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**Mystery and Expressions:  
Myth, Theology, and Pluralism  
(Functions of Affectivity and Approximations of Mystery)**

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*Our freedom is your only way out.  
On the underground railroad  
you can ride with us or you become the jailer.<sup>1</sup>*

In this presentation, I shall focus mainly on pluralism in religious myth and theology. On the one hand, myth and theology are languages of heart and mind, respectively, as well as approximations rather than replicas of mystery. On the other, pluralism is the ability to perceive the truth of diversity<sup>2</sup> as well as a posture that allows for critical thinking when—both in myth and theology—one speaks of ultimate mystery, which some people call 'God.'

Briefly, first, I shall define what I mean by 'mystery.' Then, in reference to the 'mysteric' languages of myth and theology, I shall describe the meaning of 'heart' or 'affectivity' and of 'mind' or 'cognition.' I shall discuss as well the 'approximating' rather than 'replicating' nature

of mythical and theological discourses in the expression of mystery. And finally, I shall focus on religious pluralism which, I suggest, protects mythic and theological formulations against irrelevancy and idolatry and, within the field of religion, fosters critical thinking: a way of thinking which recognizes the social forces's impact on the diverse disciplines as well as the diverse disciplines's impact on social forces. Critical thinking provides one with the distance needed to assess historically rather than dogmatically -- from below rather than from above --his/her discipline, other disciplines as well as society itself. Language itself—such as religious mythical and theological discourses—is 'discovery of plurality': the discovery of the contingency and ambiguity of history and society.<sup>3</sup>

### ***I. Mystery***

In *Truth & Expression*, Edward MacKinnon relates transcendence both to the mystery of the universe, which scientists fathom, and to the Mystery of God, upon which theologians reflect.<sup>4</sup> It is in MacKinnon's sense that the expression 'mystery' is interpreted in this presentation. More specifically, when applied to God, mystery refers to the all-encompassing horizon of consciousness as described, for example, by Avery Dulles in *Models of Revelation*.<sup>5</sup>

### ***II. Cognition and Affectivity, Mind and Heart***

During my seminary days—the mid-fifties—when 'man' was defined

essentially as rational, to be a 'man' one had to subjugate 'his' affective nature. One's spirituality comprised mainly of daily conquests of 'mind' over 'heart,' of 'spirit' over 'flesh.' In every-day life, 'particular' friendship needed be generalized, and through weekly confession, 'sins of the flesh' needed be particularized. Heart, the epitomizing force that penetrates to the very center of one's being, as Karl Rahner called it,<sup>5</sup> was perceived as a destabilizing demon that jeopardized one's 'assumption' into Heaven.

Life-experience, however, has taught me otherwise. The relationship between heart and mind is not one between damnation and redemption, one of opposition, but one between two amenable dimensions of my being, one of wholeness. For affectivity relates to cognition as 'what I am' relates to 'what I know,' connatural knowledge to representational knowledge.<sup>7</sup> and praxis to theory. On the one hand, affectivity speaks of "the unity of spirit and matter, soul and body, intellect and phantasm, will and passion, prior to these subsequent distinctions."<sup>8</sup> It embodies one's entire person: a function of the heart. On the other, cognition speaks of intellect and will—of reason and thought, of freedom and choice, respectively. Cognition is a function of the mind. Both approaches, heart and mind, disclose two correlative, yet autonomous, modes of intentionality and metaphysical transcendence<sup>9</sup> and, together, they allow for a corrective, healing and humanizing dialectics between praxis and

theory.

In Church institutions of dogmatic persuasion, to this day, cognitive processes forego often affective one—a habit that results inevitably in discrediting experience and monopolizing transcendence. Theory without praxis, mind without heart, cognition without affectivity—Emmanuel Levinas suggested—impose a "mastery over matter, the soul and societies" and, respectively, machinates "a technique, a morality. [and] a politics . . . which assure the peace required for the pure exercise [of cognition]." <sup>10</sup> Cognition thus remains induratively unencumbered by life-experience. And within heartless minds—both in science and religion—dogma is concocted.

