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CHRISTIAN SUPERSESSIONISM AND THE DILEMMA OF DIALOGUE IN JOS NIGERIA: EXPLORING PANIKKAR’S DIALOGICAL DIALOGUE AS A PARADIGM FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

A Dissertation
Submitted to the McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Martin Akowe Ahiaba

December 2016
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Martin Akowe Ahiaba

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTIAN SUPERSESSIONISM AND THE DILEMMA OF DIALOGUE IN JOS NIGERIA:
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Dissertation supervised by Dr. Marinus Iwuchukwu, PhD

The Middle-belt and Northern Nigeria are notoriously known as the epicenter for ethnic and religious warfare. The hostility between the two dominant religions—Islam and Christianity—has a beginning that pre-dates the British colonial occupation in 1903. Islamic opposition to British cultural imperialism and religious superiority continues in its outright rejection of Christian supersessionism and the formation of fundamentalist sects. Though not denying the importance of addressing the economic, ethnic, and political context of the problem of violence, this work focuses on exclusivist Christology and its hermeneutical use in framing the dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Jos Plateau.

We analyze the nature of absolute claims emanating from Christian supersessionism and evaluate how these have served as triggers to violence, provoked by the slightest religious misunderstanding. Such an exclusive Christological definition lends to religious extremism, and
it raises serious ethical and theological questions for Christianity as a religion that preaches love and hospitality for neighbors, especially the stranger. In this sense, Christian supersessionism poses grave ethical danger to the virtue of hospitality in that it reduces the horizon of Christian compassion, making it accessible only to members of the Christian faith community.

By applying Raimon Panikkar’s non-dualistic method and his post-colonial critique of Western theological imperatives, this work seeks to liberate exclusivist Christology from its totalizing tendencies. It is our intention to develop an alternative dialogical pneumatology of charity and hospitality that is necessary for the interreligious encounter and mutual coexistence between Christians and Muslims. This investigation shows that Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision of reality which promotes “individuality, irreducibility and reciprocity,” remains the *sine qua non* for interreligious peace in a pluralistic setting. Cosmotheandrisism offers a deep complementarity of perspectives, insights, and approaches. In sum, cosmotheandrisism within the context of interreligious dialogues argues that there is no “one religion” that can be imposed on the “many,” and there are no “many” that can be reduced to the “one.” Thus, we contend that Panikkar’s concept of dialogical dialogue, which draws from the cosmotheandric vision, remains an effective method for formulating both the theoretical and hermeneutical principles required for addressing Christian exclusivism.
DEDICATION

To the victims of the 2001 Jos crisis

To all Missionaries

Through the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers (Spiritans)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my immense debt of gratitude to God for the gift of the Ministry of Reconciliation, through which peace among religions becomes the precondition for peace on earth. Second, my regards to Dr. Marinus Iwuchukwu, my supervisor, who took more than a personal interest in getting me to work, reading the manuscripts, and offering very useful and productive suggestions. More than this, he continued to drum into my ears the increasing concern that exclusivism has brought to the entire debate on interreligious dialogue and the need for alternative hermeneutics as justification for completing the investigation. Similar thanks go to Dr. Gerald Boodoo and Dr. Anna Florke Schied, who serve as members of my dissertation committee. They painfully read through all the lines and made many useful suggestions; my gratitude is unlimited. To them and the entire faculty in the Department of Theology, I remain eternally grateful indeed.

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CHAPTER ONE
HISTORICAL CONTEXT, RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The Middle Belt Region of Nigeria includes the city of Jos, which is the capital city of Plateau State. In the modern era, Jos has unfortunately also become the epicenter of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. Between the years 2000 and 2009, an estimated 4,000 people have been killed in Jos as well as in its surrounding villages and cities.¹ This area forms a part of Northern Nigeria, one of the most diverse regions of Nigeria, ethnically and linguistically, with over 300 languages.²

Ethnicity, as manifested in the indigene/settlers’ phenomenon, has been identified among other factors as the immediate cause of conflict and violence in Jos.³ Scholars have identified religion as the most prevailing factor serving as a catalyst for the violence. The indigenous ethnic groups in and around Jos were once largely Traditionalists;⁴ however, during the colonial era the indigenous peoples overwhelmingly converted to Christianity. Contemporaneously, there was a gradual settling of Muslim Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups in the city. Over time, this mixture of religious and ethnic presence became a source of concern to the former Traditionalist indigenous groups.

⁴ By “Traditionalist,” I mean the adherents of African traditional religions; this term is preferred as more subtle than the term “pagans.”
This chapter surveys the historical background of British colonial rule and the consequent ideological uses of religion—Islam and Christianity—to consolidate political power in Jos, as well as in the entire Northern Nigeria area.\(^5\) Our focus will be the role of religion in the interplay between the outsiders—i.e., the British colonial authority—and the Hausa/Fulani, identified as the insiders: namely, the ethnic groups within the current geopolitical space of Jos, Plateau. The introduction of the outsider-incited conflicts and disputes ultimately led to a power struggle between the ethnic minorities of the Middle Belt\(^6\) region and the dominant Hausa/Fulani, who became viewed as simply representatives of colonial authorities.

On the one hand, within the general perspective of the history of Islam in Northern Nigeria,\(^7\) it is assumed that the British ideological use of religion and politics was gainfully employed by the Sokoto hegemony to continue the political and religious domination of minority ethnic groups. This perspective led to the narrative that Islam benefited from the British colonial apparatus. On the other hand, Mohammed S. Umar argues that the colonial policies of the “appropriation and containment” of Islam had an adverse effect on its external growth and internal harmony,\(^8\) and that this repression of Islam’s advance towards the Middle Belt, and some cities in Southern Nigeria, proved advantageous to the evangelistic agenda of the Christian missionaries.

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\(^6\) This geographical area covers the Tiv, Igala, Idoma and Bassa, under the formal Benue-Plateau region. See Moses Ochunu, “Colonialism within Colonialism: Hausa-Caliphate Imaginary and the British Colonial Administration of Nigerian Middle Belt,” African Studies Quarterly 10, no. 1 & 2 (Fall 2008).

\(^7\) See Iwuchukwu’s description of Northern Nigeria, footnote 5 above.

On both the Christian and Muslim sides, “...religious leaders sought to supplant the other religious group...”\(^9\) In some instances, there have been deliberate attempts by Christians and Muslims to gain and establish political control and religious superiority through proselytization. Yet, from the Christian perspective, the narrative that Islam benefited more from the British colonial authority is still dominant as if the British designed the indirect rule system especially for the Islamic context of Northern Nigeria. On the contrary, the late Ali Mazrui asserts that the British indirect rule policy, when applied to a Christian setting in Uganda, worked more in favor of Christianity than in its application to Muslim-dominated Northern Nigeria. Mazrui argues,

In its application in Africa, Indirect rule favored Islam in those areas which were already Islamized before the British came, but favored Christianity in areas where traditional African religion still prevailed. This Indirect rule favored Islam in Northern Nigeria (which owed its Islam to pre-colonial times), but favored Christianity in Buganda and Southern Sudan where the prevailing mores and beliefs were indigenous.\(^10\)

However, the question about British support for Christian missions and the implication of such for interreligious dialogue have not yet been investigated. Adiele Afigbo commented on the detrimental effect of British double-dealing with Christians and Muslims and the implications for religious dialogue:

“[T]here was also a positive way in which the British promoted the growth of some of the evil consequences of cultural pluralism in Nigeria...the British also caused untold havoc through the application of the policy of divide and rule, and using different cultural criteria at different times to divide the peoples...they made a clear distinction between Muslim Nigerian and the so-called animist Nigerians...the Muslims were preferred to the animist...The [Muslims] in northern Nigeria were considered more civilized by virtue of their monotheism than the animist found mostly in the southern Nigeria.”\(^11\)


This dissertation probes the extent of the claim of Christian superiority over Muslims in Jos Plateau. More specifically, it investigates whether the collaboration of the British colonial authorities with the Christian mission in the Jos Plateau supported a Christian sense of superiority. It examines how this sense of superiority and entitlement laid the foundation of the “rhetoric of supremacy” and exclusion of Muslims in Jos Plateau. In conclusion, I argue that the continuation of such a “rhetoric of supremacy” of Christians in Jos Plateau State remains the source of the ethnic-religious crisis.

This work therefore, probes absolute claims stemming from Christian supersessionism. It addresses Muslims’ perception of Christian superiority as an extension of the British colonial agenda. Today in Jos, these attitudes lie beneath and have been the trigger to spiraling conflicts and violence provoked by even the slightest religious misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims. The religious situation of violence calls for an epistemic reawakening and reevaluation of the narratives, methods, and hermeneutics used in dialogue.

Applying Raimon Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue, this project seeks first and foremost to critique the basic position of Christianity: namely, the exclusive Christological claims that lies at the heart of the evangelical approach to mission and dialogue with Islam. By so doing, we intend to formulate an alternative dialogical principle for mutual coexistence between Christianity and Islam in Jos, Northern Nigeria.

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12 This is borrowed from Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
14 Through the course of his theological career, Panikkar has, for various reasons, changed his first name from Raimondo to Raymond and finally to Raimon. The footnotes and bibliographical references in this work will use the surname, Panikkar.
15 Borrowed from neo-Kantian philosophers Herman Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Eugen Rosenstock, Ferdinand Ebner and Gabriel Marcel who used the term dialogical principle to describe a relationship
The concept of dialogical dialogue is at the heart of Panikkar’s cosmotheandric principle. This vision of reality is the summation of Panikkar’s philosophical and theological thinking. Panikkar’s cosmotheandricism has enormous implications for relational thinking between the cosmos, God, and Humans in such a way that the principles of “individuality, irreducibility and reciprocity,” are tightly maintained and integrated. Thus, in applying the Greek concept of *perikhoresis* to the cosmotheandric vision of reality, Panikkar submits that “[t]here is no God without man and world. There is no man without God and world. There is no World without God and Man.” Cosmotheandrism and its accompanying principle of “individuality, irreducibility, and reciprocity” make Panikkar’s theology of multiple belongings a possibility. This theology forms the basis for his trans-spiritual and interreligious experience. Panikkar summarizes his faith journey thus, “I ‘left’ as a Christian, I ‘found’ myself a Hindu and I ‘returned’ a Buddhist, without ceasing to be a Christian.” The mutual fecundity evident in Panikkar’s theology of multiple belonging testifies that dialogical dialogue ensures respect for the “individuality, irreducibility, and reciprocity” of the other religions.

This project attempts to instantiate Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue into the polyvalent religious atmosphere of Jos Plateau, Nigeria. I argue that the rhetoric enshrined in the current dialectical hermeneutics underlying the methods for interreligious dialogue employed by Christians in Jos encourages antagonism, hatred, and mistrust on the one hand, and, on the other, terrorism, militancy, fundamentalism, and systematic exclusivism. These exclusivist religious

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categories are anti-peace and life-endangering. Thus, using Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue, we can propose ‘an-Other’ model of interreligious dialogue that minimizes Christianity’s “rhetoric of supremacy”²⁰ and exclusion and can strive for a dialogical pluralism²¹ by promoting difference and relationality. In addition to the need for dialogical principles that embrace difference and promote relationality, this work argues that the acknowledgment and acceptance of religious pluralism de facto and de jure in Jos remains the way forward towards peaceful co-existence among these religions.

Against this background of ethnic and political exclusivism built upon the citizenship/indigenes problem, this research is to examine how the exclusivist Christology that was inherited from missionaries in colonial times relates to Christian-Muslim dialogue in Jos Plateau. This will mean, first, that the issue of colonial power and Christianity’s hermeneutic of exclusion remains at the focus of this research. Second, it becomes necessary to investigate the root of Christian supersessionism: its Christological presuppositions and foundations. Thus, the search for a theological method other than the dialectics of classical Christology has led to the instantiation of Panikkar’s pluralistic theology of religions.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter offers the introductory part of the work. It gives a detailed review of the history of religious violence and conflict in Northern Nigeria. This historical review sets the stage for the research question, the thesis of the dissertation, and its operational methodology. This section demonstrates one fact: namely, that

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²⁰ Borrowed from Chela Sandoval, Methodology of the Oppressed (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
²¹ This phrase is used in this work to differentiate Panikkar’s pluralism from that of Hick and Dupuis. Dialogical pluralism moves the discourse beyond Dupuis’ Inclusive pluralism and Alan Race’s trilogy-exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. See Michael Barnes, Religions in Conversation: Christian Identity and Christian Pluralism (London: SPCK, 1989), 172 ff.
the phenomenon of religious violence is not new to Northern Nigeria. Indeed, it has deep-rooted political and ethnic connections dating back to pre-colonial times. Since Northern Nigeria is predominantly Islamic, there is a tendency to blame the Muslims for either reacting or over-reacting to every instance of religious violence. For the Christian minority in northern Nigeria, the atmosphere is unsafe for both practicing religious freedom—a constitutional right—and conducting day-to-day business ventures. Thus, the Middle-belt city of Jos has come to be perceived as a safe haven for Christians to achieve religious freedom and peace.

In order to make sense of the ethnic, political, and religious factors that precipitated the 2001 religious war in Jos, the second chapter, titled “Hermeneutics of Exclusion: Jos as Christian City and Muslim Response,” attempts to demonstrate how the ethnic “indigenous versus settlers” dynamics play into the larger theological framework that has given birth to Christian supersessionism. This chapter furthers the debate on conceptual issues and theoretical frameworks, exploring the relationship between pluralism, politics, and ethnicity, on the one hand, and Christological supersessionism and Islamic fundamentalism on the other.

The third chapter proposes Panikkar’s dialogical pluralism as a desideratum that is needed today in overcoming Christological supersessionism. Panikkar’s critique of the totalizing tendencies inherent in traditional Christology provides the lens through which we evaluate the *lacuna* in theological inclusivism and the excesses of exclusivism. Reading Panikkar alongside and against the proponent of theological inclusivism/exclusivism allows for a new prospect for thinking alterity. More important, this chapter examines Panikkar’s claim that Christophany creates a better hermeneutical ground for the mystical “I—I” experiencing of the other religions possible than does Christology.
The fourth chapter, titled “Raimon Panikkar’s Theology of Dialogical Dialogue,” focuses deeply on Panikkar’s pneumatological and mystical experience and its contribution to a pluralistic theology of dialogue. This pneumatology is conditioned by the mystical experience drawn from his cosmotheandric vision of reality. As a result of the relationality and interrelatedness that exist within Panikkar’s cosmotheandric trilogy, this chapter provides a careful analyses of Panikkar’s dialogical pluralism, which aims at finding a hermeneutics of hospitality that will serve as a way of exploring, understanding, and living with the “other.”

Finally, Chapter 5, “Theoretical Framework for Christian Dialogical Theology in Jos,” explores further the implications of Panikkar’s relational pneumatology for the development of an authentic Christian dialogue in post-crisis Jos. By proposing a hermeneutic of charity and hospitality as the basis for interreligious dialogue, the chapter concludes by advocating for the acceptance of religious pluralism de jure as the sine qua non for conflict resolution and peace building in Jos, Nigeria.

1.2. Northern Nigerian Background of Religion and Conflicts

The history of Islamic conflicts and violence in Northern Nigeria is traceable to four famous medieval civilizations in the West African sub-region: Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and the Kanem Bornu empires. The successive nature of these Sahelian states was characterized by the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires. This period lasted from approximately 800CE to 1600CE. Consequently, this epoch recorded conflict and violence on two fronts: internally, there were struggles and resistance among vassal states and between conglomerated vassal states against their lords; and externally, between established empires and external Arab and European

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forces. It was a period of great upheavals, comprising political unrest, failed ethnic negotiations and aggression, territorial hostility, fratricide, and domestic slavery. Domestic slavery evidently existed as the hub of subsistence economic enterprise in the pre-colonial era. The point here is that the presence and dynamics of ethnic conflict and violence in the West African terrain pre-dates the Sokoto Caliphate.

The Islamic faith, culture, and civilization were introduced to West Africa through trade networks in gold, copper, species, and other mineral resources. Notable among events in the history of Islam in sub-Saharan African around the eleventh century was the activity of the Berber communities, whose members acted mainly as travel guides to the Arab merchants. According to Iwuchukwu, “...[t]here had been ongoing economic and political cooperation/negotiations between different city states in the Sokoto Caliphate and Kanem-Bornu Empire with Muslim merchants and politicians from Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Chad, Mali, Niger, etc., since the eleventh century.” Scholars of history refer to this era as the peak of the African commerce and opening of the trans-Sahara trade route to northern Africa, Europe, and Asia.

The Fulani jihad of 1804 and the consolidation of the Sokoto Caliphate have a complex history. From a purely religious perspective, the jihad was reckoned as the activities of some Islamist reformation groups with a purist theological agenda; others, from a sociological point of

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24 Iwuchukwu, Can Muslim and Christians, 6.
25 Sokoto Caliphate is considered one of Nigeria’s last great empires. It stretches from Dori, present day Burkina Faso, east to Adamawa in present day Cameroon and south to the town of Ilorin in Nigeria. The Sokoto Caliphate emerged from the amalgamation of over 30 emirates in 1812 through a series of jihads that began in 1803 and were led by a Fulani called Usman don Fodio...The Sokoto Caliphate lasted until 1903, when the British and French defeated it.” Toyun Falola and Ann Genova, eds., The Historical Dictionary of Nigeria (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), 332; Kabiru Suleiman Chafe, State and Economy in the Sokoto Caliphate: Policies and Practices in the Metropolitan Districts 1803-1904 (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1999).
view, relate the jihad to racial uprising and ethnic cleansing; and from an economic perspective, the jihad was viewed as an organized mass movement against oppressive feudal lords.\textsuperscript{26} However, the position of early leaders of the movement supports the view that “in origin it was also an important intellectual movement involving the minds of the leaders, a conception of the ideal society, and a philosophy of revolution.”\textsuperscript{27} A balanced view will support tracing the jihad movement to the reformation ideology of the itinerant preacher Usman dan Fodio, which turned into a revolution that swept all of the Hausa states and beyond.\textsuperscript{28}

It is important to underscore the historical presence of Islam in the frontiers of West African city-states and in some Hausa states, such as Gobir and Zaria, prior to the jihad in 1804 and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate.\textsuperscript{29} Thus, a consideration of this history in context will balance the extreme positions championed by scholars like A. Burns and M. Delafose who have opined that “…the introduction of Islam neither profoundly affected the social and religious life of the Hausa land, as Burns says, nor left it totally undisturbed as Delafose suggests.”\textsuperscript{30}

On the whole, and from the onset, the imposition of British rule was an unwelcome encounter, as evidenced in the stern reply of the Sultan Attahiru I of Sokoto to Colonel Lugard’s initial advance: “I do not consent that any one of you should ever dwell with us. Between us and you there are no dealings except as between Muslims and unbelievers.”\textsuperscript{31} As clearly enunciated

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 333.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 333.
in the anonymous poem on Christians, *Waka Nasara*, the Islamic caliphate identified the British as Christians.

10) Even if I have to leave alone, I will not say,
    For, by Allah, I will not obey the Christians.
11) Between two alternatives one must be chosen:
    Either *hijra*, or following the Christians.
12) Even the emirs have left their towns
    So—if not *hijra*—what is there for a commoner?
    Other than to become Christian.
14) Fear of death, and the love of life, we too have.
    But to refuse the predestined is to follow the Christians.
15) If you say it is difficult to leave,
    The totality of *lahan* (injury, blemish) is with those who follow
    The Christians,
16) If you think you have powers and refuse *hijra*,
    What power reaches the power of the Christian?
17) If they give a gift, don’t accept it.
    It is poison they will give you; toxic is the gift of the Christians.
18) They admonished us to stop oppression:
    But they are themselves oppressors, these Christians.
    They have dark *fitna* and machination,
    To spoil the religion of Islam—the Christians!³²

The relationship between Muslims in northern Nigeria and the British was marred by attempted invasions, bitter battles, and finally the conquest of 1903. Of note here is that the British conquest of Northern Nigeria was gradual; starting with the defeat of Nupe and Ilorin, the two forces matched on Kotongora in 1900 and advanced on Adamawa in 1901, leveled Bauchi in 1902 and finally Kano; and Sokoto fell under the mighty military strength of the British in 1903 at the battle of Burmi.³³ The Sokoto Caliphate was defeated and thus became a vassal state

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³² For manuscripts and published copies of the Wakar Nasar, see Bello Sa’id, “Gudummawar Jihadi KanA dabin Hausa” (MA Thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 1978), 443-447; Dandatti Abdikadir, (1979), 63-66.
³³ “The incident which led to war was the death of Captain Moloney, the British resident in Nassarawa, who was killed by the magaji of Keffi (Oct. 1902). The magaji fled for protection to Kano, whose emir refused a British demand for his surrender.” Erik Goldstein, *Wars and Peace Treaties: 1816-1991* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 149.
alongside other tributary states it once ruled. Muslims interpreted the defeat and consequent surrender of the Caliphate to the British along religious lines.

The British conquest marked the end of the Caliphate. Lord Lugard in his inaugural speech of March 21, 1903, at the installation of the new emir of Sokoto Muhammad Attahiru II pointed out the new reality of the conquered Sokoto Caliphate in unequivocal terms.

The old treaties are dead, you have killed them. Now these are the words which I, the High Commissioner, have to say for the future. The Fulani in old times under Dan Fodio conquered this country. They took the right to rule over it, to levy taxes, to depose kings and to create kings. They in turn have by defeat lost their rule which have come into the hands of the British. All these things which I have said the Fulani by conquest took the right to do now pass to the British.

The fall of the Sokoto Caliphate was a great relief for minority ethnic groups in this region, especially for non-Muslims. Hassan Matthew Kukah alludes to the oppressive nature of the Caliphate toward non Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups. Prior to the religio-political constitution of the Hausa/Fulani ethnicities, references were made to the existence of the non-Muslim Hausa—Maguzuwa—group. The Maguzuwa Hausa, through the *amana* agreement with the Caliphate, maintained their cultural identity and did not commit to the cultural and political collaboration of their fellow Hausas with the Fulani ethnicity. The Maguzuwa are still found in some parts of Kano, Katsina, and Jigawa States.

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The existence of autonomous ethnic groups besides the Maguzawa in the far North and in the Middle Belt demonstrated the complexities of the colonial rule. The British subjugation of the Sokoto Caliphate was totally new for both the conquered and the conqueror. The British occupation of the Sokoto Caliphate was the first of its kind, as it signaled the collapse of an Islamic empire not only to a foreign Western culture but to a conflicting religion—Christianity. Consequently, the British invasion posed a major challenge to the psyche of Muslims and their attitude toward Western ideologies and civilizations.

In this new dispensation, the Sultan of Sokoto—leader of Muslims (*Sarkin Musulmi*) was subject to a secular authority and to receiving orders from the superior British colonial officer, whose judgment on political matters and aspects of religious jurisprudence was final and binding to all. “[P]rior to the imposition of colonial rule, the *Sarkin Musulmi* was the political head of the Sokoto Caliphate, the religious leader of the community, and the supreme judge of the Islamic law *Shari’a*.” His duties included the appointments and depositions of emirs and the enforcement of the *Shari’a*. Strange enough was the fact that under this new order, the British colonial authority assumed the administrative role of the sultan of Sokoto—*Sarki Musilmu*.

This situation left the entire Muslim *ulama* without an authentic jurisprudence and leader; for them, it was akin to utter destruction and total annihilation. “[W]ith the advent of British rule, the people of Sokoto (Sakkwatawa) expected the Sultan to continue to play the role of the final arbiter and to safeguard the tenets of Islam. Unfortunately for them, the Native Courts

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38 Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*.

39 Tinbenderana, 69.

40 Ibid.
Proclamation of 1906 and its successor, the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914, stripped the Sultan of judicial power.”

The political and religious subjugation of the Sokoto Caliphate by the British colonial authorities begins the first phase of Christian structural and political supersessionism under the guise of colonialism and civilization. Under these circumstances, and amidst news of robust growth recorded by Christian missionaries in the Southern and Middle Belt region, the vexation of Muslims in Northern Nigeria was directed towards the problem of identity and survival under the British policy of “appropriation, containment and surveillance of Islam.”

Although, the British had colonized both Southern and Northern Nigeria, their strategies in both of these protectorates were not religiously neutral. It is fair to say that each of the colonized entities responded differently to the strategies of the British colonial power: the Muslims in Northern Nigeria to the challenges of indirect rule and the Southern traditionalist to the foreignness of the Christian mission.

