

## CAPITOLO II<sup>o</sup>

# THE RISE OF THE PLURALISTIC VIEW AS A PROTAGONIST



It is all part of the preoccupation of humanity not to lose anything of his religious memory<sup>1</sup>. Contrary to the theological preservation that rises in defense of the “Glorious” conformation of the ecclesial faith, here it widens the view on all the interior patrimony of humanity. It modifies the approach on evangelization in a sense of more explicitly prophetic, between the world and Word<sup>2</sup>. The exclusivist purpose seemed more congenial to the Reform and that of the pluralist to the liberal theology, the Catholic position of Roman communion seems more uncertain amidst the renouncement of the Vatican Council II of the “extra ecclesiam nulla salus” and the opinions of the diverse theologies and ecclesial representative<sup>3</sup>. The ultimate taking of the position of the Vatican-Asian goal will be considered in the critical mode<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, p. 2: «The moment has surely come to begin gathering up the fragments, both of modern/western culture, which excels at analysis and specialization, and of the diverse civilizations of the world, each of which harbors its own excellences and shortcomings. We cannot allow any religion, culture or fragment of reality—even if it is labelled a “leftover” by a subsequent civilization or a broken shard by some higher degree of consciousness—to be forgotten, neglected or thrown away, if we are to achieve that total reconstruction of reality which has today become imperative. This study is an essay toward such an integration of the whole of reality. We have to gather the scattered fragments, even if they are only crumbs<sup>1</sup>. We have to reconstruct the body of Prayāpatio; even if some of the parts feel unworthy, are shy or run away<sup>2</sup>. Put in a more philosophical way, we have to think all of the fragments of our present world in order to bring them together into a harmonious—though not monolithic—whole<sup>3</sup>. I am certainly not advocating a naive optimism here, as if evil did not exist, as if annihilation were not possible, as if harmony were always guaranteed. The integration remains an ideal; the reconstruction is still in potential. But it is not up to us to sift and separate before the time is ripe<sup>4</sup>. At least a kind of total confidence should be ours...

(<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jn. 7, 12: “Colligite quae superaverunt fragmenta, ne pereant.” “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost”(AV). / <sup>2</sup> Cf. the many different Vedic texts as reported vs. in Chapter IV, “The Myth of Prayāpatio,” of my book *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, New York (Paulist Press) 1979, pp. 65-95. / <sup>3</sup> Cf. the traditional (since Augustine) etymology of *λογίζεσθαι* (thinking) as *colligere* (to gather). The word also suggests drawing conclusions. / <sup>4</sup> Cf. Matth. 13, 24-30.)

<sup>2</sup> D.S. Amalorpavadass, *A Theology of Mission in India Today*, in Kuncheria Pathil (ed.), *Mission in India Today – The Task of St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore 1988, p. 324: «It (evangelization) is a process of interpretative or prophetic sharing by a group of Christians of their double experience of the world and the word (the gospel) with the whole community of the people in the mutual interplay of receiving and giving, while journeying together with the human community in the same stream of life within a process of all-round sharing towards the common goal of freedom and justice, integral development, liberation, wholeness and communion».

<sup>3</sup> J. Dupuis, *Religious Plurality And The Christological Debate* (symposium sponsored by the 'Dialogue with Living Faiths' section of the World Council of Churches), in «Internet» 2001, <http://www.sedos.org/english/dupuis.htm>: «Ecumenical dimension of the theology of religions. In the context of the ecumenical discussion on the theology of religions it is no less important to note that, rather than representing distinct church traditions, the various opinions of the spectrum cut across the different churches. It may be true that the exclusivist paradigm is mainly held by Protestants of the evangelical tradition; yet the concrete attitudes of missionaries belonging to various churches would seem more often than not to betray a similar theological stand, notwithstanding — on the Roman Catholic side — the official disavowal of the rigid interpretation of the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. On the other hand, the inclusivist paradigm, while being proposed by a large number of Roman Catholic theologians, is not their exclusive preserve any more than is the pluralist preserve of liberal Protestants. Both these models are being proposed — with notable variations — by authors belonging to distinct church traditions. Theology of religions should not be misconstrued to be a factor of division between the churches; it rather offers an opportunity for a broad consensus — within a diversity of opinions — as members of the various churches reflect together on their common Christian identity in the context of the plurality of religions».

<sup>4</sup> M. Amaladoss, *The Image of Jesus In The Church In Asia*, IN «Internet» 2001, <http://eapi.topcities.com/eapr00/amala.htm>: «An a priori Affirmation. As we can see this is a very clear statement of the Vatican's view on Jesus as the unique and therefore the universal mediator of salvation for all human beings. The document is sure that “contemplating Jesus in his human nature, the peoples of Asia find their deepest questions answered, their hopes fulfilled, their dignity uplifted and their despair conquered” (EA 14). If this is so, one wonders why there is no big rush among the Asian people to become disciples of Jesus and to join the Church. This should certainly make us reflect a little more on our claims. If John Paul II prays that in the 3rd millennium “a great harvest of faith will be reaped” in Asia (EA 1) one would like to know the ‘signs of the times’ on which such a prayer is based. Is the fact that Jesus was an Asian going to make any difference to his acceptance as the only Saviour by Asian peoples? The first impression is that an Asian has in reading these statements is their a priori nature. It is not that one disagrees with what they want to say. But after having said: “The Synod Fathers noted that proclaiming Jesus as the only Savior can present particular difficulties in their cultures, given that many Asian religions teach divine self-manifestation as mediating salvation” (EA 10),<sup>3</sup> one would expect that the document would take into account this reality and would reflect on its own faith affirmation in this new context. On the contrary, what we have is an affirmation of faith that could have been made anywhere in the world at any time, not only in what it says positively about Jesus and his significance, but also in what it says about other religions.

The Christian testimony departs from the interior silence, does not give a powerful mental or intellectual elaboration<sup>1</sup>. They are symbols that permit the religion and the religious story of a small people to become universally significant and symbolic<sup>2</sup>.

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## RE-SITUATE THE ACTUAL PHASE OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The condition for a theological rearticulation, part of the discernment on the journey in course of the human purpose, until now is not only theological as what the diverse theologies did.<sup>3</sup>. They can be

