

## JACQUES DUPUIS: THE ONGOING DEBATE

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*The article evaluates what seven authors (from Terrence Merrigan in 2005 to Keith Johnson in 2011) have written about Jacques Dupuis's theology of religions. Dupuis died in 2004, but the debate about his views continues vigorously. When discussing the mediation of salvation, some, like Dupuis himself, attend to the church's prayers for "others." But neither he himself nor his critics appreciate how such prayer, being inspired by love, enjoys some efficient causality, and not merely moral and final causality. Nor have other authors yet recognized the significance of Christ's priestly mediation for the theology of religions.*

IN LATE 1997, JACQUES DUPUIS (1923–2004)<sup>1</sup> of the Gregorian University published a 447-page theological reflection on Christianity and other religions.<sup>2</sup> Written originally in English, this book appeared almost simultaneously in French and Italian, and subsequently in Portuguese (1999) and Spanish (2000). In spring 1998 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) began an investigation of the book, which culminated in a notification published on January 24, 2001. While stating that the “book contained notable ambiguities and difficulties on important doctrinal points, which could lead a reader to erroneous or harmful opinions,” the CDF did not ask Dupuis to change a single line in his text but only to

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<sup>1</sup> See G. O'Collins, “Jacques Dupuis,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2010* (Detroit: Gale, 2010) 420–22.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997). This book was the third of a trilogy; see below, p. XX and n. 84.

include the text of the notification in “any reprinting or further editions of his book, as well as in all translations.”<sup>3</sup>

The literature and documentation on *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* are vast. An article written by Dupuis himself for *Louvain Studies* took into account 20 reviews that had appeared in English and 27 in French.<sup>4</sup> Some of these, such as the assessment by Terrence Merrigan in *Louvain Studies*, entered into critical dialogue with Dupuis in a way that was admirable; others, such as an equally long piece in *Revue thomiste*, seemed an odd throwback to a dead past.<sup>5</sup> In all, there were well over 100 reviews in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and other languages, as well as articles in journals and chapters in books dedicated, in whole or in part, to a critical evaluation of Dupuis’s views.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* appeared in October 1997, the publishing house of Queriniana (Brescia) asked Dupuis to write a shorter, more accessible version. This time he wrote in Italian, and after some delay the book was published in autumn 2001.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly Dupuis addressed a central question: how can Christians profess and proclaim faith in Jesus Christ as the one redeemer of all humankind, and at the same time recognize the Spirit at work in the world’s religions and cultures—as was done by Pope John Paul II?<sup>8</sup> From a Christian perspective, what is the place in God’s providence for the other religions,

<sup>3</sup> CDF, “Notification on the Book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York, 1997) by Father Jacques Dupuis, S.J.,” *Acta apostolicae sedis* 94 (2002) 141–45; ET, *Origins* 30 (2001) 605–8; also at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20010124\\_dupuis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20010124_dupuis_en.html). (All URLs cited herein were accessed January 1, 2013.)

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Dupuis, S.J., “‘The Truth Will Make You Free’: The Theology of Religious Pluralism Revisited,” *Louvain Studies* 24 (1999) 211–63.

<sup>5</sup> Terrence Merrigan, “Exploring the Frontiers: Jacques Dupuis and the Movement ‘Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism,’” *Louvain Studies* 23 (1998) 338–59; Comité de redaction, “‘Tout récapituler dans le Christ’: A propos de l’ouvrage de J. Dupuis, *Vers une théologie chrétienne du pluralisme religieux*,” *Revue thomiste* 98 (1998) 591–630. The first words of the title for this article were obviously chosen to recall the program that Pope Pius X (r. 1903–1914) set himself for his pontificate.

<sup>6</sup> For a bibliography on *Toward a Christian Theology*, see Daniel Kendall and Gerald O’Collins, eds., *In Many and Diverse Ways: In Honor of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003) 270–81; for a shorter bibliography of reviews and reactions, see *Louvain Studies* 27 (2002) 406–10.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Dupuis, *Il cristianesimo e le religioni: Dallo scontro all’incontro* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2001); ET, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> For details on this teaching of John Paul II, see Gerald O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions* (New York: Oxford University, 2013) 166–80.

some of which predate the birth of Christ (e.g., Hinduism), and what beneficial contribution do they make toward the salvation of their followers? As revealer and redeemer, Jesus is unique and universal, but in practice the visible paths to salvation have remained many. What might the various religious traditions mean in the one divine plan to save humanity?

After Dupuis died on December 28, 2004, his views have continued to be cited, approved, or criticized. Most of those who write on Dupuis concentrate on his *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*; only a few also take into account his subsequent *Christianity and the Religions*, in which he clarified his “inclusive pluralism.”<sup>9</sup> Among other changes, he qualified his language about the “complementarity” between Christianity and other religions by calling it “asymmetrical complementarity,”<sup>10</sup> he dropped the terminology of the “Logos *asarkos*” and the “Logos *ensarkos*” and spoke rather of “the Word as such” and “the Word as incarnate,”<sup>11</sup> and he introduced some of the teaching of the Third Council of Constantinople (680/681) to support his position about the actions of Christ’s divine nature and human nature being “distinct” but inseparable.<sup>12</sup>

Keeping in mind a certain shift from Dupuis’s longer 1997 book to what he published in the 2001 book,<sup>13</sup> I propose here to present and evaluate, in chronological order, some of the discussion that has appeared in English from 2005 to date.<sup>14</sup> The (seven) interlocutors run from Terrence Merrigan in 2005 to Keith Johnson in 2011. When discussing theological method,

<sup>9</sup> Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 87–95, 255–58, 263.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 255–58; in a personal communication, I had suggested qualifying as “asymmetrical” what Dupuis meant by “complementarity.”

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 144–46.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 144; in a personal communication, I had pointed out how this council supported Dupuis’s position about the human and divine actions of Christ.

<sup>13</sup> I drew attention to these changes in “Christ and the Religions,” *Gregorianum* 84 (2003) 347–62, at 355–60.

<sup>14</sup> The discussion of Dupuis’s views continues in other languages, e.g., in the following works in Italian: Fiorella Quirini, “La mediazione salvifica sacramentale di Cristo e della Chiesa secondo Jacques Dupuis,” *Quaderni di scienze religiose* 24 (2005) 103–47; Alberto Cozzi, *Gesù Cristo tra le religioni: Mediatore dell’originario* (Assisi: Cittadella, 2005); Adolfo Russo, *La verità crocifissa: Verità e rivelazione in tempi di pluralismo* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2005); Mariano Crociata, ed., *Teologia delle religioni: La questione del metodo* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2006); Angelo Amato, *Gesù, identità del cristianesimo: Conoscenza ed esperienza* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2008); Giacomo Canobbio, *Nessuna salvezza fuori della Chiesa? Storia e senso di un controverso principio teologico* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2009); Paolo Selvadagi, *Teologia, religioni, dialogo* (Vatican City: Lateran University, 2009); Gianni Colzani, *Missiologia contemporanea: Il cammino evangelico delle chiese: 1945–2007* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010); Ivan Macut, “La salvezza nelle religioni nel pensiero di Jacques Dupuis,” *Città di vita* 66 (2011) 149–64.

the nature of interreligious dialogue, and other issues raised by Dupuis, some scholars, as we will see, prove open to his proposals, while others remain rather hostile. All the interlocutors illustrate the enduring significance of his work. But, like Dupuis himself, they continue to overlook two points of vital significance in this area: (1) the (efficient) causality of love exercised when the church prays for those of other religious faiths; and (2) the central role of Christ's priesthood.