Apart from early efforts by the Portuguese missionaries in the fourteenth century, the first African Church in West Africa was established in 1792 for returnee slaves in Sierra Leone. By the 1800s, there were early missionary contacts along the coastal regions of the western and eastern part of Nigeria; and between the 1890s and the early 1900s, further attempts were made towards the northern and middle belt towns of “...Baro, Bida, Lafiyaji, Lokoja, Minna, Zarai,  

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41 Ibid, 71.
42 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 56.
44 Frances Knight, The Church in the Nineteenth Century (New York: I. B Tairus Publishing Co., 2008); see Chap. 5 titled ‘Outcome of World Missions,’ section on Africa.
45 As Akintude observed, “by the middle of the nineteenth century, Nigeria was ready for Christianity...the Southern Baptist Convention Missionaries were formidable in Abeokuta, Lagos and Ogbomosho. Between 1842 and 1892, two Roman Catholic missions (of French Provenance) were established in Nigeria. In 1885 the Society of the Holy Ghost Fathers arrived on the Niger. This mission achieved remarkable success among the Igbo people.” See Akintunde E. Akintude, Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria: A Contextual of Ambivalent Encounters, 53-54.
Kaduna, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kastina, Sokoto, Kano, Nguru, Benue, Shandam, Damshin, Muri, Ibi, Dekina, Wase, Bauchi, Kukawa in Bornu and Zinder about 150 miles into the Sahara Desert. The point to be made here is that upon their arrival in 1903, the British encountered an established Sokoto Caliphate with a socio-economic, political, and religious culture that had endured for a century. A balanced contextual approach to the history of Islam in Northern Nigeria must acknowledge this fact.

Therefore, a thorough understanding is required for an integral history of the Sokoto Caliphate; a selective survey of episodes will not suffice. A balanced perspective on the history of the Sokoto Caliphate will correct existing pattern of distortions abounding in the Western literature. Irrespective of their volumes, styles, and category, Western literature classifies the entire reign of Sokoto Caliphate in two separate but disconnected events: namely, the origins of the revolt of Usman dan Fodio and the arrival of the British colonial authorities as liberators. The former is presented as an uncivilized epoch of weakling and cruel Hausa-Fulani aristocrats and fanatical Muslims, and the latter era is dominated by civilized Christianity. Muqtedar Khan develops the claim that

European successes were interpreted as a result of Christianity’s superiority and Muslim defeats were seen as a result of the inferiority of Islam...Thus, Christianity did gain from colonial conquest, even though much of the rationale for European imperialism was political and economic. Contemporary historians and social scientists, who often share a secular worldview, sometimes de-emphasize the role and activities of missionaries in the former colony. But in the Muslim psyche, the threat of Christianity was foremost and remains to this today.

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47 See the portrayal of Christianity as the religion of the civilized world in David Scott Kastan, ed., The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006). See also Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God.

Another concern emanating from the British distortion of the history of the Caliphate came from the first Lugardian discourse which propounds “the doctrine of hierarchy of races [and which] accounts for Fulani dominance by conflating race and religion to make sense of Muslim Fulani’s position as a conquering and ruling race over the pagan tribes.”49 The British, under the illusion of the one Fulani tribe50 against the ethnic minorities, stratified society by giving preference to the “Christian-British at the top, the Muslim Fulani in the middle, and pagan tribes at the bottom.”51 The subsequent application of this schema by Christian converts from ethnic minorities in the Middle-belt area unleashed the greatest opposition from the Hausa/Fulani Muslims, who understood this move as a continuation of Western domination.

Nigeria52 is a country in West Africa with an estimated population, as of 2012, of 182.8 million.53 It is large, consisting of a conglomeration of ethnic nations and states within one geographical mass. It has strong regional and other divisions, including religious and social

49 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 251-252.
51 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 252.
52 Capturing the accurate and most current demographical data of Nigeria is challenging due to absence of updated official records. Thus in this study we rely on analysis of scholars. “The Federal Republic of Nigeria borders Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and 853 km coastal land of the Gulf of Guinea, covering 910, 758 km² of land. The northern plains contrast with the southwest lowlands, the southeast mountains and the central hills and plateaus. The capital Abuja is located in the country’s center, while Lagos, Nigeria’s economic and financial capital, and a major port city, sits on the coast. With a population of about 182.8 million, Nigeria is the undisputed giant of Africa. Every fifth sub-Saharan African is Nigerian and the population is growing at an annual rate of 3.9% (World Bank 2009). In 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence from Britain, the country had about 45 million inhabitants, a number that since almost quadrupled. In fact, despite a noticeable decline in the total fatality rate, the UN projects the population will rise to 210 million by 2025 and reach over 300 million by 2050. Nigeria’s population is highly diverse consisting of over 250 ethnic groups and 500 distinct languages. The largest ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Igbo in the southeast and the Yoruba in the southwest. Religious affiliation, split between 50% Muslim, 47% Christian and 3% adherents of indigenous beliefs, follows no clear geographical or ethnic lines, although Islam is the dominant religion of the north, while majorities of the southerners are Christians. [Politically], the country is divided into six geopolitical zones, with 36 states, plus the Federal Capital territory, and 774 local government areas. After gaining independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria was in and out of military rule until 1999, but since then it has moved steady towards genuine Democratic rule.” See Hans Groth and Alfonso Sousa-Posa, ed., Population Dynamics in Muslim Countries: Assembling the Jigsaw (Heidelberg, Berlin: Springer, 2012), 212.

segmentations. Its cultural diversity is long-standing, shaping inter-communal harmonious relations, as well as generating frequent inter-tribal conflicts and wars.

In Northern Nigeria, various hypotheses have been advanced as factors contributing to the ethno-religious crisis. Some scholars viewed the crisis as an outcome of economic inequalities, resource control, and poverty accruing from retarded development, coupled with indigene-settlers’ issues. Others have traced it to failed policies and politics leading to uncontrolled power tussle. Yet, Kukah and Falola linked the crisis to the tendencies of the northern elite to create a politics of Islamization deriving from the Islamic principle of non-separation of politics and religion. From the religious and theological perspective, Iwuchukwu suggests that the rising trend of violence relates to the fundamentalism associated with the version of Islam inherited and practiced by the Usman dan Fodio and his progenitors.

Similarly, Grace Okoye argues that the events brewing in Northern Nigeria formed the latent stage of future ethno-religious genocides, such as those in Bosnia—involving extremist Muslims intent on cleansing the north of Christians and other non-Muslims through the extremist ideology of imposing Shariah law. Furthermore, the International Crisis Group traces the complexity of the ethno-religious crisis in Northern Nigeria to “including a volatile mix of

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54 See footnote 1 above.
59 Grace O. Okoye, Proclivity to Genocide, xviii.
historical grievances, political manipulation and ethnic and religious rivalries.” Finally, Moses Ochonu submits that the problem faced by Northern Nigeria today degenerated out of British

...articulation, bureaucratization, and consequences of a Caliphate-centered colonial administrative imagining: This was the colonial governing ideology funded on a belief in the superiority and administrative utility of significations, practices, symbols, systems of rule, and methods of socioeconomics and political organization associated with Hausa-Fulani, Muslim identity derived from the modes of belonging forged by the Sokoto Caliphate.61

With this historical reality as starting point, this dissertation probes the nature and extent of British superiority by examining its methodological and epistemological presuppositions, which developed from the British imposition of colonization, civilization, and the creed of super-ordination and sub-ordination of cultures.

This stance of cultural super-ordination viewed within the context of conquest further reduces Islam in the Sokoto Caliphate to a religious inferior and a political non-entity. The same trend of Christian supersessionism is observable among former liberated “African traditionalists” in Jos, Plateau, now converts to Christianity. Most notable are the evangelical and Pentecostal Christians who found it almost impossible to forgo the narrative of an inherited superiority over Islam. This makes the situation today alarming and dangerous.

Furthermore, the quarrelsome division of Nigerian history into simple geographical poles of “north” and “south” is problematic because it creates a narrative of Muslims in the north polarized against Christians in the south. This is a classical definition of the “divide and rule” policy. This way of reading the history of religion in Northern Nigeria gives rise to two fundamental misconceptions that are detrimental to interreligious dialogue. The first is the

60 International Crisis Group, 2001, 1.
61 Moses Ochonu, Colonialism by Proxy, 13.
62 An alternative term to the pejorative word “pagan.”
characterization of Northern Nigeria as Islamic but highly favored by the colonial authorities. This view has been refuted by Islamic scholars who opine that such a misreading of history undermines the monumental struggles of Islam against colonial authorities and their religion—Christianity. The second misconception centers on the prevalent idea that Islam prevents the spread of Christianity in northern Nigeria. The above misconceptions portray Islam as a beneficiary of the dividends of colonialism.

The Sokoto Caliphate, unlike previous kingdoms, was characteristically an Islamic polity. The Caliphate continued its reign and exercised the dynamics of power within and along ethnic homogenous lines within the West African sub-region. In this connection, the British conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate altered the dynamics of power, from homogenous to heterogenous mixtures of ethnicities and rival religious traditions. As Heussler bluntly puts it, “British authority over Northern Nigeria came from conquest and was absolute.” For the majority of Muslims, the shift from a homogenous Islamic state to a diverse Christian political entity was sudden and unpleasant.

Thus, in the event leading to the colonization of Northern Nigeria, no prior negotiations occurred between the Sokoto Caliphate and the British, such as happened in Uganda—a pro-Christian colony. The relation between the British colonial authority and the king of Buganda (Kabaka) of Uganda was normalized by a treaty, not by conquest, in 1900. Incidentally, it is

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63 For such underlying preconceptions, see Roman Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 1-15.
64 Ibid.
65 Andrew E. Barnes, “‘The Great Prohibition,’ The Expansion of Christianity in Colonial Northern Nigeria,” Historical Compass 8, no. 6 (2010).
66 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 1.
68 “The British imposed their rule on Buganda through the Anglo-Buganda agreement of 1900, not through military conquest. Sir Harry H. Johnston, the special commissioner for Uganda protectorate, negotiated the
interesting to note that Fredrick Lugard was the colonial administrator of Uganda from 1890-1900. Lugard was the administrator during the Muslim revolution of 1889-90\(^{69}\) and the Christian counterrevolution (1889),\(^{70}\) the Protestant seizure of power (1892), and finally the consolidation of the revolutionary changes by the British takeover and loss of Buganda’s sovereignty (1894/1900).\(^{71}\) Lugard had visibly joined forces with the Protestant Christians to retain the Victorian plain as an extension of the Christian British Crown. Thus, the British treaty of 1900 with the Buganda King (Kabaka) was understood as a tradeoff for Christian evangelization, education, and civilization. Consequently, “the British regarded the civilization of Buganda as superior to anything else available in Uganda; and the acceptance of Christianity and literacy enhanced that superiority.... The Buganda, for their part, became enthusiastic ‘sub-imperialists.’”\(^{72}\)

With the Uganda historical development in mind, one wonders if religion played a key role in the sudden shift in diplomacy by the British towards the Sokoto Caliphate. The offer of a political treaty by the British to the Sokoto Caliphate would have made the meeting of these empires more sincere and smoother. The result of maintaining such diplomatic relations benefits both the colonizers and the colonized. However, the British colonial authority had an unfavorable view about Islam as a religion and the Sokoto Caliphate as a kingdom. The British seem to have been looking for an excuse to exclude Northern Nigeria and Islam from the entire Niger-area while they penetrated and plundered its resources. Islam in the Sokoto Caliphate

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\(^{72}\) Kevin Ward, 10.
offered a non-conflict oppositional model\textsuperscript{73} to the British imperialistic agenda. According to Mohammed Umar, the British grand colonial strategy was targeted primarily at demonizing Islam,\textsuperscript{74} depicting it as a religion of the uncivilized and later discrediting the monumental achievements of the Sokoto Caliphate, especially its contributions to the abolishment of slavery. Umar further described this move as “the first Lugardian discourses to ideologically justify British conquest of Northern Nigeria as a termination of miseries perpetuated by the ineffectual rule of the Fulani.”\textsuperscript{75}

In Peter Tibenderana’s view, the British indirect rule system in the entire Northern Nigeria functioned as an ideology. For all intents and purposes, indirect rule was not geared towards a collaborative share of power between the colonial authorities and the native authorities.\textsuperscript{76} Simply put, indirect rule was fashioned to blind the native authorities to the realities of British looting of their resources. As Abu-Lughod argues,

The target [of the colonialist] was the same everywhere: to obtain cheap exports. But to achieve this capital, the center…could organize production on the spot, and there exploit both the cheap labor and the natural resources, by wasting or stealing them, i.e., by paying a price which did not enable alternative activities to replace them when they were exhausted. Moreover, through direct domination and brutal political coercion, incidental expenses could be limited by maintaining the local social classes as conveyor belts.\textsuperscript{77}

This passage speaks about the duplicity of the British intention: namely, the pretext to an internal land grab, and profit maximization accrued from the production of free labor for the

\textsuperscript{73} Robert Cockcroft and Susan Cockcroft, \textit{Persuading People: An Introduction to Rhetoric} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 129.
\textsuperscript{74} Umar, \textit{Islam and Colonialism}, 251.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 252.
\textsuperscript{76} Tibenderana, “The Irony of Indirect Rule,”
plantations and factories in the new world. Although, slavery was officially abolished in Britain in 1807 and 1834, the historian David Eltis argues for its continuation beyond these dates:

The flow of British resources into slave trade did not cease in 1807. After this date, British subjects owned, managed, and manned slavery adventures; they purchased newly imported Africans in the Americas; they supplied ships, equipments and insurance, and most important of all, trade goods and credit to foreign slave traders.

In the same vein, Marika Sherwood posits that

The British Emancipation Act of 1834 was equally half-hearted. It ended slavery only in the Caribbean, not the rest of the British Empire. Slavery only became illegal in India in 1848, on the Gold Coast in 1874, and in Nigeria in 1901 [and finally again on the Gold Coast in 1928]. In the late nineteenth century, colonial soldiers and police in Africa were often slaves themselves. Even after it was officially prohibited, slavery continued under other names as indentured service or forced labor.

Above all, the British stance toward Islam relates to Erik Eriksson’s concept of a pseudospecies by the implicit declaration that “we are the chosen people made in the image of God.” This declaration is pivotal to the British-Christian self-identity and assumption of power in Northern Nigeria. Erikson remarks, “...To have steady value at all, [they] absolutize them; to have style [they] must believe [themselves] to be the crown of the universe. To each extent, then,
that each tribe, or nation, culture or religion will invent a historical and moral rationale for its exclusively God-ordained uniqueness, to that extent... [this absolute claim is] a pseudospecies.”

Erikson introduces the term “pseudospecies” to describe the dehumanization and ethnic discrimination resulting from the ideological use of ethnicity and religion. To put it differently, pseudospecies “claim natural and historical superiority defined by selective values and divine design.” The root of British Christian supersessionism stems from this understanding, especially as employed by Christian converts in the Middle Belt to justify Christianity’s superiority over Islam.

The question whether the British colonial system functioned as an extension of the Christian crusades lingers in scholarly circles. Altogether absent from the literature are specifics of how British religious and political colonization of the Sokoto Caliphate contributed to Christian supersessionism. Nonetheless, within the general context of the colonization of African societies, abundant documentary evidence affirms this connection. In David Christy’s words,

Let England...make a united effort to extend the benefits of Christian civilization, not only around the coast, but into the heart of this hitherto benighted portion of the earth, and the most cheering result might be anticipated. Let accumulated wealth pour her exhaustless treasures in the lap of the Colonization Society, enabling it to send out to Africa multitude of civilized and enlightened men, to diffuse intelligence and freedom along the shores of its rivers, and over its mountains and plains. Let England with her commerce, her wealth, her public spirit, her Christianity, exert her powerful influences in extending her commerce, her enterprise and her civilization among the native of this extensive continent.

Prior to the British capture of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903, attempts were made to establish a Christian state-polis representing an extension of European Christianity in the coastal

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83 Andrew, Practical Theology, 69.
84 David Christy, Lectures on African Colonization and Kindred Subjects (Ohio, Columbus: JH Riley & Co, 1853), 50.
areas. The 1787 experiment of a European Christian settlement in Sierra Leone offers a unique opportunity to critique the strategies and motivation of Christianity in putting a check on the advancement of Islam through rigorous evangelical revival.\(^{85}\) Consequent to the religio-political pact entered by the British Crown and the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in London, the British Colonial authority in Sierra Leone, “did not will the presence of Islam, much less control its growth.”\(^{86}\)

The Muslims of the Sokoto Caliphate were aware of the failed British attempt to establish Christian settlements in Sierra Leone and the unfriendly attitude of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) towards Muslims. The Sultan of Sokoto and the Emirs of Kano voiced their discontent and offered visible resistance to the initial advance of the British colonial authority, which they viewed as an extension of Christianity.\(^{87}\)

For Muslims, a distinction between the British polity and Christianity seemed superfluous. Muslims were aware of the free pass and logistical support the British colonial authority gave to Christian missionaries in the south. This led to the belief that their defeat at the hands of the British signaled the beginning of the reign of Christianity, regardless of the broadmindedness of the British colonial authorities toward Islamic religious practices. Arising from this was the phobia behind Islamic counteraction to Christian supersessionism—a perspective that is missing in scholars’ response to British colonialism.

This present research builds on earlier works by Islamic scholars and argues that “...although the British did not prohibit Islamic religious practices, they pursued containment

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policies towards Islamic Law....”88 Most Muslims perceived the proscription of certain aspects of the Shariah by the British colonial authority as evidence of Christian supersessionism.

The subordination of Islamic laws under British colonial policy constitutes, for some Muslims, a hidden agenda for the entire colonization project of Christian Europe: that of robbing Islam of its identity and inner cohesion, and leaving it vulnerable to external Western attack. Another important factor in Muslim discourses on colonialism is the view that “Christians,’ and the Europeans were both in race and religion...inseparable.”89 Accordingly, Fredrik Barth in the nineteenth century, wrote of “Christian government” as a synonym for colonial rule.90 Walter Rodney’s phraseology of “Livingstone, Stanley, and Karl Peters,” as well, indicates the intrinsic connection between explorers, colonizers, and missionaries.91

Nevertheless, the hierarchical racial structures observable during the colonial era favored the Christian-British at the zenith, followed by the tutored Muslim Fulani in the middle position, and the pagans at the lowest.92 This opinion is similar to William Carey’s four-fold stratification of the world’s civilizations, religions, cultures, and societies. Carey, through the prism of Christian superiority, gives priority to Christians, followed by Jews, then Muslims and pagans.93

In addition, a replica of this worldview is recorded in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1797.

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88 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 6.
89 “The Fulbe are continually advancing, as they have not to do [deal] with one strong enemy, but with a number of small tribes without any bond of union. It remains to be seen whether it be their destiny to colonize this fine country for themselves, or in the course of time to be disturbed by the intrusion of Europeans. It is difficult to describe how a Christian government is to deal with these countries, where none but Mohammedans maintain any sort of government. It cannot be denied that they alone here succeed in giving to distant regions certain bond of unity, and making the land more accessible to trade and intercourse.” (Vol. ii, p.169); quoted in Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 217.
90 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 250.
91 Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, 154-155.
92 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 218.
When the different system of religions that have prevailed in the world are comparatively viewed with respect to their influence on the welfare of Society, we find reason to prefer the polytheism of the Greeks and Romans to the ruder, wilder, religious ideas and ceremonies that have prevailed among savages; Mahometanism, perhaps in some respect to the polytheism of the Greeks and Romans; Judaism however to Mahometanism; and Christianity to all of them.\textsuperscript{94}

There are theological implications to such a worldview, one of which was the development of the theology of the heathen. This theology aided the European invasion of Africa and the consequent enthronement of Christianity as the divine solution to slavery and savagery. The Sokoto Caliphate did not have a common interest with Western slavers and Western slave bearing countries like Portugal and Spain, who with the blessing of the Catholic Church in the person of Bishop Bartolome de las Casas, authorized the wholesale transportation of African slaves in perpetuity to the new world.\textsuperscript{95} Buxton’s argument was authoritative in this regard.

Whatever methods may be attempted for ameliorating the condition of untutored man, this alone can penetrate to the root of the evil, can teach him to love and to befriend his neighbor, and cause him to act as a candidate for higher and holier state of being.... This mighty lever (i.e. Christianity) when properly applied, can alone overturn the iniquitous systems which prevails throughout the continent. Let the missionaries and school-masters, the plough and the spade, go together, and agriculture opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity will operate as the proximate cause of this happy change.\textsuperscript{96}

The dual plan of the British to first put a halt to the spread of Islam, especially its radical form in the Sudan region, and to slow the advancement of the French toward West Africa focused a spot light on and renewed interest in the Sokoto Caliphate. Any alliance between France and the Sokoto Caliphate would spell doom for the British national interest along the West African coast. Even with their military strength, the British needed further justification for


the invasion of the Caliphate. The British furnished an argument on moral and humanitarian grounds to invade Sokoto Caliphate as it continued slavery after the abolition edict of 1807. The British linked slavery to the barbaric and cruel nature of the Islamic regime towards non-Muslim and non-Hausa minorities. In this way, colonization was legitimized as the tool for liberation. Walter Rodney describes this duplicity:

Curiously, Europeans often derived a moral justification for imperialism and colonialism.... The British were the chief spokesmen for the view that the desire to colonize was largely based on their good intension in wanting to put a stop to the slave trade. True enough, the British in the nineteenth century were as opposed to slave trading as they were once in favor of it...The British took a special self-righteous delight in putting an end to Arab slave trading, and deposing rulers on the grounds that they were slave traders...the common factor underlying the overthrow of African rulers in East, West, Central, North and South Africa was that they stood in the ways of Europe’s imperial needs.97

Ironically, as we see here, the moral ground for British takeover of the Sokoto Caliphate was slavery. Like other European countries, British participation in the slave abolition exercise was influenced by the progressive outcome of the industrial revolution. The production of large-scale manufacturing machines replaced manpower labor produced by slaves. In this sense, the machines are less cost-effective than slave labor. Even with its firmness, the British renewed interest in the abolition of slavery still left unresolved the initial commitment to abolition. Eric William’s “Capitalism and Slavery” makes this point even better: namely, that the British abolition exercise hinged on economics and not humanitarian considerations.98

No doubt, the Enlightenment created the path for freedom and autonomy. But the question remains—whether or not Enlightenment thinkers were themselves forerunners of

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slavery,99 and moreover, whether or not the philosophy of the Enlightenment is foundational to the Christian theology of missions that pronounces Africans to be heathens. In any case, the entire reign of the Sokoto Caliphate was characterized as cruel and its peoples uncivilized, with both in urgent need of the liberation offered by the British civilization and religion. Here began the British theological narrative of savagery, captivity, and emancipation.100 Even more reasons arise to connect Enlightenment culture and Christianity in the events that led to the systematic and methodical transfer of Africans to the New World.101

Far more problematic is the Western historical interpretation meant to legitimate colonialism, which looks away from the grotesque massacre and brutality that occurred during the transportation of Africans to the New World. For whatever purposes it may have been conceived to serve, the slave trade was the worst evil that plagued the African continent. That era in history constitutes the highest point of a society’s bondage to self and to external forces. In the estimation of Henry Gemery and Jan Hogendorn, “the economic cost of the trade [i.e., to West Africa] exceeded its gains on an overall basis,” and “the overseas slave trade had a detrimental economic impact even without considering its social cost.”102 Yet, slavery continued unabated with no possible solution at hand. The European countries of “...Portugal, Spain, France,

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100 African critics of Colonialism are opposed to this narrative. Achebe for one testifies: “I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my reader that their past—with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first European acting on God’s behalf delivered them.” Chinua Achebe, *The Guardian Magazine*, Oct. 29, 2002.
101 Reginald Coupland gave the following estimation for the African slave casualties: “An authoritative calculation made more than a century ago fixed the total slaves imported into the English colonies in America and the West Indies between 1680 and 1786 at 2,130,000. Guessing at the total for all European colonies have gone up to 40,000,000.” *The British Anti-Slave Movement* (London, Oxford University Press, 1933), 21.
Holland, and England were deeply involved in it. The very idea of emancipation was widely viewed as a threat to the social order.\textsuperscript{103}

The slave industrial unit was an enormous investment that profited both church and state. Thus, even though Europe may have intended to stop slavery, it lacked the moral will because of vested interest and economic gains. In consequence, “between 1662 and 1807 (when Great Britain made it illegal for British citizens to engage in the slave trade), approximately 3.5 million Africans crossed the Atlantic in British ships,”\textsuperscript{104} as owned legitimate property, not as persons—but as slaves with denied humanity.

