁰⁴ "Au point de vue du salut surnaturel, c'est depuis toujours et pour toujours le Christ et, par participation mystique avec lui, l'Eglise qu'il a fondée, qui fécondent et font lever par grâce tout ce que les religions renferment de juste, de noble, de grand." *Masson* 1989, 339. Cf. "L'universel ne s'oppose pas à l'unique mais n'est possible que par lui: c'est parce que le Fils unique est venu un jour du temps 'en un seul coin de terre' que d'autres peuvent avoir part, en d'autres lieux et d'autres temps, à l'onction même de Jésus-Christ. Cela implique que le Fils unique ne retient pas pour lui-même ce qui le constitue comme Christ, mais qu'il le partage avec tous ceux qui sont disposés à l'accueillir." *Fédou* 2002, 27.

¹⁰⁵ *How* is the Church necessary for salvation? SNC/PCID documentation does not give a clear answer to that question. The International Theological Commission of the Catholic Church says: "On parle de la nécessité de l'Eglise pour le salut en deux sens: la nécessité de l'appartenance à l'Eglise pour ceux qui croient en Jésus, et la nécessité, pour le salut, du ministère de l'Eglise qui, par charge reçue de Dieu, doit être au service de la venue du Royaume de Dieu." *Commission Théologique Internationale* 1997, 322.

¹⁰⁶ "Certes, la condition 'sans faute de leur part' ne peut être ni vérifiée ni appréciée par une évaluation humaine, mais elle doit être laissée *uniquement à la justice divine*." *John Paul II* 1996b, 10. (Emphasis added) "It is generally admitted by theologians that any view taken on this question [the possibility of salvation for those who have never heard of Christ] is a matter of opinion, and views are advanced by their proponents not as certain, but only as probable, or at most as more probable." *Meagher/Eds.* 2003, 602.—*Kasper* (2001, 84) says: "Today this thinking [that all those who do not know and acknowledge the Christian faith are forever lost] is hardly anymore comprehensible to the majority of people; it seems impossible to reconcile it with the justice and mercy of God or with his desire for the salvation of all, and even with human solidarity."—Two

We believe that the Church is necessary for salvation, because Christ, who is the sole Mediator and Way of salvation, renders Himself present for us in His Body which is the Church. But the divine Design of salvation embraces all men: and those who without fault on their part do not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but seek God sincerely, and under the influence of grace endeavour to do His will as recognised through the promptings of their conscience, they, in a number known only to God, can obtain salvation.¹⁰⁷

In the Pope's words there is a "yes" and "no" attitude: there is a strong ecclesiological emphasis, but at the same time the divine design of salvation in Christ "guarantees" that a certain number of non-Christians can be saved. However, the Pope does not say that they *are* saved, he says that they *can* obtain salvation.¹⁰⁸ As to the salvific values of non-Christian religions, the matter is left open. In fact, there is a certain inner tension in *Nostra Aetate* 2. It talks about "ways" [*vias*], proposed by other religions, which consist of teaching, rules of life, and sacred ceremonies. In the following passage it talks about "the way" [*via*] who is the Christ. What is the relation between these diverse religious "ways" and "the way"? Bernard Sesboué suggests that "ways" can be seen as expressions of the human search for God, from down upwards, whereas "the way" can be seen as the one given by God in Christ, from up downwards. But are non-Christian religions salvific ways in themselves? No clear answer is given.¹⁰⁹ Sesboué continues,

different views as to whether Vatican II documents affirm that religions are ways of salvation are expressed by, e.g., *Knitter* 1984, *Knitter* 1995 (yes) and *Ruokanen* 1992 (no).

¹⁰⁷ *Paul VI* 1968b, 119. He said later during the same year (1968c, 125): "In [sic] is necessary that the doctrinal principles on which this cause is founded should be better known and meditated on by all; infinite goodness at work on the destiny and in the history of the world; God wishing to save through Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ, in his Gospel [sic] in his Church are necessary for the salvation of every man." The same concept of individual salvation is found in *Humbertclaude* (1972, 381): "Mais la grâce est chose individuelle, une affaire entre Dieu et l'âme; par suite le salut est nécessairement individuel."

¹⁰⁸ It must be kept in mind that the modal auxiliary 'can' has a nuance of theoretical possibility. Cf. LG 16: "Qui enim Evangelium Christi Eiusque Ecclesiam sine culpa ignorantes, Deum tamen sincero corde quaerunt, Eiusque voluntatem per conscientiae dictamen agnitam, operibus adimplere, sub gratiae influxu, conantur, aeternam salutem consequi possunt."

¹⁰⁹ *Sesboué* 2004, 241. *Humbertclaude* (1972, 380) says: "Si les religions ne peuvent donner le salut, cela tient au fait que le salut est chose positive tandis que les religions, même en ce qu'elles ont de bon, ont un aspect purement négatif..." *Fitzgerald* (2005a, 188) notes: "*Nostra Aetate* does not solve this question [the role of religions in salvation], but the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, in the document *Dominus Iesus*, has stated clearly that the religions are not recognized as alternative ways of salvation."

linking salvation tightly to the Church: “If there is no salvation outside the Church, it is because all will be saved, or at least could be saved, through the Church. If the salvation history cannot be anything else than inclusive, the mission of the Church is deliberately inclusive.”¹¹⁰

As to the salvation of non-Christians, SNC / PCID documentation is careful in its statements. There is a continuous dialectical movement between “yes” and “no”. “Non-Christians who are deprived of explicit knowledge of Christ nevertheless benefit by the universal Providence of God. They are called upon to recognize the evidence which he gives them of his presence in created things and they receive, moreover, the light which the Eternal *Word* pours out on all men.”¹¹¹ The vocabulary of this passage is revealing: “deprived” may be understood to mean that something is missing; “explicit knowledge”, so there is implicit knowledge; “nevertheless”, in spite of what has been said; “universal providence”; “Word”. The same dialectical attitude can be found in papal statements.¹¹²

For John Paul II, faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation, and this faith must be shared with others: “What distinguishes the Church from other religious communities is her faith in Jesus Christ; and she cannot keep this precious light of faith under a bushel (cf. *Mt* 5:15), for her mission is to share that light with everyone.”¹¹³ However, it is possible to be saved even without explicit faith in Jesus Christ. For the

He (*Fitzgerald* 2005b, 67) further says: “De la sorte, les différentes religions, tout en ne constituant pas des chemins distincts de salut, puisque le seul salut est en Jésus-Christ, par Lui et avec Lui, offrent néanmoins des éléments qui peuvent conduire à ce salut.” Cf. *Brunin* 2005, 202.

¹¹⁰ “S’il n’y a pas de salut hors de l’Eglise, c’est parce que tous seront sauvés, ou du moins pourront être sauvés, par l’Eglise. Si l’histoire du salut ne peut être qu’inclusive, la mission de l’Eglise est délibérément inclusive.” *Sesboüé* 2004, 297. (Tr. by RJ).

¹¹¹ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 8.

¹¹² “... the attitude of the Church and of individual Christians towards other religions is marked by sincere respect, profound sympathy and, when possible and appropriate, cordial collaboration. This does not mean forgetting that Jesus Christ is the one Mediator and Saviour of the human race. Nor does it mean lessening our missionary efforts...” *John Paul II* 1998b, 274–275 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 16. (Emphasis added) *Dhavamony* (1998, 761) notes: “We cannot say that *de jure* they [other religions] are mediations of salvation; for as such they are not willed by God as ways of salvation. Christ and the Church are the ordinary ways of salvation, positively willed by God.”

¹¹³ *John Paul II* 2000a, 30. Cf. “Although the Church gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all men, this does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ who is ‘the way, and the truth, and life’ (*Jn* 14:6; cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 2).” *John Paul II* 1990b, 229.

Pope, those who do not explicitly profess faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ, which happens through the communication of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁴ This presupposes the Spirit's presence. The Pope is able to say explicitly: "For thousands of years you [aboriginal people in Australia] have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you."¹¹⁵

It is clear also to John Paul II that the Church, because of the Gospel, is necessary for salvation. In fact, in 1990 he gave one of his strongest affirmations in this regard: "It is a contradiction of the Gospel and of the Church's very nature to assert, as some do, that the Church is only one way of salvation among many, and that her mission towards the followers of other religions should be nothing more than to help them be better followers of those religions."¹¹⁶ The Church is intimately rooted in Christ, and thus necessary for salvation.¹¹⁷

So, there seems to be a kind of dialectical attitude in John Paul II's statements, as seen in those of Paul VI, too, above.¹¹⁸ On the one hand, Christ's universal action, universal grace, salvific will of God and the theology of the Logos would imply that salvation is more open to non-Christians than traditionally supposed, while on the other hand New Testament statements of exclusivity and the long history of

¹¹⁴ *John Paul II* 2000a, 32.

¹¹⁵ *Stowers* 2002, 330, citing John Paul II.

¹¹⁶ *John Paul II* 1990b, 230. This statement is in the Pope's Letter to the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

¹¹⁷ "In Christ salvation has come for all of humanity. In him, through him and with him we are able to offer to the Father the eucharistic sacrifice which renders this salvation present in every time and every place by perpetuating the bloody sacrifice of the cross." *John Paul II* 1987h, 92.—A critical question is whether God has tied salvation so tightly to the eucharistic sacrifice of the Church, as the Pope affirms, even though "In this organic whole [of the sacraments], the Eucharist occupies a unique place as the 'Sacrament of sacraments': 'all the other sacraments are ordered to it as to their end.'" CCC 1211. Cf. LG 11 and PO 5. Nevertheless, the Pope joins the strong Augustinian-patristic tradition in which communion with Christ means indissolubly communion with his Eucharistic body in his Church Body. "Not only is the Eucharist the supreme sacramental realization of the common life of the entire Church Body in its total unity; it is also the sacrifice of the entire Church Body in the sacrament of the Lord's saving Passion." *Lawlor/Doyle* 2003, 585.

¹¹⁸ The tension is not only, of course, in papal statements. The same tension can be found, e.g., in *Kasper* (2001, 79), who calls it the relation between universal and unicity: "By saying that the one God is the Father of all people, a second element of the Church's message is also raised. Alongside universality is the unity, indeed the unicity ... of the church's message."

tradition, from Cyprian to Fulgentius of Ruspe and the Council of Florence up until the 20th century, have emphasized that there is a qualitative distinction between the Christian faith and non-Christian faiths, between the Christian Church and non-Christian religions. This tension, attached to Christology and pneumatology, is clear also in John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*.¹¹⁹ Where does this dialectical attitude come from?

There seems to be double tension. First of all, there is a dialectical relation between Christology and pneumatology, between the uniqueness of Christ and the universality of the Spirit as the agent of salvation and dialogue that creates this tension. A similar dialectical tension between the universal and the particular is already present in the Incarnation,¹²⁰ and the doctrinal difficulties in the early centuries are well known. It seems to be the kind of tension that is permanently present in the Christian theology of religions. The tension could also be described as that between anthropocentrism and theocentrism.¹²¹ Of course, it is also linked to the Christological question presented above. Basically, we come back to the Trinitarian nature of God, which can be seen in many SNC / PCID statements, even though the intratrinitarian tension is not always articulated clearly.¹²² John Paul II said in 1987: "In him [Jesus Christ], God has accomplished the salvation of all humanity (cf. *Jn* 4:42); it is he, together with the Father, who has sent the Holy Spirit, who continues the divine work of salvation."¹²³ Here, the three

¹¹⁹ "The encyclical gives not only a Christological argument, but also a pneumatological one. The Spirit of God is present and at work everywhere, limited by neither space nor time. He is active in the heart of every person *who is ordered to what is true and good and who honestly seek God*." *Kasper* 2001, 83. (Emphasis added) Cf. *Arinze* 2004, 289.

¹²⁰ "The Sacred Scriptures consistently present the intimate relationship which exists between the action of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit (*Lk* 4:16; *Acts* 10:38)." *Machado* 2001, 89–90.—*Lindbeck* (1984, 94) speaks of "Christological maximalism", meaning that in the formulation of Christological doctrine, every possible importance was ascribed to Jesus, when doing so it did not violate two basic rules: 1) the monotheistic principle that there is only one God, and 2) the principle of historical specificity that the stories of Jesus refer to a genuine human being who was born, who lived and died in a particular time and place. However, *Greco* (1970, 567) is right when he notes: "God's transcendency must not be underestimated and God must always be treated as God, with infinite respect..."

¹²¹ "The Christ event at once canonizes anthropocentrism and subordinates it to theocentrism... The reconciliation of anthropocentrism with theocentrism cannot remove *the tension that exists between these two terms of reference* in man's world-view." *Thornhill* 2003, 508. (Emphasis added).

¹²² Cf. *Fitzgerald* 2002a, 213.

¹²³ *John Paul II* 1987i, 224. In 1999 *John Paul II* (2000l, 15) said: "Awareness that

persons of the Godhead are very clearly articulated. Pietro Rossano said in 1978: "... not only is Man placed at the top of the universe, linked radically to God and laden with responsibilities to other men—as occurs also in Judaism and Islam, creationistic religions—but he is already connected to Christ and to the Spirit, and called to a communion of life with God..."¹²⁴ The human being is thus linked to Christ and to the Spirit.

In Rossano's statement we can see already the other tension, which is somewhat less clear: that between human action and divine operation. John Paul II highlighted this aspect in a noteworthy way in his homily on Pentecost Day in 2000: "The whole logic of Revelation and the faith by which the Church lives is contained in these words: the witness of the Holy Spirit, which flows from the depth of the Trinitarian mystery of God, and the human witness of the Apostles, linked to their historical experience of God. *Both are necessary*."¹²⁵ He tried to resolve the tension in the following way: "To be more precise, it is *a single witness*: it is the Spirit who continues to speak to our contemporaries in the language and life of those who are Christ's disciples today."¹²⁶ This position—unity in plurality—is understandable, but to reduce the tension to theological anthropology does not really resolve it, because it only raises some other difficult questions: what is the relation between human action and will in relation to the Spirit's (invisible, cf. DP 29) action in human beings? When a human does something, does he or she do it only because of the Spirit's operation in him or her, or is there a kind of cooperation functioning in the human?¹²⁷ It is interesting to recall that Thomas Aquinas excludes all competitiveness between

the Spirit of God works where he wills (cf. *Jn* 3:8) stops us from making hasty and dangerous judgements, because it evokes appreciation of what lies hidden in the hearts of others."

¹²⁴ Rossano 1978a, 34.

¹²⁵ John Paul 2000i, 189.

¹²⁶ John Paul 2000i, 189. A similar statement can be found in *John Paul II* 1999d, 135 = *John Paul II* 1999h, 309: "This [Christian] witness must be given without any reservation, but also in the awareness that the action of Christ and his Spirit is already mysteriously present in all who live sincerely according to their religious convictions." The double tension is clearly articulated by the coordinating conjunction 'but', which denotes a contrast.

¹²⁷ Cf. Rossano 1990, 142: "En oeuvrant dans ce domaine en synergie avec les hommes des autres religions, le Chrétien sait qu'il coopère avec l'Esprit de Dieu, qui est présent et actif dans le monde, afin de témoigner du Royaume de Dieu et d'en développer les valeurs."—This citation reveals the nature of the synergy between the Christian and others as well as between the Christian and the Spirit of God.

human and divine agency. Thomas has a doctrine of double agency: "... there is nothing to stop us from thinking that the same effect is produced by a lower agent and by God—by both, unmediatedly, of course in different ways. It is always by divine power that the human agent produces his or her own proper effect: that is the doctrine of creation." The same effect is not attributed to a human agent and to a divine agent in such a way that it would be partly done by God and partly by the human being. "Rather, what is done is done wholly by both, in completely different ways, but harmoniously, and not necessarily competitively, just as the same effect is brought about entirely by a tool (an axe, for example) and wholly by the agent (in this case the forester)."¹²⁸ We are here in the difficult frontier between divine and human.

In Christian-Muslim relations, the first tension is unavoidable. Christology, which cannot be separated from the doctrine of the Trinity, is one of the most difficult issues between Christians and Muslims.¹²⁹ The first tension can also lead to a certain kind of theological reduction in Christology which can be sometimes found in interreligious dialogue. Because of the denial on the Muslim (and non-Christian in general) side in dialogue of the divinity of Jesus Christ, the temptation is to emphasize only his life and his teachings, i.e., Christ as the example who should be followed (*Christus exemplum*), but leave aside his divine character and mission (*Christus donum*). John Paul II said in 1999: "The teaching and example of Jesus Christ have given Christians a clear sense of the universal brotherhood of all people."¹³⁰ The crucial question is which Jesus is being talked about. Cardinal Arinze said in 2000 in his message to Muslims for the end of Ramadan: "Cannot the social and spiritual message of Jesus be considered to constitute a common heritage? ... Is not Jesus thus a model and a permanent message for humanity?"¹³¹ This kind of reduction separates the divine character of Jesus from his human character, and, of course, suits Islam quite well, in which Jesus, the human being, is honoured as a prophet of

¹²⁸ Kerr 2002, 143–144. Cf. SCG III, 20, 21, 70.

¹²⁹ E.g. "He [Bishop Geise] also outlined the difficulties of Muslims regarding the concept of the Trinity: 'the real difficulty is that Muslims say "God's own internal life is unknown to man"'. The Bishop also spoke of the different approaches to inspiration and revelation, and suggested ways in which Christians could speak to Muslims about their understanding of the divinity of Christ." Coughlan 1980, 85.

¹³⁰ John Paul II 2000, 15.

¹³¹ Arinze 2000p, 68–69.

Allah.¹³² The issue led to the Council of Chalcedon and to the question of the two natures of Christ which are *inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter*, even though the Council did not explain how Christ's divine and human nature relate to each other.¹³³

The second tension, however, is not so essential. In Islam human beings are free, their will and actions are not inspired or guided by the Spirit of God, but by the Word of God, the Qur'an, and sharia.¹³⁴ Human beings are supposed naturally to recognize, appropriate, and implement truth. Salvation is thus primarily a process of acquiring knowledge. In any case, as salvation is the work of God alone, salvation depends on God's will. He decrees some to be saved, and leads them into salvation, and others not.¹³⁵ The tension is felt thus on the Christian side, as is well expressed by Michael Fitzgerald: "DP [Dialogue and Proclamation] strongly emphasises that the unique way of salvation is in Jesus Christ. How those who do not know Jesus Christ can enter into this mystery of salvation is left open, though it is suggested that it will be through 'the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their conscience' (DP 29)."¹³⁶ As he states, the question is left open. John Paul II's attitude is similarly prudent: "The question of how God accomplishes the salvation of all those who call upon him through the unique mediation of Christ is one which demands the continued attention of the Church: likewise the work of the Spirit of Christ in the members of other religions."¹³⁷ This citation highlights the two aspects of Christian salvation: it is Christological *and* pneumatological.

¹³² A Muslim totally agrees with this reduction: "This partnership is realized through regarding Christ as the model of man in accordance with God." *Balarabi* 1997, 142. In Islam, Jesus is not a divine revelation of God. Muslims say that Jesus was a Muslim and a prophet.

¹³³ See DS 300–303.

¹³⁴ "... man has reason, spirituality and will that provided him with conscience (conscientiousness) and freedom, which endows him with the status of being 'God's partner'." *Balarabi* 1997, 142. Cf. "Faut-il rappeler que, dans la pratique, chaque Musulman participe plus ou moins à plusieurs de ces niveaux de réalisation spirituelle de sa quête de justice: le dialogue islamo-chrétien doit nécessairement en tenir compte, tout en s'interrogeant sur les développements en cours et sur l'intervention de l'Esprit de Dieu en tout cela." *Borrmans* 1978a, 144.

¹³⁵ *Gorder* 2003, 126, 127; *Caspar* 1970a.

¹³⁶ *Fitzgerald* 2002a, 213.

¹³⁷ *John Paul II* 1990a, 120–121. Cited also in *Fitzgerald* 1994, 2.

Salvation is pneumatological

There is no passage in the New Testament where the Spirit of God appears to be at work in the entire creation (and hence in all human beings). The Spirit is at work especially where the new creation is brought into being, i.e., in the community of Jesus. Everywhere, the Spirit is linked with Jesus Christ.¹³⁸ Irenaeus insisted, against Gnosticism, that the process of salvation is the work of the one and the same God. There is only one economy of salvation—the Greek word “*oikonomia*” basically means “the way in which one’s affairs are ordered”—in which the one God is at work. However, he also distinguished the related roles of Father, Son, and Spirit. Irenaeus wrote:

*God the Father uncreated, who is uncontained, invisible, one God, creator of the universe; this is the first article of our faith. ... and the Word of God, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, ... who, in the fulness of time, in order to gather all things to himself, he [sic] became a human being amongst human beings, capable of being seen and touched, to destroy death, bring life, and restore fellowship between God and humanity. And ... the Holy Spirit ... who, in the fulness of time, was poured out in a new way on our human nature in order to renew humanity throughout the entire world in the sight of God.*¹³⁹

It was clear for Irenaeus that the Trinity was present already at creation.¹⁴⁰ As can be seen, the Spirit’s position vis-à-vis Father and Son

¹³⁸ Schweitzer 1989, 408, 413.

¹³⁹ *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 6, English translation in McGrath 1997a, 296. The whole passage in Latin runs as follows: “Et hoc est ordo-dispositionis fidei nostrae et fundamentum aedificii et firmamentum conversationis.—Deus Pater infectus, incapabilis, invisibilis, unus Deus, Factor universi: hoc primum capitulum fidei nostrae.—Secundum autem capitulum: Verbum Dei, Filius Dei, Iesus Christus Dominus noster, qui prophetis adparuit secundum characterem prophetiae eorum et secundum habitum dispositionum Patris, per quem facta sunt omnia, qui et in fine temporum ad recapitulanda-et-instauranda omnia homo in hominibus factus (est) visibilis et palpabilis, ad destruendam mortem et ostendendam vitam et comunem-concordiae Dei et hominis operandam.—Tertium autem capitulum: Sanctus Spiritus, per quem prophetae prophetaverunt et patres didicerunt (ea quae sunt) Dei et iusti directi sunt in viam iustitiae, et qui in fine temporum effusus est nove in humanitatem in omnem terram renovans hominem Deo.” *Sources chrétiennes* 406, 90, 92.—McGrath (1997a, 296–297) is right when he says: “Far from being a rather pointless piece of theological speculation, the doctrine of the Trinity is grounded directly in the complex human experience of redemption in Christ, and is concerned with the explanation of this experience.”

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Duval 1989, 319: “Le Christ est partout dans la Création.” See also II *Apol.* 6, 3, and ST 1.45.6. Cf., e.g., Machado 2001, 92: “He [Jesus Christ] does not come from ‘elsewhere’ but, although hidden and obscure, is eternally present.”

was not very well defined by Irenaeus. In *Adversus Haereses* (IV, 7, 4), Irenaeus wrote of the “two hands of God”,¹⁴¹ meaning the Son and the Spirit, or Word and Wisdom (...*hoc est Filius et Spiritus, Verbum et Sapientia*). But what was the exact relation of the Spirit to the Father, and to the Son? It was the Cappadocian fathers¹⁴² who defended the divinity of the Spirit so that it was only a matter of developing Trinitarian models to allow an understanding of the triune God. In any case, there is an undeniable Christological concentration in the Paschal mystery, as well as a pneumatological unfolding succeeding the Paschal mystery.

This post-Paschal pneumatological unfolding was emphasized by John Paul II. Three examples in his ministry will be enough to show this. The first is his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986),¹⁴³ the second is all of Chapter III in *Redemptoris Missio* dedicated to the work of the Holy Spirit, and the third is the pneumatological year 1998. In 1986 John Paul II said that Christians must follow the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of truth. He exhorted Christians to implore the Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son.¹⁴⁴ This topic is very important in the field of the Christian theology of religions. The Pope said in 1998: “Even now, during this pneumatological year, it is fitting to pause and consider in what sense and in what ways the Holy Spirit is present in humanity’s religious quest and in the various

¹⁴¹ Interestingly enough, the Qur’an mentions “both hands” of Allah (Sura 5:64; Sura 38:76).

¹⁴² In the writings of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa one can see in motion the ideas of procession, property, and relation, around which the further development of Trinitarian doctrine was going to settle (*Richard/Hill/Eds.* 2003, 194).

¹⁴³ Cf. DP 26 1994, 101: “In *Dominum et Vivificantem*, he [the Pope] takes a further step, affirming the universal action of the Holy Spirit in the world before the Christian dispensation, to which it was ordained, and referring to the universal action of the same Spirit today, even outside the visible body of the Church (DEV 53).”

¹⁴⁴ *John Paul II* 1987c, 35, 36.—The Pope depends on the Western (Augustinian) concept of the Spirit. For the Eastern theologians, the Father was the only source of being within the Trinity, and the Son and the Spirit derive from the Father, but in different ways: the Son is begotten of the Father, the Spirit proceeds from him. Western theologians, since Augustine (“On the Trinity”), have said that the Father *and* the Son (*filioque*) breathe the Spirit. Augustine argued that the Spirit is the “bond of love” between Father and Son. Moreover, the Spirit is seen as the Spirit of Christ. “Augustine developed the idea of relation within the Godhead, arguing that the persons of the Trinity are defined by their relations to one another. The Spirit is thus to be seen as the relation of love and fellowship between the Father and Son ...” *McGrath* 1997a, 315. Cf. *Garrigues* 1982. Cf. DS 850: “Fideli ac devota professione fatemur, quod Spiritus Sanctus aeternaliter ex Patre et Filio, non tanquam ex duobus principiis, sed tanquam ex uno principio, non duabus spirationibus, sed unica spiratione procedit ...” (Council of Lyons 1274).

experiences and traditions that express it. It must first be kept in mind that every quest of the human spirit for truth and goodness, and in the last analysis for God, is inspired by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴⁵ According to the Pope, the Holy Spirit is present in the heart of every person. This means that every authentic prayer is called forth by the Spirit.¹⁴⁶

For John Paul II, it is clear that the Christological and pneumatological aspects are to be combined, i.e., that the theology of *semina verbi* has a pneumatological aspect:

... I have wished to recall the ancient doctrine formulated by the Fathers of the Church, which says that we must recognize “the seeds of the Word” present and active in the various religions (*Ad gentes*, n. 11; *Lumen gentium*, n. 17). ... The “seeds of truth” present and active in the various religious traditions are a reflection of the unique Word of God, who “enlightens every man coming into world” (cf. Jn 1:9) and who became flesh in Christ Jesus (cf. Jn 1:14). They are together an “effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body” and which “blows where it wills” (Jn 3:8; cf. *Redemptor hominis*, nn. 6, 12).¹⁴⁷

But the Pope, understandably enough, combined pneumatology also with ecclesiology: “On that day the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church was born. *One*, because the Spirit made the Church a mystery of communion, an icon on earth of the Most Holy Trinity; *holy*, because the Spirit preserves in her members the holiness of Christ the Head; *catholic*, because the Spirit spurs her to proclaim the one Gospel of salvation to all peoples; *apostolic*, because through the ministry of the Apostles and their successors the Spirit guides her on the paths of history.”¹⁴⁸ Besides that, he said clearly that it is the Holy Spirit who scatters the “seeds of the Word” in the various customs and cultures.¹⁴⁹ Thus there is an interdependence between the *semina verbi* and the

¹⁴⁵ *John Paul II* 1998b, 273 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 12–13.

¹⁴⁶ *John Paul II* 1987f, 61. Also, e.g., in *John Paul II* 1998b, 274, and *John Paul II* 1999a, 13. Cf. “Le Pape [Jean-Paul II] met très nettement en valeur la présence active du Saint-Esprit dans la vie religieuse des membres des autres traditions religieuses.” *Diarra* 1997, 123; “L’Esprit de Dieu qui est à l’oeuvre dans le coeur de tous les hommes comme pédagogue ...” *Salama* 1989, 72; “The Holy Spirit may truly be present in their [those belonging to other religions] hearts.” *Fitzgerald* 2000, 16.

¹⁴⁷ *John Paul II* 1998b, 273 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 11, 12.

¹⁴⁸ *John Paul II* 2000j, 190 = *John Paul II* 2000n, 27.

¹⁴⁹ “It is the Holy Spirit who scatters the ‘seeds of the Word’ in the various customs and cultures, preparing the peoples of the most varied regions to accept the Gospel message.” *John Paul II* 2000m, 5.

Spirit: the Spirit scatters the seeds of the Logos, incarnated in Jesus Christ, but at the same time the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, sent out to the Church and to the world by Jesus after the resurrection. Pneumatology cannot be separated from Christology, and soteriology is both Christological and pneumatological.

Redemptoris Missio links the Spirit, the Church, and non-Christian religions in an interesting way, such that the Spirit has an analogous role within other cultures and religions as in the Church, helping them and their adherents to follow Christ more faithfully, to become more Christ-like.¹⁵⁰ This means, too, that “through dialogue” the Church must be attentive to the possibility of discovering the divine presence and gifts in other religions, in the form of prayers, practices, and insights. It is argued that if the Church fails to be attentive, it may be practicing cultural and religious idolatry without knowing it. This attentiveness would not be possible without the Trinitarian nature of God. Consequently, the passage means that discerning the activity of the Spirit within other religions must bring the Church more faithfully into the presence of the triune God.¹⁵¹ Universal and particular find their expressions in the mystery of the Trinitarian God.

But the Pope did not rely only on the doctrine of the Trinity and the theology of the early Church Fathers. Especially echoes of *Lumen Gentium* 16 can be seen in the following citation:

This possibility [offered by the Holy Spirit in a way known to God to all who come into contact with the paschal mystery] is achieved through sincere, inward adherence to the Truth, generous self-giving to one’s neighbour and the search for the Absolute inspired by the Spirit of God. A ray of the divine Wisdom is also shown through the fulfilment of the precepts and practices that conform to the moral law and to authentic religious sense. Precisely by virtue of the Spirit’s presence and action, the good elements found in the various religions mysteriously prepare hearts to receive the full revelation of God in Christ.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ “Moreover, the universal activity of the Spirit is not to be separated from his particular activity within the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Indeed, it is always the Spirit who is at work, both when he gives life to the Church and impels her to proclaim Christ, and when he implants and develops his gifts in all individuals and peoples, guiding the Church to discover these gifts, to foster them and receive them through dialogue.” RM 29 1994, 20.

¹⁵¹ D’Costa 2000, 115.

¹⁵² *John Paul II* 1998b, 274 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 15–16. Cf. LG 16 1966, 35: “Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel.” The footnote refers to Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Præparatio evangelica* 1.1.

Once again, besides the implicit reference to Vatican II (which refers to a Church Father), there is the Trinitarian constellation: God with his “two hands”: Christ and the Spirit.