### *III. Myth and Theology: Approximations of Mystery*

MacKinnon has explained that transcendent reality (or mystery) is:

...the ultimate ground and goal of the search for truth. But it is a ground which can only be explicated and a goal which can be only approximated by the slow piecemeal process of presenting propositions [for example, in mythical and theological formulations] which we take to be true and hope to be not too inadequate.<sup>11</sup>

"The abiding temptation," writes MacKinnon, "is to absolutize the relative, to accept particular propositions as adequate expressions of ultimate truth. This is a temptation especially experienced by those who have a passion for the ultimate."<sup>12</sup> Having experienced the cancer of

dehumanization that feeds itself within the bowels of the passion for the ultimate—the Nazis' absolute claim to the supremacy of the Aryan race and its commitment to the annihilation of all other races—Jacob Bronowski warned all pretenders to heavenly thrones, whether they pontificate in laboratories or in sacristies: 'There is no absolute knowledge. And those who claim it, whether they are scientists or dogmatists, open the door to tragedy.'<sup>13</sup> Where the relative is absolutized, truth is silenced and our humanness violated, and where the absolute is relativized, truth is cherished and our humanness, respected.

#### *IV. The Languages of Myth and Theology*

Myth (heart's language) is a primary language that 'propositionalizes' consciousness's participation in ultimate mystery, and theology (mind's language), a secondary language. Russell Barta explained:

Theology and faith like their languages, represent quite diverse, but equally valid modes of raising religious questions and of apprehending the real. In theology . . . we are dealing with the language of theoretical construction whereas faith speaks in the pretheoretical language of symbols and myth.. . Theology is the creation of human thought, whereas the Christian myth grows out of experiential encounter. What is primary is the myth as it is lived. experienced and handed down. Theology . . . is a second-order reflection on first-order formulations.<sup>14</sup>

As primary language that expresses faith, religious myths speak of the

effective bond that exists between persons and what they experience as holy.<sup>15</sup> Myths are masks of eternity: stories made out of imageries and symbols. They unify the paradoxes of human religious experience, provide patterns for action, and are enacted in rituals.<sup>16</sup> Such are the primeval stories of creation and fall, the covenantal stories of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as well as our own stories of faith celebrated in word and sacrament. Religious myths neither affirm or deny the historical existence of their heroes. They merely express first-hand consciousness's participation in ultimate mystery. Religious myths allocate in memory a home for the divine partaking, which shelters its remembrance, nurtures its life and safeguards its survival.

Theology (faith's secondary language) is the systematic and theoretical reflection upon as well as the interpretation and explanation of religious myth (faith's primary language), not its substitute. "The relationship between theology and faith is similar to that between any systematic, rationalizing theory about experience and the experience itself," clarified Barta.<sup>1</sup> Theology relates to faith as cognition to affectivity, as 'what I know' to 'what I am and become.'

"Religion," stated Russell Barta, "grows out of the practical concerns of everyday life. It is not the result of theoreticians working out religious ideas. Religion as such always exists prior to its theoretical

formulations."<sup>18</sup> Disassociated from life and myth, theology becomes irrelevant: it has lost its primordial data and affective expression. Thus uprooted, theology tends toward idolatry, the monopolization of mystery itself. Humans arrogate to themselves prerogatives that are divine, as the current Vatican theology of papal and episcopal authority bears witness to (such as the recent Vatican faith profession and fidelity oath prescribed for Catholic theologians).<sup>19</sup> By the same token, when the 'divine' co-opts the 'human,' the irrelevance of religion prevails, as the century of the Enlightenment ratifies. Idolatry and irrelevance are the temptations, and more often, the sins of dogmatic religions. Similarly, when stories become history<sup>20</sup> and their interpretation, fundamentalist literalism, myth itself becomes magic rather than sacrament. Alfred North Whitehead warned against symbolic distortions: 'Those societies which cannot combine reverence to their symbols with freedom of revision, must ultimately decay either from anarchy, or from the slow atrophy of a life stifled by useless shadows.'<sup>21</sup>

Against irrelevancy and idolatry—as well as against magic and fundamentalism, anarchy and atrophy—suggest that theological and mythic pluralism might offer a remedy: by recognizing that ultimate mystery is experienced and expressed in ways that are not too inexact while it remains an incessant source of human meaning and healing.