Contrary to the dominant narrative in British historiography\textsuperscript{105} that portrays the abolition exercise as solely the product of European civilization, scholars like Darity refute the claim that the abolition of slavery was a pristinely British resolution.\textsuperscript{106} Furthermore, both Lovejoy and Fisher argue for including the contribution of Islam to the abolition exercise. A good example of this contribution is the Islamic objections on religious grounds to the enslavement of Muslims and the Islamic principle of the manumission of slaves. Lovejoy continues his argument:

\begin{quote}
...Hence the abolition of the slave trade across the Atlantic and the struggle to emancipate slaves must be seen as more than products of the European emancipation and concerns for the “right of man” as articulated in the French revolution and the Christian-based reformed movements in Britain. Such a partial perspective overlooks the discussions within West Africa over the legitimacy of enslavement and therefore ignores the efforts of Islamic government to develop their own slave policies.\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{104} Powell, \textit{Greatest Emancipations}, 19.

\textsuperscript{105} See the works of the imperial historian William Edward H. Lecky, who argues, “The unweary, unostentatious and inglorious crusade of England against slavery may probably be regarded as among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations.” \textit{History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne} (NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1906).


Today, part of the problem facing interreligious dialogue in Nigeria is the conscious and deliberate disregard of historical accuracy on the part of some scholars in their search to address historical grievances between Christians and Muslims. A selective approach to the history of North Nigeria as written by British colonial historians has flooded academia, leaving existing research biased and one-sided in its sympathy for Christianity, and ignoring the connection between the Christian religion, empire, power, and knowledge.\(^{108}\)

This approach to the history of Northern Nigeria does no justice to the entire political lifespan of the Sokoto Caliphate, from its “seizure of power, consolidation of power, and use of power.”\(^{109}\) To this point, what is known about the Sokoto Caliphate is an abridged history of Usman dan Fodio’s “seizure of state powers” by means of a violent jihad. The Sokoto Caliphate's principle of manumission of Muslim slaves was the most notable example of the Caliphate cooperation with the British towards the emancipation and later abolition of slavery. The near absence of underscoring such accomplishments in Western literature is nonetheless intriguing.

A retrieval of this Islamic principle demonstrates how the Sokoto Caliphate cooperated with the British in the negotiations that eventually led to the abolition exercise. Furthermore, we propose that the rapid advancement and successes recorded by the Sokoto Caliphate were not won by the sword alone, but also by the practice of the principle of the manumission of slaves who chose to embrace Islam.\(^{110}\) Current literature on the root cause(s) of the ethno-religious

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\(^{108}\) Scholars like “Bernard Cohn, C. A Bayly and Saul Debow have examined information gathering, and the production, ordering and distilling of colonial knowledge, the language and terminology used to convey this information, and ultimately the relationship between this knowledge, political decision and exertion of colonial control.” See David Motadel, ed., *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26.


crisis in Northern Nigeria displays little appreciation for the role the Sokoto Caliphate played in the abolition of slavery. Mostly, these documents contain negative characterizations of the Sokoto Caliphate, along with a genuine effort to exonerate the British colonial authorities of any accountability to historical specificity.\(^{111}\)

Scholars, especially of Western or Christian extraction, have succeeded in producing texts that have methodologically and systematically excluded the broader context of Islamic literature. More often than not, the perspectives of Islam and the voices of Muslim have received lesser or no representation. In other words, such works are not genuinely representative\(^{112}\) of the social context of Islam under British colonialism. The incoherency of these literatures, mostly Western in orientation and evangelical in approach, shows the degree of British intentionality\(^{113}\) in mis-representing Islam to Muslims and Christians alike.\(^{114}\)

Therefore, employing an ideology\(^{115}\) becomes necessary in turning a distortion into a grand narrative about Islam and the Sokoto Caliphate. According to Edward Said, these


\(^{112}\) The concept of representativeness forms the backbone of “modern research on categorization of objects and events...Representativeness is an assessment of the degree of correspondence between a sample and a population, a stance and a category, an act and an actor or, more generally, between an outcome and a model.” Alvin I. Goldman, Readings in Philosophy and Cognitive Science (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), 57.

\(^{113}\) Borrowed from Daniel C. Dennett, Intentional Stance (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1987).


\(^{115}\) “An ideology is a system of ideas underlying a certain social order. That is to say, ideology connects what we say and believe with the power structure and power relations of the society we live in...ideology is thus much more than the unconscious belief a people may hold; it is more particularly those modes of feeling, valuing, perceiving, and believing which have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power...an ideology will thus repress alternative or oppositional forms when they arise.” Ramon Saldivar, “Narrative, Ideology, and Reconstruction of American Literary History,” in Criticism in the Borderlands Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture and Ideology, ed. Hector Calderon and Jose Davod Saldivar (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).
distortions amount to some level of caricature: “the caricature of Islam and Muslims has emerged out of a history of political turmoil and religious conflict. In some cases, these negative images have been endangered by political conquest and aggrandizement.”\textsuperscript{116} The continuation of this “caricature” is sustained by a narrative that reduces the entire century-long reign of the Sokoto Caliphate to a mediocre political appendage to the larger British colonial history.

Furthermore, Akinade warns of a “hackneyed and stereotypical portrayal of Islam that has blighted the deep devotion and diversity....”\textsuperscript{117} As a result of this stereotyping,\textsuperscript{118} Christians have become more estranged from and suspicious of Muslims, depicting Islam as a beneficiary of the British colonial system. For example Jeanmaria Fenrich, writes that, “...It is important to note that the Islamicization of the masses did not come by the ways of these jihad; that feat was achieved by the colonial upheaval. Islam was the first beneficiary of colonialism; it progressed more in fifty years of European administration than it did in ten centuries of history.”\textsuperscript{119} Such a statement seems to suggest the presence of the Sokoto Caliphate at the Berlin Conference of 1885 to negotiate a possible hand-over to the British in the 1900s. Even as Akinade observes that “...in contemporary times, Christians are striving to go beyond the normative stereotype about Islam,”\textsuperscript{120} scholars like William F. S. Milles still defend colonial rule as “not merely preserv[ing] the role of Islam in Nigeria, [but] also indirectly strengthen[ing] it.”\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{117} Akinade, \textit{Christian Responses to Islam}, 130.
\textsuperscript{120} Akinade, \textit{Christian Responses to Islam}, 72.
The Muslim intellectual response to this position, as advanced by Muhammad S. Umar, presents a different take and an insider’s perspective. Umar pointed out that the British appropriation, containment, and surveillance over Islam was disingenuous with regard to Islamic culture. Thus, the assumption that the north benefited politically through the structures of indirect rule already in place, prior to the British takeover, does not address questions about the fundamental religious motif of the British Empire, which was to put a stop to Islamic advances in West Africa and to implant Christianity. The continuation of the myth of alleged British support for Islam has pitched Christians against Muslims, consequently creating a fundamental mistrust that is detrimental to interreligious dialogue.

Christian responses to Islam in Northern Nigeria on the basis of an alleged British support face the herculean task of reading and interpreting Islam in light of its century of existence within the Sokoto Caliphate prior to the British conquest of 1903. The first myth arising from such a reading of the history of Islam in Northern Nigeria laid the foundation for a growing trend to undermine the immense impact of Islam in the century span of Sokoto Caliphate. This has led to a trend that collapses the entire history of Islam in northern Nigeria into the straightjacket of British political ideology, and presenting it as a rising phenomenon that is simultaneous with Christianity among the Southern and Middle Belt ethnic minorities. This shift nonetheless constitutes a basic flaw in the hermeneutics of interreligious dialogue and contextual studies.

For the most part, subscribing to the storyline contained in British historiography further distorts view of Sokoto Caliphate. In this context, it is understood as resulting from the extremist

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122 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, xx.
123 Ibid., 26.
and radical Islamic “...reformist and ultraconservative brand of Islam,” practiced by Usman dan Fodio with the quest for “worldly kingdom,” and the oppression of the non-Hausa/Fulani minorities through institutional oligarchies and aristocrats.

A further characterization of the Sokoto Caliphate as a perpetrator of slavery by means of jihad has led scholars like Lissi Rasmussen to argue that “the most important consequence of the jihads was the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate, the largest political unit in nineteenth century West Africa, a confederation of states (emirates) held together by common aims and religious allegiance to the Amir al-Mumini [Commander of the Believers]...Stress was laid upon the uniqueness and exclusiveness of Islam and its opposition to any form of accommodation with African traditional beliefs.”

Such a perspective has led scholars like Iwuchukwu to the conclusion that “it is therefore logical to consider the success of dan Fodio as symptomatic of the religious intolerance and bigotry which are at the heart of Muslim-Muslim and Muslim-Christian conflicts in northern Nigeria until date.” Besides, the European literature is silent about the various mediations and confrontations between the Sokoto Caliphate and the British Empire on religio-political themes, in which the issue of slavery was topmost. There are actually sound reasons to suppose that a history of the Sokoto Caliphate, placed in the trajectory of its struggles and opposition to British

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125 See Cohen and Brenner, “Bornu in the Nineteenth Century,” 100; also quoted in Iwuchukwu, Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria, 8f.
colonialism and the slave trade will yield a different result, leading to the positive outcome needed as a prerequisite for interreligious dialogue.\textsuperscript{130}

Likewise, a history of the jihad in context will first and foremost address the Sokoto Caliphate’s policy on the manumission of slaves. As Fisher notes, “one of the major causes of the jihad which began in Hausaland in 1804 was the increasing enslavement of free Muslims.”\textsuperscript{131} Lovejoy’s findings also support the claim that slavery, not religious bigotry nor Puritan fanaticism, was among the primary factors that orchestrated the Sokoto jihad. Lovejoy writes,

In the annals of the caliphate, slaves first demonstrated opposition to their servile status during the jihad that brought the caliphate into existence. By claiming allegiance to the cause of Muslim revolution, slaves could seize the opportunity to assert their independence. Consequently, slaves played a major role in the initial uprising in the Hausa states between 1804-1808…. This prolonged period of expansion and consolidation lasted after the first phase of the jihad was over with the conquest of the first Hausa states of Gobir, Kastina, Kano and Zaria in 1808. Here the appeal of the jihad to slaves is examined in four phases: first the initial four-year rising in Hausaland; second, the campaign among Gurma in 1809-10, which led to the creation of Liptako; third, the revolt in Oyo between 1817 to the early 1830s, which led to the consolidation of the emirate of Ilorin among the northern Yoruba and fourth, the civil wars among the Nupe from the 1820s to 1857, which ultimately resulted in the creation of five emirates including Bida.\textsuperscript{132}

Lovejoy further traces the beginning and the consolidation of dan Fodio’s jihad of 1804 to the vehement opposition to the massive enslavement and deportation of Muslims slaves through the transatlantic to the Christian world. As a result of his commitment to the abolition of

\textsuperscript{130} For the historical settings of the various forms of Islamic resistance to the British, see Umar, \textit{Islam and Colonialism}, 3-17.


slavery, Usman dan Fodio was referred to as the “Muslim Wilberforce” of the Sokoto Caliphate.133

The truth is that dan Fodio was thoroughly disgusted with the bustle of irreligiosity at the Gobir court house, and the hub of this controversy was the status of Muslim slaves. The Sultan of Gobir had restricted the grant of protection for fleeing Muslim slaves only to those who had a genuine claim to Muslim parentage. The consequence of this denial of protection to Muslim slave converts raises juridical concern with respect to the prescription of the Holy Quran on the rights and privileges of freed citizens.

From the onset of the jihad in 1804, dan Fodio had complained about the slave policy of the Gobir kingdom: “...The Sultan of Gobir attacked the Sheikh’s people; they fled, for they were afraid. The Gobir army followed them and captured some and slew others, seizing children and women, and selling them in our midst.”134 Thus, dan Fodio picked an ideological fight with the Sultan of Gobir based on the argument that in Islam, faith in Allah is thicker than blood relations. This slogan became the jihadist philosophy and rule of life that aided the politico-cultural revolution and changed the entire tapestry of the West African region.

According to statistics, by the 1890s, the Sokoto Caliphate had the largest population of slaves in the world; two million of its estimated ten million inhabitants were slaves.135 As a result of the staggering numbers of slave inhabitants, many scholars, especially from the British chronicle, have uncritically referenced the Caliphate as a citadel of slave-rafters. These scholars have failed to consider the Caliphate’s slave manumission policy as the possible source of this

133 Fisher, 537.
growth. Consequently, we submit that, any history of the Sokoto Caliphate without a note on its slavery policy is incomplete and misleading.

By the same token, a reading of the jihad as a tool for liberation, granted first to Muslim slaves and then converts, provides another reason for the massive enlistment recorded by the jihadist. This contradicts the popular view “...that a good number of Usman dan Fodio’s Fulani tribesmen who joined ranks with him in pursuit of the jihad were...supporting their kinsman, as his victory brought economic and political gains...”\textsuperscript{136} Situating the jihad in the context of the liberation provides a clearer perspective as to why enlistment in the jihad become the most expedient alternative to trans-Sahara or transatlantic slavery.\textsuperscript{137} Certainly, this is not to deny that the politico-religious liberation agenda of the jihadist had some proselytizing consequences.

In addition, most slaves at the time of the trans-Atlantic trade would rather have become Muslims, even if nominally, to gain upward social status rather than to live in bondage in the plantation of the colonial Americas. In this sense, the humanitarian approach of Islam towards slaves was a major factor in its growth; for the jihad was not won by the sword alone. It was successful to the extent it offered relief, security, and freedom to slaves, especially non-Muslims, whose primary purpose for joining Islam was to obtain commercial immunity against slavery. The Islamic principle of manumission of slaves differentiates between Arabic slavery and the European transatlantic experience that offered a one-way trip with no possibility of freedom or return. As an illustration, the adoption of Arabic names and the use of tribal/facial marks were characteristic among ethnic minority groups to build a sense of belonging and to enable freed slaves to reunite with their ethnic clan after release.

\textsuperscript{136} Iwuchukwu, \textit{Muslim-Christian dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria}, 10.
\textsuperscript{137} The benefits offered to millions through enlistment to the jihad are analogous to those granted by the USA to thousands of migrants who sacrificed their lives to join military services in order to regulate their immigration status in pursuit of happiness and the American dream.
Another evidence of a non-Western resolution to the abolition of the slave trade was Caliph Muhammad’s attempt to prevent selling Muslims into slavery.\textsuperscript{138} The Sokoto Caliphate raised concern over the statistics of Muslim slaves shipped from the West African coast to the New World. The staggering numbers of Muslim slaves en-route from the Oyo Empire to the Christian world came to the attention of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1812. Caliph Muhammad Bello, son and successor of dan Fodio, had accused the Yoruba of violating the Caliphate’s prohibition against selling slaves to Christians. “The people of this land would get captured slaves from our land here and they would sell them to the Christian...I have mentioned this so that you should not purchase a Muslim slave if someone captures such a slave and brings them to you.”\textsuperscript{139} As a result of this controversy, Muhammad sought a diplomatic resolution with the British representative Captain Hugh Clapperton in the 1820s. This concord, even though not ratified, became the memorandum of understanding between the Sokoto Caliphate and the British, centering on the prohibition of the sale of Muslim slaves to the British-Christian Empire.\textsuperscript{140}

The coming of the British signaled multiple interests in sub-Saharan African, primarily to balance the territorial expansion of France and bring to a halt Islamic advancement.\textsuperscript{141} Current scholarship on the history of Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria has yet to decipher the amount of damage caused by the British colonial policy of “divide and rule”\textsuperscript{142} to Muslim and Christian dialogue. By pitching a Muslim north against a Christian south, this policy has succeeded in perpetuating the narrative that the Muslim north of Nigeria benefited from colonial

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\textsuperscript{138} Humphrey Fisher, “A Muslim William Wilberforce?”
\textsuperscript{139} Muhammad Bello, Infaq al-maysur, (1812) in Christopher Wise, 211.
\textsuperscript{140} Paul E. Lovejoy, “The Bello-Clapperton Exchange: The Sokoto Jihad and the Transatlantic Slave Trade,” 207.
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rule. This tale has become offensive to Muslims on many grounds, thereby constituting a major hindrance to interreligious dialogue.

One of the shortfalls of the British colonial authority was its policy of ethnic balkanization that set up the dominant Hausa-Fulani tribe as both foreign and the most sophisticated among the rulers of the ethnic minorities of the Middle Belt region.143 The British colonial authority created a clash of ethnicities through re-configuration of the ethnic groups, its ideological use of Islam, establishment of an indirect-rule policy in northern Nigeria, and the imposition of such without differentiation among Middle-Belt minorities.

In sum, we offer a contextual reading of the British indirect rule policy in northern Nigeria within the general framework of the British divide-and-rule strategy. We argue that this policy led to a narrative based on “divide and rule” between the Islamic north and the Christian south. The implications of such a policy in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria were twofold; first, the British continued indirect rule through the direct rule of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim hegemony over other ethnic minorities; and second, a free pass was given to Christian missions to operate within the Middle Belt. This background guides us in exploring the internecine conflict over religion and land, especially among the ethnic minorities in Plateau State, where the Christian majority sought dominance over the minority Muslim Hausa-Fulani, who once had political dominance with the support of the British indirect rule policy.

For whatever reason, in the Middle Belt, the British did not implement the kind of indirect rule it employed in the Hausa-Fulani region. Rather, the British left the affairs of the governance of the Middle Belt in the hands of the amateur Hausa-Fulani Muslim diplomats. The Middle Belt resisted the direct-rule of the Hausa-Fulani minority from its onset. However, the

143 Ochonu, Colonialism by Proxy, 13.
problem took a different twist some years later with the arrival of the Christian missionaries and their appended rhetoric of supremacy and Christian supersessionism over Islam. This, we argue is the starting place of the ethnic-religious crisis that has engulfed the entire region.

In this regard, we agree with Thaddeus Byimui Umaru “that the historical dynamics of the spread of Islam and Christianity as well as the politics of the colonial administration in the region, prepared the breeding ground for ongoing violent conflicts.”144 It is fair enough to say that British contact with Nigeria benefited both the north and south, each in its own way—the former with political structures and the latter with educational institutions. As such, any genuine effort towards interreligious dialogue must first and foremost acknowledge these dynamics. For a stark reality remains, namely, that both the southern and northern protectorates of Nigeria fell under the military might of the British and subsequently were colonized, and that each region responded differently to British colonial rule.

Thus, from the perspective of the West, the acceptance of indirect rule by a defunct Sokoto Caliphate signaled cooperation rather than resistance.145 In contrast, for the Muslims, the acceptance of indirect rule was more of an accommodation and a preference for the lesser evil.146 As matter of fact, the British appropriation of Islamic structures through indirect rule in northern Nigeria was inevitable for both the colonizer and the colonized. Besides, from the perspective of

146 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 161.
logistics, the British colonial authority lacked the manpower to administer the Sokoto Caliphate because of its geographical vastness.  

The British application of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria is not a new phenomenon in its relations with the indigenes of the British Crown Colonies. Indirect rule was thought of as the most convenient and effective method to obtain the unalloyed support of the people in accepting their new colonial status. Conceivably, the same logic holds for the British ideological use of Christian missions to occupy southern Nigerian territory where they faced the defiance of the African traditional religions. In this sense, the strategic use of indirect rule in northern Nigeria is analogous to the ideological use of Christian missionary activities in southern Nigeria. This assertion makes the entire paraphernalia of colonialism in Nigeria rest on the two mutual interdependent events of Muslim indirect rule and Christian missions.

In the long run, both principles achieved the desired result, that of quelling the people’s resistance and eliciting their acceptance of the British colonial rule. Ultimately, indirect rule did not thrive in Southern Nigeria, not only because places like the southeast lacked centralized traditional rulers or figure-heads but also for the simple reason that it was never enforced by the British, who considered the use of Christian missions most efficient and less cost-effective. Likewise, in Northern Nigeria, the abysmal failure to implement Western education can no

147 Martin A. Klein and Suzanne Miers, eds, Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa (Great Britain: Routledge, 1999), 166.
149 Chinua Achebe’s Arrow of God, which continues the story line of Things Fall Apart in a dramatic fashion and encapsulate the confrontation between the British colonial system—government and missionaries with the Igbo society. See Chinua Achebe, Things fall Apart; Arrow of God; Furthermore, Achebe testifies: “I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my reader that their past—with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first European acting on God’s behalf delivered them.” See Achebe, The Guardian Magazine Oct.2 2002.
longer be attributed to sheer resistance offered by emirs. The anomaly lies rather in the lack of British enforcement of such policies—whether indirect rule in the South or Western education in the North.

In this connection, one of the major challenges faced by scholars of interreligious dialogue in Northern Nigeria is an established reluctance to perceive the British strategy of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria and Christian missions in Southern Nigeria as both agents of colonialism. Yet, “historians of colonized or formerly colonized societies have typically viewed foreign missions as an expression of the exigencies of colonial rule, a theologically and politically undifferentiated agency of the British colonial system.”

Consequently, an isolated critique of the British indirect rule policy in Northern Nigeria that is separated from the general picture of British missionary enterprise in the South is disingenuous under scholarly scrutiny.

The British divide-and-rule policy in categorizing the North as Islamic terrain for indirect rule and the South as the domain of Christian missions made these two entities oppositional and confrontational. To this end, Frank Salomonne remarks,

“...to bolster their own power, British administration created the official wisdom, that emirs were opposed not only to Christian missionaries, but also western education...the fact that missionaries in general actively opposed the facade of indirect rule did not find them many supporters in Northern Nigeria Administration...the inherent logic of indirect rule demanded that missionaries be opposed even when they were the only visible vehicle for education...In sum, even in ‘progressive’ emirates, the north was woefully behind the Southern part of Nigeria in every field of modern education.”

In the mind of most Muslims, the concept of either direct or indirect rule from a non-Muslim entity over the Muslim community constitutes an anomaly. As Crowder pointed out, “...For Muslim societies...the imposition of white [Christian] rule meant submission to the

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infidel, which is intolerable to any good Muslim.”¹⁵³ Yet, for those Muslims who absorbed British rule, the only option left was the practice of spiritual *hijra*. This spiritual disposition entails cooperating suspiciously with British policy, and at the same time, offering pockets of resistance to the imposition of European rule, culture and religion.¹⁵⁴ For the most part, Christianity functioned not only as a religion but also as an arm of the British Empire with a hidden agenda to contain Islamic growth.

The concept of indirect rule, though devised to serve the grassroots population, became the paradox of its own creation: namely, it produced a vast uneducated Hausa-Fulani population as compared to the southern regions where Christian missionaries operated. In general, one wonders whether the Northern Nigerian populace understood the interplay between British indirect rule, on the one hand, and the plundering of resources for the New World, on the other. The question remains if truly “British authority over Northern Nigeria came from conquest and was absolute,”¹⁵⁵ how could the emirs reject the British tool of civilization: namely, Western education?

Furthermore, scholars have raised questions about the nature of the power that was conferred on the traditional rulers under indirect rule. As noted, Fredrick Lugard’s famous speech reiterates the British colonial powers’ ability “to depose and create kings.” There were indeed evidences of such depositions of emirs who showed the slightest inclination to oppose

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colonial rule. It is clear, according to Umar, “that any emir disloyal to the British could not remain in office.” Similarly, Tukur further observes that

while some emirs more or less readily worked with the British and while some others found it absolutely impossible to work with them and had to be removed, a majority of emirs adopted what the British themselves called passive resistance, a tactic whose usual form was to be very civil and cordial towards the British, to express verbal approval of most of what they proposed but at the same time find one excuse or another for being unable to help in the execution of those proposals.

Ubah, for one, raises doubt as to whether emirs would have constituted any hindrance to missionary education had the British colonial authority willed it. The question remains: Why this unwillingness by the British colonial authority to enforce western education in Northern Nigeria, especially following Lugard’s own narrative that the “Hausa-Fulani’s exposure to Islam and its principles constituted a civilizational substitute for British Modernity, a tolerable alternative instrumental to conveying the blessing for British rule and enlightenment to Northern Nigerian's benighted ‘natives.’” What gain had the British colonial authority in not educating the probable agents of social change that would have accelerated the pace of the colonial project? The answer is not farfetched. British intelligence gathering on the capability of the Sokoto Caliphate as an autocephalous political entity began prior to the conquest in 1903. The fear of educating the emirs, mallams, and entire ulama as agents of social change was not unconnected to the known consequences of liberating the masses and their subsequent inclination to revolt against colonial rule.