Dialogue and Proclamation is the PCID document that best illustrates this combination of Christology and pneumatology, the “two hands of God”. When this document was released, Cardinal Josef Tomko of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples said: “Dialogue with all its demands and forms, arises from this respect for persons, or rather, from this belief that Christ loves them to the point of having given his life for them, and from this faith that the Spirit acts in them.”¹⁵³ The conclusion of *Dialogue and Proclamation* 21 proclaims: “Jesus is thus opening up a new horizon, beyond the purely local, to a universality which is both Christological and Pneumatological in character. For the new sanctuary is now the body of the Lord Jesus (cf. Jn 2:21), whom the Father has raised up in the power of the Spirit.”¹⁵⁴ The Word and the Spirit are inseparable. Besides combining Christology and pneumatology and providing a Trinitarian framework, there is also a strong link to the historical Jesus.

Dialogue and Proclamation 17 recognizes that the Holy Spirit was at work before Christ: “It [the Council] attributed these [positive] values to the active presence of God through his Word, pointing also to the universal action of the Spirit: ‘Without doubt,’ *Ad Gentes* affirms, ‘the Holy Spirit was at work in the world before Christ was glorified’ (AG 4).”¹⁵⁵ The mystery of salvation is linked to the operations of the Spirit of Christ: “... all men and women who are saved share, though differently, in the same mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ through his Spirit. ... The mystery of salvation reaches out to them, in a way known to God, through the invisible action of the Spirit of Christ.”¹⁵⁶ The universality of the Spirit of the risen Lord is repeated also in *Dialogue and Proclamation* 40. The strong Christological-pneumatological link is repeated, as well as the uniqueness of Christ.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Tomko 1991, 207–208.—Cf. Diarra 1997, 119: “D’abord l’homme est ‘capable’ de Dieu; non seulement son coeur, mais les initiatives religieuses qu’il met en oeuvre à travers les rites et son comportement. Ensuite, seconde raison, il y a de tout temps l’action du Verbe et de son Esprit dans les coeurs des hommes et aussi dans certains éléments objectifs de leurs religions.”

¹⁵⁴ DP 21 1994, 99.

¹⁵⁵ DP 17 1994, 98.

¹⁵⁶ DP 29 1994, 101. It is clear that in the document the Trinitarian framework is Western. See also, e.g., DP 50.

¹⁵⁷ “In dialogue Christians and others are invited... to respond with increasing

But the Spirit of Christ is also the Spirit who vivifies the Church, thus there is a link between pneumatology and ecclesiology: “In proclaiming this word, the Church knows that she can rely on the Holy Spirit, who both prompts her proclamation and leads the hearers to obedience of faith.”¹⁵⁸

However, the document fails to deal with one difficult question, namely, how we know that the Spirit of Christ acts in non-Christian individuals and religions.¹⁵⁹ Are there any criteria to distinguish elements of grace? According to the document, it is easy to discern the fruits of the Spirit in the life of individuals, but for religious traditions the criteria have to be established: “The fruits of the Spirit of God in the personal life of individuals, whether Christian or otherwise, are easily discernible (cf. Gal 5:22–23). To identify in other religious traditions elements of grace capable of sustaining the positive response of their members to God’s invitation is much more difficult. It requires a discernment for which criteria have to be established.”¹⁶⁰ Interestingly enough, later on in the document this discernment is linked to the proclamation of Jesus Christ: “Here they draw the grace of discernment, to be able to read the signs of the Spirit’s presence and to recognize the favorable time and right manner of proclaiming Jesus Christ.”¹⁶¹ *Redemptoris Missio* 29 affirms that this discernment is the responsibility of the Church. There is also widespread decadence in

sincerity to God’s personal call and gracious self-gift which, as our faith tells us, always passes through the mediation of Jesus Christ and the work of his Spirit.” DP 40 1994, 104.—Cf. *Journeying Together* 1999, 108: “Inseparable but distinct, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in their joint mission, make invisible God visible and reveal him.” (Emphasis added).

¹⁵⁸ DP 64 1994, 110.

¹⁵⁹ *Vanhoozer* (1997, 63) notes that “‘in relation to the decreased specificity of ‘Spirit’, its usefulness in a theology of religion diminishes.’ If the Spirit’s activity were literally universal, we would not be able to distinguish the divine from the demonic.” He continues (p. 66): “The Spirit is the Spirit of the humiliated and exalted Christ. . . . a reading of the ‘expanded economy’ that takes account of the diverse relations of Father, Son, and Spirit would, I believe, configure the Spirit as the deputy of Christ rather than as an independent itinerant evangelist.” and asks pertinently (p. 69): “How, then, can we discern God’s Spirit, if it is indeed everywhere? Does not the narrative identification of the triune God present the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ—not simply the Logos, but the crucified and raised Christ?”

¹⁶⁰ DP 30 1994, 102. On the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Christian mission, see, e.g., *Taylor* 1975.—*Fitzgerald* (2005b, 191) admits the difficulty: “Quoi qu’il en soit, il est certain que l’expérience spirituelle, et surtout l’expérience mystique, est difficile à évaluer. Elle se prête davantage à un langage poétique qu’aux analyses scientifiques.” Cf. *Brunin* 2005, 204.

¹⁶¹ DP 86 1994, 117.

religions. Not everything in religions is good and the fruit of the Spirit. There are many less desirable forms of rites and worship. Where do they come from? What is the Christian response to them? SNC / PCID documentation does not deal with these questions, either.

Concerning individuals, there is one key in Vatican II documentation in *Gaudium et Spes* 16¹⁶² and *Dignitatis Humanae* 3:¹⁶³ human conscience and the natural law that is written within the hearts of all and is part of the created order. However, living the good life through conscience and natural law is not to be identified with supernatural revelation, even though doing so is made possible by grace and can lead to salvation.¹⁶⁴ The conscience is the place where human beings become themselves, since it is the conscience in which the invisible God becomes present.¹⁶⁵ Human knowledge is stored in the conscience; it is something common to all humanity.¹⁶⁶ The concept of conscience has theological and philosophical significance as the locus of freedom and the intersecting points of mental experiences.¹⁶⁷

John Paul II spoke about the religious values and qualities in non-Christian religions in 1986: “These are precisely the ‘traces’ or the ‘seeds’ of the Word and the ‘rays’ of the truth. Among these there is undoubtedly prayer, often accompanied by fasting, by other penances and by pilgrimage to sacred places held in great veneration.”¹⁶⁸ The signs of the Word which the Pope mentioned are all religious rites, which can be phenomenologically and anthropologically observed. However, it may be asked whether the observable religious rites can be so straightforwardly identified with the working of the Logos.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² “In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged.” GS 16 1966, 213.

¹⁶³ DH 3 1966, 680.

¹⁶⁴ D’Costa 2000, 104.

¹⁶⁵ Dupré 2003, 140. “Therefore it is proper to the true nature of conscience, with constant effort and submissively, to align itself on what conforms it as claim from the nature of man and his history—for example, the requirement of faith.” Dupré 2003, 140.

¹⁶⁶ Williams 2003, 146.—In the specific Christian meaning, conscience has grace, faith, and charity as its sources (Williams 2003, 146).

¹⁶⁷ Dupré 2003, 140.

¹⁶⁸ *John Paul II* 1987a, 22. Cf. *John Paul II* 1987d, 41: “Prayer, fasting, pilgrimage.”—“Les prières, la parole des mystiques, les ‘théologies’ sont des semences du Verbe.” *Ploux* 2004, 188.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *Ploux* 2004, 187: “Toutes les paroles des hommes pour instaurer l’homme,

Apparently John Paul II wanted to give a theological explanation for a religious phenomenon; in this respect another SNC document clarifies the Pope's position: "This commonality is seen *theologically*—indeed, all have God as their common origin and ultimate end; and *phenomenologically*—all seek in the different religions the answer to the arcane enigmas of the human condition."¹⁷⁰ As seen in the previous chapter, the rays of truth present in non-Christian religions should lead Christians and non-Christians to common action "because there are many fields of action on which we agree in our service to God and mankind, and because it is the Church's duty to glorify God for the rays of truth which he extends to his children in all the corners of the earth, offering in a way known to him alone that salvation which has its source in Christ's paschal mystery (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 22)."¹⁷¹

One PCID document suggests that by adopting common basic values, religions can make visible seeds of light, which are at the same time signs of the human being's search for God and of the work of the Spirit.¹⁷² Pneumatology and Aristotelian-Thomistic teleology are apparently combined. Another document proposes that union and peace of the human being with God and one another are signs that reveal the action of the Spirit in non-Christian religions.¹⁷³ Others give as an example battling against evil, but do not fail to mention that the Spirit must be associated to Christ:

The Church therefore acknowledges that all those who battle against evil through manifold tribulations and even suffer death, patterned on the dying of Christ, are guided by the Holy Spirit; their lives are linked with

construire son humanité sont des semences du Logos. Le travail de la fraternité, de la justice et de la raison pour mieux dire les droits de l'Homme et ses devoirs de solidarité, sont des semences du Logos. Par dessus tout, l'amour vécu par les hommes, l'amour donné, les gestes de miséricorde, le pardon prodigué: ce sont là les semences du Logos... Le principe de discernement des 'semences du Logos' est donc simple: c'est le respect de l'homme, la construction de l'homme, la création de l'homme et ce qui le sauve de lui-même quand il cède à ses démons intérieurs."

¹⁷⁰ *Zago* 1987, 152. (Emphasis added).

¹⁷¹ *John Paul II* 2000c, 59.

¹⁷² "These and other important duties imply that religions should know how to make these common basic values emerge as well as strongly pursue them, especially now that we are about to start a new millennium. Christ himself asks us Christians to carry out these duties. ... Besides, only in this way will we be able to make those seeds of light present in all religious traditions emerge. They are the signs of man's up hill [sic] search for God and the work of the Holy Spirit." *Goretti* 2000, 51.

¹⁷³ "Les signes par lesquels l'action de l'Esprit peut être découverte sont l'union et la paix de l'homme avec Dieu et des hommes entre eux." *Diarra* 1997, 122.

the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, and they will hasten to the resurrection in the strength which comes from hope. This is how the work of the Holy Spirit can be seen to be associated with Jesus Christ. The question of the salvific value of religions as such must be situated in the context of the universal active presence of the Spirit of Christ.¹⁷⁴

Another proposition says that searching for religious values—without specifying them—would mean to search for “seeds of truth” and “fruits of the Spirit” in other religions.¹⁷⁵

When a Christian considers that in the other person Christ’s Spirit is present, this has (or should have) consequences in his or her relation to the other. John Paul II said in 1998: “... the attitude of the Church and of individual Christians towards other religions is marked by sincere respect, profound sympathy and, when possible and appropriate, cordial collaboration.”¹⁷⁶ *Dialogue and Proclamation* 84 says the same thing in other words: “Christians must always be aware of the influence of the Holy Spirit and be prepared to follow wherever in God’s providence and design the Spirit is leading them.” In fact, the willingness to discern the fruits of the Spirit in non-Christian traditions makes interreligious dialogue indispensable. Only by entering into a dialogue with religious traditions can Christians fully discover the seeds of the Word which lie hidden in other religious traditions. This should happen under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁷ However, interreligious dialogue should not lead to reductionism or to relativism.¹⁷⁸

Nature and grace

The presence of the Spirit in non-Christians and their traditions raises an underlying question of the relation between nature and grace.¹⁷⁹ Quite understandably in Christian theology, when we speak about

¹⁷⁴ Fitzgerald and Machado 2002, 323–324.

¹⁷⁵ “Chercher à connaître les valeurs religieuses des autres religions c’est chercher à découvrir les ‘semences du Verbe’ et les ‘fruits de l’Esprit’, à l’oeuvre partout dans le monde.” Sabanegh 1983, 272.

¹⁷⁶ John Paul II 1998b, 274 = John Paul II 1999a, 16.

¹⁷⁷ Machado 2001, 91.

¹⁷⁸ John Paul II 2003b, 335; John Paul II 2004d, 155.

¹⁷⁹ On this subject, see, e.g., TeSelle 1971, Duffy 1992, Greshake/Faber 1995, Regan 2003, and Saarinen 2003. The whole issue is notoriously complex, and what is ultimately at stake is the subject of philosophical and theological anthropology. In the following I will limit the discussion in order to deal with it from the point of view of the SNC/PCID

salvation, we must speak about grace (see, e.g., *Lumen Gentium* 13 and 16). Basically, we have to return at least to Augustine and Pelagianism. For Augustine, natural human freedom exists; human beings do not do things out of necessity, but as a matter of freedom. However, human free will is weakened and incapacitated through sin, but it has not been eliminated or destroyed. In other words, free will exists, but is distorted by sin.¹⁸⁰ To be restored and healed, free will needs the operation of divine grace. Philosophically expressed, there is an intrinsic connection between the essence and the finality of the human being (the two modes of Aristotelian being). Theologically, this connection can be expressed in terms of the Irenaeian notion of the human being as *imago* and *similitudo Dei*. “A human being, the *imago Dei*, called to the *similitudo Dei*, is constituted by a relation to its source. Not only participation in the divine life, but one’s very existence is the gift of God. Herein lies the double gratuity.”¹⁸¹ In Western theology, the relationship between nature and grace has an anthropological dimension. The question is whether grace is simply an aid or completion or correction of nature. Does grace perfect nature? In other words, how can a human being come to freedom and a state of perfection?

“It is in and through Christ that God communicates life and it is only through the option of faith in Christ that this life becomes a vital reality for any individual.”¹⁸² The medicinal¹⁸³ aspect of Christ’s grace has led to the following theological distinction: supernatural grace is absolutely necessary for supernatural good acts, but for simply honest acts, i.e., for those that fulfil the natural law, and can be thus done by non-Christians as well, medicinal grace need not be supernatural absolutely but only relatively, and may even be only external. In fact, the whole matter is

and of the theology of religions. *Duffy* (1992, 59) rightly asks: “Is it possible that the radical similarities found by anthropologists and students of comparative religion to exist between non-Christians and Christians are explainable in terms of some element or elements that are more than merely ‘natural’?”

¹⁸⁰ *McGrath* 1997a, 427. *Balthasar* (1962, 406) notes: “Für Augustin wird der konkrete Naturbegriff immer konkreter, wobei er seine theologische Fülle enthüllt, für Thomas wird er abstrakter, bis zur [von ihm nicht erreichten] Grenze der *natura pura*, für welche Gott nichts mehr wäre als principium et finis mundi, dessen ‘an sit’ zwar erkennbar, dessen ‘quid sit’ aber verborgen wäre.”

¹⁸¹ *Duffy* 1992, 204.

¹⁸² *Duffy* 1992, 205.

¹⁸³ Sin renders grace medicinal, even though, in Catholic theology, grace is considered primarily as elevating. For Rahner, e.g., grace is not exhausted by its medicinal function. God is gracious to humanity not only as sinful humanity, but humanity as humanity.

still a debated point, as well as its further refinement as to whether it need be the grace of Christ at all.¹⁸⁴ In any case, grace is something distinct from nature, wholly undue to nature, yet given to nature by God.¹⁸⁵ Sometimes this is described to be a two-storey building, the ground floor being nature, and the first floor grace-based supernature, linked by *potentia oboedientialis*.¹⁸⁶

In the context of grace, the Roman Catholic Church has placed considerable emphasis on the term ‘supernatural’,¹⁸⁷ and it teaches that elevating grace is absolutely necessary for supernaturally good works. The Council of Trent taught that supernatural grace comes to the human being without any merit on his or her part. After the Counter-Reformation, a noticeable shift in emphasis took place in the Catholic theology of nature and grace. Theologians took an approach which is much more historical and personalist.¹⁸⁸ Vatican I made the supernaturalism of God’s will to give himself to the human being the foundation of the necessity of grace as well as a necessary characteristic of divine faith. Supernatural grace is needed for (supernatural) good works.¹⁸⁹ *Humani Generis*, an encyclical issued by Pius XII, places a heavy emphasis on the absolute gratuity of the supernatural order.¹⁹⁰ Since the human being must respond freely to God’s grace, “even without grace there is in the spiritual creature a capacity for this self-disclosure of God in Christ. It is this capacity that theologians have termed an obediential potency (*potentia obedientialis*). This term simply formulates this fact: what God can achieve in and with man can be impossible for man himself to do.”¹⁹¹ In order to avoid falling into the dualism

¹⁸⁴ *Burke/Colborn/Kenel* 2003, 399.

¹⁸⁵ “The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it.” CCC 1999.

¹⁸⁶ “Natur u. (v. der G. begründete) hinzukommende Übernatur bilden gewissermaßen zwei Stockwerke, die allerdings nach thom. Auffassung durch die *potentia oboedientialis* verbunden sind.” *Greshake/Faber* 1995, 777–778. Cf. the position of Rahner, for whom *potentia oboedientialis* is *realiter* identical with the essence of the human being (*Sesboüé* 2001, 152). *Balthasar* (1962, 312–313) notes: “Der Philosoph, auch der christliche, wird immer die Tendenz haben, die Fähigkeit der Natur bis zur Gottesschau auszudehnen, während der Theologe die entgegengesetzte Neigung verfolgen wird, im Streben der Natur die heimliche Voraussetzung der Gnade aufzudecken und den Anteil der Natur auf eine passiv verstandene *potentia oboedientialis* zu beschränken.”

¹⁸⁷ See, e.g., DS 1000–1001, 1921, 1923, 1926, 2435, 2616, 2851, 2854.

¹⁸⁸ *Duffy* 1992, 196–197.

¹⁸⁹ DS 3005, 3008–3010. Cf. DS 373–380.

¹⁹⁰ DS 3891.

¹⁹¹ *Burke/Colborn/Kenel* 2003, 394–395.

and formalism of the post-Tridentine era, Vatican II obviously avoided the expression “nature and grace”, and used rather expressions like “man and God” or “creation and salvation”. The Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* 22 says that in the hearts of all men of good will “grace works in an unseen way.”¹⁹² The Thomistic idea of grace (ST 1–2.110) seems to be behind *Gaudium et Spes* 22. The idea is that there are two different types of grace: actual grace (*gratia gratis data*), grace which means divine actions or influences upon human nature, and habitual grace (*gratia gratis faciens*), meaning a created habit of grace in the human soul.¹⁹³ Habitual grace is a kind of intermediate stage between humanity and divinity, it is something supernatural in the human soul. This is the meeting place (“grace which makes pleasing”) of human nature with God, who cannot establish a direct presence in human nature.¹⁹⁴ Thomas Aquinas said that the primary function of grace, besides healing wounded nature,¹⁹⁵ is to elevate nature to a share in the properly divine nature.¹⁹⁶ Grace is “supernature” that elevates nature.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² In Latin: “Quod non tantum pro christifidelibus valet, sed et pro omnibus hominibus bonae voluntatis in quorum corde gratia invisibili modo operatur.”

¹⁹³ Whether this distinction is due to Thomas Aquinas himself or to his disciples does not change anything. Cf. “The compression of the treatment on grace into the categories of habitual and actual grace is alien to St. Thomas.” *Burke/Colborn/Kenel* 2003, 388. On grace and Thomas Aquinas, see, e.g., *Kerr* 2002, 134–148.

¹⁹⁴ *McGrath* 1997a, 434.—Hardly 150 years after the Council of Florence, the Jesuit Juan de Lugo (1583–1660) said that even if there are people who do not belong visibly to the (Roman Catholic) Church, they should not be called non-Christians, because interiorly they have the virtue of habitual and actual grace in common with the Church, and in the sight of God they can be reckoned among the Christians (*De virtute fidei divinae* [Lyons 1646], disp. 12, n. 104, p. 300, cited in *Sullivan* 1992, 96; see also *Sesboüé* 2004, 133–134). These “revolutionary ideas” (*Sullivan* 1992, 98) are not very far from the idea of Rahner’s “anonymous Christians”. ‘Habitual grace’ as a concept is important for Rahner, even though he does not appear to refer to it as such. On de Lugo, see, e.g., *Brinkman* 2003.

¹⁹⁵ “The grace that divinizes man as man and does it progressively also heals the wounds of nature by restoring the elevation sin negated and by removing the obstacle that hinders nature’s gravitation toward virtue.” *Regan* 2003, 412.

¹⁹⁶ “Consequently, to divinize man means to elevate him to a level of perfection transcending his own nature. Since it entirely transcends the powers and exigencies of man’s nature, divinizing grace is something to which nature can lay no claim.” *Regan* 2003, 412.

¹⁹⁷ *Regan* 2003, 411. *Dalferth* (1988, 73) links the issue to the question of faith and reason: “... grace is superior to nature as a source of knowledge, and faith, although inferior to reason as a mode of knowledge, is superior to it with respect to what it knows.”

Scholastic theology used the Thomistic axiom *gratia naturam non tollit sed perficit*.¹⁹⁸

Gaudium et Spes 22 is not as simple or innocent statement as it might seem, because it creates a tension between nature and grace in SNC / PCID documentation. Indeed, Vatican II says that non-Christians may be saved, but they cannot reach the salvation without grace.¹⁹⁹ They can be saved because they belong to humanity, which has gratuitously been given the salvation of God in Jesus Christ and which comprises the Church, an institution, “sacrament”, ordained to universal salvation. It can be said that grace is thus mediated by the inner teleological search and through the contingencies faced in history (*Redemptoris Missio* 28).²⁰⁰ *Dialogue and Mission* 23 is an attempt to find harmony between nature and grace: “He [Christ the Word] is the redeemer present with grace in every human encounter...” To put it in other terms: those who argue that non-Christian religions are means of supernatural revelation tend to put nature and grace very close one to another. Those who disagree see a sharper distinction between nature and grace.²⁰¹ In any case, gratuity is not related to a hypothetical being, but to historical humanity.²⁰²

Karl Rahner says that since the possession of God is the humans’ only true end, there must be a resonance, a supernatural existential—which is not human nature nor sanctifying grace—in human existence so that he or she never ceases to be called by God’s love, which is totally a free gift. Rahner says strikingly: “Thus he [man] must have a real

¹⁹⁸ “Cum igitur gratia non tollat naturam sed perficiat...” ST I.I.8. On Thomas’s theology of nature and grace, see, e.g., *Torrell* 2001. Cf. “Grace of God builds on nature. The Church’s mission has been and still is to elevate the fallen human nature to the supernatural life in Christ.” *Omnubiko* 2002, 9.

¹⁹⁹ Cf., e.g., LG 16 1966, 35: “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 [non sine divina gratia]*.” (Emphasis added).

²⁰⁰ *D’Costa* (2000, 107) notes: “Nevertheless, this grace is not the fullness of sanctifying and redeeming grace found in Christ’s eschatological Church. Hence, all these actions of the Spirit cannot facilitate a theology of religions which affirms the various religious quests as authentic in themselves, apart from Christ, the trinity, and the Church.” He seems to take the position of *Mystici Corporis* 57 which states: “Finally, while by His grace He [the Spirit of Christ] provides for the continual growth of the Church, He yet refuses to dwell through sanctifying grace in those members that are wholly severed from the Body.” See DS 3808. The distinction between different graces is to be noted.

²⁰¹ *D’Costa* 2000, 102.

²⁰² *Duffy* 1992, 199.

‘potency’ for it [Love]. ... To this extent this ‘potency’ is what is inmost and most authentic in him, the centre and root of what he is absolutely. He must have it *always*... he must consequently always remain what he was created as: the burning longing for God himself in the immediacy of his own threefold life. The capacity for the God of self-bestowing personal Love is the central and abiding existential of man as he really is.²⁰³ This supernatural destiny, in fact, engenders in human beings an affinity to the end for which they were made.²⁰⁴ “Rahner argues that the notion of *pure nature*, something totally divorced and opposed to grace, is at most a limit concept. That is, pure nature cannot be isolated in a person’s life because of his or her transcendental orientation to the mystery of God. ... Instead we should talk about graced nature rather than opposing nature to grace without precluding the possibility of a person’s free rejection of grace.”²⁰⁵ Rahner’s position looks for harmony between grace and nature, through the supernatural existential,²⁰⁶ in which the human being, being inherently called to God, does his or her part—consciously or unconsciously—and God with his grace does the rest. The classical scholastic axiom *Facienti quod est in se Deus non denegat gratiam* shows how Christian theologians have wanted to show that to those who look for God sincerely he is ready to give his salvific grace. This axiom of God’s salvific grace presupposes already grace given to the person in question in order to not to fall into Semi-Pelagianism, the ideas of which were condemned at the Second Council of Orange in 529.²⁰⁷ “Without acknowledging the name of Christ, and perhaps

²⁰³ Rahner 1969b, 311–312.

²⁰⁴ Saarinen (2003, 105) notes: “... daß kath. Erneuerer wie de Lubac und Rahner mit ihrer Betonung der ‘intrinsischen’ und Freiheit bringenden G.[nade] solche Themen aufgegriffen haben, die aus reformatorischer Perspektive dem Pelagianismus nahestehen.”

²⁰⁵ D’Costa 1986, 103.—‘Pure nature’ (*natura pura*) was a concept created by Roman Catholic theologians after the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Vatican II did not make any mention of the famous thesis of “pure nature”. See, e.g., Burke 2003. Duffy (1992, 199) notes: “He [Henri de Lubac] it was who stressed the wholly hypothetical character of pure nature and its inability to do full justice to gratuity and immanence because it totally prescind from the concrete, historically situated being of humanity. We must consider how this changed perspective on gratuity has had an impact on the theological formulation of the supernaturalism of grace.” In fact, both de Lubac and von Balthasar consider a theology of pure nature to be an impossibility. See, e.g., Balthasar 1962, 278–335.

²⁰⁶ See especially Rahner 1969b.

²⁰⁷ See DS 370–397.

even while rejecting it, one may, by accepting oneself as a person, by a fundamental decision to pursue the moral good, and above all by the effort to live a life of love, simultaneously be responding positively to the presence of God within."²⁰⁸ In Rahner's theology, supernatural existential, uncreated grace, and general revelation are equivalents.²⁰⁹ When grace is the communication of God himself which transforms people inwardly, one consequence is that a person does not continually sin. Therefore the theologies of sin, judgment and the cross are no longer of major importance for Rahner.²¹⁰

A critic of Rahner's position would say that Rahner errs when he affirms that a sinner, conceived of as living in his or her concrete existence, can be called into the supernatural order and yet still remain a sinner. Rahner places in human nature a reality present in the human being, both in the state of grace and as a sinner. But only sanctifying or salvific grace places the human being in the supernatural order. "Hence in actuality the distinction is either acceptance and personal relationship with God or a deliberate refusal and thus being truly a sinner—these are the only terms of God's call. Vocation by its nature remains extrinsic to man because it cannot become actual save by free response or rejection."²¹¹

²⁰⁸ *Duffy* 1992, 216. In Rahner's theology, the nature of human existence is to be taken over, to step into the unknown in love and trust and to realize itself most fully. This is the key to Rahner's transcendental anthropology.

²⁰⁹ See especially *Rahner* 1966a and *Rahner* 1969h. Rahner seems to think that von Balthasar shares de Lubac's views; see *Rahner* 1969b, 304, n. 1. Cf. *Balthasar* 1962, 309–310.

²¹⁰ *Vögrinler* 1986, 119–120.

²¹¹ *Burke/Colborn/Kenel* 2003, 396. In other words, how can Rahner justify the existence of his "supernatural existential" as an intermediary structure between nature and grace? Does this not only transfer the problem to another level, i.e., to the relationship between nature and this intermediary structure, which is not natural and still is not yet sanctifying grace? (*Schillebeeckx* 1964, 397.) See also, e.g., *Balthasar* 1962, 310–312.—*Duffy* (1992, 212) is of a different opinion: "It should be clear by now that Rahner did not initially devise the existential as a tertium quid between nature and grace, as a nebulous linking reality void of content and meaning. The existential is now understood to refer primarily to God's activity, rather than to some component added to human nature. This does not mean it is without implications for human being." *Menke* (1995, 1115) notes: "Von daher ist eines der meistdiskutierten Probleme der Rahner-Interpretation die Frage, ob u. wie weit die Annahme eines übernatürl. E.[xistentialen] die konkrete Heilsgeschichte auf das transzendente Apriori des Menschen reduziert (J.B. Metz) u. Metaphysik im Sinne der rein philos. (v. christolog. Prämissen freien) Eruierung eines Begriffs letztgültigen Sinns verunmöglicht (H. Verweyen)."

To come back to the specific question of the salvific value of religions, it must be remembered that Rahner never said that religions *per se* are ways of salvation. As to Vatican II documentation, Rahner remarked: "... the essential problem for the theologian has been left open. ... the properly theological quality of the non-Christian religions remains undefined. ... Understandably, *Nostra aetate* gives us no information about these questions."²¹² Gavin D'Costa affirms that Vatican II made it clear that non-Christians may be saved, religious or not, with explicit belief in God or not, under three conditions: 1) "who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or his Church" (LG 16); 2) ignorant "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." (LG 16); and 3) these positive realities are only a preparation for the full and undiminished truth of the gospel: "Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel." (LG 16) "This is a restatement of the Thomistic principle: *gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit.*"²¹³

SNC / PCID theology seems to reject the Rahnerian position on the question of nature and grace. Even though there is not very much explicit material about nature and grace in SNC / PCID documentation, it repeats the idea of the necessity of grace: "This divine presence in the soul and the transfiguration it produces is called habitual 'grace', sanctifying 'grace', or simply grace."²¹⁴ Nevertheless, to be effective, this grace always demands cooperation from the human side, and this cooperation implicitly, if not explicitly, orientates the human being towards Christ and the Church.²¹⁵ Because this human cooperation can be said to be conscious, it seems to reject the Rahnerian notion of "anonymous Christians". In SNC / PCID documentation, the others are not called "anonymous Christians", nor are there "anonymous Christianities". This is exactly the position of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which emphasizes the human being's free response to grace. It speaks of a longing for truth and goodness in the human being that is placed there by God and that can be satisfied only by God.²¹⁶

²¹² Rahner 1983b, 290, 291. Cf. Rahner 1973.

²¹³ D'Costa 2000, 103–104.

²¹⁴ *L'espérance qui est en nous* 1967, 20: "Cette présence divine dans l'âme et la transfiguration qu'elle produit est appelée 'grâce' habituelle, 'grâce' sanctifiante, ou simplement grâce." (Tr. by RJ).

²¹⁵ John Paul II 1996b, 11.

²¹⁶ CCC 2002.

Not going further in the relationship between nature and grace, SNC / PCID documentation is more interested in the human response, in the cooperation of the human being with God. Theologically, the tension between universal and particular is clear. However—and this may be the reason that the relationship between nature and grace is not an explicit theme in SNC / PCID documentation—in the lived experience of human beings, the distinction between nature and grace is not so easy to make.²¹⁷ Be that as it may, the relationship between nature and grace cannot be understood apart from Christology and ecclesiology. That is why Pietro Rossano seems to be right when he says: “... Catholic theology recognizes and maintains *the universal action of God, of Christ and of the Spirit* in individuals and, by reflection, in the cultures and the religions; but it recognizes and maintains *a special and unique action in the Church*—in the order of knowledge (the word of God, revelation), in the order of structures (sacraments, teaching), and in the order of life (new life in the Spirit).”²¹⁸ *Dialogue and Proclamation* 40 states: “In this dialogue of salvation, Christians and others are called to collaborate with the Spirit of the Risen Lord who is universally present and active.”²¹⁹ However, it is not said *how* the Spirit is universally present and active.