### *V. Mythic and Theological Pluralism*

Pluralism<sup>22</sup> refers to a condition of and an attitude toward diversity.<sup>23</sup> As condition, it describes the world, which, according to William James, is "more like a federal republic than like an empire or a kingdom."<sup>24</sup> As such, pluralism is philosophical, societal and cultural as well as ethical, racial, religious, or sexual."<sup>25</sup> As attitude—the focus in this presentation—pluralism speaks of the ability to perceive 'that which is not myself as diverse rather than as an inferior version of who I am and believe.'<sup>26</sup> As attitude, pluralism is a function of affectivity rather than cognition, of heart rather than mind.

David Tracy defined pluralism as 'attitude': a response to the fact of religious plurality.<sup>27</sup> Within one's religion or with other religions, pluralism as attitude allows for conversations which require—on the part of participants—not only "the ability to preserve the tension of the original symbolic language within the clarity of the concept."<sup>28</sup> Such conversations comprise also "a willingness to enter the conversation, that unnerving place where one is willing to risk all one's present self-understanding by facing claims to attention of the other." Even the willingness to be transformed, perhaps, to be converted!<sup>29</sup> That ability and willingness spring forth from analogical imagination. Thus as attitude, pluralism speaks of symbolic sensitivity and 'response-ability,' willingness, risk, change of heart: all functions of affectivity.



Similarly, Don Cupitt described pluralism, diacronic and synchronic, in affective language: the former, as “the historical realization that past ages were very different from the world of today, and the consequent attempts to enter sympathetically into the minds and world views of men [sic] of past epochs”; and the latter, as “the realization that contemporary men [sic] living in other cultures have different world views from ours, which can be entered by an effort of sympathetic imagination.”<sup>30</sup>

Even more crucial is the recognition that, attitudinally and affectively, pluralism is not passive exercise that "enjoys the pleasures of difference without ever committing oneself to any particular vision of resistance and hope."<sup>31</sup> Pluralistic dialogue requisitions that one's heart has been 'conscienticized' to the enslavement of individual and systemic ideologies, and converted to a hermeneutics of ideological suspicion.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, for a fruitful religious dialogue—rather than Christocentric or Theocentric theologies that perpetuate domination [who's got the true God]. or even a continuous creation-centered theory of religious truth—Paul Knitter suggested a soteriology that denounces domination and announces liberation by fostering the praxis of preferential option for the poor and nonpersons: the option to work with and for the victims of the world.<sup>33</sup> Thus, "instead of searching for 'one God' within all religions," Knitter explained. "we can recognized [in the preferential option for the poor or non-persons] a shared locus of religious experience now available to all religions ...." <sup>4</sup> Or in the words of Renny Golden: "Our

freedom is your only way out. On the underground railroad you can ride with us or you become the jailer."<sup>35</sup>

Jan Barbour suggested that "in place of the absolutism of exclusive claim to finality, an ecumenical spirit . . . would acknowledge a plurality of significant religious models, without lapsing into a complete relativism."<sup>36</sup> which would undercut all concern for truth .... " He added: 'We must avoid the theological imperialism to which preoccupation with doctrines, along with literalism in interpretation, have often led."<sup>37</sup> To obviate the pitfall of relativism in religious dialogue, Knitter—as explained above—suggested his soteriological model. "If there is no preestablished common ground or common essence that we can invoke before dialogue, perhaps there is a common approach or a common context with which we can begin in order to create our shared 'shaky ground";<sup>38</sup> namely, that of shared praxis of the preferential option for the poor.

About relativism, Cupitt argued that the experience of relativity itself already speaks for the capacity in humans to transcend and of 'their having become conscious spirit.' 'To say 'All our knowledge is relative to interpretative frameworks, claimed Cupitt, "is to say something which, if true, must be an exception to the rule it states: to have been for a moment able to transcend our ordinary level and way of knowing and say something about it as a whole."<sup>39</sup> Consequently, it seems to me, that,

in religious dialogues, even our 'soteriological shared shaky ground,' religiously speaking, might not preclude—as discussed above—the 'shaky' experience of ultimate transcendence.<sup>40</sup>