157 Umar, Islam and Colonialism, 104-105.
159 Ubah, 1976, 352.
160 Ochunu, 38.
161 A good example is the Satiru revolt of 1906. This event demonstrated the resilience of local Hausa-Fulani militia group connected to Mahdism. See Paul E. Livejoy and J S, Hogendorn, “Revolutionary Mahdism and
Given the centrality of British religio-political dominance over the Sokoto Caliphate and its adjoining regions, this work will relate the findings from the general context of the Caliphate to the specific religio-ethnic crisis in Jos Plateau. The focus will be on three areas: first, the persistent attempts by the Sokoto Caliphate to gain control of the Jos Plateau region by annexing Jos to the Bauchi emirate; second, the implications of the British policy of colonization by the proxy use of Hausa/Falani aristocrats and the resistance from the indigenous groups; and finally, the role of missionaries as both agent of colonialism and social change.

1.3. Research Questions

The incessant conflict between Christians and Muslims in the colonial and post-colonial city of Jos, Plateau, is a challenge to the practice of an authentic—de jure and de facto—religious pluralism. Competition among religions in the public domain has led to the delineation of ethnicity and designation of political power. From a Christian perspective, there has not been a commensurate de jure response from Christian theologians that effectively addresses the soteriological concern of other religions.

In this light, this study investigates the problem of Christian-Muslim dialogue in Jos, Plateau, and in a fundamental way, raises the question of whether supersessionism or exclusivism constitutes the appropriate theological response to religious pluralism. In Jos, like in other parts of Nigeria, the whole issue of a suitable response to religious pluralism is a burning question. Accordingly, a nonchalant attitude towards religious pluralism remains topmost among the leading factors that ferment internecine conflict in Jos, Plateau. While it is true that


163 Although scholars like Elochukwu E. Uzukwu and Marinus Iwuchukwu have highlighted the theological significance of inclusivism, such a view still lacks ecclesiastical backing and endorsement.
perceived aggression and hostility among ethnic groups have led to the loss of lives and property, it is also a fact that the casualties of this deadly violence are mostly Christians and Muslims.

The objective of this research is to determine the factors underlying the deadly conflict and bloody vendetta between Muslims and Christians in Jos, Plateau. The research questions deals with two issues: first, we briefly identify the main questions to be investigated. Subsequently, we shall formulate specific questions based on a descriptive analysis of the guiding questions of the research.

In addition, this study asks whether Christianity has embraced the fuller meaning and implications concerning the *de jure* right of existence of the other religions. From a broader perspective, Iwuchukwu’s quest for the *de jure* right of non-Christian religions can be a starting point of the *status quaestionis*. 165 Foremost is this question: What role does Christian supersessionism—the idea of being the chosen people—play in the conflict of Jos, Plateau? Do Christians share an understanding that God has chosen them *alone* as a people? Does Christian exclusivism necessarily lead to supersessionism? And is such supersessionism liable for *de jure* or *de facto* discrimination against members of the Islamic faith? The focus remains on the instantiation of Panikkar’s Trinitarian theology for the future of interreligious dialogue among Muslims and Christians in Jos, Plateau.

While evidence of the relationship between ethnicity, religion, and violence has been established in many literatures, there is scanty substantiation regarding the role of Christian supersessionism as the start to conflict and violence. Until now, the outcomes of prior studies have been biased, mixed, and contradictory, as evidenced by the works of Umar Habila

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Still, not enough is known about the negative impact of the evangelical hermeneutics of Christian missionaries, especially the Sudan United Mission (SUD). The point often overlooked was that despite the social contributions and charitable works of SUD, no study has ever looked at the potential harmful effects of its long history of proselytism, especially on the campuses of higher institutions, and how such aggressive evangelistic outreach ignited the counter response of Islamic fundamentalists. Under those circumstances, we pose the questions: (a) How much of the roots of Islamic fundamentalism in Jos, Plateau, are traceable to the exacerbating influence of Christian proselytism? (b) Is Islamic fundamentalism more of a reaction to Christian supersessionism or to Western domination?

The preceding discussion about Christian supersessionism in Jos, Plateau, raises some historical questions about the kind of Christianity that was implanted in the Jos area. Yusuf Turaki maintains that knowledge about the historical antecedents involving the meeting of Christianity, Islam, and the Traditional religion is not only crucial but also a genuine prerequisite to interreligious dialogue.

It is not possible for us as Nigerians to have a proper grasp of the nature of religious and communal clashes, riots, conflicts and violence in Nigeria today, without understanding our primordial, religious, cultural and colonial past, what we were before the arrival of Islam, the colonial masters and Christian missions, and what we became during and after the Islamic, colonial and Christian, and post-colonial eras.\footnote{Yusuf Turaki, “Historical Roots of Crisis and Conflicts in Nigeria with reference to Northern Nigeria and Kaduna State.” in \textit{CEDRA}, November 18, 2013.}

Turaki’s point of view draws attention to the activities of the British wing of the Sudan United Mission (SUD). Apart from its hidden ties with the British colonial authorities, the Christocentric exclusivism of SUD, as was strictly mandated by the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, has come under scrutiny. Against the backdrop of this broader perspective, the following questions can be deduced: (a) Did the British colonial administration consciously or unconsciously favor Christians over Muslims in the administration and allocation of social services and educational infrastructures in Jos? (b) Did the Christian Missionaries’ hermeneutic of mission constitute the basic knowledge of and feelings and attitudes towards Muslims? (c) How did the British colonial presence aid the occurrences of Christian conversion? These questions relate to the influence of colonial support on the formation of Christian identity among the dominant ethnic group in Jos.

1.4. Definition of Terms

This study concerns itself with the role of Christian supersessionism in the larger framework of religious dialogue in Jos, Plateau. The focus of this theological research shares a significant theoretical framework with the social sciences. Thus, defining and, in some cases, delineating some of the key terms used in this dissertation is imperative.

Supersessionism

The term “supersessionism” comes from the Latin words super (on or upon) and sedere (to sit), meaning literally that something sits upon or replaces or supersedes the other.

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171 We define supersessionism with specificity and particularity. We follow the model of cognitive anthropology and sociology where findings in ethnic studies are used in formulating theological discourses.
It was originally coined to describe the ambiguous Jewish and Christian interreligious relations marred by absolute exclusivist claims about the nature of the chosen people of God. Matthew Levering’s definition of supersessionism is useful: “...what happens when Christian theologies leave no theological space for Judaism or Jewish theologies leave no theological space for Christianity—due to the Christian proclamation that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God incarnate who fulfils God’s covenant with Israel and reconfigures Israel around himself.”

Furthermore, in its classical usage, the doctrine of supersessionism “maintains that because the Jews refused to receive Jesus as Messiah, they were cursed by God, are no longer in covenant with God, and that the Church alone is the ‘true Israel’ or the ‘spiritual Israel.’” In this study, supersessionism is used synonymously with both replacement and fulfillment theologies.

Although a similar claim of supersessionism is put forward by Islam, alleging that it supplants Christianity and Judaism as the finality of revelation, the use of supersessionism is restricted in this study to instances where Christianity offers “no theological space” for Islam or Islamic theologies in Jos, Plateau. In the context of the debate of interreligious dialogue, the use of supersessionism further denotes illustrations of both Christological exclusivism and some

Supersessionism is narrowly and precisely delineated by what is inter and intra-subjectively shared, creating predictable norms and attitudes that breeds ethnic isolationism and religious exclusivism.


mild forms of Christological inclusivist thinking. Conversely, the use of the terms “nonsupersessionism” or “nonsupersessionist” is applied to designate pluralistic alternatives to exclusivist and inclusivist thinking.

Religious diversity/plurality-pluralism

Unlike the concept of religious diversity, which is as old as the concept of religion itself, the term “religious pluralism” is a neologism. It is complex in nature, multifaceted in approach, and diverse in practice. It is difficult to give a detailed account of its various nuances and paradigms. As a result, in some of the literature, “religious pluralism” and “religious plurality” are used interchangeably. This study uses the fourfold distinction offered by Diana Eck of the Pluralism Project of the Harvard University.

First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity. Diversity can and has meant the creation of religious ghettos with little traffic between or among them. Today, religious diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies.

Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require Christians and Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and ardent secularists to know anything about one another. Tolerance is too thin a foundation for a world of religious difference and proximity. It does nothing to remove our ignorance of one another, and leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence. In the world in which we live today, our ignorance of one another will be increasingly costly.

Third, pluralism is not relativism, but the encounter of commitments. The new paradigm of pluralism does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind, for pluralism is the encounter of commitments. It means holding our deepest differences, even our religious differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another.

Fourth, pluralism is based on dialogue. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism. Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean everyone at the
“table” will agree with one another. Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table—with one’s commitments.  

De jure and De facto religious pluralism

We understand religious plurality as an actual reality—the *de facto* reality of the existence of other religions besides Christianity; and the acceptance of this reality as a given principle from God constitutes *de jure* pluralism. The questions posed by *de jure* pluralism have led scholars to re-define the theological significance of the other religions.

Christological triumphalism

According to Douglas John Hall, this term entails “the profession of Christ's sovereignty, whether it is called kingship or monarchy or lordship or whatever else, [which] invites the religious tendency to turn the whole character of Jesus Christ's person and work into one of blatant triumph.” The use of the term “Christological triumphalism” denotes the outcome of the colonial and post-colonial application of the Christian Scriptures by missionaries and their successors in a bid to create a superior identity for Christians with the mandate to civilize and Christianize the subjugated religiously inferior.

Christological exclusivism

Tom Greggs identifies three forms of exclusivism: (a) Christological exclusivism, (b) revelatory exclusivism and (c) eschatological or soteriological exclusivism, which denies

salvation to the non-Christians.\textsuperscript{180} Greggs argues that exclusivism forms (a) and (b) do not necessarily lead to form (c), but in the context of this study, all forms of exclusivism discussed above will be used synonymously. Thus, we conceive Christological exclusivism as theological positions that claim the possibility of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

\textit{Christological inclusivism}

In this study we do not conceive Christological inclusivism as the opposite of Christological exclusivism. Rather it shares in the conviction of the universal salvation offered by Jesus Christ but also finds, to a certain degree, the vestige of the saving Christ in a variety of religious contexts. Alister McGrath had this to say about the fluidity of the term inclusivism: “Inclusivism…argues that although Christianity represents the normative revelation of God, salvation is nonetheless possible for those who belong to other religious traditions. This class of approach includes parallelism, a form of inclusivism which recognizes the obvious differences between the religions and argues that each religion is to be seen as valid, in that it achieves its own specific goals.”\textsuperscript{181}

\textit{Pseudospecies declaration}

This term is derived from Eric Erikson’s concept of pseudo-speciation. It is applied in this study to illustrate the use of religion and ethnicity by the dominant ethnicities in Jos, Plateau, in their relationship with ethnic minorities.

In Erikson’s (1968) view, man survived as a specie by dividing into pseudo-species by way of the distinctions introduced by language barriers and the tendency to reject outside groups as “barbarians” excluded from humanity…. However, in so doing, he differentiates himself into groups, thus running the risk of rejecting as inhuman, animal, or bestial the groups which do not share the same basic identity. Pseudo-speciation, by causing the sense of human specificity of

\textsuperscript{180} Tom Greggs, \textit{Barth, Origen and Universal Salvation: Restoring Particularity} (Oxford University Press, 2009), 86, fn3.
every man to be lost, is one of the greatest dangers threatening humanity. The collective identity of the horde, tribe, class, nation or religious community may lead to only regarding as truly human those who share the same identity. Now, the search for a pure identity is both a sign of alienation and a condition of historical evolution, through the necessary confrontation with confusions of identity...

1.5. Thesis

This research centers on group conflict in Jos, Middle-belt, Nigeria. It is premised upon the trio dynamics of (a) the inherited British colonial super-ordination, (b) religion and ethnicity and (c), religious identity and the politics of power-holding and resource control. British indirect rule, as orchestrated by the Hausa/Fulani hegemony over ethnic minorities in the Middle-belt region, is the genesis of the ethnic and religious crisis. Relations between “indigene” or “host” and “settler” communities in Nigeria have been historically complex, vexed, and tense; and most times they have resulted in fatalities. The problem, simply put, is that the three dominant Christian ethnic groups of Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere (BAA) constitute a “we” or “inner” group sustained by the “pseudospecies declaration, we are the chosen people.” By implication, the Jassawa Muslim minority are the un-chosen. This strong group identity, based on ethnic and religious dominance and attached to “territorial imperatives;” has invariably undermined

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184 See footnote 181 above.

185 In this study Christian Majority Indigenes is used interchangeably with the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere (BAA) ethnic groups while the Hausa/Fulani minority would be referenced as the Jassawa. For the political dynamics resulting from the indigenes and settlers issue in Jos, see, Victor A. Adetula, “Ethnicity and the Dynamics of City Politics: The Case of Jos,” in Abdoumaliq Simone and Abdelghani Abouhan (eds.), *Urban Africa: Changing Contours of Survival in the City* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 206-234. For a detailed study of how religion can play both devastating and consoling roles in the lives of people and nations see, Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

186 According to Robert Ardrey “territory is an area of space, whether of water or earth or air, which an animal or group of animals defends as an exclusive preserve. The word is also used to describe the inward compulsion in animate beings to possess and defend such a space.” Robert Ardrey, *Territorial Imperative* (New York: Artheneum Publishers, 1966). Also, Barbaba Sizemore’s separationist stage of categorization: “(i)
the Jassawa ethnic group, turning them into what Volkan vigorously refers to as “suitable targets of externalization.”

The importance attached to land and the issue of gaining territorial control is part of the reason for which people fight in Jos. More important and complicating is the fact that these crises are centered in religion and intergroup competition among religions. One school of thought on the origin of the name “Jos” traces its foundation story to 1904 as a German missionary territory. According to this school, J, O, and S are an acronym for “Jesus our Savior (JOS).” Explicitly, this school or tradition identified Jos as a Christian city. Consequently, Jos became a scrambled space that generated inter-group conflict between Christianity and Islam, with the latter presenting also a well-defined claim and identity in Jos. A recipe for inter-group conflict would emerge from these separate identities. The symbolic claim of Christians emanating from the “Jesus Our Savior (JOS)” narrative becomes the basis for its exclusivism and supersessionism.

There are several consequences to the violent and tragic encounter between the BAA and the Jassawa. The need to establish a well-founded religious identity as a means toward political relevance often pitted one group against another. In this melee, both ethnic groups remain stranded without a sustained conflict resolution method. The core pursuit of this study is to find a possible answer through the conceptual frameworks laid out by the Chicago Sociology

189 See The Chicago Sociology research group schema for the collection and analysis of data on intergroup conflicts and the postulation of theories aimed at reductions of violence in Ruth Shonle Cavan, The Chicago School
Raimon Panikkar’s methods for conflict resolution. Together these will provide the basis for our analysis of the series of internecine conflicts that led to the 2001 religious crisis that engulfed Christian indigenes and Moslem settlers in Jos, Nigeria.

By liberating exclusivist Christology from its totalizing tendencies, we intend to use Panikkar to develop an alternative dialogical pneumatology of the charity and hospitality necessary for an interreligious encounter and coexistence between Christianity and Islam in Jos, Nigeria. The application of exclusivist Christology as a foundation for interreligious dialogue is held suspect. Hence, this study attempts to instantiate Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue\textsuperscript{190} into the interreligious world of Northern Nigeria. Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue will be useful in formulating theoretical-hermeneutical principles for rejecting Christian supersessionism as an approach to interreligious dialogue. This study further investigates the nature of absolute claims emanating from BAA and evaluates how these claims serve as triggers to violence, which is provoked by the slightest religious misunderstanding between Christianity and Islam in Jos, Nigeria.

One cannot deny the existence of supersessionism in Islam. The problem has been that most of the literature on the 2001 Jos crisis seems to downplay, if not neglect entirely, the extent to which religious supersessionism has functioned as a trigger to violence. This lacuna has left vast room for further research. There is a lack of genuine theological attempts by both Christians and Muslims to engage in a thorough self-critique of doctrinal presuppositions that hinder mutual

\textsuperscript{190} Panikkar, \textit{The Intrareligious Dialogue}, 29-30.
dialogue. Therefore, from a Christian perspective, our attention will be drawn to the role of Christian supersessionism and how it serves as trigger to the immediate cause of the Jos riots.

This study on the first level will carry out a theological investigation into Christian supersessionism, tracing its foundations to the Christian myth propelled by BAA about the origin of Jos—properly understood as the city of “Jesus Our Savior.” In addition, the self-understanding of Christianity as a religion *sui iurui* and with *iure divino* status to public existence and action is on trial. The narrative of Jos as the city of “Jesus Our Savior” accounts for the vehement opposition by BAA to the appointment of Hausa political figures to State and Federal government positions. Such a definition, even though backed by political correctness, depicts religious extremism. In other words, it raises serious ethical and theological questions for Christianity as a religion that preaches love and hospitality for neighbors, especially the stranger. In this sense, Christian supersessionism poses a grave ethical danger to the virtue of hospitality in that it reduces the horizon of Christian compassion, limiting its beneficiaries to members of Christian faith communities only.

This study proposes that the tragic encounter between BAA and Jassawa that led to the death of about 5,000 inhabitants of Jos is not unconnected with the Christian deterministic claim of ethnic and religious superiority over the Muslims. To put it differently, the role of Christian supersessionism is identified as one of the contributing factors that triggered the conflicts and violence in Jos. Hence, there is a need to propose a non-supersessionist theology that challenges the dominant exclusive theology that is hostile to religious pluralism.

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No other theological framework has furthered the advancement of non-supersessionist theology as well as Panikkar’s theology of interreligious dialogue. His critique of the worldview built on exclusive theology is relatively important because it draws attention in this research to the dangers of the totalizing effect of exclusive theology.\(^{194}\)

Panikkar’s non-supersessionist model, as outlined in his dialogical pluralism,\(^{195}\) provides the thesis to be proven: namely, that the dialogue of equity is in jeopardy in Jos, Northern Nigeria, owing to the absolute supremacy claims of Christianity over Islam. The Christian paternalistic attitude that is evident in the exclusivist model of “we are the chosen people, therefore, we own the land, and the truth that leads to salvation,” is at the core of its ethnic bigotry and religious supersessionism.

1.6. Theological Methods

The method used in this dissertation is qualitative research. It is based on descriptive, analytic examination and cross-examination of the subject matter that is both reflexive and active. This work studies the role of religion in colonial and post-colonial Jos, Plateau, in Middle-Belt Nigeria. For this reason, through the hermeneutical lens of post-colonial discourse, this dissertation situates theology within the confines of the cultural struggles of both Christians and Muslims in Jos as they have responded to the aftermath of colonialism.

Thus, theological methods that ignore the colonial and post-colonial realities of this context function at best as epistemological tools at the disposal of what Mignolo describes as


\(^{195}\) The purpose and use of this phrase has been explained on p.6 to designate a difference in the varied form of pluralism represented by Hick and Dupuis.
“...coloniality of power which controls the conceptualization of knowledge.”196 Owing to the complex nature of the phenomenon of interreligious conflict in Jos, an eclectic197 approach that transgresses the limit and borders of euro-centrism will be employed to harness the different theological presuppositions used in this study.

Furthermore, an understanding of the existing problems of traditional theology is a *sine qua non* for an effective engagement in transgressive theology. In the words of Boodoo, “Can one speak of transgressive theology, one that implies and encourages transgression, or is it theology itself that needs to be transgressed? The former holds out hope that theology is capable of transgressing boundaries and can engage and generate transgression as a constitutive part of its endeavor.”198 In his extensive research on the Roman Catholic theological methods, Francis S. Fiorenza affirms the necessity of a balance between philosophy, culture, community, and theology. To maintain this balance, the issue about methods is paramount and must be taken seriously.199 For the relevance of theology to the human community depends heavily on how it is packaged and how it is been unpacked. Thus, for Fiorenza “...theology relates to a community: a community of discourse and of faith.”200 A Nigerian-Igbo proverb, *nku di na mba na eghere mba nri* (the firewood within a given locale is sufficient for cooking), drives this point home beautifully: namely, that the philosophical and theological ingredients available by nature and culture in a particular locale are sufficient for God-talk. We agree with Fiorenza that method in

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197 See Gerald M. Boodoo, for the use of “eclecticism as a transgressive theological style.” 22.
200 Ibid, 80.
theology, or theological method, belongs to the realm of nature and is therefore culturally bonded. This means that claims to “substitutional universalism”\(^{201}\) overlook the God-given resources bestowed on nature and culture. This tendency toward “substitutional universalism,” that is, “claiming as universal what is in reality a specifically Eurocentric viewpoint,”\(^{202}\) has been the stumbling block of magisterium theological methodology.

The next section on methodology is divided into two major parts on (i) dialogue, contextual, and incarnational methods, and (ii) liberalational and hermeneutical methods.

**1.6.1. Dialogue, contextual and incarnational methods**

The search for appropriate methodology and concise hermeneutics remains one of the fundamental tasks of the theology of interreligious dialogue as a sub-sect of African theology. The socio-political and cultural changes evolving in the context in which theology is been done in Africa call for a reevaluation of the methods already employed and the sharpening of its hermeneutics. The logic is that if there is to be any genuine dialogue between Christianity and other religions, African theologians must be convinced of the reliability and validity of the methods and hermeneutics employed in the dialogue.

The enigmatic and perennial question about the relationship of Christ and culture within African theological studies has been nagging at scholars over the years. Scholars of various faith backgrounds and different religious affiliations during the course of history have attempted to strike a balance between the summons of faith in Christ and the respective human response in culture. In spite of the recorded scholarly progress, the problems of hermeneutics and methods remain perennially in the study of African theology. In light of the above, therefore, the search for proper hermeneutics and appropriate methodology for retrieving, investigating, and

\(^{201}\) Ibid, 69.
\(^{202}\) Ibid.
articulating the concerns of the African people and the theological responses given to these concerns have now become the *prolegomena* to the study of African theology.

African philosophers and theologians, as well as sociologists and anthropologists, do not agree on the methods of inquiry required for an integrated approach to the social sciences. Kwame Bediako, in his work *Theology and Identity*, testifies to this fact. While scholars like Bolaji Idowu (Methodist), John Mbiti (Anglican), and Mulago Cikala Musharhamina (Catholic) argue for an inclusive methodology that builds on the genuineness of the pre-Christian African heritage and its usefulness for the reconstruction of African theology, others, like Byang Kato (Evangelist), from an exclusivist standpoint are vehemently opposed to any kind of continuity between African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity.

However, from a pluralistic African feminist perspective, Ifi Amadiume critiques methodological presuppositions that come from both the African Traditional Religion (ATR) and African Christian theologians. According to Amadiume, scholars of the aforementioned religions enthroned a male supreme God alongside the Judeo-Christian God to the de-valuation of female deities. Amadiume believes that this trend of thought shows an inherent weakness in the work of Christian theologians, namely, “patriarchal greed, totalitarian patriarchy, gender oppression, and centrism.”

Similarly, non-Christian African scholars, like Okot p’Bitek and Ali Mazrui, offer a similar critique against the universalistic claims evident in the hermeneutics of modern African scholars. p’Bitek, for instance, has accused some African scholars as “Hellenizers of ATR,”

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204 Ibid.
because, “they dress up African deities with Hellenistic robes and parade them before the Western world.”

p’Bitek draws further attention to the predicament of African scholars.

What did African scholars find so beautiful or useful in Greek metaphysics that they chose it to be the vehicle for expressing African Religious Concepts? It would appear that African scholars were attracted to this tool not because of its usefulness or efficiency. They were reacting against intellectual arrogance and...

“in order to establish her intellectual equality with the West, African has to master Western versions of intellectual skills. Africa has to be as Greek as the next person.” And, while the West is busy demolishing the Hellenistic mould in which Christian faith had been imprisoned, African scholars are busy collecting the same rusty, thrown-away pieces and putting them on African deities.

Likewise, in the epilogue to p’Bitek’s work, Ali Mazrui, retired late Professor of Political Science, seriously queries the intent of studies that are geared towards a universal hermeneutics if they do not take the local context seriously:

Why should there be a constant search to fit African conceptions of God into notions like omnipotence and omnipresence and omniscience? Why should there be a constant exploration for one super-god in Africa societies, as if one was trying to discover an inner monotheism in traditional African belief systems? Why should African students of religion be so keen to demonstrate that the Christian God had already been understood and apprehended by Africans before the missionaries came?