Summarizing remarks

“The task of a Christian theology of Religion is, guided by the Holy Spirit, to broaden the understanding of the mystery of Jesus Christ by laying bare the ‘seeds of the Word’ hidden in other religious traditions.”²²⁰ It is clear that the patristic theme of *semina verbi*, linked to Christology and pneumatology, gives a solid base for a positive approach to non-Christian religions. However, an important question

²¹⁷ *Balthasar* (1962, 313) says: “Weil aber das theologische Apriori in der Natur niemals reinlich auszuklammern sein wird, *kann der Streit nicht geschlichtet werden, und es bleibt bei der Spannungsbreite, daß Natur aus sich selbst keinen Zugang zur Welt der Gnade hat, obwohl sie zuletzt nur von der Gnade her und auf die Gnade hin geschaffen wurde und verständlich ist.*” (Emphasis added) Cf. *Narcisse* 2001.

²¹⁸ *Rossano* 1971b, 105. (Emphasis added).

²¹⁹ DP 40 1994, 104. Cf. *L'espérance qui est en nous* 1967, 16: “La grandeur de l’homme est de pouvoir perfectionner la création et de l’acheminer vers Dieu, sa fin et son Seigneur.”—It is clear that the question of the relation between nature and grace is important also to missiological thinking. See, e.g., *Maurier* 1976, 103.

²²⁰ *Fitzgerald and Machado* 2002, 324.

is the theological weight of the Logos in the Gospel of John. Another important question is whether the Logos of whom the three Church Fathers speak really refers to the Word of God presented in the Prologue of the Gospel of John, to the immanent “reason” (*logos*) of the Stoa, or to the *logos* of Philo Judaeus.²²¹ This is the decisive question. If it refers to the Logos who is incarnated in Jesus Christ, the universal presence and action of God’s immanent Logos in human history can be affirmed. If it refers to immanent reason of the Stoa or of Philo Judaeus, these Fathers offer only an attainment of a natural truth through the philosophical use of reason. It has been argued that Christian apologists made an ideological connection between the creative word of Elohim in the first chapter of Genesis and Jesus as Logos in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, ‘logos’ understood as the explanation of all order and rationality in the world.²²² These questions are complex and deserve a long and a careful treatment. Certainly this sort of theological thinking was not received enthusiastically by all, even at that time.²²³ It is important to note here that SNC / PCID documentation has adopted the first option, in which the Logos refers to the Logos in the Prologue of the Gospel of John, manifested already in the Old Testament and manifesting himself through deeds and words in history.²²⁴

The Church Fathers considered the active presence of the Logos, before the incarnation, as a divine “pedagogy” or as a preparation for the Gospel (*praeparatio evangelica*). This preparation can be understood as a stepping-stone to Christianity. In a way, it neatly takes the idea of *semina verbi* and shows that the aspirations of human beings are fully

²²¹ Dupuis 1999, 72.

²²² Peter 2003, 761.

²²³ The idea that a saving cosmic process threatened to become a necessary element in the divine origin of the Logos was criticized by Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* II,28,6), among others: “Quoniam enim ex cogitatione et sensu uerbum emittitur, hoc utique omnes sciunt homines. Non ergo magnum quid inuenerunt qui emissiones excogitauerunt neque absconditum mysterium, si id quod ab omnibus intellegitur transtulerunt in Vnigenitum Dei Verbum, et quem inenarrabilem et innominabilem uocant, hunc, quasi ipsi obstetricauerint, primae generationis eius prolationem et generationem enuntiant, adsimilantes eum hominum uerbo emissionis.” *Sources chrétiennes* 294, 284.—“It may be another question to ask whether there is objective compatibility between the assertion that the Word is not fully generated as Son until time begins and that He is nevertheless always God in the full sense.” Peter 2003, 762.—It cannot be ignored that the first Fathers of the Church chose that which seemed to be the most suitable to their expression of faith.

²²⁴ Dupuis 1999, 72. See the discussion and references in Dupuis 1999, 72–83. See also Theobald 1988, and Müller 1990.

answered by Jesus Christ and Christianity. Paul VI says in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “They [non-Christian religions] are all impregnated with innumerable ‘seeds of the Word’ and can constitute a true ‘preparation for the Gospel’ ...”²²⁵ This seems to be the idea of John Paul II, as well.

In his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* John Paul II gave his strong support to the fulfilment theory. First of all, he joined with the Church Fathers in saying that the incarnation brings forth something quite new: Jesus “is God himself speaking in his Eternal Word made flesh. Here we touch upon *the essential point by which Christianity differs from all the other religions*, by which *man’s search for God* has been expressed from earliest times. Christianity has its starting point in the Incarnation of the Word.” Second, the incarnate Word is the fulfilment of human aspirations: “*The Incarnate Word is thus the fulfilment of the yearning present in all the religions of mankind*: this fulfilment is brought about by God himself and transcends all human expectations. It is the mystery of grace.” Third, this fulfilment is the sole and definitive completion: “*Christ is thus the fulfilment of the yearning of all the world’s religions and, as such, he is their sole and definitive completion.*”²²⁶ Fourth, the cosmic dimension of Christ is emphasized: “*Jesus Christ is the recapitulation of everything* (cf. *Eph 1:10*) and at the same time the fulfilment of all things in God: a fulfilment which is the glory of God.”²²⁷ In 1983 he said that “the countries of Asia, whose religions, so sensitive to the monastic message, await the light of full revelation from Christian monasticism.”²²⁸

²²⁵ EN 53. In Vatican II documentation cf. LG 16 1966, 35: “Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the Church as *a preparation for the gospel*.” (Emphasis added) In Latin: “*Quidquid enim boni et veri apud illos invenitur, ab Ecclesia tamquam praeparatio evangelica aestimatur...*” (Emphasis added) This is echoed in AG 3 1966, 586: “For these attempts [multiple endeavors, including religious ones, by which men search for God] *need to be enlightened and purified*, even though, through the kindly workings of Divine Providence, they may sometimes serve as a guidance course toward the true God, or as *a preparation for the gospel*.” (Emphasis added) In Latin: “... haec enim incepta indigent illuminari et sanari, etsi, ex benigno consilio providentis Dei, aliquando pro paedagogia ad Deum verum vel *praeparatione evangelica* possint haberi.” (Emphasis added) These endeavours may not be only individual or secret, they can also find religious and social expressions.

²²⁶ *John Paul II* 1995, 123 (TMA 6). *Machado* 2002a, 177–178, also refers to this passage.

²²⁷ *John Paul II* 1995, 123–124 (TMA 6). Cited also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 108.

²²⁸ *John Paul II* 1984b, 28. It might be appropriate to ask whether Asian religions would agree with this papal theological evaluation. The context of this statement was his celebration of Mass for the Observance of World Mission Day in the Basilica of St Paul on Sunday, 23 October, 1983. The original text was published in *l’Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, on October 31, 1983.

Christ's centrality does not lessen the sincere respect which the Church has for the other religions of the world,²²⁹ but John Paul II was clear to reject any theory that would displace Christ from the centre of God's plan of salvation. He was against any religious relativism which would say that one religion is as good as any other.

In this regard, we reaffirm that interreligious dialogue does not replace the *missio ad gentes* but rather forms a part of it (...). Similarly, it must be noted that *relativist explanations of religious pluralism, which state that the Christian faith is of no different value than any other belief, in fact empty Christianity of its defining Christological heart: faith alienated from our Lord Jesus, as the only Saviour, is no longer Christian, no longer theological faith.*²³⁰

John Paul II rejected the suggestion that non-Christian religions constitute the "ordinary way" of salvation, saying that "*the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation (UR 3; AG 7)*".²³¹ However, the Pope has nowhere explicitly taken up the question of the salvific signification of non-Christian religions for their adherents.²³²

Dialogue and Proclamation continues along the same lines. *Dialogue and Proclamation* 19 takes the covenant idea of Irenaeus and affirms that the history of salvation sees its final fulfilment in Jesus Christ. In him the new and definitive covenant is established for all people. The final fulfilment is in Jesus Christ. *Dialogue and Proclamation* 24 confirms the manifestation of God before and outside Christian dispensation: "... God has already, in an incomplete way, manifested himself. This manifestation of the *Logos* is an adumbration of the full revelation in Jesus Christ

²²⁹ *John Paul II* 2004a, 11.

²³⁰ *John Paul II* 2003c, 342.

²³¹ RM 55 1994, 36.

²³² *Sullivan* 1992, 197. He further states (*Sullivan* 1992, 197) that the most significant statement of John Paul II in this respect is RM 5 (1994, 8): "No one, therefore, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. Christ's one, universal mediation, far from being an obstacle on the journey toward God, is the way established by God himself, a fact of which Christ is fully aware. Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value *only* from Christ's own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his." Sullivan notes (p. 197): "One can only conjecture whether he would recognize the non-Christian religions as such 'participated forms of mediation' for the salvation of their adherents." Cf. "Cependant, ce que j'ai dit plus haut ne justifie pas la position relativiste de ceux qui pensent qu'on peut trouver dans n'importe quelle religion une voie de salut, indépendamment de la foi au Christ Rédempteur, et qu'il faut fonder le dialogue interreligieux sur cette concession ambiguë." *John Paul II* 1996b, 9.

to which it points.” The words “incomplete” and “full” are to be noted. *Dialogue and Proclamation* 48 takes a stand on the situation after the incarnation: “At the same time, while remaining firm in their belief that in Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man (cf. 1 Tim 2:4–6), the fullness of revelation has been given to them, Christians must remember that God has also manifested himself in some way to the followers of other religious traditions.”

John Paul II and *Dialogue and Proclamation* are joined by all of SNC / PCID documentation in following the fulfilment theory,²³³ often linked to the theology of *semina verbi*.²³⁴ Indeed, SNC / PCID documentation confirms that one of its theological foundations is fulfilment theology. As seen above, the patristic period was taken as a specific area of research by Daniélou, de Lubac and von Balthasar, and patristic ideas act as pillars of SNC / PCID documentation. Of these theologians and fulfilment theory it is said: “‘Fulfilment theology’, of which Jean Daniélou could be considered as a pioneer, with Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar as major exponents, brings out the value of religions. Although religions are the result of human endeavour, they nonetheless have been ‘illuminated’ by ‘rays of the Truth’ and thus contain values. Yet these values are destined to find their full development in Christianity.”²³⁵ This fulfilment is tightly linked to God’s self-revelation in Trinitarian form. Any other “revelations” understood as other “gods” are out of question, as well as non-Trinitarian forms of God’s self-revelation.²³⁶

²³³ See, however, the critical attitude of M. MacDonald in B 63 1986, 269–280.

²³⁴ “... les vérités et vertus des religions sont un point de départ, une aide et une invitation au voyage de progrès dont le terme, clairement indiqué, est la parfaite sagesse de la révélation chrétienne. ... Les anciens Pères ne parlent pas autrement lorsqu’ils voient dans les religions des semences ou germes du Verbe. Cela appelle nécessairement un développement, une croissance, jusqu’à la plénitude du Christ dans la force de l’âge (*Ep* 4, 13). Une plénitude qui ne se trouvera que dans une marche graduelle vers le christianisme.” *Humbertclaude* 1969, 84–85. This quotation includes all the themes mentioned above: progress towards perfect wisdom in Christianity, early Church Fathers, seeds of the Word, development towards Christ, reference to Ephesians, and progress towards Christianity.

²³⁵ *Fitzgerald* and *Machado* 2002, 313–314.

²³⁶ E.g. “... we can conclude by saying that Christ is seen as the origin, centre and destiny of the various religions, as he who brought them to birth, takes them up, purifies them and fulfils them in order to take them to their eschatological goal so that ‘God may be all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28; cf. LG 17; AG 11).” *Rossano* 1980, 29 = *Rossano* 1981a, 108.—Cf. “There can be no question of ‘other revelations’ in so much as this might be understood as other ‘gods’, or a cancellation of how God has chosen to reveal God’s-self in trinitarian form.” *D’Costa* 2000, 129.

There seems to be a triple emphasis in the fulfilment theory. First of all, there is the fulfilment of the Church (and of the Kingdom): “The Church, or Messianic-eschatological community, has a universal destination and vocation, and needs the whole of mankind and its spiritual riches in order to achieve her full stature, and everyone needs her mediation in order to fulfil themselves completely according to God’s plan...”²³⁷ The second fulfilment is on the level of the religions: they find their fulfilment and the full revelation in Christ. John Paul II said in 1998:

This possibility is achieved through sincere, inward adherence to the Truth, generous self-giving to one’s neighbour and the search for the Absolute inspired by the Spirit of God. A ray of the divine Wisdom is also shown through the fulfilment of the precepts and practices that conform to the moral law and to authentic religious sense. Precisely by virtue of the Spirit’s presence and action, the good elements found in the various religions mysteriously prepare hearts to receive the full revelation of God in Christ.²³⁸

These ideas of fulfilment and progressing “towards” Christ and Christianity can be seen in the contents of some SNC / PCID publications. The fact is that they are said to be consistent with the self-understanding of the Catholic Church: “However, in order to remain consistent with its own understanding and with how the Catholic Church understands other religious traditions, the chapter on Christianity is deliberately put at the end [of the booklet].”²³⁹ The third fulfilment takes place on the level of individual human beings. God wants to guide everybody towards more complete spiritual and human fulfilment.²⁴⁰ Human beings must actively maintain in themselves the tension towards the fulfilment of their being.²⁴¹ All this means that the

²³⁷ Rossano 1971b, 104. Cf. Dupuis 1994a, 112–113: “The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*... specifies that this Reign is progressing towards its fulfilment at the end of time (LG 5).”

²³⁸ John Paul II 1998b, 274 = John Paul II 1999a, 15–16. Notice, once again, the Pope’s strong pneumatological emphasis.

²³⁹ Machado 1999b, 9, introducing *Journeying Together*.

²⁴⁰ Teïssier 1978, 202: “... Dieu sollicite tout homme de l’intérieur de sa propre tradition religieuse, pour le conduire en avant vers une réalisation spirituelle et humaine plus complète.”

²⁴¹ *Guidelines* 1969, 33. Cf. “... les valeurs religieuses et humaines de tous les peuples sont assumées, libérées et relevées dans le Christ, selon le mot de Paul: ‘Tout est à vous, vous êtes au Christ et le Christ est à Dieu.’” *L’espérance qui est en nous* 1967, 10. Specific reference to Christians: “Le vif sentiment de solidarité... est une condition très

Church does not meet with a vacuum to be filled, but a mystery of human creativity to discover and fulfil.²⁴² It is clear that the fulfilment of the human being in God can be found at its apex in Jesus Christ, God-Man.²⁴³

Lumen Gentium 14 is clear: “Basing itself upon sacred Scripture and tradition, it [this sacred Synod] teaches that the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation.”²⁴⁴ This citation contains one of the hermeneutical keys of interpreting and understanding Roman Catholic theology. The sacred Scripture is complemented by the passing down of the content of the faith based in Scripture, i.e., ‘tradition’.²⁴⁵ The Catholic Church understands itself as a living organism passing down the Gospel.²⁴⁶ This idea is also present in some SNC / PCID documents: “This New Testament teaching was continued by the fathers of the church. They said that in all truth in the non-Christian religions too there are fragments of the truth (*logoi spermatikoi*), that appeared in all its fullness in Jesus Christ once and for all time.”²⁴⁷ There is the New Testament and the tradition, which is said to be a continuation of the scriptural teaching. In this case, those who continued New Testament teaching were the Church Fathers. The idea of taking both, Scripture and tradition, gives the Roman Catholic

favorable à l’esprit d’apostolat que le Saint-Père recommande si instamment de cultiver chez les laïques, pour compléter l’action sacerdotale en portant la grâce de chacun à sa surnaturelle perfection.” *Visions d’espoir* 1967, 19–20. Specific reference to non-Christians: “Les divers courants philosophiques qui sont sous jacents aux croyances et manifestations par lesquelles le peuple japonais a voulu satisfaire ses besoins religieux contiennent des éléments de vérité et laissent paraître d’admirables efforts de rénovation spirituelle qui peuvent être considérés et utilisés comme les mouvements naturels par lesquels Dieu prépare les âmes droites et les conduit à la vérité surnaturelle.” *Visions d’espoir* 1967, 20.

²⁴² Žago 1984, 267.

²⁴³ See, e.g., GS 18, 22, 38, 41.

²⁴⁴ LG 14 1966, 32.

²⁴⁵ DV 10 (1966, 117) says the same thing: “Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the Church.”

²⁴⁶ See, e.g., CCC 74–82. Cf. *Sesboüé* 2004, 333: “... les deux points que constituent l’Écriture d’une part et la tradition vivante de la foi, attestée par l’enseignement du magistère d’autre part, sont nécessaires à une juste compréhension de la révélation reçue de Dieu.”

²⁴⁷ Kasper 2001, 83. Cf. *Oborji* (2002, 309) who speaks of “the light of the sacred Scripture, the tradition of the universal Church, particularly of the Church Fathers who spoke of the ‘Seeds of the Word’ as the *preparatio evangelica* in respect to the relationship between the Church and other religions ...” (Emphasis added).

Church the possibility to search for theological and philosophical truth outside the biblical canon. However, it can be argued that the Scripture has a special standing within the process of handing down the faith.²⁴⁸

Increased emphasis has been placed on the action of the Spirit in non-Christian traditions and their adherents, while at the same time affirming the universality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ. But, after all, is the presence of the Spirit in non-Christian religions really as evident as is often assumed, without any further questioning?²⁴⁹ Frankly speaking, many non-Christians who do good works will not want to admit that their good works are caused by the third Person of the Christian Trinitarian God in them. In Islam, e.g., this would be a horror, and the idea is not accepted by other non-Christian religions, either. Does the Holy Spirit really move so freely and effect such good acts in all human beings in the world? In the New Testament the Spirit is described as being active above all within the Church, the community of those who believe in Christ, and the whole economy of grace is established to draw people into the Church. Pneumatology is always Trinitarian and ecclesiological by nature, even when the Spirit's presence in non-Christian religions is being referred to.²⁵⁰ The Spirit cannot be separated from the Church. "There is to be no separation of the Spirit's 'universal' activity and 'his particular activity within

²⁴⁸ "For sacred Scripture *is* the word of God... sacred tradition *hands on* in its full purity God's word... Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence." DV 9 1966, 117. (Emphasis added) On tradition, see, e.g., *Pottmeyer* 2000, and *Fichtner* 2003.

²⁴⁹ *D'Costa* (2000, 128) affirms: "... we must be *extremely reticent* about any abstract talk of the 'Spirit in other religions,' ..." Cf. *Commission Théologique Internationale* 1997, 325: "Étant donné cette reconnaissance explicite de la présence de l'Esprit du Christ dans les religions, on ne peut exclure la possibilité que celles-ci exercent, en tant que telles, une *certaine fonction salvifique*, c'est-à-dire qu'elles aident les hommes à atteindre leur fin ultime, même malgré leur ambiguïté. ... *Il serait difficilement pensable que ce que l'Esprit Saint réalise* dans le coeur des hommes pris individuellement *ait une valeur salvifique*, et que ne l'ait pas ce que ce même Esprit réalise dans les religions et dans les cultures." (Emphasis added) The statement does not question the presence of the Spirit in non-Christian religions, but is very careful not to recognize the "saving function" in other religious traditions.

²⁵⁰ "It [the Holy Spirit's presence] is trinitarian in referring the Holy Spirit's activity to the paschal mystery of Christ, and ecclesial in referring the paschal event to the constitutive community-creating force it has, under the guidance of the Spirit." *D'Costa* 2000, 110.

the Body of Christ.”²⁵¹ SNC/PCID documentation does not really engage in reflection on what the presence of the Spirit in Islam (or other non-Christian religions) means in Islamic or other non-Christian understanding. Pietro Rossano said: “A Christian cannot place his own faith and other religions on the same level. He cannot hold that the Holy Spirit dwells equally in the Church, in Hinduism and in the dars-Islam.”²⁵² Nevertheless, he did not elaborate the theme. In fact, it may be asked whether it is the Spirit of Christ or grace that is effective in everybody? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives an answer: “Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church.”²⁵³ What is to be especially noted here is that the *Catechism* clearly sets the justifying and sanctifying activities of the Spirit in the Christian and ecclesial context.

It may also be asked whether this all means that somehow the urgency of Christian mission is watered down, or at least made unclear? This is certainly not the intention of the SNC/PCID, but if saying “yes” to grace means also saying, at least implicitly, “yes” to the Roman Catholic Church, in “various ways” (LG 16) non-Christians are already within the Church. This is especially so, because the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that the first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is conversion.²⁵⁴ If conversion comes first and good works come thereafter, and if a non-Christian does good works, then what is the point of proclaiming the Gospel to these “converted” people? At least it can be said straight away that there is no indication in the Vatican II or postconciliar Vatican documents that there should be no further urgency about

²⁵¹ D’Costa 2000, 115.

²⁵² Rossano 1979b, 104. Cf. DM 24.

²⁵³ CCC 2003. Cf. *Adv. Haer.* III, 24, 1. Cf. *Mystici Corporis* 22: “It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in the unity of such a Body, nor can they be living the life of its one Divine Spirit.” See DS 3802. *Badcock* (1997, 147) argues that Rahner’s theology as a whole is a theology of the Holy Spirit. Rahner consistently defines grace in pneumatological rather than in Christological terms.—Rahner would say that all are offered divine friendship, but human freedom remains. The supernatural existential means that the Spirit is present to all so that they are objectively justified. But subjectively—and this is the crucial point—one can still reject the divine gift offered.

²⁵⁴ CCC 1989.

Christian missionary endeavour.²⁵⁵ However, the relationship between dialogue and mission remains problematic.²⁵⁶

SNC / PCID documentation confirms that the grace of the Kingdom of God can be found outside the visible Church.²⁵⁷ “So His grace is found among all peoples, and therefore not only in the Church but also outside the Church. Yet, the part of humanity outside the Church (namely those who are not yet listening to Christ, in other words have not yet acknowledged Christ, not yet recognised his divine identity and authority) is also included in God’s invitation of the entire human race to the eternal banquet, to salvation...”²⁵⁸ The Church is said to be the universal sacrament of salvation, and therefore non-Christians are “oriented to the Church, must pass through the Church.”²⁵⁹ Indeed, the next chapter takes up the relationship between the Church and the world outside the Church, between the Church and the Reign of God.

²⁵⁵ *Sullivan* 1992, 167. “This [the fact that the Holy Spirit is present in a non-Christian’s life and culture] does not reduce the urgency of mission. Rather, it qualifies it by requiring respect and discernment with regard to persons and groups.” *Zago* 1998, 98.

²⁵⁶ *Sheard* 1987, 32. Cf. *Sarah* 2003, 56.—Dialogue and mission are taken up in Chapter Six below.

²⁵⁷ *Fitzgerald* 1988, 119.

²⁵⁸ *Egbulefu* 2002, 30.

²⁵⁹ *Egbulefu* 2002, 31.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHURCH AND REIGN OF GOD

The Reign of God is broader than the Church

The ‘Reign of God’ or the ‘Kingdom of God’ is an important concept in the Christian theology of religions.¹ It is often linked to the Church in many SNC / PCID documents, because there is a continuity between the Kingdom of God preached by Jesus, and Christ proclaimed by the Church.² The ‘Reign of God’ was certainly at the centre of Jesus’s teachings and actions. There is a radical newness of the Reign of God that is to come. In Jesus’s teachings, there is a tension in this phrase between the “already” and the “not yet”, typically seen, among other places, in the Lord’s Prayer: “Your Kingdom come”, and yet: “Yours is the Kingdom”. Jesus even relativizes himself in relation to this Kingdom: he wants to show it, be its herald and precursor. The Twelve that he chose—the movement which was destined to become the Church—were commissioned to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom. The Good News was the same before and after the resurrection of Christ. In other words, the Church is destined to proclaim the Reign of God.³ However, the concept is not as important outside the synoptic Gospels,⁴ or the other apostolic writings, and “the usage of Acts suggests that it had begun to function as a stereotyped formula for the gospel message rather than with the dynamic variety of reference we find in

¹ On misunderstandings connected to the English word “kingdom” as a translation for the Greek word “βασιλεία”, see, e.g., *France* 1997, 301, 303.

² DP 58 1994, 108. Cf. *Sesboüé* 2004, 224.

³ *Dupuis* 1999, 343.

⁴ In the Gospel of John only in 3:3,5. “Matthew 16:17–19 asserts that there is a connection between kingdom and church, that leaders in the church hold the keys to the kingdom, and, implicitly, that our relationship to the leaders has some bearing on our eternal destiny.” *Viviano* 2003, 174. Mark and Luke speak of the Kingdom of God, whereas Matthew rather uses the concept ‘kingdom of heaven’.

the synoptic Gospels.”⁵ Only the future reality of the Kingdom will have sovereign independence, unconditionality, and universality.⁶

Christian theology has rediscovered this tension between “already” and “not yet”. On the one hand, the Reign of God was instituted in the world and history through Jesus Christ, through his words and deeds, his death and resurrection. On the other hand, there is also the “not yet” dimension, which is an eschatological dimension. The Reign of God instituted in history through Jesus Christ (the “already”) must develop to its eschatological fullness at the end of time (the “not yet”).⁷ In other words, the Kingdom already exists in its fullness in heaven, even if not yet on earth. It may be said that the word “kingdom” denotes a social, political, personal, universal, and divine gift to humanity.⁸

The Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, seems to equate the Reign of God instituted in history through Jesus Christ with the Church of Christ present in history. *Lumen Gentium* 5 affirms that the Church has the mission to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God and of Christ. The Church “becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom. While she slowly grows, the Church strains toward the consummation of the kingdom ...”⁹ The Church seems to be identified with the “initial budding forth” of the Kingdom of God. Another passage, maybe even more clearly, identifies the Church on earth and the Reign of God present in the world. *Lumen Gentium* 3 states: “The Church, or, in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly in the world through the power of God.”¹⁰ Both citations may permit the conclusion that *Lumen Gentium* identifies the Church and the Reign of God, in their historical realization and in their eschatological fulfilment.¹¹ The

⁵ France 1997, 301.

⁶ Ganoczy 1978, 38.

⁷ Dupuis 1999, 334. D’Costa (2000, 112), referring to GS 44, notes that “the church, here on earth, is not identical with the eschatological church, and in this sense, is not yet the church triumphant.”

⁸ Viviano 2003, 174.

⁹ LG 5 1966, 18. The Latin text is as follows: “... huiusque Regni in terris germen et initium constituit. Ipsa interea, dum paulatim increscit, ad Regnum consummatum anhelat...”

¹⁰ LG 3 1966, 16. The Latin text is as follows: “Ecclesia, seu regnum Christi iam praesens in mysterio, ex virtute Dei in mundo visibiliter crescit.”

¹¹ Dupuis 1999, 336. Dhavamony (1998, 765) is of another opinion: “The Kingdom is

Catechism of the Catholic Church 567 notes succinctly: “The Church is the seed and beginning of this kingdom.”

However, the encyclical letter of John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), seems to present the relationship between the Church and the Reign of God differently. Chapter II, entitled “The Kingdom of God”, first confirms the teaching of Vatican II. *Redemptoris Missio* 17 rejects “Kingdom-centered” conceptions of the Church, i.e., conceptions which stress the image of such a Church, as is not concerned about itself but is totally concerned with bearing witness to and serving the Kingdom. These conceptions are rejected because, besides being silent about Jesus Christ and the mystery of redemption, their concept of the Kingdom “ends up either leaving very little room for the Church or undervaluing the Church in reaction to a presumed ‘ecclesiocentrism’ of the past, and because they [these conceptions] consider the Church herself only a sign, for that matter a sign not without ambiguity.”¹² The Pope continues by saying that the Church is effectively—and concretely—at the service of the Kingdom.¹³ It serves the Kingdom by spreading throughout the world the “Gospel values”, which are an expression of the Kingdom. Then comes the passage that reflects the tension between the “already” and the “not yet” seen above in Jesus’s teaching: “It is true that the inchoate reality of the Kingdom can also be found beyond the confines of the Church among peoples everywhere, to the extent that they live ‘Gospel values’ and are open to the working of the Spirit who breathes when and where he wills (cf. Jn 3:8). But it must immediately be added that this temporal dimension of the Kingdom remains incomplete unless it is related to the Kingdom of Christ present in the Church and straining toward eschatological fullness (EN 34).”¹⁴

Redemptoris Missio seems to recognize that the historical reality of the Reign of God extends beyond the Church to the whole of humankind.

not identified with the Church; the Church is the seed and beginning of the Kingdom. There is neither identity nor separation between them (*LG* 5, 9, 39).”

¹² RM 17 1994, 14.

¹³ RM 20 1994, 15.

¹⁴ RM 20 1994, 15. The Latin text is as follows: “Verum est ergo incipiens Regnum inveniri posse etiam extra fines Ecclesiae in universo humano genere, prout hoc vivat ex ‘valoribus evangelicis’ et aperiatur ad actionem Spiritus, qui ubi et quo modo vult spirat (cf. *Io* 3, 8); sed addere oportet hanc Regni rationem temporalem truncam esse, si cum Regno Christi non coniungitur, quod in Ecclesia inest et ad plenitudinem eschatologicam spectat.” AAS 83 1991, 267.

It is present where people live “Gospel values” and are open to the Spirit. The Reign of God is oriented towards its eschatological fullness, and the Church is in the world at the service of the Reign throughout history. This position can have consequences also for the Christian theology of religions. It can relate “others” to the Reign of God. The perspective of the whole *Redemptoris Missio* can be said to be not only ecclesiocentric but also pneumatological, because *Redemptoris Missio* insists on the universal, operative presence of the Holy Spirit. This presence has no limits of space and time. The Spirit is present not only in non-Christian persons, but also in their religious traditions.”¹⁵ However, John Paul II made it clear that the way of salvation of those who do not know the Gospel is not outside of Christ or of the Church, because the universal divine will to save all people is related to the unique mediation of Christ.¹⁶ In fact, many non-Christians are languishing in spiritual obscurity and dearth, which has negative effects on the cultural and moral level as well.¹⁷

Somewhat more christocentric than the encyclical, *Dialogue and Proclamation* is to some extent very similar to *Redemptoris Missio*.¹⁸ After stating that the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation, it says, revealingly enough, that the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom is “mysterious and complex”. Showing the close relationship between the Church, the Kingdom, and Jesus Christ, it states that the Kingdom of God is inseparable from the Church. In the same way they both are inseparable from the person and the work of Jesus Christ, and it is likewise impossible to separate the Church from the Kingdom.¹⁹

¹⁵ Dupuis 1992b, 166, mentioning RM 28 (1994, 19): “The Spirit’s presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions.”

¹⁶ “Il est important de souligner que la voie du salut parcourue par ceux qui ignorent l’Evangile n’est pas une voie en dehors du Christ et de l’Eglise. La volonté de salut universel est liée à l’unique médiation du Christ.” *John Paul II* 1996b, 10.