Personally speaking, it remains that for each one, the challenge of religious dialogue resides primarily in the call to faithfulness, to which consciousness is summoned as it affectively 'intentionalizes' mystery in all of its soteriological, liberating and humanizing power. People experience mystery in unique yet sharable ways, but at times—especially when mystery is 'propositionalized'—they experience it in ways that are diametrically opposed, and there lies the challenge for religions and religious dialogue. Bernard Lonergan explained:

What in one is found intelligible, in another is unintelligible. What for one is true, for another is false. What is good for one, for another evil. Each may have some awareness of the other and so each in a manner may include the other. But such inclusion is also negation and rejection. For the other's horizon. at least in part, is attributed to wishful thinking, to an acceptance of myth, to ignorance or fallacy, to blindness or illusion, to backwardness or immaturity, to infidelity, to bad will, to a refusal of God's grace. Such a rejection of the other may be passionate, and then the suggestion that openness is desirable will make one furious. But again, rejection *may* have the firmness of ice without any trace of passion or even any show of feeling, except perhaps a wan smile."

The realm of rejection, however, has its own limits, and beyond its boundaries agreement is possible. For example, "both astrology and genocide are beyond the pale . . . ." wrote Lonergan. "The former is ridiculed, the latter is execrated."<sup>42</sup>

At the core of faith -- of one's religious affectivity and dialogue -- one experiences a painful ontological aloneness, which must be embraced resolutely. For the experience of participating in mystery -- in whatever way and accordingly, of responding to it is unconditionally undeniable and compellingly calling for its affirmation. Like friendship, mystery can only be welcomed or rejected.<sup>43</sup> If rejected, then the self is lost: it becomes aimless and homeless. If welcomed, then hope might be affirmed in the midst of despair, meaningfulness in the midst of meaninglessness and life in the midst of death.

The salvation of both myth and theology from irrelevancy and idolatry—as well as magic and fundamentalism, atrophy and anarchy—might lie in the recognition of pluralism, which allows myth and theology to en flesh mystery and, at the same time, to remain a 'not too inexact explanation and approximation of mystery itself. For example: Christians may say that God's mystery of graciousness is expressed fully in Jesus. But, among other concerns, this is not to say that divine mystery is expressed fully in Christological myth and dogma. Dogmas, especially, often disclose the absolutization and dehistoricization of 'privileged' theological statements. For example. Pope Paul VI taught that "the

formulas used by the Council of Trent to express the Church Eucharistic faith, 'like the others which the Church uses to propose the dogmas of the faith, express concepts which are not tied to a certain definite form of human culture, or to a certain stage of scientific progress, or to one theological school or another, but exhibit that which the human mind, in its universal and necessary experience of reality, perceives . . . . Hence they are suited to men of all times and places.'"<sup>44</sup> Describing such classicist assumptions—the 'one culture' view of unity—Lonergan had this to say:

On classicist assumptions there is just one culture. That culture is not attained by the simple faithful, the people, the natives, the barbarians. Nevertheless, career is always open to talent. One enters upon such a career by diligent study of the ancient Latin and Greek authors. One pursues such a career by learning Scholastic philosophy and theology. One aims at high office by becoming proficient in canon law. One succeeds by winning the approbation and favor of the right personages. Within this set-up the unity of faith is a matter of everyone subscribing to the correct formulae.<sup>45</sup>

'Correct' faith formulae unite in holy alliances all possessors of absolute truth and give rise to Kingdoms of Certitude: fools paradises erected on 'pure power structures.'<sup>46</sup> In the real world of faith, 'correct' faith formulae do not exist, and the reasons are many: linguistic, social and cultural differences, undifferentiated as well as differentiated levels of consciousness, various phases of intellectual, moral and religious conversion<sup>47</sup> and, most importantly, the infinite and incomprehensible

nature of ultimate mystery.<sup>48</sup>

But there is another reason for denying the existence of 'correct' faith formulae: 'postmodern' historical consciousness which foregoes the witch hunt for 'errors'<sup>49</sup> and situates one within the arena of systemic distortions. 'Modern' historical consciousness, in turn, had secured its hopes in 'rational' reason, and consequently, 'error' could always be counteracted and annihilated by the 'enlightened mind,' through which again reason could retrieve its translucency. And for Churches of dogmatic persuasions—since 'reason' was not contrary to faith' and faith enlightened reason—error could always be walloped by merely restating the content of the so-called 'deposit of faith' as they proposed it. Postmodern consciousness, however, points to a 'split' within reason itself, which could be expressed in the question: "After Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as with the current accumulation of thousands of nuclear weapons that threaten the survival itself of our planet, where is reason?" "[Something is fundamentally and systematically awry in our history and society," wrote Tracy, and "postmodern consciousness" . . . now deeply suspects the optimism concealed in Western notions of reason."<sup>50</sup>