As a result, current theological methodologies and hermeneutics proposed for a dialogical encounter between Christianity and Islam in Jos as advanced by leading African scholars and religious leaders demand critical scrutiny. The staggering statistics of violence resulting from interreligious riots and wars between the Christians and Muslims in Jos indicate failed dialogue. In this study, we will argue that the incessant failure in dialogue witnessed in Northern Nigeria is the result of applying the wrong dialogical methods and hermeneutics, most of which are heavily

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based on the framework and ideology of the western paradigm of *God-Talk* which by all standards have grossly become redundant and thus inadequate.

Furthermore, judging from the context of the theology of inculturation, these imported western dialogical principles lack vigorous pastoral relevance and contextual application. Consequently, for African theology to be relevant today, African theologians must wean themselves from the palliatives provided by Western hermeneutics and methodologies.

If theology is to be relevant today, the issue of inculturation should not be taken as an option. It is urgent and necessary, a *hic et nunc* for the Church in Africa. In the words of Chupungo, “The necessity for inculturation in the theology today especially in mission countries cannot be over stressed. It is absolutely necessary if the church is to be positioned to offer to all people the mystery of salvation and life brought by God.” Theology without inculturation, says J. M Walligo, “paralyses all efforts to make Christ appear in all his splendor to the people of each culture.”⁵⁰⁸ Teresa Okure also states that “our understanding of the mystery of incarnation serves as a solid foundation for comprehending inculturation—for inculturation rests on incarnation seen not as a mystery and event in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but as a process to be carried on in history till the end of time.”⁵⁰⁹ Patrick Chibuko corroborates Okure’s position when he shows that:

the word took flesh and dwelt among us. In the incarnation, Jesus is seen as the model and archetype of inculturation. His birth, life and death took place in a particular context and culture. He learnt the language and customs, then in and through these he expressed the truth and love of God for the entire humanity. Authentic inculturation needs to be distinguished by noble simplicity, radical

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transformation, enduring values depth in meaning and having an embrace wholeness.\textsuperscript{210}

The views of Okure and Chibuko present Christ’s incarnation as model for the Nigerian Church. Consequently, authentic inculturation builds on the principle of incarnation whereby the Son of God became Jewish in all things but sin, sharing their faith, culture, and tradition. This ecclesiological dimension of inculturation makes it incumbent on the Church to identify itself historically and culturally with its people and become not only a “Church in” but a “Church of” a particular place—a local church.

Similarly, Uzukwu opines that “our analysis of the merging of certain elements in the traditional Igbo experience and practice of priesthood, and leadership with the received Western Christianity’s practice of ministry shows the urgency...of the theology of inculturation.”\textsuperscript{211} Accordingly, Uzukwu defined inculturation theology for the Igbo as that theology which works towards the encounter of Igbo structural history and the heart of the proclamation of the gospel; because this theology must be Christian, it becomes an incarnation of the Christian message into the Igbo culture so that the Christian way becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies Igbo life, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation.\textsuperscript{212}

This definition of Uzukwu has a direct bearing on the \textit{sitz in leben} of the Igbo cultural community and, therefore, evokes a fundamental review of its ecclesiastical structures. Uzukwu continues this clarion call for structural adjustments and the balancing of ecclesiastical powers and sharing of charisms within the local Church.\textsuperscript{213}

From the ecclesiastical dimension, since the Second Vatican council, the Church has issued documents and pronouncements highlighting positively the question of gospel and culture.\textsuperscript{214}

\textsuperscript{210} Chibuko, 2.
\textsuperscript{211} Uzukwu, \textit{The Church and Inculturation: A Century of Roman Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria} (Enugu: Spiritan Booklets, 1985)
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{213} Uzukwu, \textit{A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches; Worship as Body Language; God Spirit and Human Wholeness: Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style.}
The establishment of the Pontifical Council for Culture by John Paul II in 1993 is its culmination. Commenting on this council for culture, the Pope declares: “oftentimes when one talks about African Culture, minds are filled with dress, dance, color, art work—modes of the past. But culture is dynamic and living and not past oriented. It embraces the socio-economic and political organization of a people within a given environment; it has a depth—level where people struggle to express and reflect on the mystery of its contact with the universe. At this level, the question of life and death, of God and the spirits under guiding the universe are posed.”

Subsequently, in 1994, the African Synod considered inculturation an urgent priority in the life of particular churches for rooting the Gospel in Africa. The Synod acknowledged the “‘difficult’ and ‘delicate task’ of inculturation, especially as it may affect people’s fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of culture.”

Sadly, the contributions of the African Bishops’ leading-up to the wonderful proposals of the Synod received very little attention from scholars.

With the African Synod come and gone, Uzukwu reminds the African Church leaders that if the goals of the synod as they were clearly articulated in the Lineamenta (Proclamation, Inculturation, Dialogue, Justice and Peace and Social media) were to be achieved, the Church has to develop a listening ear to issues and challenges raised by contextualization. Thus, for the African churches to be autonomous, self-reliant, and in communion with one another and with Rome, it has to take seriously the resources and tools offered by the African traditions and culture.

Drawing from the examples of African patristics, especially from the elaborate treatment of the ecclesiology of Cyprian of Carthage, Uzukwu argues for an African Church that maintains

universal communion but also reserves the right to be different and autonomous in both discipline and rite. The metaphor of the Church with large *listening ears* works well within an ecclesiological framework where the pastoral theological concerns of the local churches are not suppressed or subsumed under a desire for universal conformity to dogma.\textsuperscript{216}

In order to give a theological boost to the issue of inculturation, Aylward Shorter draws attention to the Christological connection between Jesus Christ and the logic of his Incarnation, and the implication of such on the content of the Christian message. Relying on the concept of the *logos spermatikos* of Justin Martyr, which was referenced also by the Second Vatican Council’s *Ad Gentes* (#22), Shorter argues for the incarnation as the starting point for inculturation. In the conciliar document, there seems to be confusion among the terms “adaptation,” “inculturation,” and “incarnation.” These were used interchangeably in some instances. This was a good thing, however, because “[t]he Bishops of Africa and Madagascar consider as being completely out of date the so-called theology of adaptation. Instead they adopt the theology of incarnation.”\textsuperscript{217} This approach is appropriate because it looks at Jesus Christ as a disciple of the Jewish cultural heritage.

Second, in the words of Shorter, “the analogy indicates Christ’s need of cultures in order to spread his good news of the kingdom and to share his life with humanity. There could have been no earthly ministry for Jesus if he had not adopted the cultural concepts, symbols and behavior of his hearers.”\textsuperscript{218} Shorter’s dogmatic reference is to *Ad Gentes* #22, which highly favors Justin’s concept of “seeds of the word.” Shorter’s ideas in relation to the Church’s

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\textsuperscript{216} Uzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*.


\textsuperscript{218} Shorter, 80.
understanding of incarnation as inculturation raises some doctrinal as well as pastoral issues, especially in the context of the Church’s position on the theology of interreligious dialogue.

This openness to dialogue with non-Christians, especially the pagan philosophers, was instrumental in the shaping of the logos-theology of the early Church Fathers. Underlying the theology of Justin’s *Logos Spermatikos* (sower), Ireneaus’s *Logos emphutos* (revealer), and the *Logos protreptikos* (conventional) in Clement, there is the presupposition that God before His incarnation in Jesus was already manifest in creation and human history with its civilizations.219

The use of the hermeneutics of logos-theology by the Church Fathers as a tool for dialogue had a positive result in their understanding of non-Christians. It furnishes the early Church with the philosophical terminologies (language) to theologize, and it facilitates the development of the concept of the Logos as a divine “pedagogy” concerning things to come. Later on, Eusebius of Caesarea developed this expression to illustrate the doctrine of “preparation for the gospels” (*praeparatio evangelica*). In recent times, Karl Rahner’s concept of the “anonymous Christian” lays the foundation for an inclusivist Christian theology of religions. Rahner argues for both an explicit and implicit connection between incarnation and salvation.

The Second Vatican’s *Nostra Aetate* in its appreciation of non-Christian cultural values and religions rejects theological exclusivism and moves toward inclusivism. Despite the apparent ambiguity in *Nostra Aetate*, we see implicitly the Church’s first official positive attempt towards inclusive dialogue with all religions. This dialogue is based on shared commonalities about the origin and destiny of man and the search for answers to the most existential question and the meaning of life.220 The central doctrinal statement of *Nostra Aetate* states “that the Church

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rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions.”

This is an open-ended declaration and can conversely be reframed in a positive way: The Church accepts the things that are true and holy in these religions.

The question that remains unanswered, however, is what are the Church’s criteria to judge what is true in other religions, and whether that which is true is in any way essentially the same as, or different from the fullness of the Truth possessed by the Church. Is it possible to have some values, doctrines, and belief systems as “True” that have nothing to do with “Truth”? If what is true relates to soteriology, would the Catholic Church accept as ‘true and holy’ the de jure salvific doctrine of salvation evident in other religions?

1.6.2. The librational and hermeneutical method.

Furthermore, the method used in this work relies heavily on hermeneutical analysis and comparisons derived from inductive reasoning. Panikkar in many ways subscribed to this methodology of doing theology, which he shared in part with Jacques Dupuis who proposes a new “interreligious hermeneutical theology” that is inductive, contextual, and hermeneutical. In contrast to the deductive methodology of traditional theology which feeds on general doctrinal principles, this proposal endorses inductive reasoning that is derived from contextual and hermeneutical theology.

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221 Ibid, 657.
Since the demand of praxis and specificity remains at the heart of post-colonial discourses, current studies in religious pluralism call for a drastic change in methods and hermeneutics. Panikkar, for instance, insists on a hermeneutics that builds on existential situations, which recognizes others “in their very otherness (the other qua other)” as the prerequisite to pluralism achieved through dialogical dialogue. Walter Mignolo designates this new hermeneutics as border thinking: “[T]he transcending of the colonial difference can only be done from a perspective of subalternity, from decolonization, and therefore, from a new epistemological terrain where border thinking works…. Border thinking can only be such from a subaltern perspective, never from a territorial (e.g. inside of modernity) one.” In other words, doing theology in post-colonial Jos, Plateau, requires a hermeneutics that transgresses traditional methods and is drawn from territorial/global designs.

Panikkar also insists on the footing of theological discourse on epistemological grounds. Such a way of doing theology considers “the signs of the times” and the current human condition.

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226 Gerald M. Boodoo, “Transgressive Theology or Transgressing Theology.”

and predicament. Accordingly, “Panikkar’s theologizing is hermeneutical in approach, and attaches crucial importance to experience.” As he draws more spiritual depths and insights from his cosmotheandric experience, his “methodological distinctiveness is that he tries to put experience in dialogue not only with Christianity but also with Hinduism and Buddhism traditions.” Correspondingly, this research will benefit from Panikkar’s methodology as it seeks to formulate theoretical paradigms from a Christian theological perspective for interreligious dialogue.

Evidently, exclusivist absolute conclusions, which are drawn from claims based on deductive reasoning, labor under the scrutiny of specificity. The demands of specificity and particularity characterize the postcolonial inclination for inductive reasoning. Put in another way, theology now confronts the basic scientific scrutiny for proven propositions that are data-driven through verifiable methods. Scholars like Jacques Dupuis, Raimon Panikkar, and David Tracy have expressed their indebtedness to inductive methodology. The preference for an inductive methodology that is guided by the specificity of the context shields theological formulation from drifting towards the generalizing trends of “fulfillment theology”—the product of deductive reasoning and dialectical hermeneutics.

The de facto reality of religious pluralism makes the tools provided by praxis and culture indispensable in the studies of interreligious dialogue. The hermeneutical triangle of “text,”

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228 Komulainen, 287.
229 Ibid.
“context” and “interpreter”\textsuperscript{232} revolves around the axle of culture. This means that no text, context, or interpreter can exist outside the periphery mapped by culture. Thus, the framework of the studies of interreligious dialogue culture now assumes the epicenter of what Panikkar describes as \textit{diatopical} hermeneutics.

I call it \textit{diatopical} hermeneutics because the distance to be overcome is not merely temporal, within one broad tradition, but the gap existing between two human \textit{topoi}, “places” of understanding and self-understanding, between two—or more—cultures that have not developed their patterns of intelligibility or their basic assumptions out of a common historical tradition or through mutual influence. To cross the boundaries of one’s own culture without realizing that another culture may have a radically different approach to reality is today no longer admissible.\textsuperscript{233}

In order to effectively carry out this cross-cultural hermeneutics, we borrow from the cognitive anthropology of James P. Spradley, which defines “culture as the acquired knowledge [and information] people use to interpret experience and generate their behavior.”\textsuperscript{234} This definition of culture allows interlocutors engaged in dialogue to define the world as they live in it and see it. Thus, a strong emphasis will be laid on the African concept of hospitality, which is deeply rooted in signs and symbols.\textsuperscript{235}

Finally, Paul Tillich’s correlative method and the hermeneutical method provide a useful resource in delineating the methodological framework of this project. In its core, the correlative and contextual methodology draws insights from theology to address the philosophical and cultural issues facing human beings. This way of doing theology from below has enormous influence on inculturation, contextualization, and liberation approaches to theology. Our

\textsuperscript{232} Hall, 38.


methodological presupposition is as follows: culture and its interpretation through the lens of dialogical dialogue remains the necessary raw material for doing the theology of interreligious dialogue.
CHAPTER TWO
HERMENUEUTICS OF EXCLUSION: JOS AS A CHRISTIAN CITY
AND THE MUSLIM RESPONSE

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the implications of British colonialism and its
ripple effects over the entire Sokoto Caliphate in general and the Jos Plateau in particular. The
implication of colonialism and capitalism coupled with the urbanization project made the city of
Jos a melting pot of various ethnicities.¹ In the midst of scarce resources amidst a nascent
capitalism, the problem of resources control triggered ethnic and religious maneuvering and
conflict. We subscribe to Coser’s definition of conflict as “a struggle over values and claims to
scarce status, power and resources in which the aim of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or
eliminate their rivals.” ²

Along similar lines, Nnoli identifies four major traits of ethnicity in relation to conflict:
“first, it exists in a polity in which there is a variety of ethnic groups; second, it is characterized
by exclusiveness which is manifested in inter-ethnic discrimination; third, conflict is inherent
particularly in situations of strong competition over limited resources; finally ethnicity involves
consciousness of being one in relation to other ethnic groups.”³ The key term Nnoli employs
includes exclusivism, competition, and violence. On these grounds, we can agree with Dung Pan
Sha that the struggle for scarce resources has led to the “settlers’ problem” in Jos Plateau.⁴

¹ Simon Davou Mwadkwon, “Religion, the Settler Question and the Emergence of Ethnic Conflict in Jos,” in
Swedish Missiological Themes, 89 1 (2001), 56; See also Bill Freund, Capital and Labor in the Nigerian Tin Mines
³ Okwudiba Nnoli, Ethnic Politics in Nigeria (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1978), 23; Ethnic Politics in Africa
In this work, the term “settlers” denotes ethnic groups in the Jos Plateau that have ancestral ties to established ethnic homeland outside the geographical space they now occupy. Members of these ethnic groups, in other words, belong to and can lay claim as indigenes to their ancestral homeland in ways that, for instance, a Jos Plateau native Berom, Afizere, or Anaguta cannot. It is in this sense that we can categorize the following dominant ethnicities—Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and Tiv—as settlers in the Jos Plateau terrain. However, reference is made to the attempt by the Hausa/Fulani-Jasawa group in Jos to dissociate themselves from the Hausa/Fulani of the other Northern States. According to Iwuchukwu, “The Hausa/Fulani people in Jos self-identity as Jasawa people. This name is a product of political construct to symmetrically identify their ethnicity with the founding of Jos, as a city.”

In addition, the other aforementioned ethnic groups in the Jos Plateau are referred to as natives of the land. These indigenous people were “known to have resisted the pressure of conversion to Islam by the Fulani jihadist, which came principally from the Bauchi and Jema’a emirates.” According to Fwatshak, “the Anaguta, Berom of Bukuru, Afizere, Buji and Arno (all Jos Plateau groups) in about 1873, repulsed [the] jihadists from Bauchi, led by Ciroman Bauchi Usumanu, Aijian Bauchi, and Magajin Bauchi, by combining their forces against the invaders in Jos. The invaders were beaten back as they were chased from Rafin Jaki to Toro.”

Subsequently, all other later arrivals prior to and shortly after the 1940 recruitment exercise by colonial administration to the minefield, railway, and other sectors, are referred to as migrant residents. The pursuit of happiness or the desire to join the white-collar labor force brought

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7 Iwuchukwu, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, 102.
people “from Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, and Zaria. The highest number of migrants came from Zaria with 19 per cent, Sokoto with 16.1 per cent, Bauchi with 15.8 per cent, and Benue with 12.9 per cent. These migrants settled in Jos and its environs.”

On religious policy, the British maintained freedom of religion and the rights of the natives in Jos. However, in retrospect, this policy was carried out merely on paper. While the British continued its containment policy on Islam, it supported the efforts of the Christian mission on a larger scale. Politically, the British colonial administration, through indirect rule, set up the dominant Hausa/Fulani ethnicity as rulers over the Middle Belt minorities. The indirect rule system created the belief among the ruling Hausa/Fulani that political leadership equals ownership of the people and its landed resources. On the other hand, the dominant ethnic minorities of Jos Plateau have a different take: political leadership is by conquest and ownership through ancestral inheritance.

According to Adamu and Kirk-Green, “The term ‘Jos Plateau’ denotes a geographical entity. It occupies about 7.762km2 within the area marked by 10°30’E. It includes high plains 1,219m above sea level with granite hills rising to over 1,719m on the Shere hills east of Jos. The term Jos Plateau refers here to the Plateau province created by the colonial regime in 1926.” Jos is also the capital city of Plateau State. It is located on a mountainous plateau that rises more than 1,000 meters over the surrounding plain. Therefore, given its high altitude, it offers a temperate climate and has long attracted both foreign visitors and retired elites. Until the regime

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9 Simon Davou Mwadkwn, “Religion, the Settler Question and the Emergence of Ethnic Conflict in Jos,” in *Swedish Missiological Themes*, 89, 1 (2001), 60.

10 Ochunu, *Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle-Belt Consciousness in Nigeria*.

change in 1999, it was also known for its relatively harmonious communal relations.\textsuperscript{12} According to official records, the city was founded in 1913 and inaugurated in 1920.\textsuperscript{13} It is located in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.\textsuperscript{14} The 2006 Nigerian Census pegged the population of Plateau State at 3,178,712.\textsuperscript{15} The state has seventeen local government areas, and the metropolitan city of Jos is made up of three of these areas: Jos North with 429,300 people, Jos South with 306,716, and Jos East with a population of 85,603.\textsuperscript{16} According to Anthony Ham, “although Jos seems an outwardly religious city to the visitors, it sits astride one of Nigeria’s major Christian-Muslim fault lines.”\textsuperscript{17}

The geographical location of the city on the highland with relatively flat terrain supports the agricultural activities of nomadic pastoralism and land farming. This orientation gives agricultural occupation a key factor that defines the ethnic and religious identities of the people. The demographics and multi-religious context of Jos shows that the city has a predominantly Christian population as compared to many northern cities where Muslims are the majority. The 1952 census has the Christian population of the Jos town as 84.5 percent as against the Muslim population of 12 percent. However, recent studies show the population in the entire Plateau State

\textsuperscript{13} Iwuchukwu, \textit{Muslim and Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria}: 104.
\textsuperscript{14} Nigeria is a tropical land located in West Africa. It extends about 4° to 14° north latitude, with a north-south span of about 700 miles (1,125 kilometers)...about 700 mile—slightly larger than Texas and Oklahoma combine …Nigeria was a British colony before gaining its independence on October 1, 1960…with an estimate of 130 million people…with nearly about 250 different languages been spoken. See Douglas A. Phillips, \textit{Nigeria} (USA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 9-11.
\textsuperscript{15} Krause, “A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.”
\textsuperscript{17} Anthony Ham, \textit{West Africa} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Plant Publication, 2009), 646.
to be overwhelmingly Christian majority at 95 percent, with Jos town itself forming the nucleus.\textsuperscript{18}

Population wise, the pastoral nomadic Hausa/Fulani Muslims are the minority. They are generally regarded as settlers—i.e., non-indigenous. The Christian majority constituting the ethnicities of BAA claim to be the authentic indigenous owners of Jos, and other ethnicities are considered settlers. Like other metropolitan cities in Nigeria, Jos is a conglomeration of the Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Idoma, Urhobo, Igala, Nupe, Bassa, and Jukuns. This mass migration into Jos by the various ethnic groups, especially those who identified themselves as Christians, increased the numerical strength of Christians in Jos.

Marinus Iwuchukwu lists the following historical factors as fundamental in shaping the identity of the people of Jos: “the migration to the hills of the plateau some centuries ago; the consolidation of the territories from the attacks of bigger kingdoms… living under the control of the Hausa-Fulani emirate system under the supervision of colonial authorities; the struggle for autonomy… and the close proximity to several ethnicities with identical but different languages and cultures.”\textsuperscript{19} These factors partially account for the protest and vehement opposition registered by the indigenes to the British indirect rule policies and the reluctance to grant the Hausa-Fulani settlers full residential status as fellow land owners in the Jos Plateau.

Plateau State consists of about fifty-two ethnic groups, making it the most diverse state in Nigeria alongside Adamawa State.\textsuperscript{20} Of these various ethnicities, the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizare (BAA) are the most dominant. Apart from their numerical strength, the BAA had been in

\textsuperscript{19} Iwuchukwu, Muslim and Christian Dialogue, 102.
the forefront in the fight against Islamic intruders into the Jos Plateau region.\textsuperscript{21} According to Umar Danfulani,

Three major language families of Africa meet on the Jos Plateau. These are the Kwa and Bantu sub-groups of the Benue Congo family and the Chadic sub-group of the Afroasiatic. In the Jos Plateau region, Kwa-speaking groups include among others, Berom, easily the largest ethnic group in the area, Pyem, Ganawuri, and Tarok. Chadic-speakers constitute a number of small ethnic groups to the east of the Jos Plateau stretching all the way towards the Chad basin. These include among others the Ron, Kulere, Mushere, Ngas, Mwaghavul, Mupun, Mship, Jiplal, Chakfem and Goemai. Most of these groups share traditions of origin from the Chad-Borno region. The Bantu-speakers also live on the high plateau. These include the Anaguta, Afisare, Bache and the Irigwe. These are cousins with the Ham, Kafa, Bajju, Kagoro, Kagoma, Chawai, Kaningkon, Nimzon and several other such small groups found in Southern Kaduna.\textsuperscript{22}

Nigeria became an independent nation in 1960, yet remained deeply dependent on ethnic affinities and affiliations. Each space and spot in Nigeria is defined by ethnic identifications and relations. This creates a consciousness of double identity: first, of the claim to this ethnic space and second, a realization that the “other” is present within the ethnic space. These “others” are equally conscious of their abandoned ethnic space and the new space of welcome or possession. The reality of this double identity means that one cannot simultaneously belong to both realities. In other words, one cannot be both an indigene and settler in the same community. “The indigene-settler distinction is also explosive because it reinforces, and is reinforced by, other identity-based divides in Nigeria.”\textsuperscript{23} The question is, can any ethnic group(s) lay claim to the ancestral ownership of Jos Plateau like the Hausa in Kano, the Kanuri in Maiduguri, the Yoruba

in Ibadan, the Igbo in Enugu, the Tiv in Gboko, Nupe in Bida, Igala in Idah and Idoma in Oturkpo? The question remains: Who owns Jos?²⁴

The prevailing narrative that Jos Plateau fell under the British rule and by proxy under the Bauchi emirate no longer holds, for the above named ethnicities (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) and their various cities fell under the same British rule, yet they maintained their lands and cultural identities. We argue that the narrative of indirect rule by proxy of the Hausa/Fulani dynasty over Jos Plateau, coupled with the scarcity of resources in a nascent capitalism, is fundamental to crisis between the Hausa and the natives; between the Hausa and other residents (the 1932 uprising); the Hausa and the Igbo (the 1945 potato riot), and the Hausa and natives against the Igbo in 1955.