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Cardinal Julius Darmaatmadja, responding to the presentation of the document by John Paul II in Delhi, said: "Yes, it is true that there is no authentic evangelization without announcing Jesus Christ, Savior of the whole human race. But for Asia, there will be no complete evangelization unless there is dialogue with other religions and cultures" [CCBI News 10 (1999) 92]. Should not such dialogue with other religions help us to interpret our faith tradition and to revise our formulations? Asian (Indian) theologians have attempted such reformulations. The Indian Theological Association in a Statement (April 1998) on "The Significance of Jesus Christ in the Context of Religious Pluralism in India" had this to say: *In the context of our positive experience of other believers in their search for and realization of wholeness and freedom, we acknowledge the gracious and loving act of God who has reached out to them in various ways... Celebrating this gracious and living mystery of God, we are not only aware of the Spirit of God "who blows where She wills," but also of the Word of God who speaks to peoples through various manifestations in different ways (Heb 1:1), and whom we profess as the one who became incarnate in Jesus. We gratefully acknowledge that it is our experience of the incarnate Jesus that leads us to the discovery of the cosmic dimensions of the presence and action of the Word... For the Christian believer, Jesus Christ is the perfect symbol of God who brings fulfilment to all persons in their world through his words and works, signs and wonders. He is unique to the Christian in that he is the definitive, though non-exhaustive symbol of God-experience in the world. But Jesus' uniqueness does not necessarily displace symbols in other religions... The vision of all the saving movements in the world as manifestations of the one divine mystery, of the one Word and the one Spirit of God, urges us to be open to the religious experience of others and to dialogue with them... We hear the call of Jesus to contribute through the process of dialogue and convergence to a growing reconciliation and peace with justice...*<sup>4</sup> We can immediately see the difference in tone and perspective. I do not intend to contest what the document *Church in Asia* is saying. Our reflection takes place through images and paradigms that are based on our experience. The way that the document understands its faith affirmation and explains it may have a certain validity from the point of view that it has adopted. But Asians from their multi-religious context understand and explain their faith in a different way. Let me try to point out some of the differences».

<sup>1</sup> M. Barrett, *The Silent Guide. An Interview with Father Bede Griffiths*, in «Internet» 2001, <http://www.parabola.org/magazine/backissues/1101/silentint.html>: «Father Bede Griffiths: In meditation one tries to calm the body and the senses, to calm the mind, and become what's called "the silent witness," the witness beyond the mind. We in the West think that the mind is everything, but all Eastern practice is to get beyond the mind to the point of the silent witness, where you're witnessing yourself, where you've gone beyond the ego, beyond the self. The Indian tradition rests on what the West has largely lost: that there are three levels. There is the level of the body and the level of the mind, which the Western world thinks is the end. But beyond the body is the spirit. It's the Atman, the *pneuma* of St. Paul, another dimension where we go beyond the mind, the senses, and the feelings, and we're aware of the transcendent reality. And that is the goal of life, to get to that. The supreme example of this in Hinduism is the guru who is regarded as able to fully awaken a person. But I think that at almost any level there can be a sharing--you see, we do actually influence the mind of the person we're talking to, and someone who has gone beyond the mind can help others to go beyond it. I do think it's true that the guru has a deeper insight and that he can awaken it in others, but the idea that one simply surrenders to the guru I find rather dangerous. It can help people at a certain stage, without a doubt, but equally it can lead to a sort of infantilism where you may lose your ego but you also lose your own dynamism and your own identity. The Indian temperament tends toward total surrender to the guru, but frequently there is little growth. And it can be very bad for the guru; he can become inflated if he's not careful, you see. MB: The final guru is the witness inside us. BG: Yes, but it's very tricky. You can reach quite a deep level of experience, but the ego is always there behind. It can always come up again, and sometimes you don't recognize it. There are some gurus who are really very egoistic. I remember one very well-known guru whom I respect saying of another one that he was ego from head to foot.».

<sup>2</sup> B. Griffiths, *Return to the Centre*, Springfield 1982, p. 79: «It is precisely the mythical element that reveals the universal significance of the events. Of themselves the events recorded in the Old and the New Testaments would have a very limited importance; it is the myth that relates them to the eternal drama of man's salvation. Paradise and Fall, the Exodus and the promised Land, the Messiah and the Kingdom, Jerusalem the City of God, the new heaven and the new earth - these are the great myths which transform the history of a small people in the Middle East into a symbol of the destiny of man».

<sup>3</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, p. 16: □a) When primal Man began his career on Earth as a conscious hum being, he found the Gods already present. This seems to be an important though often neglected, phenomenological datum. The Gods are older than and prior to Man - in Man's own consciousness. Primal Man was more convinced of the existence of the divine than of the human. And he had no doubt about the cosmos. Primal Man pondered about the Gods as he wondered about Nature and about himself. The three elements were there. And then, as human consciousness commenced its long course of analysis and introspection, this undiscriminated whole began to break up. With this, a second moment in human consciousness began to unfold: great period of discernment and increasingly severed perspectives. The divine became more and more disentangled from the World, and Man emerges as an independent being who discovers and dissociates the separate forces and particular laws of the entire reality, and himself as a successively more individualized center of operations. It is a process of discrimination and individualization. But there is yet a third moment in human consciousness: it is the still unachieved conquest of a new innocence, the synthesis of an integral experience. The different spheres of being and the several forms of consciousness strive toward a complex unity; the dispersed pieces of the second moment are drawn toward reconstruction; Man's body becomes once again a constitutive part of himself and the World reappears as the greater *hod*, in which Man is integrated. The human community becomes aware that it is more than either an undifferentiated mass or an agglomeration of alienated individuals. The vertical or divine dimension is no longer projected onto "another" being, but experienced as the infinite dimension of reality, itself. The ideal of this divine, human and cosmic synergy has probably been present since the very emergence of consciousness, but it has been floating, in suspended animation as it were, and today it crystallizes in clearer and more coherent forms. There now seem to be signs of a real mutation in the overall dynamism of reality: a change in consciousness also implies a change in reality. As we have said, this study draws on the last ten thousand years of human memory, and would like to encompass the eastern as well as the western experience of Man. To understand modernity in the global

distinguish in three phase 'kairologiche' (moments with proper potentiality) of the human journey up until today<sup>1</sup>. We are not in the presence of 'linear progress' but in the movement in the spiral form<sup>2</sup>. From this kairologiche key, that of cosmocentric, that of anthropocentric and that cosmotheadric, it outlines the hermeneutic approach of all the human experiences: point of opening to understand the pluralistic aim. The coamocentric step sees the unity between nature and culture<sup>3</sup>.

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context of human geography and history, we have to take into account the entire texture of human experience, even at the risk of minimizing particular details».