My article aims to establish three conclusions. First, the debate over the views of Dupuis, far from dwindling away after his death, has continued vigorously. Some of the seven interlocutors chosen for this article have written at greater length (e.g., Gavin D'Costa), others at less. But I need to cite a range of authors to adequately portray a sense of the ongoing debate and the issues that remain alive. My account of the debate will also involve responding to certain misplaced criticisms made by some of the interlocutors. Second, when discussing the mediation of salvation, some, like Dupuis himself, have attended to the church's activity in praying for "the others." But neither he nor anyone else has appreciated that prayer, being inspired and fuelled by *love*, enjoys not merely moral and final causality but even some efficient causality. Third, the mediatorial activity of the church draws on and remains subordinate to that of Christ and the Holy Spirit. His high-priestly mediation is very significant for the theology of religions but remains universally neglected. I begin, then, with a chapter written by Merrigan for an edited collection.<sup>15</sup>

### TERRENCE MERRIGAN ON THE CHURCH'S MEDIATION (2005)

Merrigan, who had not only in 1998 reviewed Dupuis's *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* but also in 2003 contributed to the Festschrift in his honor,<sup>16</sup> observes perceptively that Dupuis's conflict with the CDF "represented a decisive moment in the contemporary Catholic understanding of religions." In the whole debate Merrigan names as "the most significant issue" the precise role of the church "with respect to the salvation of those who do not belong to her." How does the church mediate salvation to non-Christians?<sup>17</sup>

Merrigan recalls Dupuis's position: the church is an effective instrument of salvation for its own members, but for others exercises only "moral" and "final" causality by interceding for them. That position involved

<sup>15</sup> Terrence Merrigan, "The Appeal to Congar in Roman Catholic Theology of Religions: The Case of Jacques Dupuis," in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, ed. Gabriel Flynn (Louvain: Peeters, 2005) 427–57.

<sup>16</sup> Terrence Merrigan, "Jacques Dupuis and the Redefinition of Inclusivism," in *In Many and Diverse Ways* 60–71. For Merrigan's review see n. 5 above.

<sup>17</sup> Merrigan, "Appeal to Congar" 428–30.

acknowledging an intrinsic mediatory value in non-Christian religions for the salvation of their followers. Dupuis, when presenting and defending his views on the church's limited mediatorial role for "the others," enlisted the support of Yves Congar. Merrigan raises the question, Was Congar a clear ally in Dupuis's efforts to circumscribe the church's mediation of salvation to those "outside"?<sup>18</sup> Merrigan's close analysis of what Dupuis drew from Congar and how he interpreted those texts suggests a certain divergence. Unlike Dupuis and somewhat ambiguously, Congar defended a universal role for the church in mediating salvation "efficiently."<sup>19</sup>

As regards the mediatory value of other religions, Congar at a 1971 conference declined to conclude that "these religions are divinely legitimated *in themselves* and *as such*. Their value derives from the persons who live them."<sup>20</sup> Speaking at the same conference, Dupuis took a different line:

"It is then said that, though non-Christians are saved due to the sincerity of their subjective religious life, their religion has for them no objective salvific value. However, the dichotomy on which this restriction is based is seriously inadequate. Subjective and objective religion can be distinguished; they cannot be separated."

Dupuis went on to say that it is "theologically unrealistic to maintain that, though non-Christians can be saved, their religion plays no part in their salvation." This led him to the conclusion: "No concrete religious life is purely natural, no historical religion is merely human."<sup>21</sup> Dupuis was to put this positively in his 1997 book: "in the overall history of God's dealings with humankind," the world's religions express "distinct modalities of God's self-communication to persons and peoples."<sup>22</sup> As Merrigan remarks, the controversial position expounded by Dupuis in 1997 was nothing more nor less than "the working out" of what he had said in 1971.<sup>23</sup> From the 1970s one could also cite Dupuis's comments on the exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, where he urged that non-Christian religions should be seen not "merely as expressions of human aspirations towards God but [also] as embodying for their followers a first, though incomplete, approach of God to human beings."<sup>24</sup>

Merrigan, reflecting on the divergence between Congar and Dupuis, associates their interest in the *mediation* of salvation with the sacramental

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 436–39.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 439–57.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in *ibid.* 452, emphasis original.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in *ibid.* 453.

<sup>22</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 212.

<sup>23</sup> Merrigan, "Appeal to Congar" 453.

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Dupuis, "Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI," *Vidyajyoti* 40 (1976) 218–30, at 230.

nature of the church.<sup>25</sup> Beyond question, the church is an instrument of salvation for non-Christians who do not and never will belong to her. Below I argue that the church's liturgical life is effective for them as well.

Nevertheless, important as it is to recognize the church as universal sign and sacrament of salvation, it is even more important here to acknowledge the *priesthood* of Christ and its universal impact—something relentlessly ignored (as I will continue to show below) by those who reflect of the salvation of “the others.” The sacramental work of the church must not be downplayed, but it depends upon and is incorporated into Christ's exercise of his priestly function, a function that not only involves the sacramental life of the church but also goes beyond it to affect all humankind. Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum concilium* (SC), the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, pictured strikingly the worldwide force of Christ's priesthood: “Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant, when he assumed a human nature, introduced into this land of exile the hymn that in heaven is sung throughout all ages. He unites the whole community of humankind with himself and associates it with him in singing the divine canticle of praise” (SC 83, my translation).

In the Eucharist, the crucified and risen Christ, invisibly but really, presents lovingly to the Father his self-offering on behalf of all people and, mysteriously but truly, draws them into his own self-offering. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the administration of the other sacraments, and beyond, but supremely in and through the celebration of the Eucharist, Christ continues his high-priestly, mediating role not only for the faithful who take part in the liturgy but also for all human beings and, indeed, the whole created world. As Thomas Torrance remarks, “when the Church at the Eucharist intercedes in his [Christ's] name for all mankind, it is Christ himself who intercedes in them.”<sup>26</sup> Below I return to the question of the mediation of the church's prayer exercised at common worship. But we should never forget that this mediation depends on and remains subordinate to the priestly self-offering of Christ, who intercedes before the face of the Father for the baptized faithful *and* for the entire human race. The priestly intercession of Christ, if we want to apply to it Aristotelian-style language, is a supremely “efficient” and no “merely moral” cause.<sup>27</sup> Below I take up again the significance of Christ's priestly ministry—something

<sup>25</sup> Merrigan, “Appeal to Congar” 455–57. See Roger W. Nutt, “An Office in Search of its Ontology: Mediation and Trinitarian Christology in Jacques Dupuis' Theology of Religious Pluralism,” *Louvain Studies* 32 (2007) 383–407.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996) 134.