¹⁷ “En effet, ceux qui ignorent le Christ, sans faute de leur part, se trouvent dans une condition d’obscurité et de pénurie spirituelles, ayant souvent aussi des répercussions négatives sur le plan culturel et moral.” *John Paul II* 1996b, 11.

¹⁸ Even though the purpose of the two documents differs greatly, RM and DP have much in common, beginning with their chronological proximity. RM was signed on December 7, 1990, and was made public in January 1991, and DP was signed on May 19, 1991, and made public on June 20, 1991. As a sign of the similarities, Orbis Books published *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation* in 1993. See also Dupuis 1992b.

¹⁹ DP 33–34 1994, 102. In fact, this reference is the Pope’s discourse to a group of Indian bishops during their “ad limina” visit. See *John Paul II* 1989c, and AAS 81 1989,

The Church's role is necessary for the Kingdom, at whose service it is placed. Then the document confirms that the inchoate reality of the Kingdom can be found beyond the confines of the Church, e.g. in the hearts of non-Christians, insofar as they live evangelical values and are open to the working of the Spirit. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that this is still an inchoate reality. It is in need of finding its completion through being related to the Kingdom of Christ. It is already present in the Church, but will be realized fully only in the world to come.²⁰ The document also emphasizes that Jesus not only proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom, he also "incarnated" the Reign of God through his actions, attitudes, and options, by his whole life, and finally through his death and resurrection. The Reign of God cannot be separated from his person. "Jesus makes it clear that it is through him and in him that the Reign of God is breaking through into the world (cf. Lk 17:20–22), that in him the Kingdom has already come upon us, even though it still needs to grow into its fullness."²¹

To summarize: since Vatican II, both *Redemptoris Missio* and *Dialogue and Proclamation* are the first two documents issued under the central authority of the Roman Catholic Church to make a distinction between the Church and the Reign of God in history. They also profess that the Reign of God in history is a broader entity than the Church, being present and operative beyond the confines of the Church among the members of other religious traditions.²² This is admitted subject to two conditions: first, that non-Christians live "Gospel values" in their lives, and second, that they are open to the action of the Spirit. In this respect, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is clear enough: "Everyone is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations. To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word..."²³ As such, the Kingdom cannot be separated from Christology. But it cannot be separated from ecclesiology, either: "Henceforward the Church... receives the mission

1125–1129. *John Paul II* (1989c, 149) continues: "The kingdom in fact is to be sought *here and now, in the mystery of the Church* which 'grows visibly in the world through the power of God', until she achieves her glorious fulfilment when all the just 'will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church'." Also in AAS 81 1989, 1126.

²⁰ DP 35 1994, 103.

²¹ DP 56 1994, 108. The footnote says: "In the early Church the Kingdom of God is identified with the Reign of Christ (cf. Eph 5:5; Rev 11:15; 12:10)."

²² *Dupuis* 1992b, 167.

²³ CCC 543.

of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom.”²⁴ This two-dimensional or dialectical purpose of the Church is a real mystery. How is it possible that the Church be at the same time on earth and in heaven? How is it possible that the earthly Church be on the move towards God, towards eternity to which human beings are invited, and at the same time towards all peoples in order to evangelize them?²⁵ One possible answer is to emphasize the sacramental nature of the Church.

The Church as the universal sacrament of salvation

Even though the understanding of the presence and the role of the Spirit in the Church has been absent or at least underemphasized in many Western ecclesiologies,²⁶ it is undeniable that Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology cannot be separated. Pope Pius XII said in his encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis Christi* in 1943: “But after Christ’s glorification on the Cross, His Spirit is communicated to the Church in an abundant outpouring, so that she, and her individual members, may become daily more and more like to our Savior.”²⁷ Vatican II documents affirm that it is the Spirit of Christ that has made the Church as the sacrament of salvation. *Lumen Gentium* 48 states: “Rising from the dead (cf. Rom. 6:9), He [Christ] sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through this Spirit has established His body, the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation.”²⁸ Paul VI, in his encyclical letter *Ecclesiam Suam*, emphasized the dialogic role of the Church: “The

²⁴ CCC 768.

²⁵ *Egbulefu* 2002, 27.

²⁶ *Irwin K.W.* 2003, 474.

²⁷ *Mystici Corporis* 56. English translation in *Mystici Corporis*, p. 34. The Latin text is as follows: “Ac postquam Christus in Cruce clarificatus est, eius Spiritus cum Ecclesia uberrima effusione communicatur, ut ipsa eiusque singula membra magis in dies magisque Servatori nostro adsimulentur.” AAS 35 1943, 219.—In the same encyclical, Pius XII identified the Body of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church in communion with the Pope.

²⁸ LG 48 1966, 79. The Latin text is as follows: “... resurgens ex mortuis (cf. Rom. 6, 9) Spiritum suum vivificantem in discipulos immisit et per eum Corpus suum quod est Ecclesia ut universale salutis sacramentum constituit...” Cf. LG 1 1966, 15: “By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind.” and LG 9 1966, 26: “God has gathered together as one all those who in faith look upon Jesus as the author of salvation and the

Church should enter into dialogue with the world in which it exists and labors. The Church has something to say; the Church has a message to deliver; the Church has a communication to offer.”²⁹ In the postconciliar period those who have had the greatest influence on the sacramental theology of the Roman Catholic Church have been Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner, “who reinterpreted classical Catholic teaching on the seven Sacraments (particularly that of Thomas Aquinas) in terms of the important shift in systematic theology at the time, the turn to the subject. Here the seven Sacraments are appreciated as encounters with Christ as the basic sacrament (Schillebeeckx) in the context of the Church as foundational sacrament (Rahner).”³⁰

Traditionally, a sacrament³¹ is understood to be a visible sign of an invisible grace. In what sense can the Church be called a sacrament of salvation? “The Church, in its visible aspect, is the sacrament (*sacramentum tantum*); the reality signified (*res tantum*), which it both contains and confers, is the belonging to the Reign of God which is being conferred; the intermediate reality, the *res et sacramentum*, is the relationship to the Church which is realized in the members of the ecclesial community, by virtue of which they share in the reality of the Reign of God.”³² The

source of unity and peace, and has established them as the Church, that for each and all she may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity.” See also AG 1.

²⁹ ES 65. English translation in *Ecclesiam Suam*, p. 31. The Latin text is as follows: “Iamvero Ecclesiae in colloquium veniendum est cum hominum societate, in qua vivit; ex quo fit, ut eadem veluti speciem et verbi, et nuntii, et colloquii induat.” AAS 56 1964, 639.

³⁰ *Irwin K.W.* 2003, 472.

³¹ “One of the contributions of scholastic reflection and the systematic presentation of sacramental doctrine during the 12th and 13th centuries has been the distinction of three elements in the Sacraments: (1) the sign that causes and is not itself caused, that is, the rite itself called *sacramentum tantum*; (2) the sacramental grace that is signified and caused but does not signify and cause, that is, the *res tantum*; (3) the element that is both signified and caused (by the *sacramentum tantum*) and itself signifies and causes the *res tantum* (in conjunction with the *sacramentum tantum*), that is, the *res et sacramentum*, or symbolic reality.” *Irwin K.W.* 2003, 470. Cf. *Koch* 1997.

³² *Dupuis* 1999, 354. He applies sacramental theology to the relationship in history between the Reign of God and the Church and to the role of the Church in relation to the Reign of God present in history. Cf. *Rahner* (1968, 1339–1340): “Kirche ist nicht identisch mit ‘Reich Gottes’, sondern das heilsgeschichtliche Sakrament des Reiches Gottes in der eschatologischen, mit Christus konstituierten Phase der Heilsgeschichte, die das Reich Gottes geschehen läßt. Solange Geschichte währt, wird die Kirche nie identisch mit dem Reich Gottes. Endgültig da ist dieses Reich Gottes erst mit dem Ende der Geschichte in der Ankunft Christi und dem Weltgericht. Aber es ist doch nicht einfach das bloß Ausständige, das sich erst später anstelle der Welt, ihrer Geschichte und des Ergebnisses dieser Geschichte setzt. Das Reich Gottes selbst

Church is a mystery (*sacramentum* is the Latin translation of the Greek *μυστήριον*)³³ in the sense that its true nature and secret life are hidden. As a sacrament, it is an effective symbol because it communicates what it symbolizes. In other words, it contains and transmits the invisible grace that it signifies. In this analogical sense it is called a sacrament. The Church remains an efficacious sign of grace, willed by God, giving access to the Kingdom of God through its word and deed. The Church is a visible sign of God's total work of salvation in the world in the sense that it is entrusted with the message of reconciliation. It is the sign and instrument of the salvation of non-Christians.³⁴ Because the Church is the locus of the Spirit, it must be the point towards which "nonecclesial" grace is heading. The sacramental presence of the Kingdom of God in the Church is a privileged one. If it is correct to affirm that "the Church is the sign willed by God to signify what his grace in Jesus Christ has accomplished and continues to accomplish in the world", then the expression "sacrament of the world" can be used of the Church.³⁵ In the world, the Church is a sign of the Kingdom's par-

wird in der Geschichte der Welt (nicht nur der Kirche!) überall dort, wo Gehorsam gegenüber Gott in Gnade als Annahme der Selbstmitteilung Gottes geschieht. ... Für dieses Reich Gottes in der Welt, das doch nie mit einer bestimmten weltlichen Objektivität schlechthin identifiziert werden darf, ist die Kirche ein Stück (weil sie ja selbst in der Welt ist und in ihren Gliedern auch Welt-Geschichte macht [vgl. D 1783]) und vor allem das partikuläre Grundsakrament, d. h. die heilsgeschichtlich-eschatologische und wirksame Erscheinung (Zeichen) davon, daß in der Einheit, Tat, Brüderlichkeit usw. der *Welt* das Reich Gottes am Kommen ist, so daß auch hier, wie bei den einzelnen Sakramenten, Zeichen und Bezeichnetes nie getrennt, aber auch nie identifiziert werden dürfen (vgl. Vaticanum II 'Lumen gentium' n. 9)." — *Aydin* (2002, 67) is of the opinion that there is a difference between Rahner and John Paul II with regard to the function of the Church: "For, while the Pope gives the Church a very significant place because of her function of making Christ known in the world, Rahner questions this function of the Church because of the objective nature of Christ's action."

³³ "The Greek word *mysterion* was translated into Latin by two terms: *mysterium* and *sacramentum*. In later usage the term *sacramentum* emphasizes the visible sign of the hidden reality of salvation which was indicated by the term *mysterium*. In this sense, Christ himself is the mystery of salvation: 'For there is no other mystery of God, except Christ.'" CCC 774.

³⁴ *Sullivan* 1992, 161. "... as the humanity of Christ is the instrument of the divine Word in the total work of salvation, so also the church can be seen as the instrument of the Holy Spirit in the total work of bringing Christ's grace to every human person." *Sullivan* 1992, 158.

³⁵ *Dupuis* 1999, 352, 355. In this sense it has been argued that the ancient axiom "No salvation outside the Church" could be transformed to "No salvation outside the world" (*extra mundum nulla salus*).

tial presence. The Church is at the service of the Kingdom, its “protosacrament”.³⁶ The reality of the sacrament (*res*) is always more extensive than the sacrament itself.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives two purposes for this Church-Sacrament. First, its purpose is to be the sacrament of the “inner union of men with God. Because men’s communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of the unity of the human race.” Second, besides this function based on the theology of creation, there is another, soteriological purpose: “As sacrament, the Church is Christ’s instrument. ‘She is taken up by him also as the instrument for the salvation of all’, ‘the universal sacrament of salvation’, by which Christ is ‘at once manifesting and actualizing the mystery of God’s love for men’. The Church ‘is the visible plan of God’s love for humanity’, because God desires ‘that the whole human race may become one People of God, form one Body of Christ, and be built up into one temple of the Holy Spirit’.”³⁷

Pope Paul VI admitted the possibility of salvation outside the confines of the Church, but did not touch the issue of relations between the Church and the Reign of God.³⁸ Concerning universal salvation and non-Christian people, Pope John Paul II said in *Redemptoris Missio*: “For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church... This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit.”³⁹ Postconciliar SNC / PCID documentation supports the same idea. *Dialogue and Proclamation* 33 affirms that the Church has been willed by God. It was instituted by Christ, and is necessary for salvation. Its functions are to be the sign and instrument of the divine plan of salvation, the centre of which is Jesus Christ. The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation. The relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God is unique and special, and it confers upon the Church a specific and necessary role.⁴⁰ An SNC / PCID document states that “the

³⁶ *Viviano* 2003, 174.

³⁷ CCC 775–776.

³⁸ *Paul VI* 1968b, 119.

³⁹ RM 10 1994, 10. *Dhavamony* (1998, 765) links religions, the Kingdom, and the Church together: “The religions of the world are oriented to the Kingdom of God in their partial realisation of the salvific message of the Gospel and, hence, are oriented also to the Church which is the sacrament of the Kingdom of God (RM 12–19).”

⁴⁰ RM 18 1994, 14.

Church is the sacrament of salvation, the sacrament of the Kingdom of God. The Church's efforts are directed to the coming of the Kingdom, which is already anticipated in some way in each act of faith and charity, but in a special way in the celebration of the Eucharist.⁴¹ The grace of God can be found outside the visible Church, which means that the Kingdom is wider than the boundaries of the visible Church.⁴² In this way, the SNC/PCID confirms the idea that the Church represents the Reign of God present in history and is therefore the sacrament of the Kingdom. It stands thus in relation to the eschatological fulfilment of the Kingdom, insofar as the Church-Kingdom in history advances towards the Church-eschatological Kingdom.⁴³

The Church's mission is to proclaim in word and sacrament that the Kingdom of God has come in Jesus Christ. It is to offer its life as a test case: the Kingdom is present and operative in the world today. And the Church is to challenge society to transform itself according to the Kingdom values: justice, peace, kinship, and human rights.⁴⁴ So, the Church is not only present as a sign, as the sacrament of the Kingdom of God in the world, it is also at its service in different ways.⁴⁵ It is to work everywhere, not only among those who accept its message. The Church is called to be a dynamic force in humanity's journey towards the eschatological Kingdom. It is the promoter of Kingdom values. To be at the Kingdom's service means that the Church spreads throughout the world the "Gospel values". These values—which could be said to be the ethical content of the Gospel⁴⁶—are an expression of the Kingdom, and they help people to accept God's plan.⁴⁷ It is to witness and foster dialogue, human promotion, commitment to justice and peace, education, and the care of the sick and the poor.⁴⁸ In other words, its tasks are to witness, serve, and proclaim. To do this, it must be "decentred" from itself and centred on Jesus Christ and the

⁴¹ *Fitzgerald* 1988, 119.

⁴² *Fitzgerald* 1988, 119.

⁴³ *Dubuis* 1999, 353.

⁴⁴ *Fuellenbach* 2000, 594.

⁴⁵ See RM 20 1994, 15. Cf. *Caspar* 1987, 88.

⁴⁶ I owe this expression to M. Fitzgerald.

⁴⁷ RM 20 1994, 15.

⁴⁸ RM 20 1994, 15. Cf. DP 80 that mentions "truth and life, holiness, justice, love and peace". (Without any reference, DP 80 is cited, with two minor modifications, also in *Journeying Together* 1999, 127–128.) Cf. *Zago* 2000, 11: "These images [salt, light, yeast] express an active role of the Church in the world, achieved by life and not only by works."

Kingdom of God. *Lumen Gentium* 35 affirms that “all [the laity] ought to cooperate in the spreading and intensifying of the kingdom of Christ in the world.” But this cooperation is not separated from the Christian revelation. The following sentence exhorts the laity to “strive skillfully to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom.”⁴⁹ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 764 confirms the same idea: “To welcome Jesus’ word is to welcome ‘the Kingdom itself’.” Pietro Rossano is of the opinion that one of the roots of dialogue is ecclesiological: “The Church, or Messianic-eschatological community, has a universal destination and vocation, and needs the whole of mankind and its spiritual riches in order to achieve her full stature, and everyone needs her mediation in order to fulfil themselves completely according to God’s plan: in this perspective dialogue cooperates in the growth of the people of God and it is destined to re-orientate, purify and raise in Christ the values of the non-Christian religions.”⁵⁰ There is reciprocity. The Church, in order to become what it is meant to be, needs the others.

In other words, in this becoming itself in relation to non-Christian religious traditions, the Roman Catholic Church needs also other Christian Churches. This need is implicitly acknowledged in *Dialogue and Proclamation*.⁵¹ For Pope John Paul II, the ecumenical level signified the first level of unity, whereas interreligious relationships and dialogue constituted the second level of unity.⁵² The SNC/PCID emphasizes this ecumenical dimension of interreligious dialogue.⁵³ Thus, interreligious dialogue can also have ecumenical consequences: “Dialogue with non-Christians can also be a way of realizing unity among Christian

⁴⁹ LG 35 1966, 62.

⁵⁰ Rossano 1971b, 104.

⁵¹ “It [this document] is offered as well for the consideration of Christians belonging to other Churches or ecclesial communities who themselves have been reflecting on the questions it raises.” DP 7 1994, 96. Cf. DM 7.

⁵² “Thus, as the first unity finds its adequate expression in the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* on ecumenism, which continues to be valid, the second unity is formulated, on the level of inter-religious relationships and dialogue, in the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*.” John Paul II 1987f, 58. These two levels go hand in hand in other papal statements as well. E.g. “Special attention needs to be given today to the *ecumenical* aspect of migration, with reference to Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, and likewise to the *interreligious* dimension, with particular regard to the followers of *Islam*.” John Paul II 2004b, 18. (Emphasis added).

⁵³ Rossano 1977, 140: “... every initiative of dialogue, either of thinking on it, or of practising it with members of other faiths, be taken, *whenever possible*, in an ecumenical shape and collaboration.”

Churches which are moved by the same love of Christ. ... But dialogue is not an easy thing.”⁵⁴ Especially “the encounter with Islam makes us become more conscious of the urgency of Christian unity.”⁵⁵

However, the use of the word “Church” referred to in the SNC / PCID documents is sometimes problematic: in general statements, it can be argued that it is used to refer to the world-wide community of Christians, i.e., all the Christian Churches, whereas in some other places it is pretty clear that only the Roman Catholic Church is referred to. What is, then, the relation between the Roman Catholic Church and the other Christian Churches? One of the key ecclesiological passages of Vatican II in this respect is *Lumen Gentium* 8: “This Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure. These elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism toward Catholic unity.” The change of “is” to “subsists in” [in Latin: *subsistit in*] is significant.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *John Paul II* 1984c, 124.

⁵⁵ “La rencontre avec des croyants musulmans met les diverses confessions chrétiennes en situation de réflexion commune, et les invite à une action concertée déjà amorcée entre leurs instances spécialisées. Il est souhaitable que se développe un travail commun sur le terrain entre disciples du Christ, pour ‘rendre compte de l’espérance’ qui nous habite. La rencontre avec l’Islam fait davantage prendre conscience de l’urgence de l’Unité chrétienne.” *Catholiques et Musulmans* 1999, 5. Cited also in PD 102 1999, 321. (Tr. by RJ).

⁵⁶ LG 8 1966, 23. In Latin: “Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniantur, quae ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.” Cardinal *Johannes Willebrands* said in 1987: “Cela veut dire que L’Eglise du Christ ne se limite pas à la structure visible de l’Eglise catholique. ... Dans la ligne de *Mystici Corporis*, le n. 8 de *Lumen gentium* redit, certes, qu’il n’est de plénitude ecclésiale, dans l’économie actuelle du Salut, que dans la communauté ‘qui est gouvernée par le successeur de Pierre et par les évêques en union avec ce successeur’ (cf. *UR*, 4). C’est là une conviction absolue, que rien dans les textes ne nuance. ... Le *subsistit in* ne peut être interprété de façon authentique que dans les perspectives d’une ecclésiologie de communion, et cela à condition que la communion soit vue non pas simplement de façon horizontale, ni au simple registre de la communion entre chrétiens ou entre communautés chrétiennes, mais aussi et d’abord comme une communion avec Dieu lui-même.” *La Documentation Catholique*, 3 janvier 1988, N° 1953, 39, 40. The same expression “*subsistere*” can be found also in DH 1 (1966, 677): “We believe that this one true religion subsists [*subsistere*] in the catholic and apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus committed the duty of spreading it abroad among all men.” In both cases it seems that there is a shift of emphasis from individuals to public communities.

Non-Christians on the path of dialogue towards the Kingdom of God

The concept of the Reign of God has important consequences for the Christian theology of religions and for interreligious dialogue.⁵⁷ The Reign of God, to the sphere of which believers of other religious traditions are related, is the Kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus Christ, and already present as a historic reality. Non-Christians share in the mystery of salvation, which makes them related to the Kingdom of God already present as a historic reality.⁵⁸ Thus, believers of other religious traditions, Muslims among others, are related to the Kingdom of God in the world so far as they sincerely live the Gospel values and are open to the Spirit. Jacques Dupuis argued that, as God is not bound by the sacraments (see ST 3.64.7), when non-Christians hear God's call through their own tradition and respond to it in the sincere practice of their tradition, they become active "members" of the Kingdom, without being part of the Church and without recourse to the Church's mediation. The Church belongs to the sacramental realm, which is relative. This is not the only possible access to the Reign of God: "...the Reign present in the world is a reality which is broader than the Church; it extends beyond its boundaries and includes—even if modalities may differ—not only the members of the Church but also the 'others'."⁵⁹ Dupuis went so far as to say that formal consciousness or awareness of "membership" was not a prerequisite for it.⁶⁰ He obviously echoed Rahner's position on anonymous Christians.⁶¹

Being related to the Kingdom of God, non-Christians can be co-builders of the Kingdom of God in the world. The Reign of God calls Christians and non-Christians to build the Reign of God together, through conversion and through promotion of the Gospel values, until it achieves its eschatological fullness. Can this mean that the religious traditions also build the Kingdom of God, among their followers as well as in the world at large, as has been claimed?⁶² SNC / PCID

⁵⁷ I follow here *Dupuis* 1999, 344–346. Cf. RM 20 1994, 15–16. Cf. *Dupuis* 1994a, 126.

⁵⁸ *Dupuis* 1999, 345.

⁵⁹ *Dupuis* 1999, 341. Cf. *Fitzgerald* 1988, 119.

⁶⁰ *Dupuis* 1994a, 127; *Dupuis* 1999, 345. My question is whether Dupuis's word "member" of the Kingdom goes too far when speaking of non-Christians. At least it is not the term used by Vatican II.

⁶¹ *Dupuis* (1999, 345–346) said that "it must also be admitted that these [other] traditions themselves contain 'supernatural, grace-filled elements' (...) for the benefit of the followers of these traditions."

⁶² *Dupuis* 1999, 356. Cf. *Dupuis* 1999, 346: "It follows that the religious traditions

documentation, while affirming that individual believers can build the Kingdom of God, does not give support to such a claim. Cardinal Arinze said in 2000 that “the followers of the various religions, in spite of their fundamental differences in beliefs and rites, can strive to build together a world more and more according to the will of God, the Creator.”⁶³ No mention is made of traditions as such being the builders of the Kingdom of God, and the fundamental differences in beliefs and rites, i.e., in their religious traditions, are explicitly mentioned.

This means that interreligious dialogue can take place between such persons as are already related to the Kingdom of God, in spite of their fundamental religious differences. This makes interreligious dialogue a form of sharing, because the reality of the Kingdom of God and its values are already present in the mutual exchange. It is thus not difficult in dialogue to call people to the values of the Kingdom of God. Such values are also present in Islam. In Christian-Muslim relations the idea is that both Christians and Muslims turn to the Kingdom, so that their faith might be enriched by mutual interchange and their mission to the world might bear more fruit through their shared insights and commitments.⁶⁴

Being co-builders means that Christians and non-Christians build together the Reign of God in the world each time they commit themselves of common accord to the cause of human rights or when they work for the integral liberation of human persons, but especially of the poor and the oppressed.⁶⁵ Besides this horizontal level, there is also the vertical level. Christians and non-Christians build the Reign of God by promoting religious and spiritual values. These two dimensions, horizontal and vertical, human and religious, are inseparable. “... secularization and the problems it poses for the Moslem conscience and

contribute, in a mysterious way, to the building up of the Reign of God among their followers and in the world.” Cited also in *Dupuis* 1994a, 128.

⁶³ *Arinze* 2000q, 30.

⁶⁴ B 43 1980, 89–90 (Final Statement, BIRA II, Bishops’ Institutes on Interreligious Affairs).

⁶⁵ *Dupuis* 1999, 346. Also in *Dupuis* 1994a, 130. Cf. “Il [le dialogue inter-religieux] souligne l’universalité du salut et la dialectique du ‘déjà-là’ et ‘pas-encore’ du Royaume. ‘Nos relations avec nos partenaires musulmans donnent à notre amour du prochain ces deux notes spécifiques de la charité évangélique: la gratuité et l’universalité (...) L’engagement ensemble, chrétiens et musulmans, pour servir les plus pauvres, pour faire la vérité dans la société, pour assurer le respect des droits de l’homme, pour soutenir ceux des femmes ou des minorités, etc., toute cette action commune appartient aux travaux du Royaume de Dieu.’” *Mbuka* 1995, 66.

society are a necessary phase for the future of Christ and the Church in these [Moslem] countries. I would even say they are themselves the Kingdom of Christ on the march. Not only because Christ himself is mysteriously present every time the conscience of man is faced with real problems..."⁶⁶ However, as has already been noted, in spite of this idea of sharing of spiritual and religious values, Christian-Muslim dialogue seems to be more interested in the horizontal level, i.e., in those actions and projects which touch the human being on the social, physical, and cultural level, while the religious and spiritual dialogue between Christians and Muslims as such is rather a rare occasion compared to an everyday form of dialogue. In all this, SNC / PCID documentation emphasizes that the Kingdom of God cannot lose its origins in Jesus Christ: "Dialogue in the Christian context is also meant for the building up of God's Kingdom, as it is revealed in Jesus Christ. This is God's universal plan."⁶⁷ Building up does not necessarily mean that the main interest is focused on spiritual or religious values, nor does it mean that the perspective of the endings and the eschatological hope is emphasized.⁶⁸ In any case, Pope John Paul II wrote in *Redemptoris Missio* that dialogue is a path toward the Kingdom of God. It will certainly be fruitful, even though only God knows the time and season.⁶⁹ This means that "the importance of dialogue for integral development, social justice and human liberation needs to be stressed. ... Another context in which interreligious dialogue seems urgent today is that of culture."⁷⁰ The cultural context was important also for Paul VI. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* he noted: "The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times."⁷¹

SNC / PCID documentation follows these same lines. Interreligious dialogue makes it possible to deal with various subjects, when it is admitted that "dialogue is the accepted path of collaboration to form a better society for humankind",⁷² that it "provides a constructive environment for addressing many injustices and wrongs in our society

⁶⁶ Caspar 1970c, 156–157.

⁶⁷ D'Souza 1985, 153.

⁶⁸ Cf. Dupuis 1999, 346; Dupuis 1994a, 130.

⁶⁹ RM 57 1994, 36. Cited also in Tomko 1991, 208.

⁷⁰ DP 44, 45 1994, 105.

⁷¹ EN 20. English translation in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 1990, 12.

⁷² *Towards A Culture of Dialogue* 2000, 85.

today”,⁷³ when dialogue is seen as “a starting point for a deeper civilizational interlocution”,⁷⁴ that it can help to “solve the great problems facing society and the world, as well as in education for justice and peace”,⁷⁵ that “it must be applied to social and political life.”⁷⁶ Basing itself on a theology of creation, interreligious dialogue can deal with ecology and environment as well.⁷⁷ John Paul II, for the most part, tried to keep the religious and non-religious aspects of dialogue together. In 1999 he said that Christians and Muslims are called on to defend and always promote human dignity, moral values, and freedom. As they are on the common pilgrimage to eternity, they pray, fast, and practice charity, but they also engage in joint efforts for peace and justice, for human advancement, and the protection of the environment. Generally speaking, the Pope affirmed that dialogue aims at generating human dignity and moral values.⁷⁸ A Muslim states: “Dialogue in fact aims at generating common human and moral values emanating from the wide Abrahamitic belief...”⁷⁹

Eschatological hope

Eschatology, in the broadest sense, is discourse about endings, whether of an individual’s life or of the world.⁸⁰ It is also, at least since Jürgen Moltmann’s book *Theology of Hope* (1967), intimately linked to hope.⁸¹

⁷³ Machado 2000b, 92.

⁷⁴ Balarabi 1997, 141 (a Muslim).

⁷⁵ DP 44 1994, 105.

⁷⁶ Arinze 2000h, 53.

⁷⁷ Irwin 1996, 82. See also, e.g., *Religion and the Use of the Earth’s Resources* 1996.

⁷⁸ John Paul II 1999c, 88–89 = John Paul II 1999g, 305.—Michel (1986, 187) remarks that for the Pope, “dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be built upon existing bonds... and begins with mutual recognition...”.

⁷⁹ *El-Mawla* 1997, 99. *El-Mawla* continues (1997, 99) by suggesting that dialogue should make allowance “for a real confrontation with the prevalent human situation under the title of correcting the path of modern civilization and aiming at the happiness of nations and peoples.” The writer seems to hold Christian-Muslim dialogue as a means of changing modern civilization.

⁸⁰ Rowland 1997, 161. Finkenzyler (1997, 137) notes: “Unter E.[schatologie] (griech. éschatos = der Letzte; die Lehre von den ‘letzten Dingen’) versteht man die Glaubensaussagen über das Endschiedsal des einzelnen Menschen und die von Gott gewirkte endzeitliche Neugestaltung der Menschheit und des gesamten Kosmos.”

⁸¹ J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM Press 2002; originally in German: *Theologie der Hoffnung: Untersuchungen zur Begründung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie*. München:

In Christian theology, the concept of eschatological hope is intimately related to the Church and the coming of the Reign of God. "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit."⁸² In Vatican II documentation, Chapter VII of *Lumen Gentium* is entitled "The Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church and Her Union with the Heavenly Church". *Dei Verbum* 8 affirms that the Church is constantly moving forward towards the fullness of divine truth. This will happen until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in the Church.⁸³ In any case, eschatology means hope for a better world. *Gaudium et Spes* 40 states: "Coming forth from the eternal Father's love, founded in time by Christ the Redeemer, and made one in the Holy Spirit, the Church has a saving and an eschatological purpose which can be fully attained only in the future world."⁸⁴ John Paul II, too, emphasized the question of hope, in the perspective of eschatology:

In this *eschatological perspective*, believers should be called to a renewed appreciation of the theological virtue of *hope*, which they have already heard proclaimed "in the one word of the truth, the Gospel" (*Col* 1:5). The basic attitude of hope, on the one hand encourages the Christian not to lose sight of the final goal which gives meaning and value to life, and on the other, offers solid and profound reasons for a daily commitment to transform reality in order to make it correspond to God's plan.⁸⁵

Eschatological hope should not leave Christians inactive, but rather motivate them to action.⁸⁶

Chr. Kaiser Verlag 1964). Moltmann insisted that hope is not individual, existential, or private. It is the public hope of the whole of creation, as it awaits the renewing work of God (*McGrath* 1997a, 550).