The recent phase of the Jos crisis began in 1994 and reached its climax in 2001. This crisis has demonstrated repeated cycles of reprisals in 2004, 2008, 2010, and 2012 from both Christians and Muslims. The death toll of victims over these years rose to about 5,000.²⁵ Before the genesis of the crisis in 2001, the city of Jos was known as the “home of peace and tourism” and a center of religious liberty and harmony. Prior to 2001, the last episode of extremely brutal violence in Jos was in 1966 during the events of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War.²⁶ The peace experienced in Jos attracted expatriates, retired military personnel, and business moguls from diverse ethnic groups from the southern and northern part of the country. For the vast majority of the inhabitants of Jos, both settlers and indigenes, the Hausa language continues to be the lingua franca among all the ethnic groups, which cut across political and religious traditions. Inter-

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²⁶ However, there were sporadic occurrences of conflicts like the crisis in 1994, 1996. See Danfulani & Fwatshak, 2002.
religious and ethnic marriages are also rampant among indigenes and settlers alike. These ethnic and cultural elements are long-standing, and they shape inter-communal harmonious relations as well as generate frequent inter-tribal conflicts, intolerance, and violence.

In recent times, instances of religious conflicts and violence have assumed a peculiar character in Jos. Unlike previous instances of violence in other parts of northern Nigeria, the 2001 Jos crisis defied earlier characterizations of violence occurring in predominantly Muslim populated areas where the politics of the implementation of the Sharia law has led to bitter confrontations between Muslim indigenes and Christian non-indigenes. The connection between the formerly peaceful city of Jos and its post-crisis outlook at the wake of the 2001 massacre is an interesting case study for interreligious dialogue.

The frequent attacks on churches, mosques, and military barracks demonstrate numerous widespread cases of terrorist brutality. They suggest a rising tide of continuous, internecine conflict, now turned into guerilla warfare. In recent times, the emergence of an organized terrorist group called Boko Haram has changed the context of conflict and difference into a terror campaign. The activity of this group has sparked inter-communal violence, spearheaded by perceived religious differences.

The Jos mayhem contradicts the claim that Christians in northern Nigeria are the target of violence given their lesser numerical strength. Although there are sound reasons to adhere to the


thesis of a persecuted Christian minority in northern Nigeria, the Jos crisis gives a contrary twist to Christian-Muslim conflict in northern Nigeria. The claim that portrays Christianity as a persecuted minority standing always at the receiving end of most interreligious conflict and violence in northern Nigeria must be qualified in this context. The dynamics that triggered this magnitude of violence leading to the wanton destruction of lives and property in a predominantly Christian city makes the Jos crisis an exception in the cases of violence in the history of Christian-Muslim relations in northern Nigeria.

2.2. Pre-colonial and Post-colonial Critical Review of Violence in Jos

The 2001 ethnic-religious crisis in Jos Plateau shocked the nation and aroused international interest and alarm. However, it was not the first of its kind. There were instances of resistance in pre-colonial times between the inhabitants of the Jos Plateau, who were adherents of the African Traditional Religion (ATR), and the onslaught of the Usman dan Fodio’s jihad. Under the geopolitical mappings of the Sokoto Caliphate, Jos Plateau occupied a strategic position along the boundary between the Caliphate and the southern Oyo and Benin Empires. Scholars referred to this vast savannah area as Kasanchen Bauchi.\(^{30}\) It comprises what is today known as the Middle Belt geopolitical region—Bauchi, Plateau, Keffi, Nassarawa, Toto, Lafia, Benue, and the Nupelands, with the exception of the Adamawa mountainous region, which lies below the Kanem-Bornu.\(^{31}\) At various periods, areas of the lowlands of the Plateau and its adjoining environs had fallen under the Caliphate’s emirate of Zaria, Ninga, and Bauchi.


Consequently, during the post-jihad era, the Sokoto Caliphate had already established sub-emirates in the lower-Plateau towns of Keffi, Doma, Lafia, Nasarrawa. But the question of whether Jos was part of the Kasanchen Bauchi is still controversial. Some scholars who are affiliates of the Sokoto Caliphate argue that Jos Plateau was part of the Bauchi emirate by proxy, because the Caliphate expanded its growth south to Keffi, Doma, Lafia, Nasarrawa, and Ilorin. Others contended that because of its hilly nature, the Sokoto jihadists never captured and settled in the Jos Plateau prior to the British takeover in 1902.

The fact that the Sokoto Caliphate was unable to penetrate the hill country of the Plateau gave the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere ethnicities the needed fortress to launch a reprisal attack in 1873 against the jihadists led by the Ciroman Bauchi. Although the jihadists lost the war on the hills of the Plateau, mainly to the un-s subdued Anaguta and Afizere, they made some gains on the lower land, thus establishing Islamic presence and sub-emirates in Wase and Kanam. The acceptance of Islam and the use of its military support under the Bauchi emirate further exacerbated the thorny relationship between the ethnic minorities around and up the Jos Plateau who were predominantly adherents of the African Traditional religions. These ethnic groups opposed and resisted Islamic cultural dominance and demand for religious conversion.

Bauchi has a complex history in relation to the Hausa states. The Hausa etymology for Bauchi means “slave” or “the land of slaves.” Thus, the term Kasanchen Bauchi denotes the current regions of Bauchi, Plateau, Southern Kaduna, Northern Niger and South Sokoto (Zuru

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33 Iwuchukwu, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, 103.
35 Ochonu, Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agent and Middle Belt Consciousness, 82.
37 Iwuchukwu, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, 103.
38 For discussion on the etymology of Bauchi, see Adamu 1978, 23.
and Yawuri).\textsuperscript{39} It was notorious as the hub of slave raiders for the Kastina and Kano boundary line of the trans-Saharan trade route.\textsuperscript{40} Although there was evidence of an established seat of government in Bauchi by the Kamgari and Kamuka peoples in the sixteenth century, recent archaeological findings about the Nok culture show activities of peoples in the Jos Plateau region that pre-date the Bauchi and the Sokoto Caliphate.\textsuperscript{41}

In the pre-colonial setting, the relationship between the non-Muslim ethnic minority in the Jos Plateau and the dominant Islamic Bauchi emirate was maintained through the traditional \textit{amana}\textsuperscript{42} contractual relationship, wherein ethnic minorities pay either to retain or regain autonomy from external dominance. The Sokoto Caliphate through its application of the Islamic proviso of the \textit{amana} contractual agreement ensured that “the non-Muslims shall maintain their religious and social autonomy while preserving their distinct characteristics.”\textsuperscript{43} This form of treaty was foundational to the Caliphate’s attitude on religious tolerance and conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{44} Lamentably, this positive attitude of the Caliphate towards ethnic minorities is not often the subject of Western interest and discussion.

However, the \textit{amana} policy was taken by the British colonial authority as sign of weakness and surrender to defeat. Ochunu points out the confusion inherent in the British application of the \textit{amana} contract formula: “The formula for discerning these preexisting


\textsuperscript{40} Niane, \textit{General History of Africa IV}. 299.


\textsuperscript{42} Typically means, “Trustworthiness, faithfulness, and honesty…Amana is also used to define a situation in which one party is keeping another person’s property in trust. This is the way in which the term is most commonly applied, especially within the confines of Islamic commercial law.” See Arm Mohamed el Tiby Ahmed and Wafik M. Grais, \textit{Islamic Finance and Economic Development: Risk Management, Regulation, and Corporate Governance} (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), appendix 1B.


conditions was less than perfect and sometimes arbitrary. The result was a default exaggeration of Bauchi’s prior control, and the equating of *amana* and other relational modes with emirate conquest. For instance, British colonial officials asserted Bauchi’s political control ‘over the pagan district of plain Angass.’”

The resistance of the ethnic minorities of the Jos Plateau to Islamic infiltrations through the Bauchi and Jema’a emirates lasted until the British defeat of Bauchi in 1902 and the fall of the entire Sokoto Caliphate in 1903. The British announcement of the beginning of a new era brought relief and a sign of hope to ethnic minorities who initially welcomed British occupation as a genuine political substitute and a divine intervention against Islamic domination. Contrary to the expectations of the people of Jos Plateau, the British colonial authority stripped the ethnic minorities of their traditional autonomy maintained through *amana* contractual relationships.

With this British fiat, the entire Jos Plateau and its adjoining regions were completely submerged into the Bauchi Province. The British regarded this arrangement as evidence of indirect rule, but for the natives, it was an indirect rule by proxy and a postmortem victory for the Hausa/Fulani hegemony of the defunct Sokoto Caliphate. Moses Ochonu questions the integrity of the British indirect rule towards the Middle Belt ethnic groups: “How is it that northern Nigeria is seen in the Africanist colonial studies literature as a bastion of indirect rule when, all over the vast Middle Belt region, a system of colonization that violated the foundational rationale of indirect rule held sway?”

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45 Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 83.
46 Ibid.
47 Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, ix.
Furthermore, the discovery of tin ore around the Naraguta hills attracted the British Royal Niger Company to the Jos Plateau. As far back as 1884, elements of “straw tin” produced by the local tin industry in Jos found their way into the Niger-Benue river basin and West African coastal markets. In March 1902, under the patronage of the Royal Niger Company, mining engineer G. R. Nicolaus’s report from the British resident official, Colonel H. W. Laws led to the permanent takeover of Jos Plateau in 1904. The internecine warfare between the peoples of Jos and the Bauchi Province Hausa/Fulani administrators, on the one hand, and the British expatriates mine workers, on the other, forced the British to pacify the locals by opening the Bukuru zonal office in 1907. The people’s resistance paid off later with the creation of an entirely new Jos Plateau province from the existing Bauchi province in 1926.

Ultimately, with the arrival of European expatriates, Christian missionaries, and other ethnicities from Southern Nigeria, Jos acquired its urban look and characteristically Christian identity, which was antithetical to the Islamic North. The Scottish branch of the Christian missionaries identified the British policy of indirect rule as a tool for oppression at the disposal of Northern hegemony. Thus, British indirect rule by delegation was hardly successful in the Middle Belt among the native ethnicities. The dominant ethnicities—Berom, Anaguta and Afizere—of Jos Plateau resisted the imposition of the emir’s religion—that is, Islam—even after the British’s subjugation of the entire Jos Plateau under the Bauchi emirate.

The new cultural and religious independence of Jos Plateau in 1926 raises the question of ethnic and religious re-alliance in a radically new fashion. Whereas the indigenous ethnicities who were adherents of the traditional religion maintained their opposition to Islamic domination,

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48 “So-called ‘straw tin’ because of its appearance as thick strands of wire. This was the form in which tin smelted by Africans was transported and traded. Africans used it to tin brassware.” See Leonard Plotnicov, *Strangers to the City: Urban Man in Jos, Nigeria* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), 33.
there is evidence for the sporadic phenomenon of religious conversion to Islam, as well as the presence of some Hausa/Fulani migrants shortly before, but mostly during and after, the tin mining expeditions. Though some of these migrants were legates of the defunct Bauchi hegemony, others were traders and workers at the mining industry. In the strict sense, the relationship between the ethnic indigenes of Jos Plateau and the settlers took a different turn with the arrival and establishment of Christian missions in the predominantly non-Muslim areas in Jos Plateau.

2.2.1. The Jos crisis of 1932

The event that led to the 1932 crisis was born more out of the rumor that a potential crisis was looming in the horizon than from its actual occurrence. The scramble for scarce resources in Jos Plateau was not unconnected to the global economic events that preceded the World War II. As observed by a global economist columnist,

The crash of the U.S. stock market in October 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression did not immediately sweep the world in a universal wave of economic decline. Rather, the degree, type, and timing of economic events varied greatly among nations. Many believed the Depression was largely “exported” by the United States to Europe and other countries in the 1930s through the various economic policies it adopted.50

The consequences of the depression in Britain soon had an adverse effect on the mining industry in Jos. The first outcome for the Jos mining industry was mass retrenchment of unskilled workers who were mainly the migrant Hausa/Fulani. Next, there were rumors of an impending mass exodus of European expatriates from the mining industry as a result of the Great Depression. Thus, it was believed that the affairs of the company would be left in the hands of

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skilled employees who were dominated by other African workers, of which the Igbo were the most dominant. As Plotnicov describes, the rumors were many and varied:

Coupled with these accounts was the rumor that all Europeans were preparing to vacate the area, and Jos would be left to its African residents. Informants were consistent in stating that the unemployed minefield laborers, mainly Hausa, who had drifted into Jos after being retrenched, were boasting that, once the Europeans departed, they were going to take for themselves all European property, homes, automobiles, and so on. Furthermore, since there were not enough of these possessions to be shared among them, the Hausa were alleged to be planning to drive out of Jos all the Africans who were not northern Nigerians or Muslims, and to seize their valuables as well. And finally, rumor had it that the indigenous people in the villages near Jos were taking their weapons out of mothballs in anticipation of driving out the alien Hausa, thus restoring their country to the conditions in which the Europeans had first found it almost thirty years earlier. The Europeans, of course, did not leave, and the anticipated anarchy did not occur.\(^{51}\)

Although the events of 1932 did not develop into a full-blown war, these rumors raised the underlying concern among the Hausa and the native ethnicities about a take-over of the local resources by outsiders. This fear was later manifested in the ethnic and religious crises that ensued in 1945, 1953, and 1966.

2.2.2. The October 1945 Jos crisis

The establishment of the tin industry and the railway project made Jos the center of excellence and a growing metropolitan city in northern Nigeria. By 1945, the presence of the three dominant ethnicities of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo became obvious in the socio-political, economic, and religious sphere in Jos. The Hausa and Yoruba made initial progress in the area of petty trade and skilled and un-skilled labor force. However, the coming of the liberal and autonomously minded Igbo group into Jos brought competition into the commercial and political life of the city. In Jos, as well as in other Northern cities, the British were uncomfortable with the Igbo presence and their type of egalitarianism, which was drawn from the Igbo cultural

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experience of autonomous political structures. For the British and the Hausa oligarchy, an infiltration of egalitarianism threatened the centralization of government and the indirect-rule policy.

According to Leonard Plotnicov, the British had a paternalistic and preferential treatment for the supporters of its indirect rule system. The presence of the progressive and autonomous Igbo people provided the natives of the Jos Plateau with the necessary tool for liberation and independence. The Igbo popularity and influence doubled as they became successful businessmen and pastoral agents to the various Christian Missionary groups. The Igbo cherished “economic autonomy and independence at the individual level and political autonomy and independence at the group level.”

Although the colonial authority was uncomfortable with the political liberalism of the Igbo, it did grant them favors on numerous occasions based on their religious affinity as Christians. The Igbo are predominantly Christians. Most of the Igbo offered volunteered services to the missionaries as pastoral agents. In the local church setting, the financial support from the Igbo towards Christian ministry is unequal compared to other ethnic groups.

As a result, the British understood that support for the Igbo would remain so long as the latter stayed away from the political domain—a safe haven for Hausa/Fulani hegemony. In this wise, the British indirect rule policy was narrowly interpreted by the Hausa/Fulani to mean legitimacy of political leadership, in similar way that the Yoruba are viewed to be technocrats and the Igbo entrepreneurs.

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54 Iwuchukwu, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, 222.
Through commerce and religious activities, the Igbo continued their advocacy for both individual and group autonomy and independence and created such consciousness among the natives. During the initial stage of their struggle for emancipation, the converted natives easily formed alliance with the Igbo on the basis of religious similarities. However, not the same bond existed between the natives and the Yoruba most of whom were Muslims. The Igbo alliance with the natives was not a welcomed development by either the colonial authority or the Hausa ruling class. The Hausa ruling class was gradually losing out in the new political dispensation. Hence the need to curb the political enthusiasm of the Igbo led to the 1945 potato crisis.

According to Plotnicov,

In October 1945, the Hausa and the Ibo in the city of Jos fought one another for two days, during which at least two people were killed, many others injured, considerable property was destroyed or damaged, and Nigerian police and army units had to be brought in from Kaduna to restore order. Later, one man was tried for homicide. Yet there is no report by the Nigerian Government on the rioting, nor any mention of it in the annual administrative reports, which generally record minor disturbances.55

The 1945 riot was the first of its kind in Northern Nigeria; yet it was not recorded anywhere in the annals of the British or Northern Nigeria chronicles. The absence of records was not coincidental. However, it is interesting to note the Biafran account of the crisis: “At Jos in 1945, a sudden and savage attack by Northerners took the Easterners completely by surprise, and before the situation could be brought under control, the bodies of Eastern men, women and children littered the streets and their property worth thousands of pounds reduced to shambles.”56

The silence from the government on this crisis led some scholars to believe that the British

incited the Hausa against the Igbo, who were viewed as harboring anti-colonial sentiments. The government’s nonchalant attitude in curbing anti-Igbo sentiment in 1945 set a precedence for the Kano violence eight years later, in 1953. No doubt, similar anti-Igbo sentiments were manifested during and shortly after in the events that led to the pogrom of 1966 and the inhumane Nigeria-Biafra war that followed in 1967-1970.

2.2.3. The Jos crisis in 1994

After the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1970, there was relative peace among the settlers and indigenes of Jos Plateau. The state of peace in Jos led to the choice of the motto of Plateau State when it was created in 1976 as “the home of peace and tourism.” The Jos crisis of 1994 was purely the outcome of the tense religious-political situation in Nigeria. In the background of the 1994 crisis lie the following factors: (a) the return of political power to the Hausa/Fulani hegemony with establishment of the Second Republic with President Shehu Shagari (1979-1983) and (b) the interruption of political power by the military Heads of States: Generals Muhammad Buhari (1983-1985), Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), and Sani Abacha (1993-1998).

Under the regime of General Sani Abacha, the Jos North Local Management Committee was created (in 1994), with Sanusi Mato, a Hausa/Fulani from Bauchi, as chairman. The indigenous people of Jos protested against the appointment on grounds of ethnicity and religion. Sanusi Mato was a Muslim and a non-indigene. Accordingly, the nomination and subsequent swearing in of Sanusi Mato was withdrawn on April 5, 1994, leading to the Hausa/Fulani reprisal and protest by April 12, 1994. This conflict led to the crisis that left the Jos Modern Market partially burnt. There were other appointments of Hausa-Fulani in 1996 and 1998 respectively.

2.2.4. The Jos crisis 2001

Another Jos crisis began in 2001. This crisis was repeated in cycles of reprisals in 2004, 2008, 2010, and 2012, stemming from both Christians and Muslims. The death toll of victims within these years rose to about 5,000.\textsuperscript{58} Prior to 2001, the last episode of extremely brutal violence in Jos had been in 1966 during the events of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war.\textsuperscript{59} Indigenous Christian opposition to the appointment of Mukhtar Muhammad, a Muslim/Hausa non-indigene as the Chairman of the Poverty Eradication Program, set off the crisis. Earlier in 1998, Mukhtar Muhammad had witnessed similar opposition when he was appointed caretaker chairman of the newly created Jos North Local Government Area. The Human Right Watch supported the view that the Mukhtar Muhammad saga triggered the 2001 crisis:

His subsequent appointment to the coveted post of poverty eradication coordinator was seen by some as a provocation and was strongly opposed by Christian groups. While some of the questions raised about the poverty eradication coordinator’s appointment may have been legitimate, the protests soon escalated into an ugly exchange of abuse in the days leading up to September 7. Some groups seized the opportunity to launch personal attacks on Mukhtar Muhammad, posting death threats at his office, such as “Trace your roots before it is too late,” “Run for your life,” “You are warned once again not to step in,” “This office is not meant for Hausa-Fulani or any non-indigene,” “Mukhtar Muhammad is a wanderer. If you want to stay alive don’t step in.”\textsuperscript{60}

The underlying argument against the appointment of Mukhtar was purely on the grounds of religion and ethnicity. The Indigenous point to the political injustices suffered by ethnic minorities in Hausa-dominated cities like Kano.

Many Christians in Jos point to the discrimination against fellow Christians in Muslim-dominated Northern states and therefore see no wrong in political exclusion of the Jasawa community in Jos. For instance, the ancient city of Kano hosts a significant Christian population that is denied indigene rights. Non-Hausa there have never been granted a local government area but ‘were divided and

\textsuperscript{58} Jana Krause, \textit{A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria}, 13.

\textsuperscript{59} However, there were sporadic occurrences of conflicts like the crises in 1994 and 1996. See Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002.

placed at Hausa dominated areas just to ensure that non-indigenes never dominated any political space in Kano’.

2.2.5. The Jos land controversy: Indigenous versus Settlers

The events that triggered the 2001 Jos massacre are traceable to both remote and immediate factors. The remote factor was characterized by structured and perceived differences between the two dominant ethnic groups concerning the origin and ownership of the city of Jos. The Human Right Watch identifies ethnicity and the indigenes/settler phenomenon as the root of the violence in Jos. The contest for the land has been between the Jasawa Muslims and the dominant Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere (BAA) ethnic groups. This study is motivated by William E. Connolly’s analysis of the etymologies of Land and Territory.

[land] it is presumed by most moderns to derive from terra. Terra means land, earth, soil, nourishment, sustenance; it conveys the sense of a sustaining medium that fades off into indefiniteness. People, you might say, feel the claim the land they belong to makes upon them…But the form of the word territory, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, suggests something different from the sustenance of terra. Territory derives from terrere, meaning to frighten, to terrorize, to exclude. And territorium is “a place from which people are warned” To occupy territory, then, is both to receive sustenance and to exercise violence. To become territorialized is to be occupied by a particular identity.

In Jos, the understanding of terra as both land and territorial boundary were operative in settling dispute. The crux of the matter has been a sheer battle for existence and survival between the “indigenous and settlers.” From the perspective of the indigenous, the fear of re-establishing the Hausa hegemony is imminent through the infiltration of the Jasawa into mainstream political

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life. For the Jasawa settlers, the claim for joint ownership of the city of Jos is an issue of equity; they have lived in Jos all their lives, and “they have no wish to go anywhere else and in many cases nowhere else to go.”

According to Danfulani, “labels such as ‘settler,’ ‘native,’ ‘non-native,’ ‘host community,’ ‘foreigner,’ ‘native foreigner,’ ‘stranger element,’ ‘squatter,’ ‘non-squatter,’ ‘immigrant,’ ‘migrant,’ ‘indigene,’ ‘non-indigene,’ ‘mbák,’ ‘Gambari,’ ‘Hausa-Fulani,’ ‘nyamiri,’ ‘nasara,’ ‘ngwa,’ ‘arna,’ ‘kirdi,’ and ‘baro,’ among many others are in use daily in Nigeria to stigmatize, stereotype or describe, the ‘other’ as a category which ‘does not belong.”

At the heart of the complex and contentious Jos land controversy, was the issue of identity, understood in all its ramifications—social, political, religious, and cultural. This disagreement led to a visible and acrimonious divide between the autochthonous indigenous and perceived settlers. The indigenous perceived themselves as such and were constantly redefining themselves in relation to those deemed as settlers. As Ogoh Alubo suggests, there is no ready-made concept of identity. The entire process of identity formation and self-definitions is characterized by being and becoming, of ‘othering’ and being ‘othered.’

An identity is a distinguishing label that objectively exists, is subjectively felt, and enables its bearers to experience individually and collectively a sense of solidarity. As a label, it can be assumed by, or imposed on bearers. It is also a prism by which objects, people, and collectivities are sorted, organized, mapped and ordered into meaningful [and] understandable units. Identities are socially constructed, dynamic and multifaceted. Subjectively, identification with a

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64 The city of Jos has three local governments’ areas—Jos South, Jos East, and Jos North. The bone of contention was the creation of Jos North a densely populated Jasawa area and the seat of the traditional ruler of the BAA—the Gbong Gwon Jos. See report; “Curbing Violence in Nigeria (I): The Jos Crisis.” International Crisis Group Working to Prevent Conflict Worldwide. Africa Report N°196 – 17 December 2012.


category is simultaneously a definition of self, so that groups come to identify themselves as ethnic, religious, occupational, national and other terms. Objectively, individuals do not identify in general, but do so in relation to others’ definitions of themselves and the boundaries implied in such definitions.67

Prior to the colonial takeover of Bauchi in 1902, the Sokoto Caliphate had desired to extend its rule throughout the Jos Plateau down to the Igala Kingdom in the South-East, to the Bini Kingdom in the Mid-West and the Oyo Empire in the South-West. Scholars of the history of Jos Plateau are agreed that there was never a time when the entire area was suppressed under the Sokoto Caliphate prior to British takeover in 1912.68 Danfulani develops the claim that “by 1920, the British had conquered the whole Jos Plateau and brought it under firm British control, a feat which the Muslim jihadist Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817) and his sons and flag bearers had never achieved.”69 As the late Sadauna of Sokoto and Premier of the Northern region testified: “The countries which did not come under Fulani rule were areas known as the Borno Province, the Plateau province, the Junkun, the Tiv, [Igala], and Idoma peoples of the South of Benue and small parts of Kabba and Ilorin Provinces.”70 Thus, we agree with C. G. Ames’ assertion “that the influx of Muslims took place during the establishment of the British Protectorate.”71

Though the Sokoto Caliphate never achieved total victory, by ascending and descending the Plateau hills, it nonetheless recorded success in establishing Islamic malams and traders on the lowland adjoining the Plateau. In addition, the British encouraged mass immigration of Hausa/Fulani unskilled laborers from Sokoto, Kano, Kastina, Lare, Zaria, and Bauchi to work in

the tin industry because the traditional agrarian natives initially refused to abandon farm work for the industrial labor. By 1912, there were enough residents in the city of Jos to warrant the British colonial authority designating a “Hausa settlement” in Jos. It was intended to preserve the Islamic identity of the Hausa/Fulani hegemony and, by extension, to fortify the base of indirect rule system.