<sup>27</sup> On Christ's priestly mediation of salvation to the world, see Gerald O'Collins, S.J., and Michael Keenan Jones, *Jesus Our Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Jesus* (New York: Oxford University, 2010) 226–29, 265–70.

glossed over not only by Dupuis himself but also by his commentators and critics.

### MARA BRECHT ON THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST (2008)

Like Don Schweitzer (as we will see), Mara Brecht explores Dupuis's thinking about other religious traditions and Christianity's relationship to them within the context of his Christology. She writes: "Unless one reads his view of religious pluralism through the lens of his Christology, one mistakes its status."<sup>28</sup> Unlike any of the other six authors I examine in this article, Brecht also presents Dupuis's theological method, which correlates Christian tradition and experience, before she evaluates his position on other religions.<sup>29</sup>

Where D'Costa associates Dupuis with Karl Rahner, Brecht is at pains to show how Dupuis went beyond Rahner. She touches, for instance, one point that sets Dupuis and Rahner apart.<sup>30</sup> Rahner persistently denominated Christ as "absolute Savior."<sup>31</sup> Whatever Rahner's reasons for this expression, Dupuis maintained a firmly Thomistic line: only God, who is totally necessary, utterly unconditioned, uncaused, and unlimited is truly absolute. While Dupuis certainly never wanted to reduce Christ to being one savior among many, he was sensitive to the limits involved in the historical incarnation of the Son of God, the created character of the humanity he assumed, and the specific quality of his redemptive human actions. Moreover, the incarnation itself was a free act of God's love and not unconditionally necessary. Dupuis never applied to Christ the title of "absolute Savior," but called him "constitutive" for human salvation.<sup>32</sup>

Brecht aims, above all, to highlight the importance for Dupuis of Christ's humanity: "by reason of his humanity he is uniquely related to the whole human universe." This means that Christ's "claim and effect on humanity cannot be restricted to any earthly institution."<sup>33</sup> Although Brecht and

<sup>28</sup> Mara Brecht, "The Humanity of Christ: Jacques Dupuis' Christology and Religious Pluralism," *Horizons* 35 (2008) 54–71.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 60–63. <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 70.

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Seabury, 1978) 193–95, 204–5.

<sup>32</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 283. The issue here involves neither reflecting on other modalities of salvation nor discerning implications of the Christ-event but simply the use (or misuse?) in Christology of the term "absolute."

<sup>33</sup> Brecht, "Humanity of Christ" 66. This is not intended to assert that any or every religious form or institution (even some substantially perverse rites) can mediate Christ's salvation, but rather to maintain that his saving work reaches people beyond the institutions that constitute the church's sacramental life.



Dupuis do not make this connection, they have Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes* (GS), the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, on their side. After retrieving the patristic theme about the incarnation ("by his incarnation, the Son of God has in a certain way united himself with every human being"),<sup>34</sup> GS went on to teach that all human beings can share in Christ's "paschal mystery" (no. 22)—a striking statement about his "claim and effect on humanity" not being "restricted to any earthly institution," including the church.

While Brecht rightly emphasizes Christ's humanity, she (and before her Dupuis himself) failed to attend to a significant consequence of the incarnation. By taking on the human condition, the Son of God could now exercise a priestly function for the human race. A straight line led from his assumption of humanity to his being the High Priest for all men and women of all times and places.

#### CATHERINE CORNILLE: FOUR THEMES (2008)

Catherine Cornille signaled her interest in the work of Jacques Dupuis by inviting him to contribute to a work she edited in 2002.<sup>35</sup> *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* shows that she has not lost that interest after his death.<sup>36</sup> She highlights four significant themes in his *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, and does not neglect modifications Dupuis subsequently introduced in *Christianity and the Religions*.

First, she appreciates Dupuis's respect for the fullness of the reign of God to come. This means that, while recognizing "a privileged role for Christian revelation and the church," Dupuis regarded all religions "as oriented toward an ultimate state of realization that is beyond any one particular religion."<sup>37</sup> Second, she notes how Aloysius Pieris had employed the category of "complementarity" eight years before Dupuis used it in *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (1997). But she recognizes the force of characterizing such complementarity as "asymmetrical," a modification that Dupuis introduced in *Christianity and the Religions* (2002). It reminds "us of the impossibility of reconciling religious commitment with a recognition of the radical equality of religions." Cornille quotes what Dupuis wrote in his 2002 book: it is "in this fidelity to personal, non-negotiable convictions, honestly accepted on both

<sup>34</sup> All translations of Vatican II documents are mine.

<sup>35</sup> See Jacques Dupuis, "Christianity and Religions: Complementarity and Convergence," in *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*, ed. Catherine Cornille (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002) 61–75.

<sup>36</sup> Catherine Cornille, *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* (New York: Crossroad, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 39.



sides, that the interreligious dialogue takes place ‘between equals’—in their differences.”<sup>38</sup>

Third, Cornille observes that Dupuis faced religious pluralism within a trinitarian framework, focusing primarily on the Holy Spirit. She writes: “Without denying the inseparability of the Spirit from the Son,” Dupuis emphasized the distinctive role of the Holy Spirit in an economy of salvation.<sup>39</sup> Here Dupuis spelled out at much greater length what John Paul II taught about the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the cultures and religions of the world.<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, Cornille wants to restore “empathy” in the context of interreligious dialogue. Hence she is attracted by what Dupuis wrote about the depth of religious experience and the struggle to express this in words. Empathy can help us understand and interpret what the “others” contribute to interreligious dialogue.<sup>41</sup> What she says in this connection makes me regret that she does not engage with Dupuis over what he proposed concerning interreligious prayer.<sup>42</sup> She examines mysticism and intermonastic dialogue,<sup>43</sup> but I would like to have seen her reaction to Dupuis on interreligious prayer.

#### GAVIN D’COSTA: A MAJOR CRITIC (2009, 2010)

Back in 1998, Gavin D’Costa published a lengthy review of Dupuis’s *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*.<sup>44</sup> That review anticipated some of the comments and criticisms that D’Costa would later repeat and develop after Dupuis’s death in 2004. (1) For instance, he argued that “Dupuis is basically a Rahnerian”; “theologically, he carries on from where Rahner left off.”<sup>45</sup> (2) He also linked the views of Dupuis (later called “inclusive pluralism” by Dupuis himself) with those of Paul Knitter,<sup>46</sup> even though he was aware that Dupuis strongly distanced himself from Knitter’s pluralist paradigm. (3) D’Costa claimed that Dupuis held that both Christ and the kingdom “can be severed from the Church”; in other words, Dupuis “breaks the link between Christology and ecclesiology.”<sup>47</sup> This strong language about “severing” and “breaking” the link between the kingdom of God and the church seems quite incompatible with what

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 87–89; Cornille quotes Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 229.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 198–99. <sup>40</sup> See n. 8 above.