⁸² CCC 1817.

⁸³ "For, as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her." DV 8 1966, 116. Cited also (slightly modified) in DP 37 1994, 103.

⁸⁴ GS 40 1966, 238.

⁸⁵ *John Paul II* 1995, 125 = TMA 46 1994, 58–59.

⁸⁶ "Christians are called to prepare for the Great Jubilee of the beginning of the Third Millennium by *renewing their hope in the definitive coming of the Kingdom of God*, preparing for it daily in their hearts, in the Christian community to which they belong, in their particular social context, and in world history itself." *John Paul II* 1995, 125 = TMA 46 1994, 59.

Robert Caspar considered eschatology important for Islam and Christianity, for “the meaning it gives to the world and to the lives of men: a meeting with God at the end of time, when true values will be revealed.”⁸⁷ Cardinal Arinze dealt with hope in his message to Muslims for the end of Ramadan in 1998, for hope enables people to see the good existing in the world. It also is the fruit of divine action in human hearts. For Arinze, the many signs of hope include solidarity among people, especially with the poor and destitute, the desire for justice and peace, voluntary service, the return of religion, an awareness of human dignity and human rights, environmental questions, etc. As one particular sign of hope, he underlined interreligious dialogue: “How can we not see in the dialogue between believers, and in particular between Muslims and Christians, a sign of hope for the present and for the future?”⁸⁸

One SNC / PCID document, commenting on the World Day of Prayer for Peace in 1986, does not forget to mention its important eschatological perspective:

Assisi clearly shows that the boundaries of the ecclesial mission have been extended. They are not limited to evangelization and the establishment of Christian communities, but extend to being a leaven of Gospel values, to the promotion of the Kingdom—which is already initially present in the Church but exists also beyond her visible boundaries and will be fully achieved in eschatology. The Church is sign and sacrament of the Kingdom, as at the service of the Kingdom she has a role to play in regard to every person, for all are candidates of this Kingdom.⁸⁹

Without any doubt, this reference is to *Redemptoris Missio* 20. This is an interesting statement in so far as it emphasizes those aspects of RM 20 that are clearly dialogic and anthropological, whereas it does not mention the Christological passages of RM 20. It certainly offers eschatological hope to every person, not as members of the Church, but as “candidates” for the Kingdom of God.

As a sacrament of the Kingdom, what will happen to the Church at the end of time?⁹⁰ SNC / PCID documentation does not directly deal with this issue. Some references to it are not entirely clear and can be interpreted in several ways. The ambiguity certainly reflects the diffi-

⁸⁷ Caspar 1976, 5. He continued (p. 5): “It is this direction and eschatological tension which gives full meaning to human activity in this world.”

⁸⁸ Arinze 2000n, 64–65. Cf. *John Paul II* 2005d, 23.

⁸⁹ Zago 1987, 154.

⁹⁰ I follow here Dupuis 1999, 357.

culty of the question.⁹¹ In Vatican II documentation, Chapter VII of *Lumen Gentium* deals with the “heavenly Church” (LG 48–51), but theologians do not agree on its theological meaning. While some consider the fullness of the Kingdom as the fulfilment of the mystery of the Church (e.g. *Dulles* 1985), others seem to combine LG 48–51 with the passage about the eschatological Reign in *Gaudium et Spes* 39 (e.g. *Mondin* 1986). One solution would be to say that the Church is only provisional, and that the eschatological reality at the end of time is the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God.⁹² The advantage of this solution from the point of view of the Christian theology of religions and dialogue would be that “the followers of other religious traditions, who have belonged to the Kingdom of God in history without being members of the Church, can at the end of time share in the fullness of the Kingdom without having to be linked at the last stage to an ‘eschatological Church.’”⁹³ However, an important question is whether this is in accordance with *Lumen Gentium* 48, which does not seem indicate that the pilgrim Church will disappear at the end of time: “The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God, will attain her full perfection only in the glory of heaven. Then will come the time of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).”⁹⁴

⁹¹ E.g. “The Church believes that she is invited by the Spirit to encourage all religious institutions and movements to meet, to enter into collaboration, and to purify themselves in order to promote truth and life, holiness, justice, love and peace, dimensions of the Kingdom which, at the end of time, Christ will hand over to his Father.” *Journeying Together* 1999, 128; “The reign of God is the final end of all persons. The church, which is to be ‘its seed and beginning’ (LG 5, 9), is called from the first to start out on this path towards the kingdom and, along with the rest of humanity, to advance towards that goal.” DM 25.

⁹² *Dupuis* (1999, 357), joining Rahner and referring to Teilhard de Chardin, is of this opinion. *Teilhard de Chardin* (1973, 206) refers to “l’Eglise, portion réflexivement christifiée du Monde—l’Eglise, foyer principal d’affinités inter-humaines par super-charité (...),—l’Eglise axe central de convergence universelle, et point précis de rencontre jaillissante entre l’Univers et le Point Oméga.”

⁹³ *Dupuis* 1999, 357.

⁹⁴ LG 48 1966, 78. The Latin text is as follows: “Ecclesia, ad quam in Christo Iesu vocamur omnes et in qua per gratiam Dei sanctitatem acquirimus, nonnisi in gloria coelesti consummabitur, quando adveniet tempus restitutionis omnium (Act. 3, 21)...” Cf. LG 48 1966, 79: “Therefore, the promised restoration which we are awaiting has already begun in Christ, is carried forward in the mission of the Holy Spirit, and through Him continues in the Church.”

Summarizing remarks

There can be no doubt that the Church is heading towards eschatological fullness, towards the “eschatological Church”, and that it is effectively and concretely at the service of the Kingdom. However, at least two important questions need to be dealt with. The first one concerns the relationship between the Kingdom of God and humanity, and the second the relationship between dialogue and mission. The first question is dealt with here, the second one in Chapter Six.

What is the relation between the Kingdom of God (or the Reign of God) and the whole of humanity? How widely should the Kingdom of God be understood? What is its relation to the Reign of God? These are not simple questions.⁹⁵ We can start to respond to them with the following citation: “The Church is called to start out on the path to the Kingdom of God and, along with the rest of the humanity, to advance toward that goal.”⁹⁶ One of the tasks of the Church is, in spite of its being at the service of the Kingdom and of humanity,⁹⁷ to advance towards the Kingdom of God. It can be noted first that ‘kingdom’, as a more concrete and local term, indicates a place rather than dimension. If the Spirit of God is everywhere, working in a hidden way in the hearts of human beings, does that not mean that the Kingdom of God is also everywhere, in the Church as well as in the world? Even if the term is changed to ‘Reign’, which has a more abstract and dimensional aspect, the situation hardly changes. Wherever Gospel values can be found, the Spirit of God and the Reign of God are also present. Everyone who sincerely strives to live a good life (*Lumen Gentium* 16) and is open to the working of the Spirit (*Redemptoris Missio* 20) can attain everlasting salvation and is related to the Kingdom of God. But logically this means that practically every human being is related to the Kingdom of God. There is hardly any normal human person who

⁹⁵ E.g. a Lutheran mission document called *Mission in Context* (2004, 23) asks pertinently: “Likewise, clarity is needed on the difference between the reign of God and the traditional concept of the ‘Kingdom of God’ with the possibility for one to be outside of the Kingdom, by one’s own choice, and the in-breaking reign of God in Christ.”

⁹⁶ *Journeying Together* 1999, 123.

⁹⁷ “... en effet, l’Eglise n’existe ni travaille pour elle-même, mais elle est au service d’une humanité appelée à la filiation divine en Christ (cf. *RM*, 19).” *John Paul II* 1996b, 11. Cf. *Rossano* 1978a, 36: “It means awareness that God intervened in a decisive, irreversible manner in the Church at the service of mankind, and that the gift made to the Church is true and meaningful for everybody.”

on purpose, consciously, systematically, wants to live a bad life. Who would not want to promote truth and life, holiness, justice, love, and peace—even at the risk of failure? Through creation, everybody strives to find answers to the fundamental questions of life: What is the human being? What is good and what is bad? (*Nostra Aetate* 1). In 1984 *Dialogue and Mission* 25 stated: “The church is thus oriented towards God’s reign until its fulfilment in the perfect communion of all mankind as brothers in God.” This language is, once again, very inclusive and supports the fulfilment theory: the use of such words as “fulfilment”, “perfect”, and “all” is to be noted.

It is affirmed that the Church is to carry out such activities as dialogue, the promotion of human, commitment to justice and peace, education, the care of the sick, and aid to the poor and children.⁹⁸ When this is the only passage referred to in *Redemptoris Missio* 20—added to the notion of God’s universal will to save and the inclusive use of language—the Reign of God and humanity and its actions are easily, though not necessarily, identified, whenever every good human action can be interpreted as a sign of the presence of the Kingdom and the Spirit in the human being. It is helpful to remember that the first meaning Jesus gave to the concept of ‘kingdom’ was not social, even though it did not exclude social consequences. Because the Spirit’s locus is in the Church, which is the sacrament of salvation, the human being in question must be within the sphere of the salvific grace of Christ. It seems that the originally religious meaning of the biblical concept has been transformed to something social and phenomenological: the “anthropological turn” has strayed too far from religious issues. And this is reinforced by Mark 1:15 where Jesus clearly sets the two conditions of repentance and faith upon those who want to enter the Kingdom. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” Here there is no question of “anonymous” or unconscious faith. Implicitly and unconsciously, anthropologizing the question of the Reign of God in the world means also anthropologizing the question of salvation. In other words, ecclesiology, Christology, and pneumatology are stripped of their theological meanings. If it be so, ecclesiology may become a synonym for the universal Reign of God in the world, Christology may become a synonym for the universal Saviour who guarantees everybody’s eternal happi-

⁹⁸ RM 20 1994, 15.

ness, and pneumatology may become a synonym for the universal grace effective in everybody's heart.⁹⁹ This approaches Origen's idea of *apocatastasis* in his *De principiis*. His doctrine of universal restoration ultimately rests upon an affirmation of God's final and total triumph over evil: every creature, the whole of humanity, and even Satan, will be saved. The Church rejected Origen's idea in the 5th and 6th century.¹⁰⁰

This has consequences for interreligious and Christian-Muslim dialogue. The following citation is illustrative:

The difficulty, the "Muslim wall", forces us to deeply re-discover our Christian being, which is communal. It leads us continuously to Christ: to his word, but especially to his 'dialogic' being: to establish dialogue between God and his People, to go beyond the rigidity fixed in this People, to widen the frontiers of the Kingdom... It is for this reason that we are called as a community, as the Church, and let us not forget, let us never forget: the Spirit of Christ has preceded us in the heart of every Muslim that we will be able to meet.¹⁰¹

However, this reduction, based on the anthropological approach, should not be made too hastily. *Gaudium et Spes* 39 clearly distinguishes between human progress and Christ's Kingdom. John Paul II himself rejected a total identification when he said: "And with all genuinely religious people the Church continues her pilgrimage through history towards the eternal contemplation of God in the splendour of his glory."¹⁰² This seems to imply that there are people who are not genuinely religious and who do not continue the pilgrimage towards eschatological hope. There is no biblical justification for using the word "kingdom" to replace or bypass the Church in history. However, the

⁹⁹ In this respect, Dupuis seemed to break the tight bond between Christology and ecclesiology. He explained that LG 16 (*ordinantur*) means that "the members of the other religious traditions can be saved through Jesus Christ *without belonging in whatever way to the Church...*" Dupuis 1999, 349. (Emphasis added) SNC/PCID documentation does not support this position.

¹⁰⁰ See DS 293, and DS 403–411.

¹⁰¹ "La difficulté, le 'mur musulman', nous oblige à redécouvrir en profondeur notre être communautaire chrétien. Il nous renvoie constamment au Christ: à sa parole, mais surtout à son être 'dialogal': renouer le dialogue entre Dieu et son Peuple, dépasser les durcissements établis dans ce Peuple, élargir les frontières du Royaume... C'est à cela que nous sommes appelés en communauté, en Eglise et n'oublions pas, n'oublions jamais: l'Esprit du Christ nous a précédé dans le coeur de tout musulman que nous pourrions rencontrer." Stamer 1980, 327. (Tr. by RJ).

¹⁰² John Paul II 1999d, 135 = John Paul II 1999h, 309.

precise contours of God's Kingdom with the return of Christ cannot be fully known.¹⁰³

Some vital questions arise. Where is the specificity of the Reign of God? Where is the discernment necessary to distinguish that which belongs to the Reign of God, and what not? *Gaudium et Spes* 39 cited above offers no help when it states only that "earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the kingdom of God."¹⁰⁴ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2820 admits the problem, but it does not give any answer: "By a discernment according to the Spirit, Christians have to distinguish between the growth of the Reign of God and the progress of the culture and society in which they are involved. This distinction is not a separation." However, what is meant with the "discernment according to the Spirit" is not explained. In the end, everything remains within the mystery of God. As stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 865: "The kingdom has come in the person of Christ and grows mysteriously in the hearts of those incorporated into him, until its full eschatological manifestation."

In SNC/PCID documentation there is undoubtedly a tension between the anthropological turn and the classical theological approach when it is said that the continuous widening of horizons of humanity's existence gives to Christians the dimensions for their understanding of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and that the implantation of the Church is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom, as well as everything that contributes to truth, justice, peace, and communion makes the Kingdom come.¹⁰⁵ The dialectical tension is explicitly admitted in two places at least. Pietro Rossano said that the "distinction between Israel and peoples, between Church and mankind is, therefore, a permanent note in the economy of salvation and requires from the Christian a dialectical relationship with the religions."¹⁰⁶ Michael

¹⁰³ Viviano 2003, 175.

¹⁰⁴ GS 39 1966, 237. The Latin text is as follows: "Ideo, licet progressus terrenus a Regni Christi augmento sedulo distinguendus sit, in quantum tamen ad societatem humanam melius ordinandam conferre potest, Regni Dei magnopere interest."

¹⁰⁵ "D'ailleurs l'élargissement continu des horizons d'existence de l'humanité donne des dimensions sans cesse croissantes à notre regard sur la venue du Règne de Dieu. ... *L'implantation de l'Eglise est un des signes de la venue du Royaume*. Mais tout ce qui contribue à la vérité, à [sic] la justice [sic] à la Paix et à la communion fait aussi advenir le Royaume." Teissier 1979, 155, 156.

¹⁰⁶ Rossano 1978a, 36.

Fitzgerald, concerning *Dialogue and Proclamation*, shares the same view: “Other aspects of DP found to be positive are the affirmation of the relationship between the Kingdom and other religions, the emphasis on the Holy Spirit, the fact that proclamation is seen to involve the whole person, and the idea that dialogue and proclamation are to be held in a harmonious, fruitful tension.”¹⁰⁷ The dialectical relation between the Reign of God and humanity is due to the tension (or “distinction”, as P. Rossano says) between theo-logy and anthro-po-logy. Interreligious dialogue has an anthropological and theological foundation. This also means a tension between dialogue and mission, as well as between dialogue and proclamation.¹⁰⁸ These themes will be dealt with in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Fitzgerald 1993, 25.

¹⁰⁸ The concept ‘Kingdom of God’ is understood differently in Roman Catholic and Protestant missiology, especially by the Protestant evangelical denominations. “Roman Catholics would expect God’s mercy to be exercised effectively in benevolent action of his grace for the majority of humankind, unless they specifically reject his offer. Such a position gives them cause for confidence. Evangelicals consider that this view has no explicit biblical justification, and that it would tend to diminish the evangelistic zeal of the Church. Evangelicals are therefore less optimistic about the salvation of those who have no personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ.” *The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission* 1986, 8.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL NECESSITY

The anthropological foundations of interreligious dialogue

Vatican II is said to give two reasons for interreligious dialogue: one social and the other theological.¹ The starting points of SNC / PCID-fostered interreligious dialogue are that all human beings are naturally religious and that their dignity is not violable.² Thus, it is no surprise that interreligious dialogue is described as an anthropological necessity.³ Interreligious encounter helps an individual to grow as a human being and helps him or her to better know and understand the truth and to live by it. The unity of human nature and the quest for truth are given as philosophical-anthropological foundations.⁴ Dialogue can even purify and deepen one's faith,⁵ and it opens the door to mutual enrichment. It is also affirmed that simply knowing more about other religious traditions will deepen one's own faith.⁶ These human- and subject-oriented affirmations also reveal existentialist and personalist aspects in the foundations of dialogue in SNC / PCID documentation.

¹ *Zago* 1987, 151. Cf. NA 1.

² "Après avoir noté que l'homme naturellement religieux est le fondement et la base du dialogue, nous nous demandons: comment approcher cet homme..." *Marella* 1969a, 12 = *Marella* 1969b, 14; "To offend against man is, most certainly, to offend against God." *John Paul II* 2002d, 47; "Man is the primary and fundamental way of the Church." *Arinze* 1985b, 117.

³ *Zago* 1984, 267.

⁴ *A Guide for Teaching* 2004, 42. In "Notes for Teachers" it is said: "From their basic knowledge of the philosophy of human nature (*philosophical anthropology*) the students should already be aware of the essential equality of all human beings in their nature and dignity. Show them how this constitutes the most natural foundation for interreligious dialogue. Similarly, the fundamental orientation of the human intellect to Truth, which is one but different in its manifestation, makes interreligious dialogue both necessary and possible." *A Guide for Teaching* 2004, 42. (Emphasis added).

⁵ *Zago* 1984, 267.

⁶ *Reflections on Interreligious Marriage* 1997, 334. Cited also in PD 96 1997, 334.

A person has a value as a subject who has entered into a dialogic relationship, whose experiences can be an enrichment for the other as well, and who, theologically speaking, is a participant in the history of salvation and belongs to the sphere of general revelation. In addition, he or she has an inalienable freedom—a major theme in existentialism.⁷

Among postconciliar documents, there seems to be a heavier emphasis in *Dialogue and Mission* on anthropological-personalist ideas as a foundation of dialogue than in *Dialogue and Proclamation*. The latter seems to shift slightly away from the position of *Dialogue and Mission* towards a more theological position, even though anthropology still plays an important role in it.⁸ *Dialogue and Proclamation* 38 states: “The foundation of the Church’s commitment to dialogue is not merely anthropological but primarily theological.”⁹ As one SNC/PCID document says: “The document [DM] very wisely relates this understanding of the mission of the Church to the unshakable elements of Christian anthropology; human dignity and freedom. . . . dialogue is rooted in the personal nature of man and in the complex, pluralistic situation of the human society.”¹⁰ In SNC/PCID documentation it has been claimed that anthropological research should be given more importance in order to improve the basis for interreligious dialogue.¹¹

⁷ “Dialogue is born from the conviction of the value of the subject as being essentially in relationship to God and to the other, as the depository of values and of experiences which can enrich me, as the object of a history of salvation and of a general revelation, as being gifted with an inalienable freedom which prevents me from considering him simply as the ‘object of mission’.” *Rossano* 1971b, 104.

⁸ E.g. DM 21: “In every person and in every human group there is the aspiration and the need to be considered responsible subjects and to be able to act as such. This is the case whether one regards the need to receive or, even more, when one is conscious of possessing something which is to be communicated. As the human sciences have emphasized, in interpersonal dialogue one experiences one’s own limitations as well as the possibility of overcoming them.”

⁹ DP 38 1994, 103.

¹⁰ *D’Souza* 1985, 151, 152.

¹¹ “Qu’il suffise de signaler que dans les années à venir, il faudrait attacher plus d’importance à la recherche anthropologique afin d’asseoir les bases d’un vrai dialogue pour l’ensemble de l’Eglise.” *Sabanegh* 1984, 312.—The French Roman Catholic Bishops affirm anthropological and theological foundations for interreligious dialogue, and also dialogue and proclamation: “Le dialogue avec des croyants qui se réclament des autres traditions religieuses n’est donc pas facultatif pour nous. Il permet de reconnaître comment la recherche de Dieu et la relation à Dieu façonnent, quoique différemment, une existence humaine. Contrairement à ce que l’on craint parfois, le dialogue entre croyants de religions différentes, quand il porte vraiment sur la recherche et l’expérience de Dieu et sur leurs implications dans l’existence humaine, n’aboutit pas au relativisme. Il appelle plutôt à comprendre davantage comment des

Social and societal reality, too, demand dialogue. John Paul II said: "It is also clear that our firmness in being witnesses of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit does not prevent us from collaborating *in the service of man* with those who belong to other religions."¹² Socio-cultural changes, the interdependence of those living, working, and promoting human welfare together, and the urgency of bringing about peace make contact and methods of dialogue necessary. In this dialogue, religions should favour and stimulate these contacts and methods of dialogue, not oppose them.¹³ Possible and positive consequences of interreligious dialogue are the love of neighbour, respect for the other, overcoming fear and suspicion through developing trust and confidence both within and across various religious communities and faith traditions.¹⁴ Especially the importance of dialogue for genuine peace and harmony is often noted.¹⁵ John Paul II also mentioned the promotion of the dignity of women as one purpose of interreligious encounters.¹⁶ In some circumstances dialogue becomes a means of survival for some small Christian communities, or a possibility for inculturation.¹⁷

One of the aims in dialogue is, according to one SNC / PCID document, to help all partners to become better people.¹⁸ It has been stated that dialogue can consolidate everybody's religious engagement, not in

libertés et des consciences personnelles sont en quête de l'Absolu. *L'annonce de l'Évangile est devenue aujourd'hui inséparable de ce dialogue interreligieux.*" *Les évêques de France* 1999, 30. (Emphasis added).

¹² *John Paul II* 2000m, 5.

¹³ *Žago* 1984, 267.

¹⁴ *Marriage and the Family* 1995, 126.

¹⁵ *D'Souza* 1985, 153.

¹⁶ "*La recherche et la promotion de la dignité de la femme est aussi un domaine particulier pour une rencontre active avec des personnes d'autres traditions religieuses.*" *John Paul II* 1997, 289.

¹⁷ "There are also ecclesiological reasons which are more concrete and urgent. Dialogue is a means of survival for many Christian communities who are a minority living in a closed religious society. It is a condition for setting inculturation in context, and is one way of giving Gospel witness which would otherwise be impossible in many situations." *Žago* 1984, 267.

¹⁸ "The aim of such dialogue is not to 'convert' the other party, nor to make them doubt their own faith. ... It should... help all concerned to find a way to become better people in themselves and to improve their relations with one another ..." *Guidelines* 1969, 9–10. Cf. "Far from being a pretext to dilute or compromise the essence of the Christian faith, engagement in and practice of interreligious dialogue provides an incentive for a Christian to become a better Christian." *Journeying Together* 1999, 124–125. DP 50 (1994, 106), too, implicitly states that dialogue makes Christians better Christians: "They will become increasingly aware of their Christian identity and perceive more clearly the distinctive elements of the Christian message. Their faith will

the sense of their becoming better adherents of their religions, but of encouraging them in the process of conversion to believe in God.¹⁹ It can be asked, on the one hand, whether this means that the forms and rites of a religion should be phenomenologically distinguished from its doctrinal content and its object of faith, so that consolidation means consolidation in religious belief. Were it so, this idea would not be very far from the idea of helping partners to become better people on their own. On the other hand, “conversion to God” is a rather vague expression. In this respect, there seems to be a slight disagreement between John Paul II and SNC / PCID documents. In fact, in 1990 John Paul II gave one of his strongest affirmations in this regard: “It is a contradiction of the Gospel and of the Church’s very nature to assert, as some do, that the Church is only one way of salvation among many, and that her mission towards the followers of other religions should be nothing more than to help them be better followers of those religions.”²⁰

The theological foundations of interreligious dialogue

There is a clear theological foundation for SNC / PCID-fostered interreligious dialogue in the Trinity. John Paul II held that dialogue means, first of all, putting oneself at the service of all humanity and of the one God. One must not stop at easy results. “This commitment [in dialogue] is born from theological virtues and grows with them.”²¹ Theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity—dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have the one and triune God for their origin, their motive, and their object: God known by faith, God hoped in, and God loved for his own sake. When communion and interchange between persons are emphasized in interreligious dialogue, the basis and model for dialogue is the Trinitarian God. In the Trinitarian mystery of the nature of God, Christian revelation allows to

gain new dimensions as they discover the active presence of the mystery of Jesus Christ beyond the visible boundaries of the Church and of the Christian fold.”

¹⁹ *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 46: “Le dialogue, cependant, peut être plus profond, conduisant à une consolidation de l’engagement religieux d’un chacun et à une réponse plus généreuse à l’appel personnel de Dieu. Ceci ne doit pas être compris comme ‘une aide aux musulmans à être de meilleurs musulmans’. C’est plutôt un encouragement à un processus de conversion à Dieu.” Cf. *Fitzgerald* 2005b, 40.

²⁰ *John Paul II* 1990b, 230.

²¹ *John Paul II* 1984c, 124.

see in God a life of communion and interchange.²² For Christians, the most decisive reason for dialogue arises from the doctrine of the Trinity. The triune God remains the model for all Christian relations with non-Christians.²³ The Trinity is thus the source and goal of the Church's evangelizing mission, and of interreligious dialogue, being one of its integrating elements.²⁴ This Trinitarian aspect can be clearly found in SNC / PCID documentation: "The Church's mission is to lead people of every age and race to the Father in the Son through the Holy Spirit."²⁵ The triune God is himself the mystery of communion and dialogue. That is why the Church, rooted in the intratrinitarian love and communion, is missionary by its nature.²⁶

John Paul II said in 1984: "For the Church, dialogue is based on the very life of God, one and triune. God is the father of the entire human family; Christ has joined every person to himself (*Redemptor Hominis*, 13); the Spirit works in each individual..."²⁷ This Trinitarian basis is repeated in 1984 in *Dialogue and Mission*.²⁸ And finally, *Dialogue and Proclamation* 10 states: "*Proclamation* is the communication of the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God for all in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit."²⁹

The theological explanation given for this Trinitarian basis in SNC / PCID documentation is the following: God wants all human beings to

²² DM 22. Cf. *Arinze* 1985b, 114: "The Blessed Trinity is a model of communion and dialogue."

²³ *Zago* 1984, 267; *D'Souza* 1985, 152.

²⁴ *Zago* 2000, 11. Cf. *Mbuka* 1995, 55: "Que la mission soit enracinée dans la Sainte-Trinité signifie principalement que celle-ci est la source, le modèle et la finalité de la mission. Se référant au Nouveau Testament. [sic] en particulier à Mt 28, 19–20, l'*Instrumentum Laboris* rappelle que la mission découle du Père, qui envoie son Fils dans le monde: le Fils envoie le Saint-Esprit pour la continuation de sa mission; l'Esprit-Saint descend sur les apôtres, et les voilà envoyés pour annoncer la Bonne Nouvelle jusqu'aux extrémités de la terre."

²⁵ *Onwubiko* 2002, 23.

²⁶ *John Paul II* 2001e, 53.

²⁷ *John Paul II* 1984c, 123. He continued (p. 123): "... therefore dialogue is also based on love for the human person as such, who is the primary and fundamental way of the Church (*Redemptor Hominis*, 14), and on the bond existing between culture and the religions which people profess."

²⁸ See DM 22–24. "It [*Dialogue and Mission*] suggests the Blessed Trinity as the foundation for dialogue: dialogue flows from the Father, is expressed in the Word made flesh and is made present through the work of the Holy Spirit. This reflection on interreligious dialogue in the context of the Trinity helps Christians understand better how other religious traditions, particularly the theistic religions, are related to Christianity, the religion of the Triune God." *Machado* 2002a, 175.

²⁹ DP 10 1994, 97. Cf. DP 16, 17, 21.

participate in his triune being. God being the Creator and the Father means that the entire human race is one huge family. In his love, he embraces all people and nations.³⁰ Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Saviour of all, has already spread seeds of truth and goodness. God's only Son became man to gather and redeem all humankind. He is the one who reveals to human beings definitively this one God, whom people of all religious traditions have sought from ancient times.³¹ The presence of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, means that all holiness, truth, and goodness come from him. The Spirit actualizes the divine plan of grace in the world and incessantly calls out to every person. The Spirit accompanies the Church and helps it to discern the presence of the signs of the Spirit in the world, and thus the Christian Church does not reject anything which is true and holy in other religions.³² Humanity has one destiny, and it shares one earth.³³

It is clear that this Trinitarian basis is, from the point of view of Christian theology, the only possible basis for the theology of religions and interreligious dialogue, but at the same time this basis entails a lot of hard work in explaining its meaning already to Christians themselves, and this work becomes even more complicated vis-à-vis non-Christians. It would have been much easier to emphasize only the Godhead or God the Creator, or only the Spirit, but in encountering Christology and the three Persons of the Trinity, we enter into speculative theology and specific Christian theology which is much more difficult for non-Christians to understand or to accept.

³⁰ Cf. DM 22: "In God, the Father, we contemplate a pervasive love unlimited by space and time. ... In spite of the sometimes violent manifestation of evil, in the vicissitudes in the life of each individual and every people there is present the power of grace which elevates and redeems."

³¹ Cf. DM 23: "Christ is the Word who enlightens every person because in Him is manifested at the same time the mystery of God and the mystery of mankind (cf. *RH* 8, 10, 11, 13). He is the redeemer present with grace in every human encounter, to liberate us from our selfishness and to make us love one another as he has loved us."

³² *Zago* 1984, 267; *Machado* 2002a, 175. Cf. DM 24: "The Spirit both anticipates and accompanies the path of the church which, nevertheless, feels itself impelled to discern the signs of Her presence, to follow Her wherever She leads and to serve Her as a humble and discreet collaborator."; *John Paul II* 2000m, 4: "The witness of the Spirit is *divine* in itself: it comes *from the depth of the Trinitarian mystery*."

³³ As theological foundations of interreligious dialogue, *A Guide for Teaching* (2004, 42) gives the following: the same God, Creator and Father of all; Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all; the Holy Spirit at work in all; one destiny; sharing one earth; interreligious dialogue as an integral part of mission of the Church.

Be that as it may, the SNC / PCID sees in the Trinitarian mystery the theological foundation of Christian-Muslim relations. But the Trinity is not only the basis for interreligious dialogue, it is also the principle of all Christian spirituality expressed in interreligious encounters. On the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986, Christian Churches gathered together in Duomo San Ruffino, “respecting the Trinitarian originality of their prayer to the Father that always goes through Christ in the Holy Spirit.”³⁴ Trinitarian spirituality means engagement in the love relation of Jesus Christ to his Father, vivified by and lived in the Spirit. If one is converted to the God the Father, if one’s heart is crucified and risen with Christ, if one’s heart is modelled, guided, and dominated by the Holy Spirit, one’s heart is renewed also in its relation to one’s neighbour, Christian or non-Christian.³⁵ In fact, this is nothing other than a return to Augustine, who says: “You see the Trinity if you see the charity.”³⁶

However, there are several difficulties linked to interreligious dialogue, as Cardinal Arinze noted already in 1985: “And after the dialogue euphoria following on the Second Vatican Council, it is no surprise that these difficulties show up themselves more and more.”³⁷ SNC / PCID documentation does not hide the difficulties in Christian-Muslim relations.³⁸ Some conditions must be fulfilled in order to have a fruitful dialogue with Muslims. The first is that prejudices concerning Islam must be overcome. Muslims are very sensitive to what they call islamophobia. The second is religious conviction. Christians who enter into dialogue with Muslims should not be afraid to witness their faith in Jesus Christ. Authentic dialogue is simply not possible if the partners are not ready to share what they hold as the most precious. The third condition is openness to truth. This condition may be the most difficult to the both partners. For Christians, because their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Lord and Saviour of all humanity,

³⁴ Etchegaray 1987, 132.