Hopefully, in not too inexact approximations, mythic and theological 'postmodern' pluralism might still be called to express religious truth as fidelity of faith-consciousness to ultimate mystery. It might still remain

sacramental of ultimate transcendence and respectful of finite humanity:<sup>51</sup> to allow us, humans, to let 'God' be 'God,' and 'God,' to let us, humans, be human.

Conceivably then, consciousness might intentionalize ultimate mystery and thus host the ineffable in its salvific graciousness. Affectively and cognitively, in myth and theology, it might express this 'divine' graciousness, and through mythic and theological pluralism, acknowledge its soteriological, indiscriminating, humanizing and saving power. And faith-experiences, therefore, might still freely be lived and deepened, expressed and celebrated by all people as they tend mystery and, by that same mystery, be forever tended. And so, not only priests, gurus and savants. but also -- from the very depths of their consciousness unviolated --"the simple faithful, the natives and the barbarians"<sup>52</sup> might still treasure, know and proclaim the humanizing power of ultimate mystery. In Christian terms: 'The Spirit poured out from God over all flesh'—liberated from irrelevancy and idolatry, magic and fundamentalism, anarchy and atrophy—might still empower all "to prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams."<sup>53</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. From a poem entitled "Women Behind Walls for the women in Cook County Jail and Dwight Prison," by Renny Golden in Golden/Collins *Struggle is a Name for Hope*. Poetry (Worker Writer Series 3) (Minneapolis 1982), in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "For Women in Men's Worlds: A Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation," in *Different Theologies, Common Responsibility: Babel or Pentecost?*. Claude Geffre (editor), *Concilium* (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark Ltd. 1984), p. 38.
2. For example in *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutic, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers. 1987), David Tracy, it seems to me, makes a case for 'pluralism as the ability to perceive the truth of diversity.' He speaks of language as pluralistic, that is as system (*langue*) -- as distinguished from use (*parole*) -- which is a system "of differential relations" (p. 53); of language as system (through language as use and as object) to language as discourse: "someone says something about something to someone," (p. 61); and of language as discourse as the discovery of plurality, which means "to also rediscover the contingency and ambiguity of history and society" (p. 65).
3. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, p. 65.
4. Edward MacKinnon, *Truth & Expression* (New York: Newman Press, 1971), p. 182.
5. Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday & Co.. 1983), "Revelation as a New Awareness," pp. 98-114. In *Pluralism to World Religions* (Maryknoll. NY: Orbis Books, 1985), Harold Coward claims "that in all religions there is the experience of a reality that transcends human conception [and] that that reality is conceived in a plurality of ways both within each religion and among all



religions . . . " (p. 105). Again, this is the meaning of 'ultimate mystery' or 'ultimate transcendence' in this article. Of course, not every one agrees that 'mystery' or 'transcendence' necessarily implies 'outside' of 'here.' See for example, Don Cupitt, *The Leap of Reason* (London: Sheldon Press, 1976). especially his fascinating parable of the prisoner, pp. 31-37.

6. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 8 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971), 'The Theological Meaning of the Veneration of the Sacred Heart," p. 211.

7. Andrew Tallon, 'The Meaning of Heart Today: Reversing a Paradigm According to Levinas and Rahner," in *Journal of Religious Studies* (Vol. II, Numbers 1 & 2, Sept. 10, 1984), p. 66.

8. Tallon, "Intentionality, Intersubjectivity, and the Between: Buber and Levinas on Affectivity and the Dialogical Discourse" in *Thought* (Vol. 53, No. 210, September, 1978), p. 302. Among recent works on the role of affectivity in theology -- including the article referred to in this note -- I have found rewarding Tallon's "Personal Becoming (Karl Rahner's Christian Anthropology)," in *The Thomist* (Vol. 43, No. 1, January, 1979), pp. 1-177.