<sup>41</sup> Cornille, *Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* 140–41.

<sup>42</sup> Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 336–52.

<sup>43</sup> Cornille, *Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* 110–21.

<sup>44</sup> *Journal of Theological Studies* 59 (1998) 910–14.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 910, 911. <sup>46</sup> Ibid. 914.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 911, 912.

Dupuis wrote about the church as sacrament of the kingdom. He argued that the church, while not identical with the kingdom, remains the efficacious sign of the reign of God already present in history.<sup>48</sup> As for “breaking the link between Christology and ecclesiology” (or, to put this more concretely, between the risen Christ and the church), Dupuis stated clearly that Christ remains the head of the church, with his reign extending beyond the church: “The kingship of Christ extends not only to the Church but also to the whole world.”<sup>49</sup> The generalizing and unqualified language used here by D’Costa seemed prompted by his disagreement with Dupuis over a specific issue: the extent of the church’s mediatorial activity. I will come back to this shortly when examining two books in which he discussed Dupuis’s theology: first in 2008, then in 2010.

In his *Christianity and World Religions*, D’Costa, when critically expounding what he called the “structural inclusivism” of Karl Rahner,<sup>50</sup> introduces Dupuis and names him as a “neo-Rahnerian.”<sup>51</sup> While Dupuis, in both *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* and *Christianity and the Religions* refers to or quotes from Rahner more than any other modern theologian, did that make Dupuis a “neo-Rahnerian”? In all the years that I spent with Dupuis, I never heard him suggest that he belonged to Rahner’s “school.” Of course, he could have been a “neo-Rahnerian” without realizing it. We would need to compare and contrast in considerable detail the theology and specifically the theology of religions developed by Rahner and Dupuis to reach a truly justified conclusion about calling Dupuis a “neo-Rahnerian.”

In *Christianity and World Religions* D’Costa comments that Dupuis did not endorse “the provisional status of other religions as salvific structures,” and that this was “one reason” why the CDF questioned Dupuis’s *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. Presumably D’Costa has in mind section IV of the notification (“On the orientation of all human beings to the Church”) and, in particular, no. 7: “According to Catholic doctrine, the followers of other religions are oriented to the Church and are called to be part of her.” This affirmation could appeal to *LG* no. 15 (“all human beings are called to belong to the new People of God”) and to what no. 16 says about all people being “ordained” or related to the church—language that reaches back through Pius XII’s

<sup>48</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 353–56.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 344. In equivalent terms, Vatican II’s *Lumen gentium* (*LG*), the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, followed Thomas Aquinas in presenting Christ as “the head” not only of the church but also of all human beings (*LG* nos. 16, 17).

<sup>50</sup> Gavin D’Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008) 19–23.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 22.

1943 encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, to the theology of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>52</sup> The question, however, remains: what of those millions who, while being “ordained” to the church and “called” to belong to her, nevertheless, for a variety of reasons (often not implying their sinful refusal of God’s call), do not come to Christian faith and baptism and eventually die as faithful followers of other religions? As far as they are concerned, the religions that they conscientiously practiced and through which the light and grace of Christ mysteriously came to them were not “provisional.” These living faiths provided the permanent salvific structures for their entire existence. In section V of the notification (“On the value and salvific function of the religious traditions”), the CDF speaks of “the elements of truth and goodness present in the various world religions,” which “*may* prepare peoples and cultures to receive the salvific event of Jesus Christ” (no. 8, emphasis added). The CDF does *not* claim that such elements will infallibly prepare people to receive the gospel of Christ. This may happen, but obviously not always. Hence the CDF refrains from presenting as necessarily “provisional” what the adherents of other religions receive through the elements of truth and goodness and all that D’Costa calls “the salvific structures” of the other faiths.

Finally, in his 2008 book D’Costa comes to the mediatorial activity of the church and, in particular the mediation of salvation through liturgical prayers for all people. He recalls what Francis Sullivan had proposed about “the instrumental causality” being at work when the church prays for all people.<sup>53</sup> Dupuis questioned this and, appealing to Yves Congar, argued that “the causality involved is not of the order of efficiency but of the moral order and finality.”<sup>54</sup> Against Dupuis, D’Costa cites no. 6 of the CDF’s notification on *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*: “it must be firmly believed that the Church is sign and instrument of salvation for all people.”<sup>55</sup> D’Costa rightly insists against Dupuis that it is through instrumental causality that the church’s liturgical prayers mediate salvation. Merely moral or final causality do not describe adequately what such prayers involve.

Yet none of those involved in this debate (Sullivan, Dupuis, and then D’Costa) recognized that it is precisely the (efficient) *causality of love* that

<sup>52</sup> For details on *Mystici Corporis* and the teaching of Aquinas, see O’Collins, *Second Vatican Council on Other Religions* 27–31, 48–49.

<sup>53</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist, 1992) 157, 160. See also his “Introduction and Ecclesiological Issues,” in *Sic et Non: Encountering Dominus Iesus*, ed. Stephen J. Pope and Charles Hefling (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002) 47–56, at 50–51.

<sup>54</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 350–51; see also Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 210–11.

<sup>55</sup> D’Costa, *Christianity and the World Religions* 180–86.

is at work. The church at worship prays for the salvation and well-being of all people, because she regards them with love. Here I obviously disagree with those who think of love as merely a subjective disposition and who, unlike Dante Alighieri, Charlotte Bronte, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and other classical authors, fail to acknowledge love as a powerful, efficient cause—the “love that moves the sun and the other stars,” to quote the final words of the *Divine Comedy*.

D’Costa stood apart by quoting the bidding prayers of the Good Friday liturgy. But neither he nor Sullivan nor Dupuis himself noticed what Vatican II did in restoring the “prayer of the faithful,” an old tradition that had disappeared in the Roman liturgy, except on Good Friday. This prayer was restored after the Gospel reading and homily, especially on all Sundays and holy days of obligation. *SC* explains: “By this prayer in which the people are to take part, intercessions are to be made for the holy Church, for those who lead us politically, for those weighed down by various needs, *for all human beings, and for the salvation of the entire world*” (*SC* no. 53, emphasis added). It is through such loving prayer for all people that the church at worship proves to be God’s instrument in mediating salvation to the world.

In a 2010 edited collection that ran to over 600 pages, D’Costa engaged again with the views of Dupuis. When dealing with “pluralist arguments” and, in particular, with the writing of Knitter, D’Costa remarks: “[Knitter’s] emphasis on the Spirit as a way of endorsing other religions as God-given and inspired, without having to have an anonymous Christ present, is to be found in the works of [Roger] Haight, [Georges] Khodr, Knitter, and, with a twist, Dupuis.”<sup>56</sup> “With a twist,” an unusual expression to use in a theological context, presumably means “with a small variation.” Whether or not the picture of the Spirit present and Christ absent accurately represents Knitter’s views, not to mention those of Haight and Khodr, the passage gravely misrepresents what Dupuis wrote in *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. There he persistently upheld what cannot be separated, “the universal presence and activity of the Word and the Spirit.”<sup>57</sup> For Dupuis, the activity and presence of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are distinguishable but never separable. Picking up the image of Irenaeus, Dupuis insisted that the two “hands of God” are “paired hands”; while “distinct,” they are “united and inseparable.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Gavin D’Costa, “Pluralist Arguments,” in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions: A Comprehensive Survey*, ed. Karl J. Becker and Ilaria Morali (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010) 329–44, at 337.