³⁵ Coda 1999, 230.

³⁶ *De Trinitate* VIII, 8,12: “Imo vero vides Trinitatem, si charitatem vides.” (Tr. by RJ).

³⁷ Arinze 1985b, 131.

³⁸ E.g. “Dans la *Relatio ante disceptationem* on note que ‘l’Islam est décrit dans les documents de ce Synode comme “un partenaire important mais difficile” dans le domaine du dialogue’; ‘par souci de vérité et d’objectivité du côté chrétien, continue la *Relatio ante disceptationem*, il ne serait pas honnête de fermer les yeux sur les nombreux cas de difficultés réelles et sérieuses dans la pratique des relations islamo-chrétiennes.’” Mbuka 1995, 62. Cf. *John Paul II* 2005b, 11.

might give them a feeling of superiority. But this is true for Muslims as well, because they are convinced that they have received the ultimate revelation.³⁹

One of the difficulties is the situation in Muslim countries where political ideas and religion are combined. The indivisibility and totality of the human being in nationalism rooted and cultured in positive religion is, in the opinion of one PCID writer, an “unthinkable aberration from enlightenment, development and scientific rationality.” The writer calls it the major stumbling block to sincere dialogue with the Muslim world, “which still strives to maintain unity of belief with unity of religious worship”.⁴⁰ Many Muslims do not make any distinction between religion and politics. This is a practical difficulty that must also be kept in mind: in Islamic countries there is no representative instance for religion. There are very close ties between state and religion, which means that interreligious dialogue has everywhere political dimensions that depend on local situations.⁴¹ In Asia in particular, Muslims feel that Christians easily abandon their culture and are becoming westernized, whereas Christians feel that Muslims use political power to further Islam and do not accept Christians as citizens who are ready to work for the good of their country.⁴² There are also difficulties concerning Christian-Muslim relations in the past (e.g. the Crusades). Another obstacle is the suspicion concerning the other’s motivation for dialogue.⁴³ One of the special features of interreligious dialogue seems to be that Christians have to take the initiative.⁴⁴ If true, this is

³⁹ *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 48–49.

⁴⁰ *Ejiofor* 1994, 114. Cf. *Borrmans* 1990, 35, 36: “Is space allotted for all? ... Would a ‘Festival of Christian Civilization’ be conceivable in Tripoli or Cairo?”; “One would like to know what Islamic organizations are doing in this respect [working in favour of religious pluralism] in the countries where they are based.”

⁴¹ *Borrmans* 2004a, 22. See also, e.g., GRIC 1986. *Waardenburg* (1979, 268) notes strikingly: “In the study of Muslim views of other religions we have to be aware of the fact, however, that theological judgments constitute only one, albeit an important, factor in the overall attitudes taken toward people of other faiths. Personal, practical, social, and political factors play a role as well in choosing a position for or against a *rapprochement*.”

⁴² *Arinze* 1985b, 133; *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 49.

⁴³ *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 50. *Teissier* (1978, 203) notes: “Dans l’étape présente, les difficultés majeures rencontrées dans le dialogue sont à situer à deux plans différents. D’abord celles qui se rattachent à l’histoire et aux préjugés qu’elle a accumulés entre les deux communautés. Mais cet obstacle une fois dépassé, il en surgit un autre plus fondamental. Les deux sociétés: chrétienne-occidentale et musulmane-maghrébine, ne sont pas dans la même étape psychologique.”

⁴⁴ “It is up to us Christians to take the first step, without stopping to ask ourselves if

somewhat of a burden to Christian-Muslim dialogue. “The word dialogue is unbearable for the majority of Christians [in Chad], because it suggests too much specifically doctrinal dialogue and they do not see any reciprocity on the Muslim side.”⁴⁵

Theological differences in Christian-Muslim encounters are a difficulty.⁴⁶ And still, for John Paul II, specifically in Christian-Muslim encounters, dialogue is the true path, the right way.⁴⁷ The Pope said that in dialogue with Islam, which affirms powerfully the personal absolute who transcends the cosmos and the human being, Christians can bear witness to the Trinitarian God, explaining to Muslims that the three Persons of the Godhead do not diminish divine unity but characterize it.⁴⁸ He said that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity explicitly rejects any form of tritheism or polytheism,⁴⁹ which makes for a significant correspondence between Christianity and Islam. However, he said as well that, in the light of the revelation in Christ, the mysterious oneness of God cannot be reduced to a numerical unity (as in Islam). “The Christian mystery leads us to contemplate in God’s substantial unity the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: each possesses the divine substance whole and indivisible, but each is distinct from the other by virtue of their reciprocal relations.”⁵⁰

what we are trying to do is reasonable from the human point of view.” *Guidelines* 1969, 18.

⁴⁵ “Le mot dialogue est insupportable à la majorité des chrétiens, parce qu’il suggère trop le dialogue spécifiquement doctrinal et qu’ils ne voient pas la réciprocité du côté musulman.” *Karaki* 2003, 425. (Tr. by RJ).

⁴⁶ See, e.g., *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 45, 47.

⁴⁷ The Pope’s discourse to Muslims of Cameroon in Yaoundé on August 12, 1985. Cited in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 43.—The only non-Christians named by DM are Muslims, and they in the context of collaboration, referring to NA 3, AG 11, 12, 15, 21, ES 107–109 and John Paul II’s discourses (DM 32).

⁴⁸ *John Paul II* 1999f, 296.

⁴⁹ *John Paul II* 1999c, 87 = *John Paul II* 1999g, 304. He referred to the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215: “... et ideo in Deo solummodo Trinitas est, non quaternitas; quia quaelibet trium personarum est illa res, videlicet substantia, essentia seu natura divina: quae sola est universorum principium, praeter quod aliud inveniri non potest: et illa res non est generans, neque genita, nec procedens, sed est Pater, qui generat, et Filius, qui gignitur, et Spiritus Sanctus, qui procedit: ut distinctiones sint in personis, et unitas in natura.” DS 804.

⁵⁰ *John Paul II* 1999c, 86–87 = *John Paul II* 1999g, 304.

Evangelization, proclamation, and dialogue

A lot of confusion in the Christian theology of religions as well as in interreligious dialogue is due to the vagueness of the language used. In fact, what is precisely meant by ‘dialogue’? And what is the relation of dialogue to evangelization and proclamation?⁵¹ What definitions are given for the terms ‘evangelization’, ‘proclamation’, and ‘dialogue’? Pietro Rossano seems to be right when he says: “The Christian who has received a communication from God is called to pass on and spread this communication: dialogue, witness, evangelization, mission are different but actual degrees of this process begun by Jesus and by the Apostles.”⁵² Nevertheless, Gavin D’Costa suggests that “the often cited distinctions between mission, dialogue, and inculturation are fluid and unhelpful”.⁵³ There is a gradual development and a certain overlapping of terms, as will be seen.

‘Evangelization’ in Vatican II documents is linked to the concept of ‘missions’, which term usually refers to those “particular undertakings by which the heralds of the gospel are sent out by the Church and go forth into the whole world to carry out the task of preaching the gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ.”⁵⁴ *Ad Gentes* 6 states that the specific purpose of missionary activity is evangelization, i.e., the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where there is not yet one.⁵⁵ It has been said that ‘evangelization’ in Vatican II documents remains a rather narrow concept, meaning mostly proclamation of the Gospel, planting the Church, and inviting others to join the Church. It has also been said that Vatican II used the terms ‘evange-

⁵¹ As *Blockhausen* (1999, 339) notes in the context of Christian-Muslim dialogue: “Que soit clarifiée l’expression *dialogue et annonce*”. *Labbé* (1996, 262) notes: “Cependant, l’usage d’*évangélisation* n’a jamais cessé de se partager entre un sens générique et un sens spécifique, celui de l’annonce, entraînant un risque de confusion sur la fonction du dialogue. Celui-ci est-il un élément constitutif de l’évangélisation ou un simple moyen de l’annonce? *Le flottement du mot peut rendre incertaine la doctrine.*” (Emphasis added).

⁵² *Rossano* 1971b, 104.

⁵³ *D’Costa* 2000, 131. He is right when he says (p. 131): “This is because if the church must learn another language as its first language, if it is to engage in dialogue and mission, then *both activities are intrinsically related*. In any engagement, even the act of understanding, questions and criticism as well as affirmation will surface. In this sense, *mission is impossible without dialogue, and vice versa.*” (Emphasis added).

⁵⁴ AG 6 1966, 591.

⁵⁵ AG 6 1966, 591. See also, e.g., LG 5, 9, 35; GS 39, 40–45, 91, 92; UR 2; DH 14; AA 5.

lization' and 'mission', often combining them.⁵⁶ As to 'dialogue', it is well known that Vatican II documents, even *Nostra Aetate*, do not define the word, even though they use it. *Gaudium et Spes* 21 uses the word in connection with working for "the rightful betterment of this world", and *Dignitatis Humanae* 3 in connection with searching after truth,⁵⁷ indicating thus manners in which dialogue is to be carried out. Paul VI's encyclical letter *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) speaks about dialogue, whereas—amazingly enough—his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) is silent about interreligious dialogue as such. Paul VI defines dialogue as "a method of accomplishing the apostolic mission. It is an example of the art of spiritual communication."⁵⁸ Dialogue is also a means for the Church to share Gospel values with others. It must be preceded by an attempt to find out what evangelical values already exist in different cultures and traditions.⁵⁹

The marked advantage of the postconciliar *Dialogue and Proclamation* is that it defines the terms it uses (DP 8–13). It says, without defining 'mission(s)' separately, that "*evangelizing mission*, or more simply, *evangelization*, refers to the mission of the Church in its totality."⁶⁰ Then it goes on to explain that in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the term 'evangelization' is taken both in a narrow and in a broad sense (EN 18, EN 22). In *Dialogue and Proclamation* 'evangelizing mission' is used in its broad sense, whereas the more specific understanding is given by the term 'proclamation'.⁶¹ However, it is also said that proclamation is "the foundation, center, and summit of evange-

⁵⁶ So, e.g., Dupuis 1999, 359.

⁵⁷ GS 21: "Ecclesia vero, etiamsi atheismum omnino reiicit, sincere tamen profitetur homines omnes, credentes et non credentes, ad hunc mundum, in quo communiter vivunt, recte aedificandum opem conferre debere: quod certe fieri non potest sine sincero et prudenti colloquio." DH 3: "Veritas autem inquirenda est modo dignitati humanae personae eiusque naturae sociali proprio, libera scilicet inquisitione, ope magisterii seu institutionis, communicationis atque *dialogi*..." (Emphasis added).

⁵⁸ ES 81. The Latin text is as follows: "Itaque colloquium quasi ratio quaedam est putandum apostolici obeundi muneris, atque animorum iungendorum veluti instrumentum." AAS 56 1964, 644.

⁵⁹ "Ideally and theoretically the different aspects of the dialogue process in the encounters between traditional religions and Christianity should begin by an attempt to become aware of what is already evangelical, i.e., a cultural response to the presence of the Spirit." Stowers 2002, 337.

⁶⁰ DP 8 1994, 96. "Evangelization is a single, but complex reality." Tomko 1991, 206.

⁶¹ Cf. Kasper 2002, 302: "It [evangelisation] implies presence and witness, prayer and liturgy, proclamation and catechesis, dialogue and social work."

lization (cf. EN 27).⁶² ‘Proclamation’ means thus “the communication of the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God for all in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.” It also means “an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church.”⁶³ In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Redemptoris Missio*, and *Dialogue and Proclamation*, priority is systematically given to proclamation over every other form of the Church’s activity.⁶⁴ Proclamation is urgent (DP 66). Pope John Paul II, too, named the proclamation of Christ first. After the proclamation of Christ come witness and dialogue.⁶⁵ This is the position of Cardinal Arinze as well.⁶⁶ However, some SNC / PCID statements, emphasizing the search of the Spirit’s activity and the values of the Kingdom, seem to reduce or anthropologize proclamation. This happens when the proclamation of Christ is identified with the call to the values of the Kingdom of God: “The purpose of the Church’s proclaiming the message of Christ—which is its central mission—is to call man to the values of the Kingdom of God.”⁶⁷

‘Dialogue’ has many meanings, and written dialogues on religious and philosophical subjects have a long history. In everyday use, the word “dialogue” may mean reciprocal communication: it means a spoken (or written) conversation or discussion between two or more participants, etymologically coming into English from Greek “*dialogos*”, “con-

⁶² DP 10 1994, 97.

⁶³ DP 10 1994, 97.

⁶⁴ *Tomko* 1991, 207. Cf. EN 27, RM 44, and DP 76. Cf. *Dupuis’s* (1992b, 171–172) statement: “... Vatican II recommended dialogue with the other religious traditions (*NA* 2; *GS* 92), but without stating that it is an integral part of the evangelizing mission of the Church. This is clearly affirmed by both RM and DP, following the lead of DM. Furthermore, some ambiguity in RM’s terminology notwithstanding, both RM and DP develop a broad concept of evangelization, which was not yet found in Vatican II; both assert, though in different ways, that dialogue cannot be reduced to a ‘means’ for proclamation, but has value in itself.”

⁶⁵ *John Paul II* 2000j, 190 = *John Paul II* 2000n, 27. Cf. *Celebrating Pentecost* 2000, 2.

⁶⁶ “A Christian who meets people of other religions is first of all a witness to Christ. Through that Christian, the other believers should see, hear, experience, touch, speak with and work with Christ. ... It follows therefore that interreligious dialogue is just one of the elements in the entire evangelizing mission of the Church, of which proclamation of Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour of all humanity is the high point.” *Arinze* 2002c, 58.

⁶⁷ B 43 1980 89–90 (Final Statement, BIRA II). Cf. DM 11: “Other passages of the same Council have stressed that the mission of the church is also to work for the extension of the Kingdom and its values among all men and women.” See also *Fitzgerald* 2005b, 43–44.

versation". Second, it may mean an attitude of respect and friendship which "should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the Church."⁶⁸ Third, it means "all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment."⁶⁹ This includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions. The third sense is the one adopted by *Dialogue and Proclamation*, which uses the term 'dialogue' to describe one of the integral elements of the Church's evangelizing mission.⁷⁰ The third sense is the meaning given by *Dialogue and Mission*, which document presents, among other things, the forms of dialogue, and proposes, for the first time in an official Roman Catholic text, a definition for the term 'dialogue': it is "a manner of acting, an attitude and a spirit."⁷¹ *Dialogue and Mission* 29–35 also lists four forms of dialogue: dialogue of life, dialogue of deeds and collaboration, dialogue of specialists, and dialogue of religious experience.⁷² *Dialogue and Proclamation* 45–46 adds a fifth form: interreligious dialogue at the level of culture. *Dialogue and Proclamation* 82 says of dialogue that it "does not constitute the whole mission of the Church, that it cannot simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented toward proclamation insofar as the dynamic process of the Church's evangelizing mission reaches in it its climax and its fullness."⁷³ Pope John Paul II spoke of dialogue of doctrinal field and dialogue of daily relationship, as well as of dialogue of life and dialogue of works.

⁶⁸ DP 9 1994, 96.

⁶⁹ DP 9 1994, 96, citing DM 3.

⁷⁰ DP 9 1994, 96. Cf. Tomko 1991, 206. For Paul VI, missionaries are, above all, witnesses (*Paul VI* 1968c, 125).

⁷¹ "Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude and a spirit which guides one's conduct." DM 29. Cf. the Pope's discourse to religious leaders in Jakarta on October 10, 1989. Cited in *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 27.

⁷² The list of four forms of dialogue is repeated by other PCID documentation on other occasions, e.g. *Journeying Together* 1999, 127; *John Paul II* 1999d, 132–133 = *John Paul II* 1999h, 308–309, and *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 47. *Witherup* (2005, 292) notes that "there is a certain sequence in this listing [four forms of dialogue]. one [sic] cannot simply jump to the fourth type of dialogue without some acquaintance with the other forms of dialogue. Dialogue is a slow, deliberate process that begins with getting to know your 'neighbor' better and then proceeds to a deeper sharing of values and beliefs." *Guidelines* (1969, 8) gives a somewhat different list: occasional dialogue, professional dialogue, cultural dialogue, doctrinal, political, social and "other forms" of dialogue, and religious dialogue, which can be subdivided into doctrinal, historical, exegetical, spiritual, and other forms.

⁷³ DP 82 1994, 116.

Because dialogue finds its place within the Church's salvific mission, the Pope called it also dialogue of salvation. Dialogue is not an option, because all Christians are called to it.⁷⁴

It is important to note that there is an inner development of the concept of 'dialogue' in SNC / PCID documentation. In 1969 Cardinal Marella spoke of dialogue, "*which is not yet mission*, which is distinct from evangelization, but which collaborates with the plans of God by promoting comprehension, communion, fraternity, and unity of the human family."⁷⁵ Pietro Rossano saw dialogue as a preparatory phase of mission, because dialogue is to be carried out in a spirit of witness, avoiding the danger of syncretism, relativism, and agnosticism. Consequently, dialogue prepares mission.⁷⁶ In fact, for Marella and Rossano, dialogue was not yet an integral part of the Church's evangelizing mission. In that sense *Dialogue and Mission* was a significant development. According to *Dialogue and Mission* and John Paul II, dialogue is an essential part of the Church's evangelizing mission.⁷⁷ "One of the most important features of DM is that it situates dialogue as an essential element of the Church's mission, alongside presence and witness, liturgical life and prayer, and proclamation (cf. DM 13)."⁷⁸ *Dialogue and Proclamation* gives the following forms of the Church's mission: proclamation, pres-

⁷⁴ *John Paul II* 1984c, 124–125. Cf. *John Paul II* 1997, 289. Cf. "La processus de l'inculturation et le dialogue interreligieux entrent aussi dans le cadre de l'activité missionnaire." *John Paul II* 1997, 287.

⁷⁵ "... un dialogue qui n'est pas encore mission, qui est distinct de l'évangélisation, mais qui collabore aux desseins de Dieu en promouvant la compréhension, la communion, la fraternité et l'unité de la famille humaine." *Marella* 1969a, 10 = *Marella* 1969b, 12. (Tr. by RJ).

⁷⁶ "1) There can no longer be mission without dialogue; every mission activity must now be carried out in a dialogical spirit of respect, of service, of attention, of esteem and of opening towards our interlocutors. 2) There can be a dialogue which, in its nature, in its means and in its intrinsic aims is not yet really and truly mission; but it is already a Christian activity which tends to carry God's plan into effect initially (to unite men among themselves in Christ), and it is carried out in a spirit of witness, avoiding the danger of syncretism, of relativism and agnosticism. In this sense it prepares mission and is preliminary to it." *Rossano* 1971b, 106.

⁷⁷ "In fact, interreligious dialogue is an integral part of the Church's evangelizing mission (cf. CCC, n. 856)." *John Paul II* 1999f, 295. Cf. *Picachy* 1983, 150.—It is interesting to note how similar the Roman Catholic concept of interreligious dialogue is to the Lutheran concept of interfaith dialogue: "Interfaith dialogue... is an integral part of the mission of the church." *Mission in Context* 2004, 40. However, as elsewhere, it can be asked what the exact meaning of the same words is in two different theological contexts.

⁷⁸ *Fitzgerald* 2002a, 210. Cf. *Arinze* 1991, 201.

ence, witness, work for integral human development, and dialogue.⁷⁹ One PCID document notes: “There is more to the mission to which a Christian is called than only proclamation. There is solidarity to solve common problems of life; there is dialogue to understand each other and journey together; there is commitment to build a more just and human society, there is worship to God which must be expressed also socially, there is deepening faith and the effort to render it both challenging and inculturated.”⁸⁰ Another way would be to say: presence, service, dialogue, proclamation, and sacramentalization, “the last two corresponding to the ecclesial activities which in the narrower, but traditional, view constituted evangelization”.⁸¹ The aim of the mission is that Christ may be known and his Kingdom may come.⁸²

Dialogue, mission, and conversion

Dialogue and Mission 13 states: “Mission is thus presented in the consciousness of the church as a single but complex and articulated reality.”⁸³ What are then the relations between dialogue and mission? John Paul II answers: “It is clear, then, that interreligious dialogue can never be a substitute for the proclamation and propagation of the faith, which constitute the primary goal of the Church’s preaching, catechesis and mission.”⁸⁴ He also says: “In the centre of missionary activity is the proclamation of Christ, the knowledge and experience of his love. The Church cannot escape this explicit order of Jesus, because she would deprive men of the ‘Good News’ of salvation.”⁸⁵ In these two papal citations, in spite of some terminological overlapping, at least three things

⁷⁹ DP 76 1994, 114.

⁸⁰ *Zago* 2000, 13.

⁸¹ *Dupuis* 1999, 363.

⁸² *Zago* 2000, 13.

⁸³ In the original text: “La missione si presenta nella coscienza della Chiesa come una realtà unitaria ma complessa e articolata.” AAS 76 1984, 819.

⁸⁴ *John Paul II* 2004a, 11. Cf. DP 75 1994, 114: “Yet Pope Paul VI made it quite clear that evangelization will always entail as the simultaneous foundation, core and summit of its dynamism a clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all as a gift of God’s kindness and mercy (EN 27).”

⁸⁵ “Au centre de l’activité missionnaire se trouve l’annonce du Christ, la connaissance et l’expérience de son amour. L’Eglise ne peut pas se soustraire à ce mandat explicite de Jésus, car elle priverait les hommes de la ‘Bonne Nouvelle’ du salut.” *John Paul II* 2001e, 52–53. (Tr. by RJ).

become clear. First of all, as already seen, proclamation has priority over any other Church missionary activity. As one part of the Church's mission, dialogue is subordinated to proclamation, i.e., dialogue cannot be its substitute. Second, the Pope speaks of explicit ("knowledge") proclamation. For dialogue, this means that the aspect of explicit witnessing of God's love in Jesus Christ cannot be avoided. Third, the principal duty of Christians is to open doors towards Christ for all peoples and nations through proclamation and witnessing. This means that mission is not an option, it is an obligation. Whenever proclamation is not possible, prayer, example, dialogue, and humanitarian service are left open.⁸⁶ John Paul II is quite clear when he says that the Church cannot forgo its missionary activity among the peoples of the world.⁸⁷

The dialectical relationship between dialogue and mission is seen, e.g., in *Dialogue and Mission* 17. It cites the norms given by Francis of Assisi, in the *Regula non bullata* (1221), which show that there is an interaction between interreligious dialogue and mission in Christian-Muslim encounters. "The friars who 'through divine inspiration would desire to go among the Muslims... can establish spiritual contact with them (Muslims) in two ways: a way which does not raise arguments and disputes, but rather they should be subject to every human creature for the love of God and confess themselves to be Christians. The other way is that when they see that it would be pleasing to the Lord, they should announce the word of God'."⁸⁸

However, in spite of all declarations, in reality there is an inherent tension between dialogue and mission.⁸⁹ What causes this tension, if dialogue is part of the Church's evangelizing mission? One reason may

⁸⁶ "... notre devoir principal est de leur ouvrir les portes vers le Christ, à travers l'annonce et le témoignage. Si, parfois, la proclamation de l'Évangile et l'adhésion publique au Christ sont impossibles pour diverses raisons, il reste toujours au chrétien la possibilité de collaborer à l'oeuvre du salut à travers la prière, l'exemple, le dialogue, le service humanitaire." *John Paul II* 2001c, 53.

⁸⁷ *John Paul II* 2001d, 47.—*Shorter* (2003, 679) says: "Although it [*Redemptoris Missio*] situates the Church's mission firmly in the *missio Dei*, the love and mercy of God, it cannot be denied that a strong emphasis on proclamation renders difficult the integration of dialogue in the missionary task."

⁸⁸ In Chapter XVI: "Those who are going among the Saracens and other non-believers". These "rules" might have been in the mind of Francis of Assisi before the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). See *Dupuis* 1999, 104–105.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., *Géffré* 1969.—The Protestant *D. Bosch* (1996, 487–489) says that dialogue and mission are not entirely identical nor entirely opposed to each other. Both need faith commitment, but they seem to be in tension. On the one hand the Christian message is unique and therefore mission is justified, on the other hand dialogue is seen

be the confusion between the semantic meaning of terms and their actual use. Once again, the equivocal character of the term 'dialogue' causes this tension. In fact, some people engaged in dialogue (practice) seem to avoid the term 'dialogue', and speak rather, e.g., about encounters, or meeting others.⁹⁰ However, dialogue is always based on some foundations, and good practice has to be based on good doctrine.⁹¹ For Pietro Rossano, dialogue is not and is not even intended to be mission, as meant by the term 'mission'.⁹² He also affirms that mission concentrates on the level of the message (sharing and communicating the truth of the triune God), whereas dialogue concentrates on the level of ideas, religious experiences, ethical values, human problems and themes, concerns of the present day, passing on to the level of concrete collaboration.⁹³

Previously mission was specialized; its task was to win converts and establish local Churches. However, postconciliar documents have made mission the general task of every believer, involving a more complex combination of proclamation, witness, dialogue, and service. Mission has become more fundamental, but at the same time less well-defined.⁹⁴ *Dialogue and Mission* maintains the tension between dialogue and mission.⁹⁵ Dialogue in itself has this internal tension between human and spiritual.⁹⁶ "The Church, without forgetting that her primary mission is a spiritual one, always seeks to collaborate with individual nations

as a suitable form of getting along with non-Christian religions. These two intentions create a tension which no Christian church has been able to reduce.

⁹⁰ E.g. "God however had foreseen for him [Francis] not martyrdom or the conversion of the Sultan, but an *encounter*, an encounter on the other's own ground." *Jeusset* 2000, 53.

⁹¹ "Orthopraxis has to be based on orthodoxy." *Arinze* 2002c, 57.

⁹² *Rossano* 1967, 144.

⁹³ *Rossano* 1979b, 102–103.

⁹⁴ *Schreier* 1994, 117. A statement by *Fitzgerald* (2005b, 43–44) illustrates this change: "Il en résulte que la mission n'est pas motivée par l'idée qu'il faut sauver les personnes de la perte, mais qu'elle s'enracine dans le souci de présenter positivement Jésus-Christ ainsi que toute la richesse qu'Il a apportée à l'humanité par Sa vie et par l'Eglise qui est sa présence continuée." Cf. *Dupuis* 1991, 76.

⁹⁵ "*Dialogue and Mission* holds the creative tension between exhorting Christians to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ, namely, to offer to everyone the possibility of salvation by inviting people through baptism to become members of the Body of Christ, the Church, and to encourage Christians to engage in dialogue with people of all religions. There is no conflict between the two." *Machado* 2002a, 175.

⁹⁶ "Dialogue is the patient art of listening to one another, of understanding one another, of recognizing the human and spiritual profile of the other." *Quattrucci* 2002, 68.

and people of goodwill in promoting the dignity and advancement of the human person.”⁹⁷ Diverse positions have been held even in the SNC / PCID itself.⁹⁸ The tension between the evangelizing mission and the dialogic attitude—without missionary aim—is recognized.⁹⁹ However, on the practical level this tension can lead some Christians into untenable positions.¹⁰⁰

Another, more specific reason can be found in dialogue’s relation to conversion, which is an essential aspect of the relation between inter-religious dialogue and mission. Conversion in mission and conversion in dialogue do not have exactly the same meaning. “In a similar way, the term *mission*, in its proper sense, refers to conversion from false gods and idols to the true and one God, who revealed himself in salvation history with His elected people.”¹⁰¹ Unlike in mission and in proclamation,¹⁰² dialogue’s aim is not conversion, at least not conversion to Christ or to Christian faith.¹⁰³ And this creates tension. Dialogue is thus

⁹⁷ *John Paul II* 1981a, 2. The words were pronounced at the international airport of Karachi on February 16, 1981. Compare with his words pronounced at the international airport of Amman on March 20, 2000: “The Catholic Church, without forgetting that her primary mission is a spiritual one, is always eager to cooperate with individual nations and people of goodwill in promoting and advancing the dignity of the human person.” *John Paul II* 2000g, 169.

⁹⁸ “The theological understanding of the relation between dialogue and mission has not always been clear. Even in the Secretariat itself various positions have been held, but always with the intention of promoting dialogue and safeguarding mission.” *Zago* 1984, 268.

⁹⁹ “... la tension subsiste toujours entre le souci de l’Évangélisation, inné au cœur du chrétien, et l’attitude d’un dialogue sans visée missionnaire immédiate.” *Sabaneigh* 1985, 293. Cf. *Rossano* 1981b, 215: “... is the offer of dialogue by the Church to remain a dream and a utopia? Is it a monologue which finds no real response in the one addressed? ... And the question goes further: what could be added to the Church’s appeal in order to make it penetrate better the heart of our Moslem brothers?”

¹⁰⁰ *Arinze* 1985b, 131. He continued (p. 131): “Some can come dangerously near to holding that all religions are essentially the same, that everybody is an anonymous Christian, that every religion is equally a way to salvation and that the era of missionary work and conversion should now give way to a new emphasis: that of respectful dialogue and fraternal co-existence of all religions. Others are tempted to the other extreme: not to see much good in non Christian [sic] religions and to regard inter-religious dialogue as a marginal exercise which busy bishops and priests cannot afford.” Arinze’s rejecting position to Rahner’s theology is to be noted.

¹⁰¹ *Kasper* 2002, 302.

¹⁰² E.g. AG 13. “All Christian mission is directed to conversion.” *D’Souza* 1985, 153.

