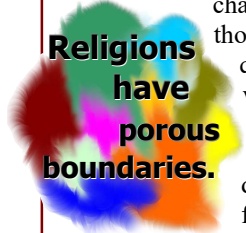


BARNET'S THREE ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER FAITHS

1. Imperial – mine only, best
2. Romantic — all basically same
3. Commitments in Encounter — commitment to one's own faith encountering others' faiths as insights into the Sacred

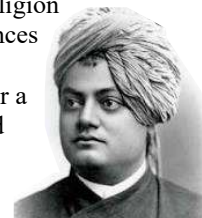
THREE DIMENSIONS OF THE SACRED

- NATURE — ecological, not hierarchical order
- PERSONHOOD — action without attachment to the fruit of the act
- SOCIETY — working for justice and peace for all



About "Theologies of Religions"

How can we understand the variety of religions in the world? Are they different roads to the same goal? Is light from one single sun refracted through stained glass of many colors? Do all roads lead up the mountain to the same summit, or are different religions actually different mountains, different purposes? Is one religion so complete and superior to all others that our attention should be wholly given to it? Are religions like different sports, with different rules and scoring, and different goals? Should religions "go on multiplying," as Swami Vivekananda recommended, until there is one religion for every person? Or conversely, should religions cast aside their differences and unite in one unified faith? Is unity without uniformity possible? For Christians, the puzzle is whether the many faiths are part of God's plan or a challenge to His will. How should folks of one faith regard those of other faiths? Should religious people leave such questions to their global leaders, or should they interact with each other in their own local communities?

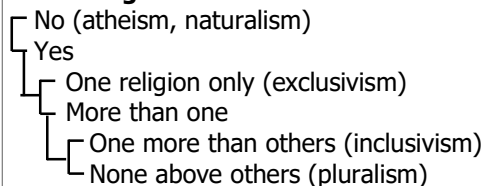


Such questions are far more difficult than they at first appear. Shallow answers are easy, but religious history suggests that answers, while difficult, are worth pursuing. They engage us at the core of our various faiths, and unfold to us a fuller vision of the sacred, that on which our lives depend, our ultimate meaning or concern. —VERN BARNET

Alan Race: Three Approaches (cf. Diana Eck)

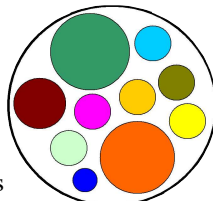
1. **Exclusivism:** Only in Christian faith can the authentic truth of God's offer of revelation and salvation be found. — ¶ Acts 4:12: "There is salvation in no

Does religion save?



one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." ¶ John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." ¶ *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus.* (Barth)

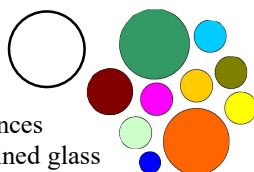
2. **Inclusivism:** Christ is the most complete of the religious choices for revelation and salvation. God wills to save all people, though particularly expressed in Christ. — ¶ Acts 10:35: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." ¶ Acts 14:16: "In past generations he [God] allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witnesses." ¶ John 1:9: The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. (Justin Martyr, *Nostra Aetate*, Karl Rahner's "anonymous Christian")



3. **Pluralism:** The many faiths are each sources of transcendent vision and human transformation. (Cusanus, W C Smith, John Hick.)

Huston Smith: Three Relations

1. Superiority 2. Identity 3. Differences without judgment (light of sun through stained glass windows)



Paul Knitter: Four Christian Models

1. **Replacement**— Total (Karl Barth, fundamentalist churches) Christianity replaces all other religions (even itself) because it alone is the truth found in Jesus. No salvific benefit in studying other faiths.

1a. **Partial Replacement.** Other faiths may grasp parts of God's revelation, but not enough for salvation. These are versions of Exclusivism.

2. **Fulfillment**— Christianity fulfills Judaism which was incomplete. Some Muslims feel Islam fulfills Christianity, as Mormonism fulfills earlier traditions. Hans Küng's and Edward Schillebeeckx's Christian views seem parallel. Karl Rahner's formulation includes those who have not yet heard the gospel but are saved by Christ's grace; this may be a disguised form of Exclusivism.

3. **Mutuality**— All faiths are incomplete; we need each other to discover the actual whole truth. Some "are mutually incommensurable." — Raimon Panikkar. But not everyone is right, and not every position is worthy. This may be a type of Pluralism.

4. **Acceptance**— Absolute claims are impossible; no one can know that any particular path is right. S Mark Heim. With modesty, we can learn from one another. The same way, profitable for one, may be a disaster for another. This utilitarian approach is a type of Pluralism.

John Cobb: Options for people together considered

—"Christ is the Way that is open to other Ways."

1. **Scientific**— Abstractions cannot tell us how to live in community.
2. **Common goal**— Ultimate goals cannot come from proximate ones.
3. **Mutual tolerance**— Great idea, but the world's faiths are forged with imperial ideologies.
4. **Synthesis**— Impossible to unite all faiths (doctrines).
5. **Pluralism**— Mutual respect as we come to know and learn from each other.

Some metaphors for the mutiplicity of faith faiths

- A. different sports with different rules, scoring, and outcomes
- B. one's native language with mastering other languages
- C. loving one's home but feeling "at home" in different places
- D. different paths up a single mountain
- E. different mountains
- F. different colors cast by the single sun through a stained-glass window
- G. The most beautiful person in the world is my spouse, but I'm glad if you disagree and say that your spouse is the most beautiful in the world
- H. different species of trees all watered by the same underground aquifer

"Religion" is largely a Western Enlightenment colonial invention.