<sup>57</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology* 367.

<sup>58</sup> Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 178–79; see also his *Toward a Christian Theology* on “the combined action of God’s Word and of his Spirit” (321).

D'Costa, having in his main text lined Dupuis up with the pluralist theologians,<sup>59</sup> in an endnote acknowledges: "Dupuis is admittedly critical of this tendency [Spirit present but Christ absent] in Knitter." Yet D'Costa presses on at once to say that Dupuis "is found guilty of ambiguity on this point in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's notification on his book."<sup>60</sup> In the literal sense, "guilt" belongs to one's deliberate and deliberately malicious) intentions. Where D'Costa states flatly that Dupuis was "found guilty of ambiguity," the CDF explicitly refrained from any judgment about his intentions. It simply presented the church's teaching so as to counter "erroneous or harmful opinions" that "could be derived from reading the ambiguous statements and insufficient explanations found in certain sections of the book," sections that are never named.<sup>61</sup> The CDF considered some of Dupuis's statements (which, however, it never specified) to be ambiguous, but refused to attribute deliberate ambiguity to Dupuis himself.

When D'Costa refers above to "this point" (the theory of the Spirit being present but Christ being absent), he does not indicate which paragraph of the notification he has in mind. But it is clearly no. 5, which makes a positive statement and immediately appends a negative judgment:

The Church's faith teaches that the Holy Spirit, working after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is always the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father, who works in a

<sup>59</sup> D'Costa, "Pluralist Arguments" 337. Dupuis himself, in *Christianity and the Religions* 263, states that he has "nothing in common" with "the pluralist paradigm" of Hick and Knitter.

<sup>60</sup> D'Costa, "Pluralist Arguments" 583 n. 65.

<sup>61</sup> The CDF states at the end of the preface to the notification: "The present *Notification* is not meant as a judgment on the author's subjective thought, but rather as a statement of the Church's teaching on certain aspects of the above-mentioned doctrinal truths, and as a refutation of erroneous or harmful opinions, which, prescinding from the author's intentions, *could* be derived from reading the ambiguous statements and insufficient explanations found in certain sections of the text [sections that are never specified]. In this way, Catholic readers will be given solid criteria for judgment, consistent with the doctrine of the Church, in order to avoid the serious confusion and misunderstanding which *could* result from reading this book" (emphasis added). The CDF was obviously at pains *not* to pass any judgment (of innocent or guilty) on Dupuis's intentions. There is also a patent tentativeness about the repeated "could," with no claim being made that "erroneous or harmful opinions" or "serious confusion and misunderstanding" have actually resulted from reading Dupuis's book. What the notification says turns out to be notably "weaker" than what we read in 2 Peter about the letters of Paul and what they have provoked: "there are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction" (2 Pt 3:16). Note that for 2 Peter some sections of Paul's letters not only *could* be misunderstood but also were *actually* twisted to the spiritual destruction of people.

salvific way in Christians as well as non-Christians. It is therefore contrary to Catholic faith to hold that the salvific action of the Holy Spirit extends beyond the one, universal salvific economy of the incarnate Word.

Here, as when the notification speaks elsewhere about what is “contrary to Catholic faith,” it cites no passages from Dupuis’s book and offers no references to it. In fact, there are no passages that could be cited and no references that could be given; Dupuis never expressed the view (which maintains two “economies” of salvation) that is here (correctly) labeled “contrary to Catholic faith.” As noted above, Dupuis insisted that the presence and activity of the Spirit and the Word are “united and inseparable.” He never divided the divine “economy” of salvation into two separate “economies,” the salvific economy of the incarnate Word and a more universal and extensive “economy” of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, D’Costa writes of Dupuis: “He also makes too sharp a distinction between the *Logos asarkos* and *ensarkos*, [an issue] also raised by the CDF.”<sup>62</sup> D’Costa does not seem to be aware that Dupuis had changed his terminology. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* distinguished the *Logos asarkos* (the Word of God as such and not, or not yet, incarnated) from the *Logos ensarkos* (the Word of God precisely as incarnated). Dupuis was surprised to find this distinction leading a few readers to imagine that he was “doubling” the *Logos* and speaking of two “*Logoi*” or “Words” (one *asarkos* and the other *ensarkos*). For “clarity’s sake” Dupuis decided to put the distinction in terms of “the action of the Word-to-be incarnate (*Verbum incarnandum*), that is, the Word before the incarnation,” and “the action of the Word incarnate (*Verbum incarnatum*), either in the state of kenosis during his human life or after the resurrection in the glorified state.”<sup>63</sup> He went on to distinguish, more briefly, between the action of the Word of God “before the incarnation” and “after the incarnation and resurrection,” and, even more briefly, the Word “as such” and “as incarnate.”<sup>64</sup>

When introducing such a “sharp” (that is to say, clean-cut and well-defined) distinction in Christology, Dupuis was following in the footsteps of Thomas Aquinas and his use of reduplicative statements (as, *qua*, insofar as, inasmuch as) in the christological section of his *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>62</sup> D’Costa, “Pluralist Arguments” 583.

<sup>63</sup> Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 140. This book, which significantly clarifies Dupuis’s views and introduces the term “inclusivist pluralism,” appears neither in D’Costa’s *Christianity and World Religions* nor in his lengthy bibliography. Yet D’Costa, without providing any reference, writes that Dupuis calls his own position “inclusivist pluralism” (ibid. 24). Did D’Costa pick this up in private conversation with Dupuis? Or had he in fact read *Christianity and the Religions*?

<sup>64</sup> D’Costa, *Christianity and World Religions* 144, 145.

The “inasmuch as” characteristic of a reduplicative statement indicates the manner in which a particular predicate can be truthfully attributed to a particular subject. Thus Aquinas distinguishes Christ as “subsistent subject” or divine agent, on the one hand, from Christ “as (*secundum quod*) man,” on the other. As man, Christ is a creature, is not eternal, and begins to exist.<sup>65</sup> It was by forgetting the force of such reduplicative statements that two critics of Dupuis at the CDF allowed themselves to say that the Word “as such” is the Word incarnate.<sup>66</sup> This would mean that, by definition and hence necessarily and always, the Word *is* the Word incarnate. We would need then to rewrite John’s prologue and make it read: “In the beginning was the Word incarnate, and the Word incarnate was with God, and the Word incarnate was God.” This would mean falling into the error condemned by the CDF’s own declaration issued on September 5, 2000, namely, that of “a metaphysical emptying of the historical incarnation of the Eternal Logos.” That would reduce the incarnation “to a mere appearing . . . in history” of the Logos “already” incarnated “from the beginning” (*Dominus Iesus* no. 4).<sup>67</sup> Pace D’Costa, Dupuis needed to make a “sharp distinction” between the Word “before” and “after” the incarnation, or between the Word “as such” and the Word “as incarnate.”