<sup>1</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, p. 20: «Mindful of the cautions and provisos involved in proposing a hypothesis with such an all-embracing aim, I submit that we can discover three fundamental human attitudes in the unfolding of consciousness. I call them kairological and not chronological moments, in order to stress their qualitative character. <sup>1</sup> The three kairological moments we are going to describe are neither merely chronological epochs, nor exclusively evolutionary stages in a linear model. Not only is each of these three moments present in the other two, but all three are compatible with more than one of the schemas proposed by scholars in the field. <sup>2</sup> This does not deny that there may be a chronological sequence of the three moments within a single culture, or that there are living civilizations spatially coexisting and yet temporally diachronical. <sup>3</sup> Nevertheless these moments may be called kairological because they present a markedly temporal character and even a certain historical sequence, although they do not follow the sequential pattern of linear and quantifiable time logically or even dialectically <sup>4</sup>. (I am fully aware that the greek word *kairos* does not always mean what some modern theologians want or make it to mean, although it expresses a more qualitative aspect than *chronos*. Cf. for a criticism of the distinction in the New Testament, sqp J. Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, London (SCM) 1962, pp. 20-46. I could perhaps introduce here terms borrowed from the indic tradition, but this may not be necessary if we keep in mind simply that time has both a sequential, more formal (chronological) character and a qualitative, more content-oriented (kairological) aspect. / <sup>2</sup> R. Bellah, for example, in his "Religious Evolution," *American Sociological Review*, XXIX (1964), pp. 358-374, distinguishes five stages in the evolution of religion: primitive, archaic, historic, early modern and modern. / <sup>3</sup> Cf. the difficulties encountered and the cautions enjoined by Arnold Toynbee when trying to find the criteria for a "Comparative Study of Civilisations" and much more when trying to construct a "Survey of Civilizations" in his now classic *A Study of History*, op. cit. Chronological time is not enough. / <sup>4</sup> It is for me reassuring and for Eric Voegelin a proof of intellectual honesty that he has abandoned the temporal pattern with which he began his projected six volumes on *Order and History*. The leading thread of linear temporality broke after the third volume. The data collected and the insights won convinced the author of "the impossibility of aligning the empirical types in any time sequence at all that would permit the structures actually found to emerge &om a history conceived as a 'course' "-as he states in the Introduction to his fourth volume of this monumental study, *The Ecumenic Age*, Baton Rouge (Louisiana State University Press) 1974, p. 2.)

<sup>2</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, pp. 20-21: «The idea of kairological dynamism should not be confused with a linear conception of "progress" or a rigid notion of development or "evolution" <sup>1</sup>. The movement of consciousness is neither straightforward nor chronological, but rather spiral and kairological. <sup>2</sup> Reading the great works of antiquity, one cannot but wonder if we have made any headway at all. The Upanisads, the Prophecies of Isaiah, the Tao-te-Ching, the confucian Four Books, the Dialogues of Plato, the Majjhima Nikaiya, and the Gospel narratives only serve to underscore this contention. Even more: every student of history knows that the most apparently modern conceptions were often already held by people in ancient times. There is a chinese proverb which puts it that anything that can be learned is not worth teaching. Equally well known is the sincere outburst of the elderly Goethe, who told Eckermann that if he had better understood what had been said before him, he would not have dared to add a single word. <sup>3</sup> *Nil novum sub sole* <sup>4</sup>: Nothing new under the sun ... And yet these precious seeds, the fruit of exceptional personalities, grow and proliferate in many soils, so that what was once the exception, the peak experience of a certain epoch, becomes the commonplace of another. <sup>5</sup>.

(<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. C. Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, London (Sheed and Ward) 1929, J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress. An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth*, New York, 2nd ed., 1955, etc. / <sup>2</sup> Cf. the similar expression of *Kairologie* used by R. Guardini to express the power and uniqueness of the human moments between Beginning (*Archdologie*) and End (*Eschatologie*), *Die letzten Dinge*, Würzburg (Werkbind-Verlag) 1940, Introduction (without page number). There is an english translation by C.E. Forsythe and G.B. Branham, *The Last Things*, Notre Dame, Ind. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1965). / <sup>3</sup> "...tout ce qui méritait d'être dit ... a été proclamé et répété mille fois au long des siècles qui nous ont précédés." G. Thibon, *L'ignorance étoilée*, Paris (Fayard) 1974, ix, who also reports the chinese saying and the words of Goethe. / <sup>4</sup> Cf. *Eccl. 1, 9*.)

<sup>5</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, for example, refined the principle of linear perspective in painting to a degree unparalleled in his own time, or I daresay since. His vision so conditioned the vision of subsequent centuries that today his paintings appear almost too normal. They have become common coin. The average museum-goer finds little remarkable about them but their reputation. Another case in point is the well-known story about the naive english student who asked his professor why Shakespeare used so many clichés. The vision of the masters is always *ordinary* in this double sense: it ordains, it ordains the way people see things to such an extent that it inevitably falls into the banal ordinariness of cliché and can be retrieved -if at all- only by dint of extraordinary effort or intuition. Cf. my article "Common Patterns of Eastern and Western Scholasticism," *Diogenes* (1973), N° 83, pp. 103-113.

<sup>3</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, pp. 25-26: «Man's relationship to Nature here is not essentially different from his relationship to his fellow beings. Nature and Culture are not two segregated entities, and much less are they dialectically opposed. Chinese, roman and german law, for example, will consider many crimes against "things" on the same level as those committed against people; and many another juridical system will punish "things" as human beings. This vision of reality is *cosmocentric*. The Earth is the center of the universe, and human religiousness is fundamentally chthonic. This cosmocentric consciousness need not be interpreted as just a primitive animistic belief. Most "sophisticated" civilizations have also entertained the same cosmic feeling. I am not thinking here only, or even mainly, of the pre-Socratic conviction that the world was sacred and thus "full of Gods." <sup>1</sup> Rather, there is also the conviction -which persists in the western world well after Isaac Newton, and in other worldviews right up to the present day <sup>2</sup> -that the entire cosmos is a living organism; in the words of a modern and yet traditional theologian, a *macranthropos*. <sup>3</sup> In fact, Pico della Mirandola uses this very expression <sup>4</sup> which is obviously connected with the biblical idea of Adam as representative of the whole universe, <sup>5</sup> and yet is different from a merely materialistic understanding of the relation between Man and World. <sup>6</sup> This conviction finds its counterpart in the notion of Man as the microcosm. <sup>7</sup> The idea is not so much a greek intuition, in spite of the greek name, as a post-hellenic and christian one. The symbol may be in the grammar itself. from *macros kosmos* to *microcosmos*. <sup>8</sup> Yet there are two moments in the idea of Man as microcosm: an immanent one and a transcendent one».

(<sup>1</sup> The entire passage reads: "Certain thinkers say that the soul is intermingled in the whole universe, and it is perhaps for that reason that Thales came to the opinion that all things are full of gods." Aristotle, *De anima 1, 5* (441 a 8-9), J.A. Smith translation, R. McKeon Edition, Great Books Edition, Chicago (Bentley) 1952. Cf. a related passage in *Metaphysics 1, 3* (938 b 20 sq.) where Aristotle elaborates on Thales' first principle, and the insightful comments of E. Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, New Haven (Yale University Press) 1941 in his first chapter, "God and Greek Philosophy." Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei VII*, 6 (P.L. 41, 199) reporting Varro's opinion that the four parts of the entire universe - ether, air, water, Earth - are all "full of souls." / <sup>2</sup> Cf., as a single example, the fascinating account by Alexandre Koyre, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, New York (Harper) 1957, who, describing the "crisis of European consciousness" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reduces it to the "destruction of the cosmos" (from a finite and well-ordered whole to an indefinite and even infinite universe) and "the geometrization of space" (from the Aristotelian inner-worldly places to an Euclidian infinite and homogeneous extension). / <sup>3</sup> "Le monde, dirait-on, fait un tout, un ensemble, et cet ensemble est

The anthropocentric phase will have as its measure that of the human event itself with its humanistic and scientific key, where the human person situates itself beyond nature<sup>1</sup>. But the anthropocentric phase is modern it ends itself with the ecological interlude, that brings man to the awareness of his fragility<sup>2</sup>. It gives a new value of the "oikos" that remains but always in the hand of "logos"<sup>3</sup>. Seen