¹⁰³ E.g. B 55 1984, 41–42. Cardinal Marella said in 1964: “Il [le Secrétariat] ne vise pas à développer directement un effort de conversion... La première tâche que nous proposons, c’est un plus grand effort de connaissance mutuelle... Nous nous placerons sur le plan de la loi naturelle, allant vers les autres dans le plus grand respect de

perhaps the only ecclesially defined activity of which it is said that its aim is not conversion to Christ or to Christian faith,¹⁰⁴ although it is not opposed to it, because the Christian is always ready to witness of his or her faith.¹⁰⁵ As the Church is inherently missionary,¹⁰⁶ how can it be that one of its activities does not aim to Christian faith and to conversion to Christ? Attempts have been made to solve this tension saying that in dialogue there is a concern for conversion, not to Christianity, but to a turning to God¹⁰⁷ or to a greater submission to God, or to the universal love of God,¹⁰⁸ to a more sincere search for truth, and to a more positive response to the concrete and constant calls of the Spirit.¹⁰⁹ Or saying that “dialogue is seen for all as a constant call

leur culture, de leur civilisation, de leur religion, de leurs traditions.” Cited in in *La Documentation Catholique*, 7 juin 1964, N° 1425, p. 698. Cf. *Masson* (1989, 334), on the first steps of the SNC/PCID: “... il a donc fallu un certain temps pour bien comprendre, ressentir et faire comprendre que la nouvelle initiative n’impliquait pas de visée de conversion, qu’elle avait seulement pour but sincère le rapprochement des personnes, l’échange des informations, la communication des expériences et par contrecoup la disparition de pas mal de préjugés mutuels.” *Fitzgerald* (2005b, 43) emphasizes: “Je le répète: le dialogue n’a pas pour fin d’amener les gens à se convertir, mais en même temps l’Eglise ne peut pas ne pas annoncer le Christ et ne pas inviter à entrer en son sein par le baptême.” Undoubtedly, there is an undeniable effect on those who engage in interreligious dialogue: “Même si le but du dialogue n’est pas d’essayer de se convertir l’un l’autre, il n’en demeure pas moins qu’on ne sort pas du dialogue comme on y entre.” *Ploux* 2004, 51.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. *Rossano* 1967, 144: “It is a question, then, of a Church activity, which serves an essential purpose of the Church, but is not subordinated intentionally to mission or to conversion.”

¹⁰⁵ *Arinze* 1985b, 112; *Marella* 1969a, 11 = *Marella* 1969b, 12: “Ce dialogue, dont la fin et l’objet semblent distincts de ceux de la mission, est cependant imprégné en profondeur par l’esprit du témoignage chrétien...”

¹⁰⁶ “The Church must not be silent. The Gospel must be proposed to all. The necessity to announce this Gospel follows from the very nature of the Church.” *Arinze* 2000r, 8. Cf. *Arinze* 1985b, 135: “Christians must keep alive the conviction that dialogue is part of the mission of the Church, that the apostolate of the Church is not only the intra-ecclesial one of working for conversions and building up the Christian community, but also the extra-ecclesial ministry of interreligious dialogue in the service of the Kingdom of God.”—RM 32 (1994, 22) states: “To say that the whole Church is missionary does not preclude the existence of a specific mission *ad gentes*...”

¹⁰⁷ E.g. *Picachy* 1983, 153: “Always and everywhere, conversion—turning to God—starts from Him and is directed to Him.”; *Seraim* 1986, 259: “Il s’agit d’une conversion du coeur, d’un changement de mentalité. ... Finalement il s’agit d’une conversion à Dieu dans la situation où l’on se trouve.”

¹⁰⁸ “Nous savons qu’une vraie rencontre avec nos frères nous convertit les uns les autres à l’Amour de Dieu qui est universel.” *Teissier* 1978, 204.

¹⁰⁹ *Zago* 1984, 268.

to conversion”,¹¹⁰ or that “the religions can appeal for the conversion of the human heart”,¹¹¹ or that “the conversion of heart belongs to every authentic religious experiences and traditions”,¹¹² failing to specify what kind of conversion is meant. Especially, when ‘conversion’ is made a common religious phenomenon, it certainly loses its specific Christian character. In other words, the central Christological issue of Christianity is avoided.¹¹³ However, a common “conversion to God” cannot exclude the particular conversion to the Trinitarian God through Jesus the Christ.¹¹⁴

In SNC / PCID documentation the term ‘conversion’ is set in one particular context, i.e. the context of peace. “Peace must begin with interior conversion of heart...”¹¹⁵ A harmonious working together requires the conversion of hearts, which should be an ongoing process.¹¹⁶ “Since wars originate in the heart before they are translated into armaments, the conversion of hearts is where the priority should be placed. And religion is necessary for this conversion.”¹¹⁷ There is no peace without conversion of hearts.¹¹⁸ It is to be noted that this requirement of peace goes very deep into human existence, and goes beyond the normally understood concept of ‘peace’, as an absence of war, violence, or disorder.

¹¹⁰ Fitzgerald 1993, 25; Fitzgerald 2005b, 187. Mbuka (1995, 58) says: “Les chrétiens doivent savoir que la parole de Dieu qu’ils annoncent les invite, eux-mêmes aussi, à une continuelle conversion.” Cf. D’Costa 1986, 123: “Hence, through dialogue, the Christian may not only be challenged to total conversion away from Christianity, but also to a continual conversion and deepening of his or her own Christian faith.”

¹¹¹ Arinze 2002a, 13. Cf. “Le témoignage dans l’Evangile n’est pas d’abord la transmission d’une doctrine mais la *conversion du coeur* qui entraîne à changer de vie.” Teissier 1979, 150–151.

¹¹² Coda 1999, 227: “Avant toute chose il convient de préciser que la conversion du coeur appartient à toutes les expériences et traditions religieuses authentiques...”

¹¹³ However, Coda (1999, 229–230) is clear: “Dès lors on comprend pourquoi la spiritualité chrétienne—dans son sens premier et fort de vie pour Christ dans l’Esprit—est essentiellement une spiritualité dynamique de la conversion du coeur qui trouve *son origine, sa forme et son but dans la participation à l’événement pascal de Jésus-Christ.*” (Emphasis added).

¹¹⁴ Labbé 1996, 263.

¹¹⁵ Arinze 1985a, 38. John Paul II (1987b, 30) said in 1986: “Prayer entails conversion of heart on our part.”

¹¹⁶ Arinze 1996b, 31. Arinze is referring to African countries.

¹¹⁷ Arinze 1996b, 31.

¹¹⁸ Etchegaray 1987, 133. He continues (p. 133): “Pas de conversion des coeurs sans engagement pour la justice.”

‘Conversion’ is a term with several meanings. According to one theological definition, “conversion usually means a spiritual movement toward God as he communicates himself *in Christ and the Holy Spirit*.”¹¹⁹ Depending on the objectives envisaged, there may be different types of conversion: e.g. theistic (to God), Christian (to Jesus Christ), ecclesial (to the church), and personal (to a certain way of life). Another type of distinction is to speak about series of kinds of conversion, and a series of levels of conversion.¹²⁰ The conversion to explicit Christian faith may be properly called conversion, and this is why the process of conversion should not be excluded from the transmission of the gospel.¹²¹ One PCID document says of conversion: “On the one hand, it is a punctual fact which takes place in a precise moment of one’s existence; on the other hand, it is an attitude which must be continuously renewed, actualized, and deepened in order to have all of one’s being and acting imbued by it.”¹²²

In Vatican II documentation, the concept ‘conversion’ is almost always used in the Christian context to mean conversion to Jesus Christ (by baptism) (AG 7), to the Lord (AG 13, PO 5), to Christianity (AG 40, SC 9, PO 4), to faith in Christ as the Lord (DH 11), to the love of the Father (PO 18), and to mean spiritual renewal with regard to ecumenism (UR 7, UR 8). The only wider use and meaning of the word can be found in *Gaudium et Spes* 63, which speaks of “universal changes in ideas and attitudes” (in a socio-economic context). Thus, with one exception, the use of the word is limited specifically to the Christian context.¹²³ However, there is a semantic widening of the term

¹¹⁹ Dulles 2000, 191. (Emphasis added) See *Witherup* 1994.

¹²⁰ *Lawrence* 2003 does that, using *B. Lonergan’s Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd 1972). After positing three kinds of conversion (intellectual, moral, and religious), and adding three levels of conversion (fundamental, revolutionary, and evolutionary), he ends up by creating a nine-cell matrix (pp. 236–237). His attempt is to try to sort out various uses of ‘conversion’ in theological, psychological, and popular literature.

¹²¹ Dulles 2000, 192.

¹²² *Coda* 1999, 226: “D’une part, il s’agit d’un fait ponctuel qui a lieu à un moment précis de son existence; de l’autre, il s’agit d’une attitude que sans cesse il faut renouveler, actualiser et approfondir pour en imprégner tout son être et tout son agir.” (Tr. by RJ).

¹²³ AG 7: “Oportet igitur ut ad Eum, per praedicationem Ecclesiae agnitionem, omnes *convertantur*, et Ipsi et Ecclesiae, quae Corpus Eius est, per Baptismum incorporantur.”; AG 13: “... ut non-christiani, Spiritu Sancto cor ipsorum aperiente (cf. Act. 16, 14), credentes ad Dominum libere *convertantur*, Eique sincere adhaerent qui, cum sit ‘via, veritas et vita’ (Io. 14, 6), omnes eorum expectationes spirituales explet, imo infinite

in SNC / PCID documentation, first in *Dialogue and Mission*, and then in *Dialogue and Proclamation*. In *Dialogue and Mission* 37–39 conversion is said to be situated on two levels. Firstly, it is constant and concerns everybody, Christians and non-Christians alike; secondly, it may mean changing one's religion or spiritual adherence. So, it is "the humble and penitent return of the heart to God in the desire to submit one's life more generously to Him. All persons are constantly called to this conversion. In the course of this process, the decision may be made to leave one's previous spiritual or religious situation in order to direct oneself towards another." The principal agent of conversion is the Holy Spirit. *Dialogue and Proclamation* 11 broadens this definition further, adding one still more general meaning of 'conversion', using the idea of a general movement towards God. However, the document always uses the same word:¹²⁴ the general meaning of 'conversion' is a movement towards God. The specific meaning is a change of religious adherence, and in particular in the Christian context conversion to the Christian faith.¹²⁵ Widening the meaning of the term means also that it is more

superat. Quae *conversio* sane initialis intelligenda est..."; AG 40: "Instituta vitae contemplativae per suas orationes, paenitentiae opera et tribulationes, maximum momentum habent in *conversione* animarum..."; PO 4: "... eorum semper est non sapientiam suam, sed Dei Verbum docere omnesque ad *conversionem* et ad sanctitatem instanter invitare."; PO 5: "... ita ut magis magisque in dies ad Dominum *convertantur*..."; PO 18: "... necessariam cordis *conversionem* ad Patris misericordiarum amorem tan-topere foveat."; SC 9: "Sacra Liturgia non explet totam actionem Ecclesiae; nam antequam homines ad Liturgiam accedere possint, necesse est ut ad fidem et *conversionem* vocentur... Quare Ecclesia non credentibus praeconium salutis annuntiat, ut omnes homines solum Deum verum et quem misit Iesum Christum cognoscant et a viis suis *convertantur*, paenitentiam agentes."; DH 11: "Ab ipsis Ecclesiae exordiis discipuli Christi adlaborarunt, ut homines ad Christum Dominum confitendum *converterent*, non actione coercitiva neque artificii Evangelio indignis, sed imprimis virtute verbi Dei."; UR 7: "Oecumenismus veri nominis sine interiore *conversione* non datur."; UR 8: "Haec cordis *conversio* vitaeque sanctitas, una cum privatis et publicis supplicationibus pro Christianorum unitate..."; GS 63: "Inde autem reformationes multae in vita oeconomico-sociali atque mentis et habitudinis *conversio* ab omnibus requiruntur." (Emphasis added).

¹²⁴ The original Italian word is "conversione" (AAS 84 1992, 418).

¹²⁵ DP 11 1994, 97.—Would that be due to the fact that the document was delivered by two different dicasteries? *John Paul II* (1989d, 311–312) combines the two meanings: "Celui qui propose la Bonne Nouvelle invite les religions non chrétiennes à découvrir le Christ, mais il est aussi appelé, par les signes de la présence de Dieu dans ces religions, à recevoir des éclairages nouveaux sur des façons différentes de vivre en homme, et donc avec Dieu. Chargé d'inviter à la conversion, le missionnaire y est invité lui-même." In the Pope's opinion, freely-chosen conversion should not be eliminated from Christian-Muslim encounters (*Michel* 1985, 189).—The question of changing one's religion, as

difficult to discern what is ‘conversion’ and what is not.¹²⁶ In fact, this widened concept of ‘conversion’ is said to be the basis of dialogue’s own validity.¹²⁷

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1427 speaks about conversion linked to baptism and salvation: “Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom... In the Church’s preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1428 speaks about “second conversion”: “Christ’s call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church...”¹²⁸

Spirituality in dialogue: interreligious prayer

It is an undeniable fact that in the praxis of interreligious dialogue spirituality, and especially prayer, has become more and more important in the last two decades.¹²⁹ This is probably part of a larger, intra-Christian, movement. In the 1960s there was an emphasis on finding God in cre-

being part of one’s religious freedom, often comes up in Christian-Muslim dialogue. See, e.g., *Fitzgerald* 2004a, 46–47. On those coming into Christian faith from Muslim background, see, e.g., *Syrjänen* 1987, *Gaudeul* 1991, and *Gaudeul* 2004. On the conversion from Christianity to Islam in the Medieval period, see, e.g., *Bulliet* 1979, and in the 20th century, see, e.g., *Hermansen* 1999. See also *Allievi* 1998.

¹²⁶ This must be the reason why DP 11 (1994, 97) adds: “When the term conversion is used in this document, the context will show which sense is intended.”

¹²⁷ “Given this aim, a deeper conversion of all toward God, interreligious dialogue possesses its own validity.” DP 41 1994, 104. Cf. *Witherup* 2005, 291: “Every individual (even the Christian!) needs to be open to the grace of ‘conversion’ in his or her life...”

¹²⁸ This passage seems to correspond to *Coda* 1999, 226. CCC 1428 continues: “This endeavour of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a ‘contrite heart’, drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first.”

¹²⁹ The PCID is preparing a document on the spirituality of dialogue (September 2005).—The S.R.I. (*Secrétariat pour les Relations avec l’Islam*) in France has recently (2005) published a document called *Chrétiens et Musulmans: Vivre ensemble... ..et prier?* See also, e.g., *Christians and Muslims: Praying Together? Reflections and Texts*. Study paper prepared by the “Islam in Europe” Committee of the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) and of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), April 2003 (www.cec-kek.org) (August 2005). Cf. *Arinze* 1979, 169: “Since it is God’s grace which softens hearts and unites people, prayer remains fundamental before, during and after dialogue...” See also, e.g., *Lamine* 2004, 171–206.

ation and in one's brothers and sisters who are to be loved and served; but now that the hopes of the 1960s have been waning, there has been a tendency to seek the transcendent, immediate experience of God in himself. The best sign of that is without doubt the World Day of Prayer for Peace held in Assisi on October 27, 1986.¹³⁰ A few days before, on October 22, 1986, John Paul explained the basic idea of the meeting:

What will take place at Assisi will certainly not be religious syncretism but a sincere attitude of prayer to God in an atmosphere of mutual respect. For this reason the formula chosen for the gathering at Assisi is: being together in order to pray. Certainly we cannot "pray together", namely, to make a common prayer, but we can be present while others pray. In this way we manifest our respect for the prayer of others and for the attitude of others before the Divinity; at the same time we offer them the humble and sincere witness of our faith in Christ, Lord of the Universe.¹³¹

In this important speech John Paul II sought to reject all charges of syncretism, and he gave a solid basis for the practice of interreligious prayer: on this occasion, Christians and "others" could not make a common prayer,¹³² but they could come together to pray—all for themselves—and they could be present while the others prayed.

¹³⁰ See B 64 1987; *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 93–95; DP 27 1994, 101. Two other examples of the Roman Catholic Church: the Day of Prayer for Peace in Europe and particularly in the Balkans in Assisi, January 9–10, 1993 (see *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 99–101), and the Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, January 24, 2002 (see PD 109 2002, 135–155; *Peace: a Single Goal* 2002, 79–94; *Machado* 2002b, 6–9). "Assisi [1986] was an instance of dialogue in the highest degree." *Zago* 1987, 150.

¹³¹ *John Paul II* 1987a, 22. He went on to say (pp. 22–23): "This is what will happen at Assisi where, at one time during the day, the separate prayers of the different religious representatives will be held in various places. Then, later, in the *Piazzale* of the Lower Basilica of St Francis, there will follow, in succession, appropriately distinct, the prayers of the representatives of each religion, while all the others will assist with the respectful attitude, both interior and exterior, of one who is a witness of the supreme effort of other men and women to seek God. This 'being together to pray' takes on a particularly profound and eloquent significance inasmuch as they will be standing side by side to implore from God the gift of peace—the gift of which all humanity has so much need today for survival."

¹³² "There was no attempt at a common prayer for all." *Arinze* 1987a, 139. Interestingly enough, four years before, in Lisbon in 1982, John Paul II said: "Our contacts, dialogue and appreciation for the undeniable treasures of every religion's spirituality, Christian community and, *when it is possible, common prayer*, can lead to the convergence of efforts to avert the illusion of building a new world without God, and the vanity of a purely anthropocentric humanism." *John Paul II* 1984a, 26. Cited also in *Interreligious Dialogue* 1997, 256, and *Michel* 1985, 182. (Emphasis added).

This was the basic meaning of “being together to pray”.¹³³ The reasons for that could be various: the high level of the official gathering, the lack of a common preparation, the diversity of religions present, the fact that people did not know each other in advance and were not jointly involved in choosing prayers.¹³⁴ At any rate, the same formula was repeated in 2002.¹³⁵ John Paul II’s attitude was prudent. He acknowledged that there are theological and pastoral questions regarding the role of interreligious prayer and worship.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, he was convinced that “authentic prayer *already changes man’s heart*.”¹³⁷ Cardinal Arinze also emphasized the spiritual dimension of the Assisi meeting: “Assisi did not want to suggest that religions can be reconciled at the level of a common commitment in an earthly project which would surpass them all.”¹³⁸

The same theological foundations can be identified for interreligious dialogue in general. *Nostra Aetate* speaks about the origin of the entire human race in God through creation and of their common destiny in God through redemption. In this respect John Paul II’s Christmas Address to the Roman Curia in 1986 lays the theological foundations for interreligious prayer. For the human being, there is only one divine plan, one single origin and goal, regardless of culture or religion. The differences between human beings are not as important as unity which is radical, fundamental, and decisive.¹³⁹ Besides referring to the common origin and destiny which unites the human family, John Paul II also mentions the universal active presence of the Holy Spirit in all per-

¹³³ Cf. *Arinze* 1987a, 139.

¹³⁴ *Dupuis* 2003, 238.

¹³⁵ “*We have a single goal and a shared intention, but we will pray in different ways, respecting one another’s religious traditions.*” *John Paul II* 2002d, 48.

¹³⁶ *John Paul II* 1990a, 121. Cited also in *Fitzgerald* 1994, 2.

¹³⁷ *John Paul II* 1987g, 74.

¹³⁸ *Arinze* 1987a, 138, citing *John Paul II* 1987b, 30. Cf. *Zago* 1987, 154.

¹³⁹ “Accordingly, there is *only one* divine plan for every human being who comes into this world (cf. *Jn* 1:9), one single origin and goal, whatever may be the colour of his skin, the historical and geographical framework within which he happens to live and act, or the culture in which he grows up and expresses himself. The differences are a less important element, when confronted with the unity which is radical, fundamental and decisive.” *John Paul II* 1987f, 56. He continued (p. 57): “It may be the case that persons are often unaware of this radical unity of their origin and destination, and their place in one and the same divine plan; and when they profess religions which are diverse and mutually incompatible, they can also feel that their divisions are insuperable. Yet despite these divisions, they are included in the great and unique design of God, in Jesus Christ, who ‘has united himself in a certain manner to every man’ (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22), even if the person in question is not aware of this.” Cf. *Arinze* 1997, 208.

sons and especially in every sincere prayer that comes from the human heart, Christian or not. The following phrase has often been quoted: “We can indeed maintain that every authentic prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every person.”¹⁴⁰

Another important element of the foundation for interreligious prayer is the universality of the Reign of God, established by God in Jesus Christ. This establishment is nothing less than the universal presence of the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ, which makes Christians and non-Christians co-builders. This also means that dialogue takes place between persons who already share in the Reign of God that is lived in anticipation in a mutual exchange. A deep expression of this communion can be the sharing of common prayer.¹⁴¹

In SNC / PCID documentation, peace and interreligious prayer go hand in hand. The Assisi Meeting of 1986 (World Day of Prayer for Peace) is referred to in many SNC / PCID documents: “... there exists another dimension of peace and another way of promoting it which

¹⁴⁰ *John Paul II* 1987f, 61. Cited also, e.g., in *Arinze* 1987a, 140, *Arinze* 1997, 208, and DP 27 1994, 101. John Paul II says in DEV 65 (1986, 116): “... wherever people are praying in the world, there the Holy Spirit is, the living breath of prayer.” Cf. PD 93 1996, 378: “The search for human unity requires interreligious dialogue and co-operative action as well as prayer.”—*Dupuis* (2003, 240) concludes that through prayer, Christians and the others are profoundly united in the Holy Spirit. “Although it is not stated explicitly in the texts, it seems that it can be concluded (in principle) that common prayer is both possible and desirable; such a prayer will simply be the common expression of such communion in the Spirit of God.” However, there is a critical question to be asked: can pneumatology be so straightforwardly detached from Christology (the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, e.g. John 15:26) and ecclesiology (in the New Testament the Spirit is active principally in the community of Jesus) as Dupuis does? That his view is only tentative can be seen also in his formulation: “not stated explicitly”, “it seems that”, “it can be concluded”, “(in principle)”.—The same question can be asked about Rahner: has he not detached the Spirit from the Christ-event, somewhat distorting the eschatological event?

¹⁴¹ Besides creation, redemption, universal presence of the Holy Spirit, and joint sharing in the Reign of God, *Dupuis* (2003, 241–242) proposes a fifth element: the religions of the world as God’s gifts to the peoples. He admits that Vatican II does not call religions “ways” of salvation, but argues that in other documents God is viewed as being present and active in those traditions. Dupuis mentions only *Odasso* 2002 to support his view. Odasso thinks that eternal wisdom is available to all humanity and is a fundamental part of God’s salvific plan. “Would not common prayer ultimately consist in recognition of and gratitude to God, by the diverse communities of faith, for the overwhelming gifts that God has given and keeps giving to humankind through history? Indeed it seems so.” *Dupuis* 2003, 242.—Cf. DP 27–29 1994, 101.

is not a result of negotiations, political compromises or economic bargainings. It is the result of prayer, which, in the diversity of religions, expresses a relationship with a supreme power that surpasses our human capacities alone.¹⁴² Prayer is especially needed in order to obtain peace that must be implored from God.¹⁴³ John Paul II said that peace is a gift of God in Jesus Christ. This gift should express itself in prayer to God who is the Lord of the destinies of all peoples.¹⁴⁴ The Pope firmly believed that peace and Christology go hand in hand.¹⁴⁵ In 1986 he also said that peace is to be built on four pillars: truth, justice, love, and freedom.¹⁴⁶ In 2002 he said that there are two pillars on which peace is to be built: commitment to justice and readiness to forgive. It is interesting to note that in fact, the two pillars of 2002 include the four of 1986. Justice, for the Pope, includes respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, respect for the rights and duties of each person, and in that sense it includes also freedom. Forgiveness heals the wounds of the heart and restores damaged human relations, but it is not possible without truth and love.¹⁴⁷

However, besides recommending common interreligious prayer, emphasis is placed on interior prayer: "... it is in the attitude of interior prayer, of response to God's interior call, that all believers can meet, apart from the rites proper to their own religion, but without redpudiating [sic] these, in shared fidelity to the truth."¹⁴⁸ For John Paul II, prayer and contemplation are ways of reaching God, and the essential components of true human fulfilment. Moreover, prayer for him is the best means by which humanity can be united.¹⁴⁹ Religions, which are the chief antidote to violence and conflict, should firmly be at the service of peace.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² *John Paul II* 1987b, 29. Cf. *Arinze* 2000d, 42, 43; *Fitzgerald* 2000, 18; *Quattrucci* 2002, 68; *John Paul II* 1998b, 274 = *John Paul II* 1999a, 13; *John Paul II* 2002a, 92.

¹⁴³ "It shares the same goal: to pray for peace, which is above all a gift to be implored from God with fervent and trusting insistence." John Paul II, cited in PD 109 2002, 136. Cf. *John Paul II* 1987a, 23; *John Paul II* 1987g, 73; *Arinze* 1987a, 138; *Arinze* 1987b, 304; *Arinze* 1997, 207.

¹⁴⁴ *John Paul II* 1987c, 34. Cf. *John Paul II* 1987d, 40: "Peace depends basically on this Power, which we call God, and as Christians believe has revealed himself in Christ."

¹⁴⁵ "I humbly repeat here my own conviction: peace bears the name of Jesus Christ." *John Paul II* 1987d, 41.

¹⁴⁶ *John Paul II* 1987d, 42; *John Paul II* 1987e, 51.

¹⁴⁷ *John Paul II* 2002a, 90.

¹⁴⁸ *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 20.

¹⁴⁹ *John Paul II* 1978, 1; *John Paul II* 1986b, 149.

¹⁵⁰ *John Paul II* 2002d, 46, 48.

Where interreligious prayer is concerned, theological study and assessment are required.¹⁵¹ *Pro Dialogo* 98¹⁵² contains a document called “Findings of an Exploratory Consultation on Interreligious Prayer: Final Statement (Bangalore, India)” that strongly exhorts to interreligious prayer: “Participation in interreligious prayer is not an optional activity restricted to an elite group, but an urgent call for a growing number of Christians today, and should be a matter of concern for all Christians.”¹⁵³ The document says that interreligious prayer is an expression of Christians’ faithfulness to the Gospel itself. Jesus urges Christians to give and receive hospitality (Luke 10:7). Receiving hospitality extends to what is precious to neighbours: prayer and worship.¹⁵⁴ The document distinguishes between attendance at each other’s worship, multi-religious prayer, and united or integrative interreligious prayer. Attendance means responding positively to an invitation to be a guest at other places of worship. Multi-religious prayer means juxtaposing the prayer of different faith traditions. The advantage is that the integrity and variety of each religious tradition is honoured. The disadvantage is that one may easily remain an outsider without entering into the spirituality of the other. United or integrative interreligious prayer means that people of different faith traditions plan, prepare, and participate in a prayer which all who come can or may claim as their own prayer. The advantage here is that all those present can genuinely pray together. The disadvantage is that prayer may be reduced to the lowest common denominator and detract from the uniqueness of each

¹⁵¹ “Worthy of special theological study and assessment is the growing phenomenon of interreligious prayer.” *Arinze* 1997, 208.—See, e.g., *D’Costa* 1998a, and *D’Costa* 2000, 143–171 (Chapter 5, “Praying Together to the Triune God? Is Interreligious Prayer Like Marital Infidelity?”).

¹⁵² PD 98 1998, 231–236. The same document is also in PD 93 1996, 373–378. See also “Theological Reflections on Interreligious Prayer: Final Statement (Bose, Italy)” in PD 98 1998, 237–243. Cf. *Colin* 2005.

¹⁵³ PD 98 1998, 231 = PD 93 1996, 373.

¹⁵⁴ “The theological rationale draws on our understanding that everywhere and at all times we are all ‘guests of the Divine’, that ‘whatever we do to/with our neighbour, we do to/with the Divine’; that indeed God in Christ both goes before us and comes to us in the guise of our neighbour and the stranger in our midst.” PD 98 1998, 240 (“Theological Reflections on Interreligious Prayer: Final Statement [Bose, Italy]”). This document speaks of the responsive form and the hospitality form of interreligious prayer. The responsive form means the outwards facing prayer in which can be discerned both human need and the presence of the Spirit calling forth the response of the prayer.

religious tradition.¹⁵⁵ It is clear that John Paul II was against united interreligious prayer: “The form and content of our prayers are very different, as we have seen, and there can be no question of reducing them to a kind of common denominator.”¹⁵⁶

As can be seen, the theological basis of interreligious prayer in the document is not very solid. It is more anthropological and phenomenological than theological.¹⁵⁷ Instead of giving a solid basis, the document raises some theological questions:

For example, what does it mean to say that God is one? Are we all praying to one and the same God, though our images and understandings of God are diverse and different? How do we expound our doctrine of God in non-theistic settings? ... Going beyond the categories of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, we are called upon to find creative ways of theologically celebrating the Spirit at work in other religions. One way may be through a fuller exposition of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and recognizing the work of the Spirit far beyond the confines of our ecclesial communities and the limits of our theological imagination. Holding fast to the centrality of Christ, we urge careful theological reflection on our understanding of the uniqueness and universality of Christ.¹⁵⁸

Gavin D’Costa, referring to the Christological, Trinitarian, and ecclesial dimension of prayer, argues that if somebody does not explicitly reject the gospel, a relationship to Christ is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁹ The precise manner is left open. He notes that interreligious prayer reminds Christians that full communion with all people is an eschatological hope, not an already existing reality. He also mentions that interreligious prayer, seen in the light of Christ’s love, has a missionary dimension.

What about the possibility that Christians and Muslims would pray in common? *Nostra Aetate* 3 says that “they [the Moslems] adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven

¹⁵⁵ PD 98 1998, 231–232 = PD 93 1996, 374. See also PD 98 1998, 241–243. “Whatever the situation, the key to authentic interreligious prayer is a sense of being rooted in one’s own tradition and an openness to the working of the Spirit in other traditions.” PD 98 1998, 232 = PD 93 1996, 374.

¹⁵⁶ *John Paul II* 1987d, 40. See also, e.g., *John Paul II* 1987a, 22. Cf. *Celata* 2004, 159.

¹⁵⁷ “Une telle conception de la prière... comporte une *approche anthropologique* qui aborde le *phénomène* de la prière sous l’angle *descriptif* et sous celui de *l’expérience*.” *Blattmann* 2005, 13. (Emphasis added).

¹⁵⁸ PD 98 1998, 234–235 = PD 93 1996, 377. The document shows well how difficult this reflecting may be if the theological method is purely inductive, starting from particular (experiences) towards universal (theological motives).

¹⁵⁹ *D’Costa* 1998a, 256–257.

and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself.”¹⁶⁰ There is no explicit statement that Muslims share in the faith with Christians (and Jews). However, John Paul II did state so on several occasions. The most famous example is his speech to young Muslims in Morocco in 1985, in which he referred to Abraham as a model of faith in God, of submission to his will and of confidence in his goodness. He affirmed that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God, the one God, the living God, the God who created the world and brings his creatures to their perfection.¹⁶¹ However, it is evident that the Muslims and the Christians (and the Jews) do not have the same concept of God.¹⁶² In SNC / PCID documentation, Christian-Muslim dialogue is a call to a spiritual emulation.¹⁶³ However, *Guidelines* (1990) is very careful to preclude any kind of syncretism.¹⁶⁴ One SNC / PCID document states that “joint Christian-

¹⁶⁰ NA 3 1966, 663.

¹⁶¹ “For us, Abraham is a very model of faith in God, of submission to his will and of confidence in his goodness. We believe in the same God, the one God, the living God, the God who created the world and brings his creatures to their perfection.” *John Paul II* 1985e, 249.—*Michel* (1986, 19) notes: “The address to Muslim youth in Morocco which is the lengthiest and most comprehensive of the Holy Father’s addresses to Muslims, concludes with a formal prayer of praise and petition which is reminiscent of the Psalms, as well as the prayers of Christian liturgical books and Muslim prayer manuals.”