When D’Costa refers to an issue “raised by the CDF” (see above), he gives no precise reference but presumably means no. 2 in the text of the notification. After rightly noting “the unity of the divine plan of salvation centred in Jesus Christ,” it added a negative judgment:

It is therefore contrary to Catholic faith not only [a] to posit a separation between the Word and Jesus, or [b] between the Word’s salvific activity and that of Jesus, but also [c] to maintain that there is a salvific activity of the Word as such in his divinity, independent of the humanity of the incarnate Word.

Once again the notification neither cited any passages from Dupuis’s book nor offered any references to it. Did the CDF want to imply that Dupuis (mistakenly) held these views, but for some undisclosed reason refrained from providing the evidence? What in fact did Dupuis propose in *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*?

As regards [a], Dupuis never separated the Word from Jesus. On the contrary, he stated clearly that “the Word cannot be separated from the flesh it has assumed.” He wrote of “the divine Word and Jesus’ human existence” as being inseparable.<sup>68</sup> As regards [b], Dupuis never alleged that

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 3, q. 16, a. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Public documentation about this is not yet available.

<sup>67</sup> CDF, *Dominus Iesus* no. 4, AAS 92 (2000) 742–65, at 745; ET in *Encountering Dominus Iesus* 3–23, at 5.

<sup>68</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 299; see also Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 144.



“the Word’s salvific activity” was or is “separate” from the salvific activity of Jesus. What he argued on the basis of John 1:9 was that “the saving action of God through the non-incarnate Logos (Logos *asarkos*) continues after the incarnation of the Logos” (Jn 1:14). He went on to explain that “the human action of the Logos *ensarkos*” does not “exhaust the action of the Logos.” A “distinct” (but not separate) action of the Logos *asarkos* endures,” but not “as constituting a distinct economy of salvation, parallel to that realized in the flesh of Christ.”<sup>69</sup> This is carefully chosen language: some activity of the Logos *asarkos* or Logos eternally as such is “distinct” and enduring (e.g., the work of conserving the universe and guiding all things through divine providence). Yet such continuing activity does *not* constitute even a “distinct economy of salvation,” still less a separate economy. One can relate Dupuis’s argument to the teaching of the Third Council of Constantinople and Thomas Aquinas.

Constantinople III defended the presence in Christ of a complete human nature with its complete human operations, and so upheld in him a duality of natures and a unity of agent.<sup>70</sup> Obviously the council’s focus of attention was not precisely on distinguishing (1) the ongoing, post-incarnation, *divine* operations effected by the incarnate Word of God from (2) the human operations of the same agent (whose actual human operations began with the incarnation). Nevertheless, the council’s insistence on the continuing presence in the *one* Christ not only of *two* wills but, more generally, of *two* “natural operations” that are to be distinguished and not blended or amalgamated does not seem compatible with holding that the infinitely powerful, unlimited divine activity of the Logos is limited by, must “pass through,” or is somehow determined or even “eclipsed” by his humanity assumed at the incarnation and glorified through the resurrection. In the incarnation the Son of God’s divine nature does not lose any of its essential characteristics and, in particular, its operations, which are strictly infinite and uniquely divine and in that sense transcend the finite operations of his human nature, even while being constantly related to it. A remark by Aquinas seems apropos here. He both championed the oneness of Christ’s person and recognized that Christ’s “divine nature [with its operations] infinitely transcends his human nature [with its operations],” while remaining always inseparable from that human nature.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 298–99.

<sup>70</sup> See Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann, eds., *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum, et declarationum*, 37th ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1991) nos. 556–58; and Josef Neuner and Jacques Dupuis, eds., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, 7th ed. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2001) nos. 635–37.

<sup>71</sup> Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* 4, chap. 35.8.

In the book examined by the CDF, Dupuis did not cite Constantinople III in support of his position about the divine activity of the incarnate Logos not being limited by his humanity. In *Christianity and the Religions* he briefly drew attention to the importance of this council's teaching on the universal salvific activity of the divine Word "before" and "after" the incarnation.<sup>72</sup> In general, however, the highly relevant teaching of Constantinople III has hardly surfaced in the whole debate about Dupuis's views. That teaching also supported some pertinent remarks by Aquinas about "the soul of Christ" and its operations, since and inasmuch as they are created, not being "almighty."<sup>73</sup>

What of the view that the CDF declared to be "contrary to Catholic faith," namely, maintaining [c] "that there is a salvific activity of the Word as such in [surely it would be better to say 'through'] his divinity, independent of the humanity of the incarnate Word"? The key word here is "independent." There can or should be no debate about the "salvific activity of the Word as such," being exercised both "before" the incarnation and "after" the incarnation and resurrection.<sup>74</sup> To allege otherwise would be incompatible with the doctrine of Constantinople III. But did Dupuis ever argue that this divine activity was/is "independent" of the humanity of the incarnate Word and the activity exercised through that humanity? He explicitly rejected such a vision: "the Word cannot be separated from the flesh it has assumed."<sup>75</sup> It was no wonder that the CDF could not refer to a passage where Dupuis asserted that the activity of the Word was "independent" of the humanity it had assumed at the incarnation.

I have taken issue with several criticisms that, somewhat in dependence on the CDF's 2001 notification, D'Costa brought against Dupuis. Moreover, as I have shown, D'Costa, like others (including Dupuis himself), never attributed the mediation of grace either to the *love* at work in the church's liturgy or to the universal role of *priesthood* that the risen and exalted Christ continues to exercise.

### ILARIA MORALI ON AMBIGUITIES (2010)

Ilaria Morali, who studied with Dupuis at the Gregorian University (where she now teaches), begins her comments on his work by stating that the *Notification* issued by the CDF did not condemn him, recognized his "intellectual honesty," and expressed no judgment on his "subjective

<sup>72</sup> Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* 144.

<sup>73</sup> *Summa theologiae* 3, q. 13, a. 1.

<sup>74</sup> CDF, "Notification on the Book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*" no. 2. The insertion "[c]" refers back to the citation of no. 2 on p. 646.