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humain - il est un'macranthropos'. E. Mersch, *Le Christ, l'homme et l'univers*, Paris (Desclée de Brouwer) 1962, p. 13. Not without reason, the great theologian of the Mystical Body stresses this idea throughout the book, which has as its subtitle: *Prolégomènes de la théologie du corps mystique*". /<sup>4</sup> "Advertendum vocari a Mose mundum hominem magnum. Nam si homo est parvus mundus, utique mundus est magnus homo, etc. Videtis quam apte omnes hae mundi partes et hominis congruant . . ." *Heptapha*, in fine (apud H. de Lubac, *Pic de la Mirandole*, Paris, Aubier, 1974, p. 163.) /<sup>5</sup> Cf. Augustine, *In psalm. XCV*, 15 and secondary literature by de Lubac, *op. cit.*, p. 161. /<sup>6</sup> Cf. Macrobius's *Scipion's Dream II*, 12: "Physici mundus magnum hominem brevem mundum esse dixerunt." Lipsiae: ed. Teubner, 1868, p. 614 (apud de Lubac, *op. cit.*, p. 167). /<sup>7</sup> Cf. the common belief of the scholastic tradition reflected in the following texts: "Et propter hoc homo dicitur *minor mundus*, quia omnes creaturae mundi quodammodo inveniuntur in eo." "And it is proper that man is called a *little world*, because all creatures of the world are in a way to be found in him." D. Thom., *Sum. theol I*, q. 91, a. 1. The "dicitur" refers to Arist. *Phys. VIII*, 2 where "the Philosopher," arguing for the thesis that "never was a time when there was not motion, and never will be a time when there will not be motion." (252 b 6) says: "Now if this can occur in an animal, why should not the same be true also of the universe as a whole? If it can occur in a *small world* it could also occur in a great one: and if it can occur in the world, it could also occur in the infinite . . ." 256 b 25-29. /<sup>8</sup> Cf. de Lubac, *op. cit.*, p. 160 sq., giving references to Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Philo, Isidorus, the Scholastics up to Cusanus, Luis de León and Calvin. 72. *De hominis creationis XVI*, 3 (Cf. Laplace, SC VI, p. 151 sq.)

<sup>1</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, pp. 32-33: «2. THE ECONOMIC MOMENT. If the literature about primordial Man and the origins of humanity is overwhelming, the plethora of thoughts, ideas and hypotheses formulated regarding the nature of "modernity" is simply bewildering and almost impossible to grasp comprehensively. Moreover, it would distract us from our main task to offer even a cursory overview of the situation. We shall have instead to limit ourselves to the degree of abstraction which philosophical speculation furnishes.

a) Scientific Humanism. If the first kairological period could be called that of the primordial mentality, this second period could be characterized, on the one hand, by the scientific mentality and, on the other, by the humanistic attitude. Today, almost everything considered valuable bears the label "scientific" or "humanistic." The famous maxim of Protagoras, "Man is the measure of all things,"<sup>1</sup> is unsurpassed in summing up the two operative vectors of this attitude: Man is at the center of everything, and *measure* at the very core of Man. It is this predominance of measurement that allows us to characterize this second kairological moment as *Man above Nature*. Here the divine (acknowledged or not) is hidden in Man. If in the first period Nature is more than natural, here Man is more than human, and also more powerful than any single individual».

(<sup>1</sup> "Of all things the measure is Man"-*pantôn chrématôn métron anthropos*: Protagoras, *Fragment I*. Cf. my chapter "La superación del humanismo" in *Humanismo y Cruz*, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-253 (with bibliography), which states in a more elaborated way my thesis of 1951: "El cristianismo no es un humanismo," *Arbor*, 62 (February 1951). For further references, cL the chapter "Religion et humanisme" of H. De Lubac, *Pic de la Mirandole*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-159.)

<sup>2</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, p. 38: «b) *The Ecological Interlude*. Three main experiences, I submit, have led modern Man to question the very foundations of his humanity, as it has commonly been understood in the humanistic phase of Man's self-understanding. The first is the experience that the humanum seems to exclude the Earth. Today the material universe seems to be taking revenge by running out of "fuel," by showing its limited capacities; in short, by reacting to its treatment at the hands of Man, who has for so long exploited Nature for his own purposes-and in fact for the exclusive use of but a tiny minority of humankind. This experience underlies the ecological attitude. The second experience is the sense - the realization - of failure afflicting Man's dreams for building a truly humane civilization. In spite of his vast technological megamachine, Man has patently failed to create a truly humanistic era, and the reason for this failure is neither a miscalculation nor a technical fault. We cannot impute either ignorance or impotence as the cause of our modern predicament. Theoretically we can eradicate poverty, injustice, hunger and exploitation, we can dominate Nature to an astonishing degree, we can live in peace without lethal ideological conflicts, we can build a world without want, we can attain all the freedom and wellbeing of which Man has dreamt since time immemorial. <sup>1</sup> And yet modern Man feels more than ever in the grip of a fate he can in no way control. And this fate is all the more terrifying since Man today can often predict what it will be. He can predict that, given the runaway accumulation of weaponry in the global arsenal, their utilization becomes more and more likely in future conflicts; he can foresee that the increasing gap between "haves" and "have-nots" on every level will trigger violent reactions; he can be fairly sure that nationalistic ideologies will not be stopped except by counter-ideologies, and so on and so forth. Here modern Man, as in the ecological situation, may be able to postpone the conflict for a while by placing the burden of facing these monumental issues on the next generation; but whenever he stops to think, he instinctively feels that only by stopping thought altogether can he find a respite-artificial and finally lethal as this may be. But while avoiding the issue may console a few, it cannot solve the wider problem. We can certainly stop thinking about a particular problem, but we cannot stop thinking entirely and for all time, nor are we convinced that this would be a solution».

(<sup>1</sup> This has long been R. Buckminster Fuller's "message," in e.g., *Critical Path*, New York (St. Martin's Press) 1981, and in his "World Game" scenarios for "making the world work." Physical "success" for humankind on planet Earth may well be *technically* feasible today, as Fuller and others have tried to demonstrate, but its attainment has rarely seemed more *humanly* remote, due to the intrinsic human limitations elucidated below. It is now more than ever obvious that an appeal to reason alone-or, similarly, a plea for scientific rationality in human affairs-addresses only a small portion of the complex human reality.)

<sup>3</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, New York 1993, p. 43: «Ecological consciousness arises when Man begins to discover that Nature is not just infinite passivity and that this planet is a limited vessel.<sup>1</sup> So Man decides to be a more humane manager of Mother Earth and tries to deal more rationally with Nature, but this really amounts to only a tactical change: "Now our exploitation must be milder and more reasonable." The underlying idea remains the same: "Only treated in this way is the Earth going to yield her fruits." <sup>2</sup> The *oikos* is still dominated by the human *logos*. In so many words, a new science, ecology, has appeared and has all the earmarks of becoming yet another tool for human mastery of the Earth. As long as ecology is a science, we have not overcome the second moment of scientific knowledge, i.e., we still fall under the rule of the theory which guides our prajds by trying to make it as rational and reasonable as possible-which is an improvement, to be sure, but certainly not enough».