The activities of the tin industry and the railway transportation system from Port Harcourt in the southeast opened the city of Jos to attracting non-Hausa settlers from Europe, Southern Nigeria, and other parts of West Africa. From the onset, the British intended to create a segregated settlement, first for its Christian European expatriates and later for the African workers who were predominantly Christians. According to Plotnicov,

>[F]rom the very beginning, the colonial administration tried to keep culturally dissimilar ethnic groups separated... the urban center of Jos was divided into two separate administrative units: a Native Town, subordinated to the Jos Divisional Native Authority who was then located in Naraguta; and the Township which was separate entity of its own within Jos Division, where Asians and Europeans eventually settled.

Excerpts from the archives captured a similar intention to segregate:

The non-indigenous natives who arrived in the Naraguta (now Jos Division) consequently upon the European Mining Activities have been administered since 1912 by a special introduced native administration, as the primitive pagan administrations could not deal with the civilized and acute incomers. The local pagans are independent of this special administration.... The non-indigenous natives mentioned above are mostly Mohammedans and Hausawa.

The creation of the Hausa settlement by the British in Jos was deliberate for purposes of appeasing the dominant Hausa/Fulani oligarchy, for the success of the British indirect rule

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74 Ibid., 43-44.
75 Ibid., 41.
depended on the dual foundations of oligarchy and Islam. However, opposition and hostility from the natives forced the British to engage in a pacification policy from 1910 onwards that gradually subjugated the Hausa settlements in Native Town under the administrative seat of the Jos Plateau in Naraguta. Problems began to ferment with the transferring of the administrative headquarters from Naraguta to Jos city in 1921-26.

The first was the abolition of the Hausa District Head in 1921. This shift in policy ended the British indirect rule as it had been established and practiced in the Northern Nigeria region. Yet, the “administration still considered the ‘Hausa Settlements’ as ‘purely alien enclaves’ having no sort of authorities over the pagans [the native people of the Jos Plateau]: the policy is the other way on...the land is the pagans and their right is jealously guarded.” The Hausa settlement in Native Town maintained its local chief, called the Sarkin Hausa, alongside other ethnicities like the Sarkin Yorubawa and Sarkin Iboawa for the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups, respectively. Later, with the support of the British indirect rule system, the Sarkin Hausa title was transformed into Sarkin Jos, which ruled over the Yoruba and Igbo, as well as all the other ethnic groups in the Jos Plateau. This title was held by the Hausa/Fulani from 1904-1947 until the death of Sarkin Isiyaku, who was listed as the last of the thirteenth of the local chiefs of the Native Town Hausa quarters.

Prior to the death of Sarkin Isiyaku in 1948, the Plateau Provincial Administration had begun plans to end the British indirect rule through the instrumentality of the Hausa/Fulani hegemony. Precisely, by 1931, the colonial administration under Governors General of Nigeria,

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78 Plotnicov, *Stranger to the City: Urban Man in Jos Nigeria*, 44.
79 See Plateau State Annual Reports, 1921; quoted in Plotnicov, *Stranger to the City: Urban Man in Jos Nigeria*, 44.
Sir Hugh Clifford and Sir Donald Cameron, had ruled the emirate’s indirect rule of the natives by proxy counterproductive. Hugh Clifford stated in his report that “[t]he Plateau Province would provide, in a very real sense, a school of pagan administration, functioning in an atmosphere undisturbed by the alien influence of the emirate.”

Clearly, then, the abysmal failure of indirect rule in the Middle Belt region left the colonial administrators with no real alternative to transferring the leadership of Jos to its rightful indigenes.

Thus, in 1948 the traditional stool of the Sarkin Berom was elevated to the status of Gbong Gwom Jos with the appointment of Mr. Rwang Pam Bogom as the new traditional ruler of Jos. By implication, the Government Gazette abrogated the office of the Sarkin Hausa and reduced it to the status of Wākili—councilor. Accordingly, Mr. Rwang Pam—the Gbong Gwom, became the President of the Town Council, with an elected Vice-President and three Wākilai from the dominant ethnic groups, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. The subjugation of the three dominant ethnic groups under the native authority, Gbong Gwom, began the first wave of agitation from the Hausa/Fulani, who perceived the British support of the “pagan administration” as a breach of contract with regard to the indirect rule system.

The persistent resistance offered by the Hausa/Fulani group in Jos developed into the political formation of the Jasawa identity. They alleged that their forefathers migrated to Jos when it was a desert area. According to Ishaku, “the Jasawa based their claim on a tripod argument; first, they have lived so long in Jos to the extent they do not know nor have any

81 Hugh Clifford 1925: Clifford to the Secretary of State, 29th January 1925 National Archives, Ibadan, CSO 20/11996; quoted in PIDAN, 53.
connection to their ancestral origins, second, they own property in Jos and therefore have contributed to the prosperity and growth of the city, and third, they had established a ruling house in Jos in the past.” The Jasawas’ argument was strictly based on the immigration factor: namely, the claim that all the ethnic groups in Jos Plateau migrated from somewhere else and that their ancestors built the city of Jos from the scratch; therefore, as such they should be accorded both right of citizenship and indigene status.

But, as the few excerpts from a number of historical studies, carried out in this edition of Analysis clearly bring out, all the ethnic groups in Plateau State are settlers, in many cases relatively recent settlers; settling in the last few centuries, on the Plateau, with their places of origin, largely, identifiable. ... Historical documents have brought out clearly, how through migration and settlements, various ethnic groups have been transformed and intermeshed to shape the various tribes that today inhabit the state.... Immigrants from Gobir settled in Pengiji and became the Pyem tribe that now inhabits Gindiri.... The Ron-Kulere tribes which inhabit the Bokkos area, where the suspended Governor of Plateau State, Joshua Dariye comes from, were also immigrants. (The Ron-Kulere are said to be recent settlers who immigrated from the Chad basin and speak Chadic languages with non- Nigerian origins. The Angas, who were inhabitants of parts of the present day Yobe and Borno States, migrated and eventually settled in the present Angas area...the Birom tribe came from the forest area somewhere around Wukari in Taraba State...the Amo or Ba tribe, the Rukuba tribe and the Fakara tribe are of semi-Bantu origin. The Mwaghavul tribe, on the other hand, are products of integration between immigrants from Borno and the earlier settlers in the area. The Goemai tribe... also migrated from Borno alongside their Angas brothers and finally settled in Shendam....The Muryam or Kufiyar people found in Namu, Kwalla, Dimmak, and Kwa districts of Shendam were actually Hausa migrants from Gwarzo in Kano State, while the Hausa group in Kwande were Gwandaraim migrants who migrated from Kano around the seventeenth century, earlier than many other Plateau tribes.85

Contrary to the Jasawa theory of Jos as *terra nullius*—nobody’s land—the Plateau Indigenous Development Association (PIDAN) proffered a different version of the origin of Jos. Accordingly, this version holds that Gwosh—the original word for Jos—was the boundary land between the Beron, Anaguta, Afizere (BAA) ethnic groups before the advent of Christianity and Islam. Consequent on the British invasion of 1899, the three ethnic groups relinquished part of the land to the British tin mining company and moved towards the lowlands in pursuit of subsistence agriculture.

Central to the narrative of the BAA, the need for skilled laborers to work at the tin mining company led to the migration of the Hausa/Fulani workers from Sokoto, Kano, Kastina, Lare, Zaria, and Bauchi. This description of the origin of the Hausa/Fulani in Jos is widely accepted as the most credible by anthropologists, sociologists, and politicians. Additionally, verifiable and objective evidence supports this claim, the most credible of which comprises the personal testimonies of the three dominant tribes that settled in Jos from the early 1920s (Igbo, Yoruba, and some Hausa), who attested to the fact that they bought the land from the BAA owners.

Evidently, the tin mining industry brought prosperity and fame to Jos—employment opportunities, developed infrastructures, and immigration. It is equally accurate to argue that the collapse of the tin mining industry dealt a fatal blow to the initial momentum evidenced by the

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86 The History, Ownership, Establishment of Jos and Misconceptions about the Recurrent Jos Conflict, by the *Plateau Indigenous Development Association* (PIDAN), (DAN-SIL Press).
development of the city. Lofty projects were abandoned, and the economic opulence of the city of Jos and the entire Plateau region began its decline. This development was significant in the beginning of the social, political, ethnic, and religious upheavals in Jos.90

The demise of the tin mining projects in Jos and its surroundings left the lowlands of the Plateau with abandoned ponds, uncompleted dams, canals, and excavation sites. These sites became a huge resource for Hausa dry-season farming. For the Jos Plateau natives, the practice of dry-season farming was a relatively new phenomenon, as they were accustomed only to the rainy season agriculture.91 Consequently, the exit of the colonial administration and the collapse of the tin-industry made land reallocation the topmost priority of the autochthonous population. In most cases, the land was leased out to the Hausa dry-season farmers according to the rules previously established by the amana trust contract.92

The transfer from the traditional amana land tenure arrangement to a complete government overhaul of the estate system and ownership was a purely one-sided political calculation. The indigenes of Jos were grossly at a disadvantage according to the federal government policy on land use.93 They lacked sufficient funds and the necessary credit and capital to enter into genuine land deals with government officials. While the Hausa/Falani had the backing of the emirate and later the federal government through easy access to credit and loan facilities from financial institutions like the Bank of the North and Northern Development

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91 Since Rainfall in Jos-Plateau between the months of April and August, the Dry season also called Harmattan season kicks from September to March creates more avenue for irrigation. See Roger Blench and Mallam Dendo, Access Rights and Conflict over Common Pool Resources on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria. Sept, 2003 Report to WORLD BANK/UNDP/DFID-JEWEL (Jigawa Enhancement of Wetlands Livelihoods Project).http://homepagentlworldcom/roger_blench/RBOP.htm
92 See PIDAN, 4-5.
Companies, the Yoruba relied on the United Bank of Africa (UBA), and the Igbo were supported by the African Continental Bank. On the other hand, the indigenes were left with subsistence economy accruing from farming.

For the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups, the possession and use of land was strictly for economical purposes and was, therefore, not linked to the issue of indigene-ship. The question of ownership of the land was clearly unnecessary because both the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups had ties to traditional homelands. However, the Hausa/Fulani group understood possession with ownership and therefore indigene-ship. Thus, the problem remains that of the politics of land by the settlers and the symbolism of land as understood by the indigenes.

With the collapse of the tin industry, the majority of the inhabitants returned to their traditional means of sustainability: namely, agriculture. With this new focus on the land and its use, people redirected their business investments to the agrarian economy. Consequently, with the earlier migration to Jos, there emerged the problem of scarcity of resources and land ownership. Uppermost on the migration list was the mass movement of the pastoral Hausa/Fulani into the Jos Plateau.

Besides ethnicity, religion, and commerce, events attributed to natural disasters made the Hausa/Fulani migrate to the Jos meadowlands. Most notable were the pest epidemics of 1885, 1901, and 1919, and the drought in Northern Nigeria during 1901-03. Even more important was the fact that the Jos Plateau hills and plains were free from tsetse fly infection; as a result, they became a dream land for the Fulani cattle rearing business. As Adamu further observes,

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94 Pam Sha, 53.
96 Adamu, Pastoralist of West Africa, 215.
The apparent result was that between 1900-1946, the pastoral Fulani entered the Plateau in ever greater numbers and expanded into areas that possessed adequate water, grazing and suitable market areas particularly around the mining areas...As a result of free access to grazing areas, the Jos Plateau has continued to be one of the largest concentration area for cattle in Nigeria...In 1940s the Fulani cattle in Jos comprised 859,392 head, while in the neighboring division of Pankshin there were 140,000. This amounted to approximately six acres per cow.\(^97\)

Initially, opposition from the native farmers toward the British sedentarization policy of Hausa/Fulani nomads was across ethnic and religious lines. For the most part, the hostilities of the natives towards the Hausa/Fulani nomads resulted from unsettled grievances arising from the misgivings about the role of the latter in the slave trade and the jihad movement. In this connection, Reuben Odo’s findings lend support to the claim that “official thinking is in support of encouraging the sedentarization of the Hausa/Fulani in the hope that such settlers could be profitably used to initiate schemes of mixed farming in the region.”\(^98\)

Agronomic changes on the Jos Plateau led to the idea of mixed farming to accommodate the demands of the nomadic pastoralist and native farmers. This innovation intensified local conflicts. In most cases, stray cattle destroyed the farms and harvests of the natives, triggering reprisal attacks from farmers.\(^99\) The colonial authorities were aware of these dynamics among the majority of conflicts between the Fulani nomads and the native peoples of Jos Plateau as early as 1940.\(^100\) Conflicts resulting from the use of land necessarily raised questions about ownership. In most cases, the identification of the Hausa/Fulani as “settlers and Muslims” transformed land-generated conflicts into full blown ethnic and religious wars.

### 2.3. Christian Supersessionism and the Jos—Jesus Our Savior—Narrative

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 215.


\(^{99}\) Roger Blench and Mallam Dendo.

\(^{100}\) See J. G. Davis, “The Gyel Farm Survey in Jos Survey in Jos Division,” *Farms and Forest*, Vol VII (2), (1946), 133; See also the recordings of similar fracas in the 1970s by Awogbade, 1983, 76; quoted in Roger Blench and Mallam Dendo.
In tracing the roots of Christian supersessionism in the Jos Plateau, we need to explore the activities of the Sudan United Missionaries (SUM) who worked in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, especially in the Jos Plateau and Southern Zaria-Kaduna. This combined effort, led by the Church of Scotland, Wesleyan Methodist Church of England, the Methodist Church of England, Congregational Church of England, and the Calvinistic Methodist Missions of Wales, led to the formation of the Sudan United Missions. The SUM was the offshoot of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference of World Missions. The words of Dr. Robson at the end of the Edinburgh Conference sets the Mission agenda for the SUM, “the very first thing that requires to be done, if Africa is to be won for Christ, is to carry a strong Missionary force right across the center of Africa to bar the advance of the Muslims.”

Within the entire northern Nigerian region, Jordan S. Rengshat identifies twelve branches of the Sudan United Missionaries-SUM:

There were many branches of the Sudan United Mission. There were two American Branches (C.R.C.B. and E.U.B.B.), a Danish Branch, the Netherlands Reformed Congregation Branch, the South African Branch and the British Branch. Others were the Australian and New Zealand Branch, the Canadian or North American Branch, the French Branch, the Norwegian Branch, the German Branch and the Swiss Branch.

The twelve branches had, at various times, worked in different parts of Africa but with a singular objective: namely, to counter Islamic growth and to implant the Church among natives.

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101 The Sudan United Mission received the backing of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. The Christian world with the exception of African Christians, Catholics and Eastern Orthodox gather to discuss mission to non-Christian world. The Conference had eight commissions. The fifth commission titled “Missionary Message in Relation to the Non-Christian World (June 18, 1910),” specifically advocates conversion through evangelism as the central message.


through rigorous evangelism. Of the twelve branches enumerated above, the focus is on the British Branch (Scottish group) and the Canadian North American branch (Sudan Interior Missionaries—SIM) who worked in the city of Jos and other parts of Plateau State.

The re-naming of the city of Gwosh into Jos in 1904 was purportedly attributed to a German missionary, Dr. Herman Wilhelm, of the Sudan United Mission (SUM). The change of name was necessary to fit the Christological acronym—“Jesus Our Savior.” Thus, the SUM established a narrative among the Christians natives that rendered Jos, “as a Christian city and the New Jerusalem of Africa.”

A similar narrative connecting the founding of Jos with the arrival of European missionaries is found in Anthony Ham’s chronology, titled “West Africa”’ This account projects Jos as the bastion of Christianity in northern Nigeria and the fulcrum of its evangelization activities:

Modern Jos is a British creation which grew on tin mining, and popular tradition claims its name is an abbreviation of “Jesus Our Savior,” from its first missionaries. It's a good story, but a corruption of a local name [gwosh] is a more likely and prosaic explanation. With a population between one and two million, it is a popular destination in Nigeria.

Likewise, the English professional travel-writer David Else corroborates this view about the uniqueness of the name Jos.

Jos (an abbreviation of Jesus Our Savior), with a population between one and two million, is a popular destination in Nigeria. The two major attractions are the cooler climate and the unique Jos museum. At 1200m above sea level, the Jos Plateau is noticeably cooler than most other areas in the country. The stone

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105 See Umar Habila Dedem Danfulani and Sati U. Fwathak, 245-246.
covered rolling hills also make it more scenic. Ask a Nigerian—they’ll lift their arms in the air and utter sweetly, “Jos!”

From the religious perspective, the city of Jos is conceived by Christians as the “Jerusalem of the Christian North,” parallel to the Muslim cities of Kano and Kastina in northern Nigeria. The SUM Missionaries reinterpreted Christian identity, turning existing frameworks into religious nationalism, sectarianism, and ethnicity. For this reason, this study investigates the effect of SUM evangelism through the rhetoric of supremacy over Muslims while also assessing the impact of SUM hermeneutics of exclusion and supersessionism claims.

Among the Christians, there was the feeling that the massive influx of Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups into Jos Plateau would continue the Islamization of the indigenous people. An inconclusive debate also occurred among the Christians about a possible complete takeover of the city of Jos by the Islamic Northern hegemony. The line of argument was, “‘If the Muslims have Jos, they have Nigeria. And if they have Nigeria, they have Africa.’... Still, many Christians—among them high-level religious leaders, academics, and journalists—invoke the terms ‘jihad’ and ‘terrorists’ to explain the current situation.”

The traditional religious system of the people of Jos Plateau stood firm against Islamic influence and domination. The phenomenon of conversion to Islam among the natives was not only uncommon but also visibly resisted. Conversely, the traditionalists were opened to the “good new” brought by the Whiteman—colonialists and missionaries alike—the “good news”

being freedom from the harassment of Islamic jihadists. Some have dissented from the view that the indigenes’ decision to accept Christianity was mostly on doctrinal grounds. For instance, Afe Adogame thinks that Christianity simply functioned as an alternative, a veritable tool of liberation from Islamic hegemony.

For the natives, the arrival of Christianity brought some relief from the menace of Islamic jihadists. To this end, the role attached to social welfare programs initiated by the colonial administration and Christian missionaries played a significant part in swaying the peoples’ allegiance to Christianity. It is well known that the missionaries provided care and a cure for the most dreaded disease of leprosy to Muslims, Christians and Traditionalists alike in Northern Nigeria. Dahiru Rabe describes the connection between the British colonial authorities and the missions.

The colonial authorities saw the advantage of using the Mission to address the pressure to enter the area by assigning specific roles to them. In the middle of the 1920s, the subject of social welfare in Northern Nigeria attracted new consideration from the colonial government. The Mission society exploited this opportunity to press hard on the colonial government to allow them extend their activities into the emirates. Dr. Roland Bingham, the founder of the Sudan Interior Mission, used that opportunity and pressurized the British colonial government to allow the Missions to enter the emirate of the Hausa land, especially Kano, Kastina and Sokoto.

2.4. Protestant and Evangelical Hermeneutics

The Scottish missionaries operating in Jos Plateau and other Middle Belt cities were familiar with oppressive hegemonic structures. Indeed, Scotland has a long history of resistance

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to the British domination. Scotland rejected the political and industrial dominance of Britain and also its version of Anglo-Protestantism. As a result, Scottish Christian nationalism developed in Scotland, which was based on a hermeneutic derived from perceived exclusivism. Musa A. B Gaiya and Jordan S. Rengshwat argue that the Scottish Missionaries who worked among the Berom, in Jos Plateau State and among the Kagoro of Southern Zaria, inspired a Christian Nationalism that was directed at reversing the internal colonialism that was created by the British administration by implementing the Indirect Rule Policy. Influenced by their experience in Scotland under English hegemony, these Missionaries encouraged their converts to seek independence from the Hausa/Fulani overlord imposed on them by the British colonial authorities. Thus, the first nationalist movement created in this region under study, was strictly speaking Christian, anti-Islam and opposed to Hausa/Fulani overload and exploitation.

The implantation of a church with nationalistic tendency by the Sudan United Mission fueled existing biases among the dominant Christian indigenes toward their perceived Muslim opponent, creating what Paul Ricoeur describes as a destructive hermeneutic of suspicion. In the words of Scott-Baumann, “Ricoeur recognizes that suspicion can function to endorse our beliefs, as we become unquestionably suspicious and unwilling to learn by avoiding conversations with the ‘Other.’” In this context, the Christian missions in Jos Plateau were suspicious of intended Islamic domination and expansion. The question remains whether the hermeneutic of Christian nationalism hindered collaborative dialogue with Muslims and thereby enhanced Christological exclusivism?

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Whereas scholars like Matthew Hassan Kukah\textsuperscript{121} and Yusufu Turaki\textsuperscript{122} are silent over the role of Christian nationalism in the history of religious violence in northern Nigeria, others like Niels Kastfelt,\textsuperscript{123} Paul Chunun Logams,\textsuperscript{124} and Nanyak Barko Gaifa\textsuperscript{125} agree on the impact of the Scottish missionaries in developing the Christian nationalism that thrived in Jos Plateau and Southern Kaduna. More particularly, Elizabeth Isichei’s work treats the theme of Christian nationalism as lending to recurrences of violence and unrest in Plateau State.\textsuperscript{126} The hostile approach of the Sudan United Mission toward evangelization of the non-Christian in Jos Plateau and other northern Nigerian cities was described as merely a show of imperial power and the coming to being of internationalism.

British Protestant missions in the high imperial era proved capable of combining distressingly crude expressions of imperial pride and racial prejudice with a quite genuine and continuing evangelical internationalism that reached its peak at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.\textsuperscript{127}

The delegates at the 1910 conference largely comprised the non-conformist\textsuperscript{128} Christian world with the exception of some African Christians, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox who gathered to discuss mission to the non-Christian world. According Brian Stanley, “no indigenous

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\textsuperscript{123} Niels Kastfelt, \textit{Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity} (London: British Academy Press, 1994).
\textsuperscript{127} Stanley, \textit{Mission, Nationalism and End of Empire} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm Eerdmans, 2003), 4.
}
black African Christian was originally deemed worthy of an invitation to Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{129} The conference had eight commissions. The fourth commission, titled “Missionary Message in Relation to the Non-Christian World (June 18, 1910),” specifically advocated for a conversion of the “animistic heathens” from the ravages of Islam through rigorous evangelism.\textsuperscript{130}

Although there was a general sympathy towards the other world religions, sinister observations were made about Islam by leading missionaries from the Islamic world that are worth noting.

W. St. Clair Jisdall from the Persia Mission submits that “Islam cannot be said to be a preparation for the older religion of Christianity, but was on the contrary one of the greatest hindrances to the spread of Christianity.” Two Missionaries from Nigeria, W. R. Miller and T. E. Alvarez, declared that “only a superficial knowledge of Islam will ever lead Missionaries to see many points of contact between it and our faith;” Henry Jessup from the Beirut Mission argues against the hoary supposition “that Islam was a kind of quarantine of the nations previously pagan and idolatrous, through which they would the more readily pass on to Christianity, had been disapproved by the reality that it was easier to convert a heathen tribe to Christianity than one who had first converted to Islam....\textsuperscript{131}

In the mind of most representatives at the conference, Islam constituted a threat to Church implantation. Islam was declared inimically dangerous and unfit as preparatio-evangelica.\textsuperscript{132} The message of the conference to Protestant missionaries worldwide was strictly that of non-tolerance and anti-Islam sentiment.