¹⁶² “The Christian tradition claims to extend the monotheism of Israel, while developing it into Trinitarian doctrine; that of the Qur’an and the Islamic tradition also highlights its origins in the monotheism of Israel, while claiming to complete it and purify it of the corruption it suffered at the hands of the Christian doctrine of the trinity.” *Dupuis* 2003, 246.

¹⁶³ *Borrman*s 1990, 37, citing Sura 5:48: “So vie one with another in good works.”

¹⁶⁴ “Sometimes Muslims and Christians feel the need to pray together, and they realize immediately how difficult it is to do so. The best course seems to be for each group to respect entirely the ritual prayer and official acts of worship of the other faith, without ever trying to participate directly in them, but maintaining a readiness to be present as sympathetic observers at those times of worship whenever invited, in the name of Abrahamic hospitality. Especially to be avoided are insistent invitations to those of the other religion and too easy assumptions of similarity between the two ways of worship. Some people would interpret these as forms of disguised proselytization and others would take them as a syncretistic tendency. The same thing might be said regarding the holy books and the official texts which provide the unique expression of the faith of each group. Primarily the Qur’an belongs to Muslims and the Fatihah is their particular prayer, even as the New Testament belongs first of all to Christians, and the Lord’s Prayer is the unique expression of their faith. We show our respect for the faith of others when we avoid any suggestion of incorporating them into our way or of trying to take them over. On the other hand we can hope that from both sides the example

Muslim prayer offered for the community and the nation, as is done in some parts of Asia, would not only be a demonstration of the common spiritual heritage and closeness of the two communities but also would be a means of growth in interreligious brotherhood and understanding.¹⁶⁵ Because of the common foundation, a common prayer between Christians and Muslims (and Jews) is sometimes presented as a possibility.¹⁶⁶ In such common prayers, it is suggested, e.g., that the psalms, the prayer of Jesus, and the *Fatiha* could be used.¹⁶⁷ It is suggested that spontaneous prayers could also be formulated.¹⁶⁸ However, it is noted that this would demand sensitivity to the manners of prayer and development of a mode of prayer acceptable to both.¹⁶⁹

Summarizing remarks

In SNC / PCID documentation interreligious dialogue is basically presented being two-tiered: on the one hand there is the everyday, socio-economic level, represented by the main body of all SNC / PCID documentation. It includes sharing religious experience and working together to promote justice, peace, human development, nation building,

of mystics and saints will provide the necessary incentive for the creation of common forms of praise and supplication that can bring them together in an experience of shared prayer." *Guidelines* 1990, 109.

¹⁶⁵ *Farias* 1984, 89.

¹⁶⁶ "... if Christians take seriously the fact that Muslims, too, worship the same God, then they can join with Muslims in praying to this God: the creator of heaven and earth, the merciful and gracious governor of history, the judge and perfecter of the world and humankind." *Kuschel* 1995, 247. Cf. *Cragg* 1970.—Dupuis is of the opinion that the formula used in Assisi is not the only one possible. He underlines the variety of concrete situations and the necessity of pastoral judgments. He also makes distinctions between various religious traditions. An important distinction is between the three so-called monotheistic or prophetic religions that go back to a common origin in the faith of Abraham. This belonging to a common family offers an important element for common prayer. For Dupuis, common prayer between Christians and the others is possible and even desirable, when the various situations are kept in mind (*Dupuis* 2003, 238).

¹⁶⁷ *Dupuis* 2003, 247. The *Fatiha* is the sura which opens the Qur'an by way of an invocation of Allah. It represents the key prayer of the Islamic tradition. *D'Costa* (1998a, 257) is of the opinion that "were the Christian to share the 'Our Father' with a Muslim who shares 'the *Fatiha*' (...) the very juxtaposition of these two semantic forms will generate a new field of meanings within these prayers." See also, e.g., *Blattmann* 2005, 16–17, and *Padwick* 2003.

¹⁶⁸ See also examples given by *Kuschel* 1995, 249–251.

¹⁶⁹ *Farias* 1984, 89. Cf. *Arinze* 2002c, 87–98.

racial harmony, and relaxation of social tensions.¹⁷⁰ This level can be called anthropological. On the other hand there is the religious, theological, and spiritual level which involves the willingness to make Jesus Christ explicitly better known, recognized, and loved. However, this two-tiered aspect is also a kind of two-stage aspect. The first step, on the human level, can be taken fairly easily; however, entering the second stage, religious dialogue, is already more difficult. Sometimes there is not even the willingness to go further. And still, this step—says Cardinal Arinze—should not be postponed indefinitely.¹⁷¹ This two-stage structure is well illustrated in the following statement:

In the presence of the non-Christian religions, the Church is not satisfied with mere proclamation (*kérygme*) and witness (*martyrion*), which are in these cases her essential divine task. In addition she urgently exhorts Catholics today through the voice of the Council and the Pope, to establish an actual dialogue *on the human level*, that is to say, frank and friendly contact, to promote in common the good of the entire community in accordance with the Gospel, also to seek the values inherent in the various religions and finally, to engage in religious dialogue properly so-called.¹⁷²

It is very difficult to enter the second stage if, before any discussion, Christian-Muslim dialogue is restricted to socio-economic values. This is the case, e.g., in organized dialogue meetings between the PCID and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research. It is stated that the principle of matchability and equivalence between these two parties has been achieved without requiring direct verbal statements: “Reasons why these two points have been so clearly and emphatically underlined include *avoidance of discussing issues of doctrine and worship*, keeping away from missionary and preaching practices and *restriction of dialogue to social values* and matters that concern both Muslim and Christian sides...”¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ E.g. *Arinze* 1985b, 136–137.

¹⁷¹ “When this [the first step] happens in sincerity, trust and respect are gradually built up, and the climate is better prepared for direct discussion of mutual religious beliefs and practices, a step which should not be postponed indefinitely.” *Arinze* 1985b, 137. Cf. *Arinze* 2002c, 58: “While interreligious dialogue may start with the horizontal dimension—joint pursuit of justice, peace, harmony and social values—it should above all keep clearly in sight the vertical dimension—looking for God, search for religious truth, effort at greater openness to divine action.”—Maybe the same thing could be described as the reconciliation of truth and charity.

¹⁷² *Towards the Meeting of Religions* 1967, 9.—*Talbi* (1998, 98) has a pragmatist attitude: “So, for certain questions, it is better to accept the situation as it is, at least for the time being, rather than bang one’s head against a brick wall.”

¹⁷³ *El-Assad* 1997, 12. (Emphasis added).

It is true that this kind of dialogue is safe, but it also reduces the nature of dialogue. In fact, one must not compromise one's faith in the dialogue. Religious faith should be no more negotiable in interreligious dialogue than it is in one's personal life.¹⁷⁴ Not being allowed to express that which is the most important for him or her and the real motivating force for the encounter is against the principle of transparency, honesty, and sincerity, to say the least. In fact, SNC / PCID documentation is not without tensions in this respect. *Guidelines* (1969) states: "It is impossible, then, for the Christian to avoid the religious aspects of dialogue. ... both what he says and his intentions must be sincere, and he must frankly put himself forward as a Christian without minimising his faith or stating it in a falsely attractive manner."¹⁷⁵ The tension may be explained by the fact that these guidelines are given rather to an individual person for what has been called a dialogue of life,¹⁷⁶ whereas the statement above concerns institutionalized, structural dialogue between religious organisations.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Dupuis 1999, 378.

¹⁷⁵ *Guidelines* 1969, 27. Cf. "It would be wrong to think that... we have shifted the dialogue from a religious or spiritual to a merely temporal plane." *Guidelines* 1969, 132.—In fact, there are inherent tensions in *Guidelines* 1969. For instance, it is said that "in any case it is not primarily a question of explaining our faith to a Muslim..." (p. 31), whereas it is also said that "we must learn how to present the mysteries of our faith..." (p. 109). This tension seems to reflect the tension between dialogue and mission.

¹⁷⁶ "Christians living among Muslims should recognize the importance of dialogue with their Muslim brethren. For most Christians, this means what can be called a dialogue of life. This is the most essential aspect of dialogue... The true Christian and Muslim offer to a busy world values arising from God's message when they revere the elderly, conscientiously rear the young, care for the sick and the poor in their midst, and work together for social justice, welfare and human rights." *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds* 1994, 113, citing Second Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, 1979, paragraph 14.

¹⁷⁷ The so-called GRIC (*Groupe de Recherches Islamo-Chrétien*), founded in 1977, concentrates on theological issues. It comprises some fifty Christian and Muslim researchers in France, Spain, Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco to answer the questions which their faith in one God puts to the modern world. No participant has an official (religious or political) mandate, but they are private members (Christians and Muslims) of their respective local communities of believers. The charter of the GRIC can be found e.g. in *Ces Ecritures qui nous questionnent: La Bible et le Coran* (Paris: Editions du Centurion 1987), pp. 17–22, and in *Islamochristiana* 4, 1978, pp. 183–186. So far, besides *GRIC* 1987, it has published an article called *Etat et religion* in *Islamochristiana* 12, 1986, pp. 49–72, and four other books entitled *Foi et justice: un défi pour le christianisme et pour l'islam* (Paris: Editions du Centurion 1993), *Pluralisme et laïcité: Chrétiens et musulmans proposent* (Paris: Bayard Editions/Centurion 1996), *Péché et responsabilité éthique dans le monde contemporain: Chrétiens et Musulmans s'interrogent* (Paris: Bayard Editions 2000), and *Chrétiens et musulmans en dialogue: les identités en devenir* (Paris: L'Harmattan 2003).

Another tendency that may impede dialogue is the attempt to create an idealistic image of the other. According to *Guidelines* (1969), “one of the first tasks the Christian will have to undertake will be to get to know his Muslim partner in dialogue, not only as he really is, but also *as he would like to be*.”¹⁷⁸ But is this really possible? Is it possible for a human being to create an image of the other according to the instructions given by the other? It may seem to be an attempt to modify reality and be extremely difficult to achieve. Second, it creates a tension or a paradox in dialogue. With whom is one to meet? Should one meet the real person in front of him or her, or the idea of the person in his or her mind?¹⁷⁹ However, it is also said, more realistically, that neither Christians nor Muslims can expect an idealized partner to begin dialogue with the other.¹⁸⁰

Another thing is the possibility that in dialogue Christians may neglect the dimension of witnessing their faith in Jesus Christ. Dialogue may become relativized or syncretized.¹⁸¹ Pope John Paul II exhorted Christians and non-Christians to constructive dialogue, in which each one becomes more deeply aware of the duty to bear witness and to proclaim. This attitude excludes relativism or syncretism.¹⁸² Maintaining

¹⁷⁸ *Guidelines* 1969, 19. (Emphasis added) Or: “It cannot be repeated too often that to enable an open and confident dialogue to take place both parties must know the other not only as he is but also *as he wishes to be*.” *Guidelines* 1969, 37.

¹⁷⁹ In fact, the idea to meet the other, not only such as he or she is, but also the idealized person he or she wants to be, is a modern version of Plato’s theory of “ideas”. But it confronts with the same problem as Plato’s ideas, that is, ideas and definitions, i.e. universal, cannot be—at least totally—separated from reality, particularities, based on sense perception. See *Metaphysics* I, 9, XIII, 4–5.—The same idea is presented, concerning only Christians, in DM 13 where it is said: “... it must be recognized that ‘we bear this treasure in earthen vessels’ (2 Cor 4:7). Thus the difference between the way the Christian appears existentially and that which he declares himself to be is never fully overcome.”

¹⁸⁰ Michel (1985, 191–192) says: “Both Christians and Muslims often betray their religious values and ideals. Christians aware of their sinful history, both personal and communal, will not be surprised to see that there are Muslims who hate, who are intolerant [sic], who are chauvinistic, who are hypocritical, and who act without regard for their neighbors of other faiths. This is not something characteristic of Islam or unique to them, but rather reflects the universal human condition. Nevertheless, *neither community can await an idealized partner for dialogue to begin*.” (Emphasis added).

¹⁸¹ In this respect, the Assisi meeting of 1986 did not reduce the Christian (or other) witness: “Each witnessed to the other in a witness of life and a witness that was expressed (prayer and speeches). ... From the Christian viewpoint, such witness is seen in relation to the active work of the Spirit and to the personal choice made by each individual.” *Zago* 1987, 154.

¹⁸² *John Paul II* 2002a, 92. Cf. *John Paul II* 2005a, 9.

the tension between interreligious dialogue and proclamation, a Christian cannot choose the one and ignore the other: "The Church firmly holds that 'just as interreligious dialogue is one element in the mission of the Church, the proclamation of God's saving work in Our Lord Jesus Christ is another... There can be no question of choosing one and ignoring or rejecting the other.'"¹⁸³ One PCID document notes: "The fact that the followers of other religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ, apart from the ordinary means which he has established, does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people."¹⁸⁴ It is clear that a creative balance between the two should be found, the balance between dialogue and proclamation, between commitment and openness, between own faith and the experience of the other. Dialogue needs mission, and vice versa.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ *Journeying Together* 1999, 123–124. The latter part is cited also in *John Paul II* 1987i, 224. And yet, there is a tension. As *Schreier* (1994, 124) puts it: "Put another way, when the post-Vatican II church opted for a more inclusive approach to other traditions, it became more difficult to say exactly why one should switch from one tradition to another."

¹⁸⁴ *Sarpong* 2002, 244.

¹⁸⁵ "... there can be no real dialogue (as it is often called today) between religions, without mission, for Christians have nothing to share with others, other than what has been given so bountifully to them." *D'Costa* 2000, 132.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored the theology of religions expressed in SNC / PCID documentation and, consequently, the theological foundations for relations between Christians and non-Christians, in particular between Christians and Muslims. The theological foundations of the SNC / PCID are amazingly coherent, even though there are nuances and many unanswered questions. The study has shown that there is a continuous interrelationship between philosophy and theology in Roman Catholic theological thinking. Consequently, throughout SNC / PCID documentation there is a dialectical tension between philosophy and theology, reason and faith. The SNC / PCID was created in 1964, and its theological position has been greatly influenced by two 20th century philosophical currents, namely existentialism and personalism, and also by two 20th century theological currents, namely the *nouvelle théologie* and “kerygmatic theology”. The study has also shown the dominance in SNC / PCID documentation of the so-called fulfilment theory. As a matter of fact, this fulfilment theory is basically an Aristotelian theory based on the principle of potentiality and actuality, finality. Everything in the world is in the process of potentially becoming, i.e., in everything potentiality is becoming actuality. Every single being is trying to actualize its potentiality. In addition, Aristotelian thinking, in which actuality always precedes potentiality, posits a Prime Mover, the First Principle, who has set everything into motion. He is the efficient cause, but at the same time the final cause because he is supremely “desirable”.

What does this have to do with the theological foundations of the SNC / PCID? In SNC / PCID documentation there is finality, the triune God, who has the same role as the absolute First Actuality in the philosophy of Aristotle. This triune God has created everything, and everyone is moving towards him. God has placed in the human being a longing for truth and goodness, and God is the only one who can satisfy it, because he is truth and perfection. To be more precise and to come closer to Christian theology, the fulfilment of the human being in God can be found at its apex only in Jesus Christ, God-Man. Thus, every-

body, consciously or unconsciously, is aiming towards this fulfilment, is aiming towards God. This *desiderium naturale* is the common *telos* shared by all human beings. The Aristotelian model of potentiality looking for its fulfilment in order to become actuality is transferred to theology. Everybody is included in God's plan of salvation and everybody is an object of the grace of God.

Besides resting on this Aristotelian basis, the SNC / PCID documents depend heavily on Thomistic theology and on Vatican II. Thomas Aquinas, using Aristotelian philosophy, says in *Summa Theologiae*: "Unbelievers, although they are not actually part of the Church, belong to it potentially".¹ Especially relevant is Thomas's idea of *exitus-reditus*: the act of creation through which all creatures proceed from God—natural order—and the principle of the return of all creatures to God—order of grace. All creatures—believers and unbelievers—are driven towards the maximum unity with God. This is consonant with their ontological status. The SNC / PCID documents also refer to Vatican II, which acknowledges that in other religions there are "true and holy" (*Nostra Aetate* 2) elements, and that divine Providence does not "deny the help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God" (*Lumen Gentium* 16). Patristic ideas of the Logos and *semina verbi* are used to strengthen this idea. "Seeds of the word" may be found hidden in non-Christians (*Ad Gentes* 11).

Consequently, it is acknowledged that non-Christians can do good works. In response to the question of the origin of these good works, the SNC / PCID documents invoke the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. *Gaudium et Spes* 22 sets the Spirit's activities in a non-Christian context, but in a clear Trinitarian framework: "... 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." This is possible because the Spirit, who works in human hearts and in the history of peoples, is the Spirit of Christ; the activities of the Spirit can be understood only in reference to Christ (*Redemptoris Missio* 29). It is the Spirit who is active in every person, to the extent that "every authentic prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every person" (John Paul II in 1986). It follows, in fact, that the good works of non-Christians are

¹ "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod illi qui sunt infideles, etsi actu non sint de Ecclesia, sunt tamen in potentia." ST 3a.8.3.

good because they are caused by the third Person of the Godhead, the Supreme Good. In their good works, non-Christians become more like the model of the Human Being, Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, it is his Spirit—emphasizing the Western theological tradition—who is at work in them. Consequently, it can be said that the positive attitude towards non-Christian religions is due to theology of creation and to the recognition of the Spirit's presence in them.

Theological anthropology has an essential role in SNC / PCID documentation. *Dialogue and Mission* 22 says that “in the vicissitudes in the life of each individual and every people there is present the power of grace which elevates and redeems.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2001 says clearly that the preparation of the human being for the reception of grace is a work of grace. Since the initiative belongs to God, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification. It is also clear that each human being enters only freely into the communion of love with God. The presence of grace means at the same time the presence of the Spirit in the human being, because grace is the gift of the Spirit and it is the Spirit who causes good works, “charity”. This grace is the grace of God in the Spirit of Christ. The vocation to eternal life, to God, is supernatural. Unanswered remains the question of how to distinguish or discern the presence and the action of the Holy Spirit from other phenomena in religious traditions. There is an inherent tension between the Rahner-based position and the more classical position in SNC / PCID documentation. Rahner's theology gives a good starting point for the theology of religions, and it has a clear advantage: it gives a positive point of common concern and experience which provides a basis for encounters and dialogue. But an open question remains which creates tensions: Is it really possible to maintain, as Rahner does, that God is so close to all that he is almost indistinguishable from the self and from humanity?

These inherent tensions come very close to one of the key questions in theology, namely the relationship between nature and grace. As the theological reflection on the relationship between nature and grace makes it possible to affirm the presence of grace outside Christianity, we have seen the importance of the relationship between nature and grace for the theological foundations of the SNC / PCID. Vatican II did not abolish the doctrines of preceding councils. The Thomistic and scholastic axiom *gratia naturam non tollit, sed supponit et perficit* is still the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. How does this happen, and what is precisely meant by *natura*? The classical philosophical think-

ing of *esse* has been confronted with 20th century dialogic existentialist, personalist, and transcendental philosophy. SNC / PCID documentation constantly tries to find a balance between two currents of Roman Catholic theological thinking, both of which attempt to deal with the relationship between nature and grace. The first current, which practically eliminates the distinction between nature and grace, is best illustrated by the theology of de Lubac. The other current makes a distinction, though not a sharp one, between nature and grace, and is best represented by the thinking of Rahner. However, both of them, it must be reminded, take the historical and concrete human being as their starting point.²

Ultimately, the work of the SNC / PCID is an effort to try to find a creative balance between philosophy and theology. This is achieved by showing philosophical theology to be a domain in which nature and grace—reason and faith—partly overlap without endangering the ultimate priority of grace over nature, and of faith over reason. In the 20th century, it can be argued, the approach to gratuity has changed in Roman Catholic theology, and that the theology of the Counter-Reformation has been radically challenged. Rather than resting on some formalized, abstract conceptual construct, e.g. *pura natura*, the starting point and focus of Roman Catholic theology has become historical human nature existing in the concrete economy and in the effects of grace upon it. There has been a shift from the metaphysical to the historical.

Describing the relationship between nature and grace is a way of describing the relation between philosophy and theology in Roman Catholic theological thinking. However, it has been argued that this description necessitates three presuppositions: first, “the idea of creation as the common frame of reference for both philosophical and theological knowledge”; second, the idea of “the God-given unity and identity of truth despite irreducibly different realms of truth and ways of coming to know the truth”; and third, the idea that analogy can be used “to move intelligibly from the order of nature to the order of grace without either mystifying reason or rationalizing revelation”.³ In the framework of SNC / PCID-fostered Christian-Muslim dialogue, these three

² The problem of nature and grace is interesting because it may be the only problem that has not yet been dealt with in the ecumenical discussions between Catholics and Protestants.

³ *Dalferth* 1988, 74.

presuppositions are perfectly appropriate: creation, unity and identity of truth, and the use of analogy. Islam defines these concepts differently, but they can serve as common background presuppositions for dialogue.

The theological foundations of the SNC / PCID include also ecclesiology, because Christology and pneumatology are inevitably associated to ecclesiology in SNC / PCID documentation. The Church founded by Christ is for everybody. It exercises in his name a mission of universal salvation. It is said to be a sacrament of salvation with an universal aim (*Lumen Gentium* 48; *Dialogue and Proclamation* 33), but at the same time it is in a minority position in the world. Universality is not a quantitative but a qualitative measure. The Church is not visible everywhere and always, but it is present in history because it is in solidarity with the Incarnated Word of God. That is the reason why all salvation happens through it. To anchor this more firmly to history and humanity, the concept 'Reign of God' (or: 'Kingdom of God') is used. This concept includes those people who are not Christians, because the Reign of God is a broader concept than the Church, and the concept is more suitable to interreligious dialogue. Anthropologically speaking, according to *Ad Gentes* 9, "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. More than that, it is healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon, and the bliss of men." However, SNC / PCID documentation does not deal in depth with the question of the corruption of human nature or the question of evil in religious traditions.

The theological foundations of the SNC / PCID are based on three dialectical relationships, namely, those between philosophy and theology, nature and grace, and the Church / Reign of God and all humanity. This entails an interesting combination of Aristotelian philosophy, patristic and Thomistic theology, and transcendental existentialist and personalist philosophy with theological and philosophical anthropology. In this structure, what is the position of the SNC / PCID towards Islam? SNC / PCID documentation deals with Islam as a human phenomenon, a religion which can be anthropologically observed and with which there can—and must—be dialogue, encounter, relationship. Nevertheless, Islam as a theological issue is not profoundly dealt with. Islam is set in a monotheistic framework, in the Abrahamic tradition, and its faith, rites, and prophet are appreciated. Islam is seen as something positive, as being part of the human being's striving towards

Good. The Spirit's presence is recognized in it. Since Vatican II, popes, especially John Paul II, have had multiple contacts and continuous dialogue with Muslims. The idea has been to encourage Christians to follow Vatican II teaching and to adopt its positive attitude towards Islam (and other non-Christian religions). Nevertheless, there are no affirmations concerning Islam as a "way of salvation", or concerning Muhammad as a prophet in the Christian theological sense. Islam is mainly described as Muslims would describe it, and Christian-Muslim dialogue tends to take up social or human issues, but does not really deal with difficult theological issues.

This raises the question of the theological position of the SNC / PCID. It is clear that the standard typology of three positions in the theology of religions, exclusivism-inclusivism-pluralism, is not really valid. The position of the SNC / PCID is that Jesus Christ is at the same time the only means of salvation and the only way. Jesus Christ is constitutive of salvation for the whole of humankind. This is a universal statement, addressed to Christians as well as to non-Christians. This Christology is deliberately set in the Trinitarian context, which seems to be the only way forward in the theology of religions. Only in the framework of the doctrine of the Trinity, which explains the ontological possibility of incarnation and immanence, creation, redemption, history and eschatology, and consequently dialogue and mission, does theology of religions become possible and meaningful. True plurality is only possible when it is based on Trinitarian grounds. Indeed, one of the features of Catholic theology in the second half of the 20th century is that the Christic and Trinitarian dimensions of grace have been restored. The classical doctrine of the Trinitarian nature of God is one cornerstone on which SNC / PCID documentation is built. This means that the SNC / PCID position in the Christian theology of religions takes the nature of the triune God, the central position of Christ, and the history and anthropology of people and their religions seriously, which does not—let us say it immediately—exclude the Church. This position is dialectical. Its answer to non-Christian religions is "yes" and "no", at the same time. Indeed, it must be so, if it is to be faithful to the theological position of Vatican II. It is open to the other, without losing its own identity. It also reflects some unresolved tensions in the documents of the Magisterium.

The Christocentric emphasis leads the SNC / PCID—and the whole theology of religions—to Christological debate. At the heart of the discussion on the Christian theology of religions is the debate concerning the unicity of Jesus Christ. It is clear that if Christology is detached

from the centre of the position, there is a danger of detaching the most essential characteristic of the Christian faith. In Christianity, Christ is the only Mediator between humanity and God, and the only Saviour of the human race. All salvation takes place through him and because of him. The Incarnation is a paradox, because the Christians say that in this particular case, the Absolute has come and is present in the contingent, the only God is present in the singular. The Logos does not work alone. He is sent by the Father, and he gives his Spirit. He is already present, with the Spirit, in creation, and he is *semina verbi* in human hearts and intelligencies before the Incarnation. Indeed, there is a human and divine nature in the Trinity: Jesus Christ is at the same time fully man, and fully God. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ is causing the Christological debate of the first Christian centuries to begin anew. The question of the uniqueness of Christ is being urged, especially by Asian theologians, as a logical consequence of the Trinitarian renaissance at the end of the 20th century. The 21st century theology must tackle the Christological issues anew, not only for Christians' sake, but for the sake of all religious traditions. Christology is the great advantage of Christian theology. Without a doctrine of Incarnation, Christian theology—unlike in Islam or in any other non-Christian religion—would have difficulties in maintaining the idea that God is both transcendent and immanent. Muslims want to emphasize that God is beyond knowing, but that he is also immanent. In Islam, as in any religion, there is a need to overcome the absolute transcendency of the divine being, and the history of these faiths is characterized by efforts in this direction.

With this Christocentric emphasis, the doctrine of the Trinity allows Christianity to maintain genuine openness to God in history. As genuine openness means taking non-Christian religions seriously, the Christian Church is consequently opening itself to genuine change, challenge, and questioning. The only possibility to keep this ferment alive is to build on this Trinitarian theology. It is clear that the Trinitarian dimension of the theology of religions can provide a fruitful field for further study and reflection. The plurality in unity encountered in the Trinity enables the SNC/PCID to do justice to the diversity and richness of the world, and yet maintain its unity and reject relativizing forms of pluralism. In this Trinitarian framework of communion and mutual interdependence, an authentic Christian encounter of the Other, be it Muslim or any non-Christian, becomes possible in dialogue and mission.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> , Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (November 18, 1965)
AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> , Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (December 7, 1965)
B	<i>Bulletin</i> of the Secretariat for Non-Christians / Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
DEV	<i>Dominum et Vivificantem</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II (May 18, 1986)
DH	<i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> , Declaration on Religious Freedom (December 7, 1965)
DM	<i>Dialogue and Mission</i> , the Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission (1984)
DP	<i>Dialogue and Proclamation</i> , Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1991)
DS	Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum. Edidit Henrici Denzinger. Editio XL (2005).
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (November 18, 1965)
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> , Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI (December 8, 1975)
ES	<i>Ecclesiam Suam</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI (August 6, 1964)
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965)
IM	<i>Inter Mirifica</i> , Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication (December 4, 1963)
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (November 21, 1964)
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> , Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (October 28, 1965)
OT	<i>Optatam Totius</i> , Decree on Priestly Formation (October 28, 1965)
PCID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, <i>Pontificium concilium pro dialogo inter religiones</i>
PD	<i>Pro Dialogo</i> of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
PISAI	<i>Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica</i> , Pontifical Institute of

	Islamic and Arabic Studies
PO	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i> , Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (December 7, 1965)
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina. Ed. Migne.
RH	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II (March 4, 1979)
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II (December 7, 1990)
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (December 4, 1963)
SCG	<i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
SNC	Secretariat for Non-Christians, <i>Secretariatus pro non-christianis</i>
ST	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
TMA	<i>Tertio Millennio Adveniente</i> , Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II (November 10, 1994)
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> , Decree on Ecumenism (November 21, 1964)
VS	<i>Veritatis Splendor</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II (August 6, 1993)
WCC OIRR	World Council of Churches Office on Interreligious Relations

SNC / PCID TABLE

Year	President	Secretary	Undersecretary	Responsible for Islam
1964	Paolo Marella	Pierre Humbert- claude		
1965				Joseph-Marie Cuoq
1966				
1967			Pietro Rossano	
1968				
1969				
1970				
1971				
1972				
1973	Serge Pignedoli	Pietro Rossano		
1974			John Bosco Shirieda	
1975				François Abou Mokh
1976				
1977				
1978				
1979				Antoine Mouallem
1980	Jean Jadot			E.S.M. Sabanegh
1981				
1982		Marcello Zago		
1983				

Year	President	Secretary	Undersecretary	Responsible for Islam
1984	Francis Arinze			
1985				
1986				Andraos Salama
1987		Michael Fitzgerald		
1988				
1989				Thomas Michel
1990				
1991				
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				Khaled Akasheh
1996				
1997				
1998				
1999			Felix A. Machado	
2000				
2001				
2002	Michael Fitzgerald	Pier Luigi Celata		
2003				
2004				
2005	Michael Fitzgerald	Pier Luigi Celata	Felix A. Machado	Khaled Akasheh

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Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) Publications*

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2. Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Vatican City, Pentecost 1991, jointly with Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; also in French, German, and Italian)
3. Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963–1995). Edited by Francesco Gioia. Boston: Pauline Books & Media 1997 (also in Italian and in French)

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3. The Rights and Education of Children in Islam and Christianity. Acts of a Muslim-Christian Colloquium organized jointly by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research Al Albait Foundation (Amman) (13–15 December 1990, Amman, Jordan)
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6. Marriage and the Family in Today's World: Interreligious Colloquium, Rome 21–25 September 1994 (Vatican City 1995, jointly with Pontifical Council for the Family)
 7. Religion and the Use of the Earth's Resources. Acts of a Christian-Muslim Colloquium organized jointly by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research Al Albait Foundation (Amman, Jordan) (Rome [Italy], 17–20 April 1996)
 8. Human Dignity. Acts of a Christian-Muslim Colloquium organized jointly by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research Al Albait Foundation (Amman, Jordan) (Amman [Jordan], 2–4 December 1997)
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 13. *Meeting in Friendship: Messages to Muslims for the end of Ramadan (1967–2000)* (Vatican City 2000; also in French)
 14. *Christianity in Dialogue with African Traditional Religion and Culture*. Seminar Papers, Volume One. Edited by Chidi Denis Isizoh (Vatican City 2001)
 15. *Peace: a Single Goal and a Shared Intention*. Forum of Religious Representatives (Vatican City, 23 January 2002); Day of Prayer for Peace (Assisi, 24 January 2002) (Vatican City 2002)
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