(<sup>1</sup> Cf. K.E. Boulding: "We are going to have to face the fact, for instance, certainly within a couple generations, that Earth has become a 'space ship' and a very small, crowded space ship at that, destination unknown." "The Prospects of Economic Abundance," in *The Control of Environment*, edited by J.D. Roslansky, Amsterdam (North-Holland Publishing Co.) 1967, p. 52. CL also R.B. Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, Carbondale, Ill. (Southern Illinois University Press) 1969, and B. Ward, *Spaceship Earth*, New York (Columbia University Press) 1966. /<sup>2</sup> Can we see remnants of "male chauvinism" in the concept of *sierra mater*? CL the words of O.L. Freeman: "What I am suggesting for your consideration . . . is that we, the people, take better charge of the environment, control it, if you please in a way that creates a more reasonable and responsible national distribution of productive and creative enterprises and utilization of workers." "Opening Convocation Address," in Roslansky, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Or again: "A responsible environmental ethic would recognize man's finitude and his place in the cosmos. He has been selected to be the custodian of God's creation and to transform the natural order for human welfare. But he must appreciate the limits of technical transformation. The side-effects of all his actions must be carefully calculated, and appropriate plans must be made to offset their negative effects. He must further understand that even the positive aspects of his technical transformations affect various people differently." N.J. Faramelli, "Ecological Responsibility and Economic Justice," in Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 200.)

from the purely religious Christian sense, they can characterize four maturations: ecclesiological-exclusivist, christological-inclusivist, theo-christocentric-normative e teo-cristocentric-non-normative<sup>1</sup>. Here, the prospective appears, soteriologico and it is the key of salvation that looks the various theological approach adopted in christian view. The extension the Christological purpose of the afterlife of the soteriological priority that can retraces in the itinerary of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will not be acknowledge subsequently. This would be one of the reasons why they were characterized with doctrinal uncertainty in such articulation of the theological time? Or that is, the criteria of “salvation” that give us a sufficient amplitude or not to consider all the Christian theological horizon?

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### WHAT THE PLURALISTIC WOULD REFER TO CHRIST?

Today, passing from the 20th to 21th century, the central question is not more on Ecclesiology but Christology, particularly to bring today and to intertwine the relations of the religions of humanity<sup>2</sup>. This, first affirmations on the theological urgency positively defuse the explusiveness of the ecclesiological problems, that have animated the debate of the past century. The panoramic of the current theology that we have taken into consideration (cfr volumi I, II, e III) affirmed this accentuation. From the ecclesiological analysis of the half of this century (with the ecumenical conciliarity and the Church in secularized society) until the turn announced by the liberation theology (cfr volume I, parte V, sezione A), the 21th century open itself with this passage of priority. From the Barthian ‘christological concentration’ and passing through the ‘the death of God’ to the Christ of the radical theologians, Pluralism assumes the tension between the “Historical Jesus” and “The Christ of Faith” specified subsequently in the 20<sup>th</sup> from Bultmann to Schillebeeckx (cfr infra). It did not simply identify the Historical Jesus with the Christ of Faith<sup>3</sup>. The Christ of history is the symbolic name of the known mystery by the Christians that other religions recognize

<sup>1</sup> J. Dupuis, *Religious Plurality And The Christological Debate* (symposium sponsored by the 'Dialogue with Living Faiths' section of the World Council of Churches), in «Internet» 2001, <http://www.sedos.org/english/dupuis.htm>: «Different paradigms of salvation. The various theological positions on the subject have been differently classified by theologians. One classification distinguishes four main opinions: 1) an ecclesiocentric universe and an exclusive Christology. 2) a Christocentric universe and an inclusive Christology; 3) a theocentric universe and a normative Christology; 4) a theocentric universe and a non-normative Christology. For the sake of simplicity other classifications reduce the spectrum of opinions to three main categories: ecclesiocentrism, Christo-centrism, and theocentrism; or, equivalently, exclusi-vism, inclusivism, and 'pluralism'. The first opinion holds that the explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ and membership of the Church are required for salvation; it maintains the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in its rigid interpretation. The second seeks to combine the twofold New Testament affirmations of the concrete and universal salvific will of God, on the one hand, and of the finality of Jesus Christ as universal Saviour, on the other; it affirms that the mystery of Jesus Christ and of his Spirit is present and operative outside the boundaries of the Church, both in the life of individual persons and in the religious traditions to which they belong and which they sincerely practice. The third opinion holds that God has manifested and revealed himself in various ways to different peoples in their respective situations; no finality of Jesus Christ in the order of salvation is to be upheld, for God saves people through their own tradition even as he saves Christians through Jesus Christ. Thus, for the exclusivist position Jesus Christ and the Church are the necessary way to salvation: for the inclusivist Jesus Christ the way of all; according to the pluralist model Jesus Christ is the way for Christians while the respective traditions constitute the way for the others. It should be noted that the three categories above have but an indicative value and may not be taken rigidly. They leave room for many shades of opinion among theologians. Taken rigidly, they would become misleading as they would freeze theological opinions into the straight-jacket of preconceived labels. They nevertheless have the merit of showing clearly that the universality of the mediatorship of Jesus Christ in the order of salvation is at the centre of the debate».

<sup>2</sup> J. Dupuis, *Religious Plurality And The Christological Debate* (symposium sponsored by the 'Dialogue with Living Faiths' section of the World Council of Churches), in «Internet» 2001, <http://www.sedos.org/english/dupuis.htm>: «INTRODUCTION . The Christological problem has always been at the heart of the Christian theology of religions. It remains so today. In fact, the present context of religious plurality and the practice of inter-religious dialogue give to the Christological question new emphasis and urgency. It is generally agreed that the New Testament bears an unequivocal witness to the finality of Jesus Christ as universal Saviour of humankind. The question is, however, being asked whether in the present context of dialogue such a massive affirmation needs not be re-examined and re-interpreted. Does it belong to the substance of the revealed message, or is it due to the cultural idiom in which the experience of the early Christians has been expressed? In the light of what we know today about the followers of other religious traditions and of the traditions themselves, is it still possible to make their salvation depend on the particular historical event of Jesus of Nazareth, about whom often or whom otherwise they have failed to recognise? Is Jesus Christ the one and universal Saviour? And, if so, how can we account for the salvation in him of millions of people who do not acknowledge him? It is important to note that the question being asked is about Jesus Christ, not about the Christian Church or churches. The Christological question, not the ecclesiological one is at the heart of the debate; and in whatever way theology may conceive the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church, both can never be placed on one and the same level of necessity. Only of Jesus does the Gospel of John say that he is 'the way, the truth and the life' (Jn 14:6): and only of the 'man Christ Jesus' does Paul affirm that he is the 'one mediator between God and men' (1 Tim 2:5), and Peter that 'there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). A Christocentric theology of religions needs to be clearly distinguished from an ecclesiocentric perspective to the same».

