

Boloron Cirilo

The Concept of Inclusive Pluralism: Exploring Jacques Dupuis's Theology of Religions and its Implication towards contemporary Interreligious Dialogue

Supervisor: Kurt Appel

Abstract (English)

This study's main objective is to expound the meaning of Dupuis' concept of "inclusive pluralism". It came to the conclusion that the proposed model for a Christian theology of religious pluralism is one that is "able to combine and hold together the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ in the order of salvation and a truly positive and salvific value of the other religious traditions for their followers." When Dupuis speaks of "inclusive pluralism", he refers to the fact that "while keeping to the inclusivist position by holding fast to Jesus Christ as a universal Savior, one may affirm at the same time a plurality of religious paths having some salvific value for their adherents; not, however, without being essentially and organically related to the Christ event in accordance with the one divine plan of salvation for humankind." It is grounded on a firm conviction of the permanent action of the "Word of God as such." Dupuis maintains clearly that the Word-to-be-incarnate and the Word-incarnate may not be separated from each other. They do not constitute parallel ways of salvation. Despite that, he affirms a universal action of the "Word-of-God-as-such" beyond the salvific action of the "Word-incarnate" through his humanity. Secondly, Dupuis also maintains the permanent activity of the Spirit of God. In the divine plan, the action of the Holy Spirit "is always connected with and in relation to the event Jesus Christ, which represents the culminating point of the involvement of God with humankind, and, as such, the hermeneutical key of the entire unfolding of the personal divine-human dealings." "Whenever God has spoken in human history, he has done so through his Word, in his Spirit." This trinitarian dimension of God's self-communication has become a foundation of the Christian commitment to interreligious dialogue. It lies in the "mystery of unity," the threefold foundation based on the common origin and the single destiny of humankind in God, universal salvation in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit's active presence. In this manner, interreligious dialogue is not anthropological, but theological. It affirms that world's religions are in themselves "gifts of God to the peoples of the world." They originate from God's self-manifestation to human beings. Thus the primary foundation for the principle of diversity and plurality is the superabundant riches and variety of God's self-communication and God's self-giving to humanity. Therefore, they have a theological significance in God's universal design of salvation. They are "ways" of salvation for their members.