<sup>75</sup> Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* 299.

thought.”<sup>76</sup> She also differs from D’Costa by insisting that “it would be an error to reduce or even to associate too closely” the views of Dupuis with those “of such authors as Knitter or Hick. Dupuis’s method of argumentation, and his tenacious desire to remain firmly anchored in the faith, set him light years apart from the pluralists, who are much less concerned than he about keeping their thought within the confines of orthodoxy.”<sup>77</sup> By proposing in an earlier work what he called “inclusive Christocentrism,” he disagreed with “most pluralist authors,” holding instead that Christocentrism and Theocentrism do not constitute “two different and [even] opposite points of view, but together constitute the very character of Christian theology, which ‘is theocentric insofar as it is Christocentric, and vice versa.’”<sup>78</sup>

Morali agrees with the CDF that three positions defended by Dupuis in his 1997 book do “admit of some ambiguity—likely inevitable, given his treatment of questions the *Notification* itself described as hitherto unexplored. These ambiguities touch on [a] the interpretation of Christ’s uniqueness, [b] the way of understanding the saving action of the Spirit, and [c] the salvific value of religions.”<sup>79</sup> Although she mentions in an endnote the issue raised by the CDF over “the orientation of all people to the Church,”<sup>80</sup> the mediation of salvation through the church does not become an issue for her, as it does for Merrigan and D’Costa. Apropos of the three positions with which she has difficulties, Morali presses on at once to recall how Dupuis himself had admitted the “intentionally tentative” character of his book, and how he made a “gentle reply” to his reviewers: “I am the first to be aware of this [the problematic character of my work]. It is in fact my awareness that I desired clearly to express in the very title of the book: *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*.”<sup>81</sup>

Despite the ambiguities she detects, Morali judges Dupuis’s work to be “worthy of appreciation. He must be given credit for having sought to delineate, in harmony with the data of faith, a way *toward* a theology that could somehow incorporate the achievements of the *praxis* of interreligious dialogue, of which he was a firsthand witness for thirty years in India.”

<sup>76</sup> Ilaria Morali, “Salvation, Religions, and Dialogue with Roman Magisterium,” in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions* 138.

<sup>77</sup> Morali, “Overview of Some Francophone and Italian Trends,” in *ibid.* 325.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 326. See Jacques Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991) 92, 104–10.

<sup>79</sup> Morali, “Overview of Some Francophone and Italian Trends” 326.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 579 n. 97.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 326. Morali is quoting J. Dupuis, “La teologia del Pluralismo religioso rivisitata,” *Rassegna di teologia* 40 (1999) 667–93, at 692.

Morali ends by evoking Dupuis's traumatic experience in the final six years of his life, and paying tribute to his greatness:

In the often harsh judgments that were made of him, and that caused him great personal suffering (this author saw at first hand the suffering they caused him), sufficient consideration was not given to the importance, psychological and spiritual too, that India had in his theological reflection, which, beyond the objective ambiguities, was lived as a wholehearted search for truth in the faith.<sup>82</sup>

### DON SCHWEITZER AND DUPUIS'S CHRISTOLOGY (2010)

As the title of his book *Contemporary Christologies* indicates, Don Schweitzer presents the thought of Dupuis on "the religious others" within the context of studying 15 modern Christologies.<sup>83</sup> Second, Schweitzer also differs from the other authors I discuss in this article, with the exception of Brecht, by clearly recognizing that Dupuis wrote *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* as the third work of a trilogy.<sup>84</sup> He is thus in a position to place and evaluate Dupuis's reflections on Christianity and world religions within the context of his complete Christology developed in a trinitarian key. Third, unlike the other authors examined above, Schweitzer enters into some detail about Dupuis's dialogue with Hinduism.

Three points deserve to be retrieved from Schweitzer's discussion. First, "the theological density" of the Christ event and the value of history for Christian faith cannot, according to Dupuis, be reconciled "with Hinduism's relativisation of the value of history and perception of the absolute as categorically beyond it." Hence Dupuis refuses "to follow an extensive tradition in India of seeking to enculturate Christology in Hindu terms"—a decision that Schweitzer respectfully questions. Yet he acknowledges that this decision may well have resulted from Dupuis's "prolonged exposure to Hinduism's emphasis on the transcendence of Brahman to the *maya* (unreality) of history."<sup>85</sup>

Second, Dupuis nevertheless wins Schweitzer's appreciation for arguing that "one must begin inductively with one's own experience of a praxis of interreligious dialogue."<sup>86</sup> Third, Dupuis's Christology proceeds inductively and deductively by uniting both history and doctrine or both an "ascending" and "descending" approach.<sup>87</sup> The outcome is not

<sup>82</sup> Morali, "Overview of Some Francophone and Italian Trends" 326–27.

<sup>83</sup> Don Schweitzer, *Contemporary Christologies: A Fortress Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010) esp. 115–25.

<sup>84</sup> Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*; Dupuis, *Who Do You Say I Am? Introduction to Christology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994).

<sup>85</sup> Schweitzer, *Contemporary Christologies* 116–17, 122.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 118, 120.

a Christology “in Hindu terms,” but a Christology “open to dialogue with Hinduism” that shows “how Christology can be enriched through dialogue with Hinduism.”<sup>88</sup>

Schweitzer deserves credit for locating Dupuis’s views on other religions within his complete Christology. But, like Dupuis, he fails to recognize that any such complete Christology must involve being attentive to the mediating role of Christ’s priesthood.

### KEITH JOHNSON ON UNDERMINING THE TRINITY (2011)

Keith Johnson entered the debate about Dupuis with a book that is a revised version of a 2007 doctoral dissertation defended at Duke University.<sup>89</sup> He repeatedly cites and draws on D’Costa, seven of whose works feature in the bibliography, but curiously he fails to include D’Costa in the index of authors. Like Morali but unlike D’Costa, he respects the difference between Dupuis’s theology and Knitter’s pluralist paradigm.<sup>90</sup> He sums up adequately the way Dupuis proposed the doctrine of the Trinity as a basis for positively interpreting non-Christian religions.<sup>91</sup>

But, paying particular attention to Augustine’s theology of the Trinity, Johnson charges Dupuis with making the Son unacceptably “subordinate” to the Father, threatening the unity of Christ’s person, undermining the unity of the economy of salvation, and severing the economic and immanent Trinity.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, Johnson uses tentative language when spelling out the four charges: Dupuis “*may* solve the problem of subordinationism,” but does so “by undermining the unity of two natures in one person.” “The way Dupuis distinguishes kingdom and church *seems* to require a second parallel economy”; he “*implicitly* posits two economies.” The trinitarian Christology of Dupuis “*may implicitly* undermine the unity of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ.” This language of “*may*,” “*seems*,” and “*implicitly*” reaches its highpoint with the claim that Dupuis “*implicitly* severs the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity.”<sup>93</sup>

Johnson has the merit of arguing his case on the basis of a more accurate view of Augustine’s theology of the Trinity, which has been seriously and rightly expounded by Michel Barnes and Lewis Ayres. Johnson presents Dupuis’s views in terms of the Logos *asarkos* and the Logos *ensarkos*, terminology used in the 1997 book *Toward a Christian Theology of*

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 122, 123.

<sup>89</sup> Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: An Augustinian Assessment*, foreword Geoffrey Wainwright (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 100.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 42.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 126–35.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 129, 133, 134, 135, emphases added.