<sup>3</sup> R. Panikkar, *A Christophany for our times*, p. 9.

with other symbols and that does not only identified with the 'Christ'<sup>1</sup>. To sigularized it in the symbols would be 'monism', to separate it with isolated symbols would be "dualism, these two positions exceed in the "advaita": neither in itself nor diverse<sup>2</sup>. The salvific symbol of Christ in his humanity has been hyperbolized in a shortcut that universalized "literally" Christ from his human presence, suffocating the symbolic specificity of the divine salvific plan<sup>3</sup>. The re-examination of the "universality" in the "story", with the particularity of the human individuality, it was the objective verification in the theological path of the 20th century (see this in volume, parte II, sezione B). The individualized "divinization" reduces the risk of the purpose of christian oriental divinization in terms of the total interpenetration of the human to the divine (cfr infra). This paradox or this antimony brings us to the Trinity<sup>4</sup>. The antimony that is treated is the diverse name of the same mystery<sup>5</sup>. This antimony implies that no religion can take to possess it exclusively or to have the mystery exclusively, but it must de-possess the revealed deposit in itself in a 'kenosis' in which the Jesus of history has given the example. Leaving unchanged the uniqueness of the Mediator, Christ in his divine-human unity, the inclusivism suggest that there are but diverse way of salvation not kept exclusively in the Church<sup>6</sup>. The historical criterion reappears as the point of reference: a

<sup>1</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, New York 1978, p. 22: «the ever transcending but equally ever humanly immanent mystery»; R. Panikkar, *Faith and Belief: On the Multireligious Experience*, p. 15: «(The mystery) also momentarily unveils itself in Christ in the last days — that is, with special historical amplitude»; R. Panikkar, *A Christophany for our times*, p. 7: «(The historic Christ) is human and divine without confusion of spheres of being and yet without any rupture whatsoever»; R. Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, New York 1978, p. 20: «Mystery —whom Christians recognize in Christ and other religions in other symbols— present and at work in every religion, usually in a dark and enigmatic way»; cfr etiam R. Panikkar, *Neither Christomonism nor Christodualism*, in. «Jeevadhara», 1994 n° 142, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr R. Panikkar, *Indian Christian Theology*, in «Jeevadhara», 1997 n° 161, p. 320; R. Panikkar, *Neither Christomonism nor Christodualism*, in. «Jeevadhara», 1994 n° 142, p.338: «To affirm that there may be many Christs is not convincing for me nor, I would submit, for any orthodox Christian. To affirm that there is only one Christ (about whom we, at least, know his true" name) would amount to an equally unacceptable christomonism. Here is the christian theological locus for 'advaita'- and for the indic contribution to a more adequate wisdom for our times»; R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, (Completely revised and enlarged Edition), New York 1981, pp. 23-24.

<sup>3</sup> M. Amaladoss, *The Image Of Jesus In The Church In Asia*, IN «Internet» 2001, <http://eapi.topcities.com/eapr00/amala.htm>: «Divinizing of the Humanity of Jesus. I think that the reason for such *a priori* affirmations is a certain divinization of the humanity of Jesus. Encountering Jesus one experiences God active in him. Jesus is recognized as divine because only God can save. As a matter of fact the document itself offers a clear example of this when it asserts that Jesus Christ saves because of who he is, namely the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Salvation is a Trinitarian action in which the Father, the Son and the Spirit have their role (EA 12). But as soon as Jesus is identified with the Son, the humanity of Jesus and its limitations, freely chosen by God who 'emptied himself' (Phil 2:7), is forgotten. As the Word or Son he can only be the fullness of revelation and salvation. One can say that attributes like uniqueness and universality are given to Jesus precisely in so far as he is divine. Though it is affirmed that Jesus is human like us in all things except sin, he is freed from human, cultural and historical conditionings. He promised to send the Spirit who will lead the disciples into all truth (Jn 16:13). He inaugurates a Kingdom whose fulfilment is in the future, when he will come again (Mt 25:31). His work of salvation takes place in history, historically. Paul speaks of a process of reconciliation or unification that is still going on (1 Cor 15; Eph 1:10; Rom 8). This whole historical-eschatological dimension is lost when the mystery of salvation is reduced to the Paschal Mystery. This historical dimension and the limitations of the humanity of Jesus are also lost when Jesus is seen as uniting himself to every human being in some mysterious way through his incarnation or when the risen Jesus is said to be present to all in a new and mysterious way (EA 13, 14). These affirmations are based on platonic anthropology and the term 'mystery' is used to hide the fact that we do not know what it is or how it happens. Jesus is the Word of God incarnate. But the presence and action of the Word, as that of the Father and of the Spirit, encompass the whole of history. The fact that the Word became incarnate in Jesus gives a special status to Jesus in the history of salvation. But it does not reduce the activity of the Word to the activity of Jesus before, during and after the life of Jesus on this earth. The Word is also active in other religions, as the Indian theologians point out. The action of the incarnate Word in Jesus has to be set in the context of the action of the Word in the whole world. The latter can neither be reduced to the former nor seen either as a preparation for it or a working out of it. The Council of Chalcedon said that the two natures in Jesus must "neither be separated nor be confused." But the tendency in the Western Church has been towards a Christology of pre-existence in which the divine person of the Son takes on a human nature. But all the actions are of the divine person and the human nature does not really seem to have an identity of its own, except to mediate the divine action. In the name of the unity of the person the human nature loses its distinct identity. The document says as much. "Jesus is our Savior in the fullest sense of the word because his words and works, especially his resurrection from the dead, have revealed him to be the Son of God, the pre-existent Word, who reigns for ever as Lord and Messiah" (EA 11). Jesus gets eternalized: "From the first moment of time to its end, Jesus is the one universal Mediator." The name 'Jesus' here refers not to the human Jesus, born two thousand years ago, but to the divine person. The document goes on to say: "We believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the one Savior because he alone - the Son - accomplished the Father's universal plan of salvation. As the definitive manifestation of the mystery of the Father's love for all, Jesus is indeed unique" EA (14). The uniqueness of Jesus as Savior depends on the fact that he is God. It is equivalent to saying that God is the unique Savior, because the Father and the Spirit too are involved in the act of salvation».

<sup>4</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, (Completely revised and enlarged Edition), New York 1981, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> R. Panikkar, *Neither Christomonism nor Christodualism*, in. «Jeevadhara», 1994 n° 142, p. 337: «"The Unknown Christ of Hinduism" is not 'another' Christ, and yet it is not the 'same' Christ Christians know. It is unknown to them - and known to the Hindus under other names, aspects and dimensions of that mystery for which the Christian has no other name than Christ. So I am not saying that the "Hindu Christ" is the 'same' as the Christian Christ." I am defending that, that Mystery, which the Christian cannot but call Christ, has aspects, manifestations, attributes, and what not, unknown to the Christian, that other people, believe are "revealed" to them and for which they give different names».