9. Emmanuel Levinas. *The Concept of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 43-45; in Tallon, 'The Meaning of Heart Today," pp. 65-66.

10. Levinas, *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l'exteriorité* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), p. XVII.

11. MacKinnon, *Truth & Expression*, p. 182.

12. MacKinnon, *Truth & Expression*, pp. 182-183.

13. Bronowski, "Knowledge and Certainty," *The Ascent of Man* (Toronto/Boston:

Little, Brown & Co., 1973) p. 353. Regarding the human instinct to absolutize, see Richard J. Beauchesne, 'Truth, Mystery, and Expression: Theological Perspectives Revisited,' *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (25:4), Fall 1988, pp. 555-572.

14. Russell Barta. "Demythologizing Theology," *America* (Feb. 5, 1972), pp. 118-119. Barta, however, equates Scripture with 'mythos' and fails to recognize that theology equally exists in Scripture. He writes: 'Theology is a logos; the Gospel is a *mythos*' (p. 119). Regarding the language of faith, see also Eugene C. Kennedy, "Believe It or Not: The Language of Believing." *Believing* (NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1974), p. 23-34 and Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation*, (NY: Paulist Press, 1975), especially "Symbol and Theology," pp. 238-265.

15. Barta, *Id*, p. 118.

16. Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms* (NY: Harper and Row, Pub., 1974), p. 19-28.

17. Barta, "Demythologizing Theology." p. 119.

18. Barta, *Id*, p. 119.

19. For example, see Vatican profession of faith and oath, *Origins* (3/89. Vol. 18, No. 40), p. 663.

20. James Barr, "Story and History in Biblical Theology," *Theology Digest* (Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall. 1976), pp. 265-274. See also Barr, "Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology," *New Theology*, No.I, Martin Marty & Dean G. Peerman. Editors (NY: MacMillan, Co.), pp. 60-74.

21. Quoted in Avery Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1971), p. 10 (not paginated).

22. Studies on pluralism: Avery Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma* (NY: Doubleday. 1971), pp. 79-94 & 163-170; Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, especially pp. 236-

333; David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (NY: The Seabury Press, 1975); Rahner, "Pluralism in Theology and the Oneness of the Church' Profession of Faith," *Concilium* 46 (NY: Paulist Press, 1969), pp. 103-123, and "The Historicity of Theology." *Theological Investigations IX*, pp. 64-83; Yves Congar "Unité et pluralisme." in *Ministère et communion ecclésiale* (Paris: Cerf, 1971). pp. 229-258; Leroy Rouner (Ed.), *Religious Pluralism, Vol. 5* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. 1984); Raymond J. Devettere. "Progress and Pluralism in Theology," *Theological Studies* (Vol. 35, Number 3, Sept., 1974), pp. 441-466; Alan Race. *Christian and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983); Claude Geffre, Gustavo Gutierrez, Virgil Elizondo (editors), *Different Theologies, Common Responsibility: Babel or Pentecost*, Concilium (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd.. 1984); Donald G. Dawe and John B. Carman (editors) *Christian Faith in a Religiously Plural World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978); Eugene A. Nida, William D. Reyburn, *Meaning Across Cultures* (Maryknoll. NY: Orbis Books, 1981); Arnulf Camps, *Partners in Dialogue: Christianity and Other World Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: 1983): "Pluralism, Polarization and Communication in the Church," *Pro Mundt Vita* (Brussels), 45, 1973; Ruy O. Costa (ed.), *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indegenization, and Contextualization* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis **Book**, 1988); Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1982); and studies referred to in this essay.

23. McCoy, *When Gods Change*, p. 48.

24. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (NY: Longmans, Green, 1909), pp. 321-22, in McCoy, *When Gods Change*, p. 49.