*Religious Pluralism*.<sup>94</sup> While listing *Christianity and the Religions* in the bibliography, however, Johnson does not seem to be aware that Dupuis replaced this terminology in his 2002 book. Like D'Costa, Johnson queries the sharp distinction Dupuis made between the two natures of Christ.<sup>95</sup> But classical christological doctrine, not least the teaching of Aquinas, as indicated above, requires a well-defined distinction.

It would take at least a full-scale article to debate Johnson's charges against Dupuis. Let me observe only what happens to his tentative language about what "may" be the case, what "seems" to be implied, and what is "implicitly" proposed by Dupuis. At the end of Johnson's book, qualifications drop away, and, although he has produced no further evidence, he now flatly claims: "I showed that Dupuis's proposal introduces subordinationism into the Father-Son relationship, undermines the unity of the economy of salvation, and severs [a verb adopted from D'Costa?] the economic and the immanent Trinity." Dupuis, we are now assured, uses "trinitarian claims to undermine Christian teaching regarding the person and work of Christ."<sup>96</sup>

Finally, Johnson understands that space for Dupuis's views had been opened up because Vatican II remained "silent about the means through which salvific grace is mediated apart from the church."<sup>97</sup> Johnson is certainly not the only one to make this mistaken comment on the documents of the council. But in *Lumen gentium*, *Nostra aetate*, *Ad gentes*, and *Gaudium et spes*, Vatican II did indicate how, through the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, grace is mediated beyond the visible Body of Christ.<sup>98</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

How might one draw together the ways in which Merrigan, Brecht, Cornille, D'Costa, Morali, Schweitzer, and Johnson have carried on the posthumous debate about Dupuis's interpretation of Christianity and the other religions? Some stand apart by discussing such significant questions as his theological method (Brecht) or his dialogue with Hinduism (Schweitzer). Some (e.g., Cornille and Morali) show themselves substantially friendly toward Dupuis's investigation and proposals. Others prove to be substantially "hostile" (D'Costa and Johnson). All seven authors witness to the lasting significance and challenge of Dupuis's views.

Without intending to do so, Merrigan, Brecht, and D'Costa in particular can lead us to two approaches that, as far as I know, have not entered the debate about Christianity and the other living faiths and that take us

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 131–33.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 187.

<sup>98</sup> See O'Collins, *Second Vatican Council on the Other Religions*, passim.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 130.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. 99.

beyond what Dupuis himself argued: (a) the causality of love involved in the church's praying for others; and (b) the central role of Christ's high priesthood. Let me explain.

D'Costa and Merrigan raise the question, How does the church mediate salvation to "the religious others?" Does the church act as an "instrumental cause" or as a "merely moral or final cause" in mediating grace to them? Recognizing how the church's prayer for "others," both within the strictly liturgical context and beyond, is inspired by love should prompt us into specifying the kind of instrumental causality at work. To do this, of course, presupposes acknowledging love to be a true, if mysterious, creative and efficient cause. The gift of God's love has drawn Christians into a network of loving relations not only with other Christians but also with those of other living faiths. When they meet for common worship and pray for "the others," Catholics and other Christians show that their faith is actively "working through love" (Gal 5:6).

Brecht moves the focus away from the church to highlight the importance of Christ's humanity by which "he is uniquely related to the whole human universe" (see above). That implies the question, How does Christ mediate salvation to those who do not belong to the community of the baptized? I would propose answering: he mediates grace to "the others" through his humanity, which enabled him to exercise forever a high-priestly role.

From the time of the Letter to the Hebrews right down to the 20th century, Christian theologians have repeatedly taught that the Son of God could not have exercised his priestly ministry unless he had truly taken on the human condition. His humanity was essential to his priesthood. We find this teaching developed by, for example, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, John Henry Newman, and Thomas Torrance.<sup>99</sup> Augustine developed this theme through his image of Christ as "the humble doctor": becoming *the priest* for the human family involved Christ in a radical self-humbling. Torrance distinguished between (1) the church rightly recognizing Christ's divine identity by adoring him "equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit"; and (2) a misguided reaction to Arianism that gave rise to some liturgical texts that reduced the place given to the human priesthood of Christ. Any such excessive reaction in defense of Christ's true divinity at the expense of his humanity entails losing a proper appreciation of his priesthood.<sup>100</sup> That priesthood stands or falls with his being fully and truly human.

It is supremely in and through the Eucharist that Christ lovingly presents to the Father his own self-offering on behalf of all people and draws

<sup>99</sup> For details, see O'Collins and Jones, *Jesus Our Priest*, passim.

<sup>100</sup> See *ibid.* 92–95 (Augustine) and 224–29 (Torrance).



them into that self-offering. In the celebration of the Eucharist and the administration of the other sacraments, Christ continues his high-priestly, mediating role not only for the faithful who share in the liturgy but also for all human beings. Dupuis and D'Costa, as noted above, explore the mediation exercised by the prayers of the church when celebrating the Eucharist. But we should not forget that this mediation draws on and remains subordinate to the priestly self-offering of Christ, who intercedes before the Father for the baptized faithful *and the entire human race*. This universal, priestly intercession of Christ might lead us to coin a new axiom. Provided we insist that no one is “outside Christ,” we should state: “outside the priestly intercession of Christ there is no salvation.”

In the theology of religions, as well as in theology in general, the high priesthood of Christ (along with the Letter to the Hebrews) has suffered from benign neglect. For a full-scale treatment of Christ's priesthood and other faiths we would need to draw on what Hebrews, some voices in the tradition, and the Second Vatican Council said about that priesthood.<sup>101</sup> We would then be in a position to illustrate adequately how reflection on the exercise of Christ's priesthood would incorporate but go beyond what Dupuis proposed about the divine plan for the whole human race with its diversity of religions.

Very recently William Burrows has edited and published two essays by Dupuis.<sup>102</sup> By making these essays available, Burrows will encourage further discussion of the views of Dupuis on the theology of religions.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> See once again what the Constitution on the Divine Liturgy taught: “Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant, when he assumed a human nature, introduced into this land of exile the hymn that in heaven is sung throughout all ages. He unites the whole community of human kind with himself and associates it with him in singing the divine canticle of praise” (SC 83).

<sup>102</sup> William R. Burrows, *Jacques Dupuis Faces the Inquisition: Two Essays by Jacques Dupuis on Dominus Iesus and the Roman Investigation of His Work* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012).

<sup>103</sup> D'Costa reviewed Burrows's book in the *Tablet* 267.9003 (June 22, 2013) 19. My reply appeared in the *Tablet* 267.9005 (July 7, 2013) 16.

Along with the seven authors covered by my article, I could have considered further contributions to the debate about Dupuis: for instance, Daniel L. Migliore, “The Trinity and the Theology of Religions,” in *God's Life in Trinity*, ed. Miroslav Wolf and Michael Welker (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006) 101–17; and Jon Paul Sydnor, “Beyond a Text: Revisiting Jacques Dupuis's Theology of Religions,” *International Review of Mission* 96 (2007) 56–71. Both Migliore and Sydnor highlight the value of Dupuis's trinitarian approach to the theology of religions.