<sup>6</sup> J. Dupuis, *Religious Plurality And The Christological Debate* (symposium sponsored by the 'Dialogue with Living Faiths' section of the World Council of Churches), in «Internet» 2001, <http://www.sedos.org/english/dupuis.htm> : «The inclusivist perspective. This is the point on which the inclusivist theory and the pluralist one are sharply divided. The inclusivist model — of which there exist different varieties — professes to hold fast to the universal significance of the mystery of Jesus Christ, constitutive of salvation, as affirmed by the New Testament. While, however, the saving mystery of Jesus Christ is available to Christians in and through the Church, it reaches out to the followers of the other religious traditions, in some mysterious way, through these traditions themselves. There is thus one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; but there exist different channels through which the saving action of the one mediator attains people inside and outside the Church through his Spirit. Admittedly, the Church,

historical vision restrict much the inclusivist approach in the vertex of roman communion<sup>1</sup>. Its nothing, after ecclesiological problem of the 20th century, to confront this, as fundamental for destroying the story (see volume I, parte IV, sezioni A-B, volume II, parte IV, volume III, parte IV, sezioni A-B). It puts then, in question the ecclesiological presupposition of the salvation belonging only to those that were explicitly integrated in her. Salvation surges from the mediation of Christ that comes widely beyond the grasp and formal affiliation to his identity, the Church instead does not come widely beyond her frontiers.

## THE ANTIMONY AND THE PROSPECTIVE OF PLURALISTIC THEOLOGY IN THE INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The inter-religious dialogue with the ancient oriental traditions connected with the antinomic approach of apophatic theology regarding the christomonistic exclusivism of the occidental christians, departing from the same historical question about Christ. Thus, it cannot simply identify the historical Jesus with the Christ of faith<sup>2</sup>. The historical Christ is the symbolic name of the mystery by the christian that other religions recognized it with other symbol and that it cannot be identified only with "Christ"<sup>3</sup>. To sigularized it in the symbols would be 'monism', to separate it with isolated symbols would be "dualism, these two positions exceed in the "advaita": neither in itself nor diverse<sup>4</sup>. This paradox or this antimony brings us to the Trinity<sup>5</sup>. The antimony that is treated is the diverse name of the same mystery<sup>6</sup>. This antimony implies that no religion can take to possess it exclusively or to have the mystery exclusively, but it must de-possess the revealed deposit in itself in a 'kenosis' in which the Jesus of history has given the example. It needs to find the full transcendentalty of the divine initiative, beyond simply the soteriological question in the

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as the eschatological community representing sacramentally the mystery of Christ, mediates the mystery of salvation in an eminent way; but it is not the only channel of the mystery. The same attains people outside the Church in the concrete situations in which they find themselves; that is, in and through the religious traditions to which they belong, which inspire their faith-response to God and in which this response finds concrete expression. For the inclusivist theory, therefore, the task to be accomplished by a theology of religions consists in showing that the Christ-event, its particularity in time and space notwithstanding, has universal value and cosmic consequences in such wise that the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ is everywhere present and operative through the Spirit».

<sup>1</sup> M. Amaladoss, *The Image Of Jesus In The Church In Asia*, IN «Internet» 2001, <http://eapi.topcities.com/eapr00/amala.htm>: «A Limited View of Salvation History. The document operates with a linear view of the history of salvation. Jesus and Christianity are seen as the fulfilment of the other religions. In the Bible we have the paradigm that relates Israel to Jesus (and the Church) as preparation to fulfilment. Jesus is the Messiah foretold by the Prophets. The document projects this paradigm on all the world's religions. In this view the non-Judaic religions are actually pre-Judaic in significance. They have some natural revelation, at the most some seeds of the Word. They might even be considered as illegitimate now that we have the definite and full revelation in Jesus, who has said the last word. I think that this extrapolation of a Jewish-Christian paradigm to the other religions is improper. If it is true that "the Church's approach to other religions is one of genuine respect" and that "this respect is twofold: respect for man in his quest for answers to the deepest questions of his life, and respect for the action of the Spirit in man" (EA 20),<sup>5</sup> then what right does any one have to prejudice the extent and meaning of the activity of the Spirit in other religions? The New Testament tries to show how Jesus fulfils the expectations of Israel. Who can credibly show that Jesus (or the Church) actually fulfils the 'authentic values' of Hinduism, Buddhism or Confucianism? (Cf. EA 14). This is a totally *a priori* vision of history. Some missionaries in India have tried to show that Christianity is the fulfilment of Hinduism (cf. Farquhar 1913, cf. Johanns 1944). But people like Abishiktananda who have actually tried to experience Hinduism gave up such an approach (cf. Henri 1998). In any case, one does not see any Hindus or Buddhists waiting to be fulfilled by Christianity. As a matter of fact every religion sees itself as a fulfilment of the others. Buddhism will consider all religions as irrelevant. Hinduism will see advaita as the final stage in spiritual realization. I think that these kind of 'comparative' approaches must be avoided, especially when we see that the majority of the humans are finding meaning and fulfilment in their lives in and through their own religions».

<sup>2</sup> R. Panikkar, *A Christophany for our times*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, p. 22: «the ever transcending but equally ever humanly immanent mystery»; R. Panikkar, *Faith and Belief: On the Multireligious Experience*, p. 15: «(The mystery) also momentarily unveils itself in Christ in the last days — that is, with special historical amplitude»; R. Panikkar, *A Christophany for our times*, p. 7: «(The historic Christ) is human and divine without confusion of spheres of being and yet without any rupture whatsoever»; R. Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, p. 20: «Mystery —whom Christians recognize in Christ and other religions in other symbols— present and at work in every religion, usually in a dark and enigmatic way»; cfr etiam R. Panikkar, *Neither Christomonism nor Christodualism*, in. «Jeevadhara», 1994 n° 142, p. 338.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr R. Panikkar, *Indian Christian Theology*, in «Jeevadhara», 1997 n° 161, p. 320; R. Panikkar, *Neither Christomonism nor Christodualism*, in. «Jeevadhara», 1994 n° 142, p.338: «To affirm that there may be many Christs is not convincing for me nor, I would submit, for any orthodox Christian. To affirm that there is only one Christ (about whom we, at least, know his true" name) would amount to an equally unacceptable christomonism. Here is the christian theological locus for 'advaita'- and for the indic contribution to a more adequate wisdom for our times»; R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>5</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> R. Panikkar, *Neither Christomonism nor Christodualism*, in. «Jeevadhara», 1994 n° 142, p. 337: «"The Unknown Christ of Hinduism" is not 'another' Christ, and yet it is not the 'same' Christ Christians know. It is unknown to them - and known to the Hindus under other names, aspects and dimensions of that mystery for which the Christian has no other name than Christ. So I am not saying that the "Hindu Christ" is the 'same' as the Christian Christ." I am defending that, that Mystery, which the Christian cannot but call Christ, has aspects, manifestations, attributes, and what not, unknown to the Christian, that other people, believe are' "revealed" to them and for which they give different names».

occidental sense, with particular central reference to the “guilt” to redeem<sup>1</sup>. The pluralist approach take again the question post by the transcendental anthropology, investigating on the “threshold” of interpenetration between transcendental and humanity; humanly human (cfr volume II, parte I, l’angolatura rahneriana).