25. McCoy, *When Gods Change*, pp. 49-52.

26. McCoy, *When God Changes*, p. 48.
27. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, p. 90. Tracy, *Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (NY: Crossroad, 1981), p. 439, note 5; see also *Plurality and Ambiguity* (*partim*, esp. pp. 93-94).
28. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, p. 93-94.
28. Cupitt, *The Leap of Reason*, p. 5. [In the text, *italics* are mine.]
29. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, p. 90.
30. See Paul Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (editors) (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), pp. 178-200; and *No Other Name?* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), esp. pp. 205-231; Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, *partim*, esp., pp. 76-77 & 111-116. Consult especially Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), "The Hermeneutic Circle," pp. 7-38.
31. Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions," pp. 185-190. Contrast with Knitter's "continuous creation" of all religions' model of religious truth in *No Other Name?*, pp. 219 ff.
32. Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions," p. 186.
33. See note 1 above.
34. For example, regarding relativism as threat to and possibilities of theology, see McCoy, *When Gods Change*, pp. 53-64.
35. Jan Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms*, p. 176.

36. Knitter, 'Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions,' p. 185.

37. Cupitt, *The Leap of Reason*, p. 66.

38. For that reason, I also appeal to Yves Congar, who equally made a case for religious pluralism and described it affectively. In *Diversity and Communion* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publication, 1985), Congar wrote: "Pluralism connotes diversity in unity. It is an intrinsic value of unity. In expressing a diversity, 'pluralism' also refers to something held in common. It is not cacophony, it is not sheer dispersion, but rather the differentiation of something held in common," (p. 40). Congar then described pluralism—the intrinsic value of unity and the differentiation of something held in common—from a religious perspective. Religious pluralism, he claimed, holds fast to two great truths: (1) transcendence, which has to be translated into history; and (2) faith, which is "set in motion by living subjects, who have their own . . . views, their culture, and their problems." Consequently, transcendence "translated into history" calls for a number of expressions while none among them is totally adequate to what it expresses; and "individual or collective subjects who live out (their faith and) make it their own, inevitably . . . express it in different ways." (pp. 40-41). Although Congar spoke of transcendence and faith as 'truths'—connoting cognition—he expressed religious pluralism as an affective attitude. Through faith-experience—set in motion by living subjects and lived out diversely—religious pluralism is the 'intrinsic value of unity and the differentiation of something held in common'; namely, the unity of transcendence diversely experienced in diverse people. Thus religious pluralism, as attitude, results from 'lived' knowledge—affective knowledge through participation: that which engages one's whole person. Participatory knowledge is sustained by

fidelity: a relation towards another (here in Congar, transcendence). which one owes to oneself by reason of one's nature (faith). And like nobility, fidelity obliges from within: a function of the heart. Inevitably, Congar concluded, the diversity of faith-experiences, individual and collective, expresses itself in ways that are different. As discussed above, that 'difference' is expressed in the plurality of myths—languages of pre-reflection—which obligate from within while they remain faithful to diverse faith-experiences: and in the plurality of theologies—languages of reflection—which obligate from without while they conform to the diversity of myths.

41. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 236-237.

42. Lonergan, *Ib.*, p. 237.

43. Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being: Reflection & Mystery I* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), pp. 242-270. especially pp. 255-256.

44. *Mysterium fidei* (AAS 57, 1965), p. 758, quoted in Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1971), p.189.

45. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. p. 326.

46. In *The Problems of Religious Faith* (Dublin: Helicon Limited. 1972). p. 321, James P. Mackey wrote: 'The Roman Catholic Church at the present time is, at least as far as its own constitutional theory and much of its practice is concerned, one of the very few pure power structures remaining in the civilized world. Were it not for some dictatorships or near-dictatorships in the Communist world, one could argue that it is the only pure power structure left.'

47. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 326-330.

48. I have developed the themes of the relative nature of faith-expressions and of the human instinct to absolutize in "Truth, Mystery and Expression: Theological Perspectives Revisited." referred to above.

49. See Rahner regarding the principle of contradiction, which can no longer apply in theology. Even within Christianity, theologies now "exist side by side with one another as disparate and mutually incomensurable." *Theological Investigations*, Vol. II (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), p. 7.

50. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, pp. 73-74. For a discussion of 'modernity' and 'postmodernity,' see pp. 73-81.

51. Rahner claims that religious pluralism is necessitated—among other reasons—because of the limitation of the human mind.

*Theological Investigations*, Vol. II. p. 139.

52. Lonergan. *Method in Theology*, p. 326, quoted above.

53. Acts, 2, 17.

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