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## FROM CHRIST TO THE ULTIMATE GOD

The pluralist intuitions re-situate the Christological key in its theocentric contextuality<sup>2</sup>. More than other, it will be the miopic Christomonist that is re-balanced. From the Indian deepening surges the horizon of “advaita”, similar to the Christian Trinitarian key<sup>3</sup>. It will be the emerging of the “advaita” that archaic orient can offer to the first Christian meditation in its further elaboration? The edge of Trinitarian analysis is finally the prospective of the non-dualism<sup>4</sup>. The mystery of God evoke his mystery as mystery of love, impossible in the static unity, the love is relational in nature in which it situates the divine person: that is the divine ultimate beyond the person and in which the person rises<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Amaladoss, *The Image Of Jesus In The Church In Asia*, in «Internet» 2001, <http://eapi.topcities.com/eapr00/amala.htm> : «A Transcendental Savior? The action of a divine person, even mediated by a human nature, transcends space and time. So Jesus’ saving action seems to have a transcendental character. As I have already pointed out, according to the document, both by his incarnation and by his resurrection Jesus is linked to every human being in some mysterious manner. Jesus Christ’s unique and universal salvific action is also explained in another way. Jesus takes “upon himself the sins of the world - past, present and future” (EA 11) and “on the Cross... breaks the power of the self-destructive resistance to love which sin inflicts upon us” (EA 13). “In this way, salvation was sealed once and for all” (11). The merits of Jesus’ saving action are distributed to every one, whether s/he lived before or after Jesus. This view has often led to an individualist approach to salvation. Loving and doing justice in the world are then seen as the consequence of being saved. Today we tend to have a more historical-eschatological view of salvation. History is a process of struggle between God and Mammon. All peoples and all religions are engaged in this in their own way. God too is actively involved in this struggle through the Word and the Spirit. Through this struggle God is leading all things to a unity when God will triumph and will be all in all. In Jesus God is committing Godself to the battle in a human, historical way. Jesus, in his life, work and death shows a particular way of carrying on this struggle by opting for the poor and the oppressed. The disciples of Jesus continue his mission of prophecy and servanthood by helping build human communities of freedom and fellowship, justice and peace. In this task they find in the members of other religions allies and not enemies. They too have a positive role in the history of salvation. The real enemies are Satan and Mammon. The Kingdom is God’s gift, but is also our task. Victory in the struggle, fullness of salvation, the establishing of the Kingdom - all these are in the future, at the end of history. They remain the horizon within which we keep on struggling. The fullness of revelation and salvation are not in the past, but in the future. Other religions, too, in which the Spirit of God is present and active, contribute to the consummation. Jesus neither replaces them nor excludes them».

<sup>2</sup> J. Dupuis, *Religious Plurality And The Christological Debate* (symposium sponsored by the 'Dialogue with Living Faiths' section of the World Council of Churches), in «Internet» 2001, <http://www.sedos.org/english/dupuis.htm> : «The theocentric perspective. It consists in substituting for the Christocentric perspective a theocentric one, according to which Jesus Christ and his saving mystery no longer stand at the centre of God’s saving design for humankind. That place belongs to God alone towards whom all the religious traditions, Christianity included, tend as to their end. It needs to be recognised plainly that God, who ‘shows no partiality’ (Acts 10:34), has manifested and revealed himself in various ways to different peoples in different cultures, and that the various religious traditions of the world embody, each in its own way, such divine self-revelation. It follows that, partial contradictions notwithstanding, the various religious traditions complement each other in their differences; what is required between them is neither mutual exclusion nor inclusion of the many into one, but reciprocal enrichment through open interaction and sincere dialogue. The pluralist paradigm is not, however, a monolithic theory; it covers different theological positions the distinction between which needs to be rapidly mentioned. In its extreme form — with which the term ‘Copernican revolution’ is associated — pluralism calls for Christianity to give up all claim to uniqueness or finality for Jesus Christ in the order of God’s relationship with humankind. Universality can only be understood in the sense that the person of Jesus Christ and his message is capable — as other saving figures also are — of a universal appeal to people, that is, of arousing in them a response to God and to that which is truly human. But such a universal appeal is in no way a distinctive or exclusive feature of Christianity. Other versions of the pluralist model are more restrained. They hold — perhaps illogically, once the claim for the universal constitutive mediatorship of Jesus Christ is abandoned — that among the various paths, all valid in themselves and in their own right, Jesus Christ keeps a relative prominence: compared with other saving figures, he remains the ideal symbol of the way in which God has been dealing with humankind salvifically, and in this sense is ‘normative’. According to some views, Christianity must renounce its claim to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ once for all. Others, on the contrary, call on Christianity to put such claim ‘between brackets’ provisionally to allow for sincere dialogue with the other religious traditions; the practice of dialogue will perhaps help rediscover that Jesus Christ is indeed unique».

<sup>3</sup> R. Panikkar, *A Self-Critical Dialogue!*, in AA. VV., *The Intercultural Challenge of Raimon Panikkar*, New York 1996, p.273: «Advaita and Trinity are two homeomorphic equivalents for the ultimate structure of reality».

(NB Advaita Vedanta of Sankara understands itself as the culmination of all religions and philosophies insofar as it leads to and interprets the ultimate experience of nonduality, i.e., the essential nonseparability of the Self (atman) and God (Brahman). Among the three classical ways of salvation in Hinduism, karrzla (works), bhakti (adoration and surrender) and jnana (meditative knowledge), this school represents jnana marga. In fact, realization or liberation is said to be reached only by intuitive consciousness.)

<sup>4</sup> R. Panikkar, *Advaita and Bhakti: Love and Identity in a Hindu Christian dialogue*, in «Journal of Ecumenical Studies», 1970 n° 9, p. 308: «If God, the Father, is the ultimate I (according to the Revelation in the Genesis and the voice at the Baptism of Jesus), who calls—generates—the Son as His Thou, manifesting and reflecting Him, then the Spirit is not only the Love personified of the Father and the Son in a reciprocal self-gift, but the nonduality (advaita) of the Father and Son. In other words, Advaita applied to the Trinity would mean that there are not three distinct beings (if this would ever be possible ultimately!) but that the only I loves itself and discovers its non-duality (which is the Spirit) in the Thou (the Son). The trinity, on the other hand, applied to Advaita, would show that non-dualism can have room for Love—understood precisely as the inner movement of the “One without a second.”».

<sup>5</sup> B. Griffiths, in W. R. Teasdale, *Toward a Christian Vedanta*, Bangalore 1987, pp. 117-118: «The ultimate Reality is love and love is relationship. You cannot have love with one (a static unity), and that is the weakness of a pure advaita. There is no love ultimately. There is pure consciousness, but no love. And yet in the Christian understanding there is pure consciousness and pure love: Self-knowing and self-giving. The whole creation

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comes to its fullness in the intimacy of personal relationship. So, the personal God is in the Ultimate Godhead. The Ultimate Godhead is both beyond person and integrates person».