As a product of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, the Sudan United Mission (SUM) inherited an exclusive Christological attitude towards Islam. At Edinburgh, Islam was declared a hindrance to the success of Christian missions in the colonies. This negative approach led to a pan-Islamic movement fostering Protestant collaboration and ecumenism. The findings of Ayandele provide support for the view that the formation of SUM has historical links with the British desire and design to counteract the propaganda of Islamic Wahhabism, which was viewed as the origin of Usman Dan Fodio’s jihad. The intent was simply to establish a pure Christian kingdom with a separated identity from both Muslims and adherents of the Traditional Religions. Rev. H. G. Harding’s caution about the resilience of Islam in 1917 is worth noting.

The real difficulty is that the Church of Christ does not realize the vital character of the conflict with Islam. She realizes the danger no more than she did in the year 625. We think of Islam as one among the many old world religions hastening to inevitable extinction before the advance of knowledge and civilization. We think of it as a religion founded and extended solely by the sword, and with the dwindling of Mohammedan temporal power are content to believe that all dangers to our Faith is past. We forget that today no error can be, if indeed it has been, successfully propagated by physical force alone. The real danger is and always has been the vital energy of Islam, and its determined aspirations after universal dominion. Islam is the “Germany” of world religion.... Islam has been in the past strong enough to defeat the Christian Church in her own stronghold; it is extending today at the rate which is the surest evidence of unimpaired vitality, and the Church is doing but little to check its progress.

The outcome of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference on Missions had an adverse effect with regard to Protestant hermeneutics and evangelism relations with non-Christian religions. The

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voice that resounded from the 1910 conference was unequivocally clear about its goal and divine mandate for the future of Mission to non-Christians.

Christian religion is superior to every other religion that exist or has existed upon earth, and …consequently we are both entitled and bound to try to persuade every tribe or nation which has not already become Christian to exchange its ancestral faith for our own.”

Similarly, the following excerpt was deduced from one of the reports from the Commissions.

Christianity claims to be, for all ages and people, the all sufficient and the only sufficient religion. A moral obligation attaches itself to such a claim. If Christianity be the only sufficient religion for all the world, it should be given to all the world. Christ’s command also lays upon the Church an obligation for nothing less than a world-wide promulgation of the Gospel.

Prior to the 1910 conference in Edinburgh, Islam had negative coverage in the West. As Edward Said observes, “yet there is a consensus on Islam as a kind of scapegoat for everything we do not happen to like.” Thus, at the conference, Islam was deemed to be responsible for the slave trade, religious superficiality, and its dangerous propaganda mechanism—jihad. The SUM had favorable reports about the prospects of Christianity among the ethnic group in the Middle Belt. Most characteristic of their testimonies were stereotypes and misinformation about Islam that abused the consciousness of delegates at the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. There was a note of urgency in missionary enterprise as recorded:

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139 Ibid, 114.
The Hausa and Nupe countries are now open to the preachers of the gospel. For many years earnest prayers have ascended from the lips of God’s people that the doors of these countries might be opened. Thank God their prayers have been answered and the door stands now not ajar, but wide open. But where is the army of occupation? The British force is in effective occupation, but what of the Army of the Church of Christ? The Gwaris, with whom I came into contact three years ago, begged me to send them teachers. These tribes will become Mohammedan if they do not become Christian.  

In the same way, Rev. J. Atiken sounded an alarm regarding the readiness for the indigenous people in embracing the Islamic faith.

Are not the fields here already “white unto harvest?” At present, they are open to us. If however, we do not quickly step in, from constant intercourse with Mohammedans under English rule, they will soon forget their old wrongs; they will embrace the religion of the false prophet, and be no longer open to us now. When I came out in 1898, there were few Mohammedans to be seen below Iddah. Now they are everywhere, excepting below Abo, and at the present rate of progress, there will scarcely be a pagan village on the riverbanks by 1910. Then we shall begin to talk of Mohammedan Missions to these places, and anyone who has worked in both heathen and Mohammedan towns knows what that means.

With the formal endorsement of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, the SUM began full scale evangelism of the Muslim territory of Northern Nigeria. The missionaries opted for an aggressive evangelism, supported by a hermeneutic based on racial superiority, of exclusion and Christian supersessionism over Islam and the African Traditional Religion. These hermeneutics of supremacy were evident in the final documents of the conference with particular reference to section of the documents that describe non-Christians as “heathen and uncivilized.” The most

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141 Ibid.

142 In *WMC* v. 4: 19, reference was made to the “heathen mode of thinking,” and also in *WMC* v. 3: 422; *WMC* v. 7: 88. Rev. Harvey, an American Missionary in the Congo, described the indigenous population as “totally uncivilized” and in desperate need of elementary education; Commission VII spoke of varying levels, low to high, of civilization among the non-Christian peoples in the world.” See Kim Kinacksi, 89-90.
astonishing reference to racial superiority based on hierarchy was found in the report of Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, titled “Among Primitive and Backwards People.”

In its aggressive approach to missions, the SUM undermined and sidelined the Niger mission, which was under the leadership of the indigenous Bishop Ajayi Crowther, who had a dialogical approach with emirs of Northern Nigeria. Besides their differences in mission policy with the CMS Missions, the SUM had strong affiliations with the nationalistic agenda of their home countries. As a result, the sudden takeover by SUM of the CMS Mission, headed by the indigenous Ajayi Crowther, created an air of mistrust. As Kim Caroline Senecki puts it,

Historians don’t agree on the reasons for the trumped up allegations brought against Crowther’s men in the 1881, but I believe the actions were part of a general shift in white missionary attitudes toward indigenous missionaries: earlier in the century, native pastors were seen as the future of the local church, but by the end of the century, white missionaries were questioning their very capability to lead local faith communities. Crowther’s pastors were discredited to make way for increased white missionary control, thus sparking the establishment of several independent African churches, not only within the Anglican denomination, but in other denominations as well.

The SUM group interpreted Crowther’s approach to mission through mutual negotiations with Muslim emirs and traditional chiefs as a sign of moral ineptness and an attempt to undermine the superiority of Christianity. For SUM, the Christian religion, as the religion of Great Britain, could not compromise with the religions of the inferior and uncivilized. Thus, with the systematic dismantling of the CMS Missions in the Middle Belt, more assistance was granted

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143 *WMC* v. 9: 238-71; quoted in Kim Kinacksi, 89-90.
to SUM by the colonial administration in Jos Plateau to hasten evangelism through education, medicine, and works of charities. Quick estimations and projections were put forth by zealous evangelical missionaries about the timely demise of Islam. It was predicted that Muslims would eventually surrender and embrace Christianity on the grounds of its superiority over Islam.

Thus, the SUM developed a hermeneutic of mistrust and a strategy of competition and confrontation with Islam.147 Not surprisingly, the missionary ambition failed woefully as Islam maintained its stature under the policy of indirect rule, and the initial effort to convert Muslims was a colossal failure. According to Ayandele, “the missionaries called the Sudan Party expected very quick results, for Brooke had calculated that within six months, much of Northern Nigeria would be converted...Not a single convert was made. One by one the Sudan Party fell off, either by resigning or by being invalidated home or by dying.”148

The question whether British non-interference policy149 and the indirect rule system were among factors that led to the failure of the missionaries in Northern Nigeria has caused much debate. A closer look at the data indicates that British colonial authorities had employed divisive policies to split Muslims and Christians. On many occasions, it pitched the Emirs against the Missionaries. Though it was true that “the British colonial authorities preserved Islamic identity in the North through the indirect rule policy, it was the case equally that Christian missionaries enjoyed the support, cooperation, and sometimes protection of the British colonial master.”150

For the most part, the missionaries accused the colonial authorities of putting economic interest ahead of the demands and urgency of the gospel. Temple Gairden offered an even more

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147 David Maxwell and Ingrid Lawrie, Christianity and the African Imagination (Leiden, Netherland: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2002), 61.
150 Jesper Svartrik, Religious Stereotyping and Interreligious Relations, 125.
splendid critique: “Contemporary British colonial policy was cowardly and unchristian...The British official may one day see that all this subservience to the Muslim and neglect to his own faith gains him neither the respect, gratitude nor affection of the people, but the very reverse.”

For these missionaries, British rule over Islam was synonymous with the idea of Christian reign and supremacy over the Muslim.

In other words, the colonial administrators actually undermined the fundamental role of the ideological use of religion in the ground scheme of colonialism: namely, that the Christian missions would continue to be at the services of the colonist and the British Empire. Kuum narrates the missionary frustration vividly: “Shall Great Britain thus send hundreds of her sons to conquer, rule, explore and traffic in the land, and shall the church maintain her two small mission stations among million of souls? The lands are in a temporary state of religious revolution...Islam is arriving and has arrived. Shall Islam prevail?

In the estimation of most missionaries, the colonial administrators failed to collaborate in the Christianization of the Muslims. On the other hand, although, it seems unpretentious that the British colonial administration in principle would bar missionaries from all of Northern Nigeria, in practice, the colonial administration to a larger extent supported the fundamental grand plan of the British government to stop Islamic advancement in the Sudan Sahara.

At various times, Scottish pioneer groups, like that of David Livingstone in the African scene and Mary Slessor in Southern Nigeria, played the dual roles of being both missionaries and

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153 Kumm Herman Wilhelm, 63.
154 Umar, Religious Conflict in Jos, 19.
representatives of British government. For instance, “the Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves Homes in Northern Nigeria, an institution of the SUM, has the sanction, sympathy and support of the British Government. Indeed the Mission has had no difficulty with representatives of the European government, who have invariably been friendly.” The fieldwork conducted by Salamone indicated moves by the SUM to create a united Christian uniqueness that would battle Hausa/Fulani Muslim identity.

With the political and religious unrest in Nigeria in the 1960s and 1970s, most expatriate missionaries faced massive repatriation to their homelands. As a result, the majority of mainstream SUM and SIM members merged into the ECWA and COCIN denominations as the core members of the SUM departed in 1977. Their departure brought to an end the initial puritan agenda of the missions: total conversion of the Muslims for Christ. While still maintaining its confrontational stance with Islam, the new Protestant mission, in collaboration with other Pentecostal and African initiated/independent churches, diverted its missionary activities towards revival and re-conversion (the born-again syndrome) of members of traditional Christian denominations through rigorous campus evangelism at universities and other institutions of higher learning.

2.5. Nostra Aetate and Christological Triumphantism

In the Catholic context, the interpretation and application of the texts and context of the entire Second Vatican Council have become the center of recent debate between conservatives

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156 See Efe Adogame and Andrew Lawrence, eds. *Africa in Scotland and Scotland in Africa: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Hybridxities*, 264.


and progressives. The question remains whether the Council constitutes rupture or continuity with Tradition? In a more specific fashion, the debate surrounds the correct interpretation of the document *Nostra Aetate*. Within the general framework of the Catholic Church’s relation to non-Christians, the question remains: Is *Nostra Aetate* a rupture or discontinuity with Tradition?

Evidently, *Nostra Aetate* broke new grounds in the Catholic Church’s attitude towards other religions. Historically speaking, the intent of the document was geared towards repairing the Catholic and Jewish relations. In this context it is restrictive in its hermeneutics and consciousness of the other religions. In the words of Lutheran scholar Paul D. Peterson, *Nostra Aetate*, “was both a breakthrough and disappointment.” As a breakthrough, it constituted the first positive step by the Catholic Church towards non-Christians since Nicolas of Cusa. The Church conscientiously accepts the truth value inherent in non-Christian religions—although to a varying degree. In this sense, it is not out of place to argue that *Nostra Aetate* as such is not a finished product, but a work in progress. As Grant Kaplan puts it, “the text of *Nostra Aetate* does not enact interreligious dialogue; it simply sets the stage for the Church to be engaged in such dialogue.”

According to John O’Malley, “even the use of such words as ‘dialogue’ indicate the Church’s shift in fundamental thinking: no longer, for instance, were non-Christians to be called...

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160 The Council was oblivious about the African Traditional Religions, Confucianism and Taoism.


163 Grant Kaplan, “Getting History into Religion?” 804.
‘pagans.’ Yet the question of how Catholic Theology engages non-Christian religions remains one of the central tasks for Catholic fundamental Theology.”

From a doctrinal point of view, the solemn proclamation of *Nostra Aetate* teaches a fundamental theological truth: namely, that God wills something good and noble in the other religious traditions apart from Christianity, which can collaborate through genuine dialogue with these religions in addressing the enigmatic and existential problems facing humanity. Despite the apparent ambiguity exuding from the historical complexity of *Nostra Aetate*, we see implicitly the Church’s first official positive attempt to inclusive dialogue with all religions based on their commonalities about the origin and destiny of man and their efforts to search for answers to the most existential question and the meaning of life.

The second paragraph of *Nostra Aetate* stands out the most in this regard. It reads:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.

However, it is also historically undisputable that *Nostra Aetate* was the reflection and the product of the culture and context of its time. In a critical appraisal of the Council, Paul F. Knitter opines that while “Vatican II forms a watershed in Roman Catholic attitude towards other faiths,” there still remains “a residual ambiguity in its understanding of just how effective the truth and grace within the religions are.” In like manner, Karl Rahner pushes the question a step further, “Do non-Christians attain salvation outside of or within the life of their religions as

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165 Austin Flannery, *Vatican II* (New Delhi: St. Paul’s, 1975), 653.
166 *Nostra Aetate*, #2, in Austin Flannery, *Vatican II*.
167 See Paul D. Peterson, 680.
such? Are such religions salvific in some manner or not?” The question is not explicitly answered.\textsuperscript{169} The central doctrinal statement of \textit{Nostra Aetate}, “that the Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions,”\textsuperscript{170} truly constitutes an open-ended proposition which can be reframed positively: “The Church accepts whatever is true and holy in these religions.” Regardless of the framing of the proposition, it left some pertinent questions unanswered: What are the Catholic Church’s criteria to judge what is true and holy in other religions? And will the Catholic Church accept as \textit{de jure} the salvific doctrine evidence in other religions, if it constitutes what is “true and holy”?

With reference to the \textit{de jure} salvific value of other religions, Catholic Church documents, both ancient and modern, uphold the age-old doctrinal position of regarding other religions and their traditions as \textit{preparation evangelica}. For instance, the \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church} states:

The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near since he gives life and breath to all things and wants all men to be saved. Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as “a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life.”\textsuperscript{171}

Thus, the Catechism develops the claim that non-Christian religions perform a rudimentary function in salvation history. The document \textit{Dominus Iesus} identified the fragmentary nature of these religions as being conditioned by the theological fact that they “contain omissions, insufficiencies and errors.”\textsuperscript{172} However, the plurality of religious experience


\textsuperscript{170} Ibid, 654.


\textsuperscript{172} Ibid; and \textit{Dominus Iesus}, 8.
raises more challenges for *Dominus Iesus*, as well as for the Catholic Church’s traditional viewpoint on *preparatio evangelica*.

In the light of the Church’s *preparatio evangelica* position, Peter Phan offers an interpretation based on the retrieval of the patristic *logos* theology. More important, however, is Phan’s distinction, between the incarnated *logos* and un-incarnated *asarkos*. This view adds a new vista to the debate on the salvific role of Jesus Christ in the grand plan of other religions. Phan submits that the activity of the Logos and the Spirit as manifested in other religions and traditions is beyond the ecclesiocentric and christocentric dimension of the activities of Jesus of Nazareth. Put differently, the incarnation of Jesus as the Logos did not exhaust God’s plan for salvation. According to Peter Phan,

> Religious pluralism . . . is not just a matter of fact but also a matter of principle. That is, non-Christian religions may be seen as part of the plan of divine providence and endowed with a particular role in the history of salvation. They are not merely a “preparation” for, “stepping stones” toward, or “seeds” of Christianity and destined to be “fulfilled” by it. Rather, they have their own autonomy and their proper roles as ways of salvation, at least for their adherents.  

Such a contrarian view must, nevertheless, be taken seriously for a coherent Christian response to the problem of religious pluralism. Phan’s contribution from the Asian perspective is similar to Panikkar’s in that it offers a non-Western dialogical approach to the question of religious pluralism. As a result, one cannot fail to notice the heavily loaded dialectical language and conceptual framework behind the drafting of this declaration on the non-Christian religions.

In structure, *Nostra Aetate* is Western in outlook. The document reflects and continues the European tradition of the dialectical hermeneutics of power and centralization.  

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reason, therefore, scholars from non-Western cultures, especially Asia and Africa, raise serious concern on epistemic grounds against the absolute claims evident in *Nostra Aetate*. The argument still holds that in *Nostra Aetate*, the Catholic Church officially but gradually moves away from exclusive claims of religious superiority and embraced religious pluralism *de facto*. Though the document also profoundly reshapes the Catholic theology of interreligious dialogue, reconfiguring it anew, yet there are within the document claims of theological exclusivism that obfuscate if not deny the fundamental *de jure* right of the other religions. Simply put, *Nostra Aetate* in its dialectical approach to interreligious dialogue treats other religions as mere objects of discourse and not as mutual-equal subjects.

Furthermore, in the context of interreligious dialogue in Jos Plateau, it is noteworthy that *Nostra Aetate* was the first Christian document, in principle, to accept Islam as a religion on the same footing with Christianity.\textsuperscript{175} Umaru refers to this influence in his recent work: “*Nostra Aetate* has been a source of inspiration within the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria, influencing religious circles in the country.”\textsuperscript{176} However, the recognition of Islam *de facto* does not erase the deep seated biases created over the years by the exclusivist hermeneutic that was established by the SUM and is employed, mostly by evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, today.

In a similar fashion, Iwuchukwu draws attention to the development of Christianity and its diversity in northern Nigeria and the social problems arising from the missionary evangelism

\textsuperscript{175} Peter Bernard Claude and Ian Linden, *Islam in Modern Nigeria: A Study of a Muslim Community in a Post-Independent State, 1960-1993* (Mainz, Grunewald, 1984), 129.

\textsuperscript{176} Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration* (Xlibis Cooperation, 2013), 93. Also, Umaru notes that Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN)—formed in 1956 is instrumental to the formation of later groups; Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)—1976; Christian Council of Nigeria; Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN/PFN); Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA/TEKAN).
of some denominations, as well as the exclusive theological assumption of many Christians.\textsuperscript{177} The implications of an exclusive Christology have far reaching consequences on Christians’ readiness to accept Islam as a religion \textit{de jure}.

Far more problematic within the context of Jos Plateau, however, are the traces of Christological triumphalism evident in the application of \textit{Nostra Aetate} and the exclusivist Christology propounded by the Plateau State evangelical wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). From the Catholic perspective, the position is further complicated by the posture of Christological superiority supported by the enforcement of the declaration \textit{Dominus Iesus}, regardless of the pastoral sensitiveness posed by militant Islam.

For the most part, there are actually sound reasons to raise the question of whether Christianity in Jos still upholds the age-old doctrinal position of regarding Islam and the traditional religions as \textit{preparation evangelica}—“a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life.”\textsuperscript{178} Put in a different way, in what ways is the Western Christological framework of dialectical hermeneutics, which underlies the semantics of \textit{Nostra Aetate}, relevant in framing the dialogical debate between Muslims and Christians in Jos Plateau?

As it stands, the vaguely inclusive language deduced from \textit{Nostra Aetate} and the exclusive, confrontational hermeneutics stance of the evangelical wing of CAN in Jos Plateau get in the way of mutual and genuine dialogue: namely, openness and an equal opportunity for each religion to stand on its merit and speak for itself from the bosom of its tradition.

\textsuperscript{177} Iwuchukwu, \textit{Muslim-Christian Dialogue}, 100.
In this regard, Panikkar opines that “‘dialogue’ is not just an external meeting with somebody who has other ideas than I have. Dialogue in the real sense arises precisely where I (or we) discover the same currents and problems within the religion of the ‘other’ as I (or we) find in my (or our) own religious world.” Besides, the pyramidal-hierarchical model of dialectical hermeneutics maintained by Nostra Aetate accords Christianity the leisure of putting itself in the order of priority in relation to the other religions.

Thus, Christianity alone and in relation to no-other but itself offers the standard for interreligious dialogue. Consequently, from this position of priority in addition to its ecclesiastical privileges and acclaimed license to divine immunities, the Catholic Church defines the theological suitability of the other religions, judging elements of their belief systems and practices to be worthy of what the Church considers as “true and holy.”

2.6. Review of Dialogue by Christian Association of Nigeria

Religious leaders from Islam and Christianity have adopted a reactionary approach to the 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008, and 2010 religious and ethnic crises in Jos Plateau. At the national level, the stage for the 2001 Jos crisis was orchestrated by debate over the declaration of Shariah in the core of Northern Nigeria. The application of Shariah law on the state level had enormous implication for true federalism and national integration. There were allegations of discrimination of Christians in political appointments at the federal and state government levels. Christians have fostered the debate in the political realm concerning the constitutional rights of fellow Christian citizens in a secular state, whereas for Muslims, secularism and Islam are

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179 Panikkar, Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 278.
181 According to Alhaji Yahaya Bawa, Secularism ... is in the final analysis a ... problem of the malfunction of the religious vision ... Islam, as the doctrine of absolute faith in God, negates everything secularism stands for. From its own metaphysical stance, ... which takes the reality of the Absolute for granted, secularism appears to be a
incompatible; thus from within Islamic spheres, the Shariah as an intrinsically religious concept that is the answer to, or is vastly preferred over, secular democracy.

The discussion here points to a relationship between religious rhetoric and violence. We will look at the politico-religious events that led to the formation Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). Most important to this work is the relationship between the Protestant wing of CAN in Jos and the Catholic Bishop Conferences of Nigeria (CBCN) on the Jos crisis. The question is did the utterances of religious associations prior to or during and after the Jos conflicts, escalate or deescalate the crisis?

Beginning with the role of the Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), in tracing the origins of CAN, Iheanyi M. Enwerem identified three political situations that led to its formation. “First, there was a centralization of power in the Federal Military Government (FMG). Second, there was a successful consolidation of power at the centre by the Hausa-Fulani Islamic ruling class. Third, there was the self-imposed mission, on the part of the military class, to work for the unity of the nation.”

There are several version of the origin of CAN. We adopt Cardinal Okogie’s account.

The Christian Association of Nigeria, as the name connotes, is an ecumenical association which embraces three big blocs — that is, at the initial stage. You have the Catholics known as the CSN (that is, the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria), the CCN (the Christian Council of Nigeria), and OTHERS (that is, those that belong to neither the CSN nor the CCN group). The Association came up (was formed) for a purpose, that is, following these ecumenical movements and then the injunction from the Pope or from Rome that we should try and talk to our Christian brethren. That was [in light of] the Second Vatican Council. So, the Catholic Bishops felt that something just had to be done along that line. We put our heads together and we suggested linking with the Christian Council of Nigeria.

disease of the mind … The same holds for the seemingly innocuous political interpretations of secularism, such as [the] Nigerian form of secularism which [has] equally corrosive effects on the mind. No matter how secularism defines itself… it is inextricable from the misperception of the absolute reality and therefore a path leading to untruth and misery. See “Secularism, Atheism Synonymous,” New Nigeria, January 23, 1997, pg.12; quoted in Iheanyi M. Enwerem, 171ff.

182 Ibid.
(CCN) ... to find the possibility of agreeing with the CCN. So we had a meeting [with the CCN] where there was accordance and an agreement ... to move together. But no sooner had we come together than we discovered that there were other groups that were neither Catholics, that is, CSN, nor CCN. So if we really wanted to form a virile Christian Association — a united one — we had to think about them. And that's how we came to get... the group we named ‘Others.’”

There is no doubt that CAN achieved monumental success in its response to national issues that bothered Christians in the Nigerian polity. CAN condemned Federal policies that were discriminatory to Christians.\(^\text{184}\) Foremost among them was the perceived domination of Muslims in executive positions in politics at the state and federal levels.\(^\text{185}\) Just as during the military era, CAN was compared to an oppositional party because it condemned the atrocities and abuses of the military dictatorship, so all through the Shariah debate, CAN was consistent in its opposition to the implementation of Shariah law in the twelve Northern States on the grounds that the law infringed on the human rights and religious liberty of non-Muslims. Accordingly, CAN asserted that

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\text{[t]he adoption of sharia by some states in Nigeria has continued to create a situation of unrest in which people are killed or maimed and thousands of others displaced from their homes and places of work.... Many indigenes of the state concerned continue to suffer in silence because they cannot defend their rights and have nowhere to relocate. We have warned repeatedly that the adoption of sharia as state law and the extension of its scope are flagrant violation of human rights of non-Muslims in a multi-religious society and a secular state like Nigeria.}\(^\text{186}\)
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\(^\text{184}\) Ibid.


The *Christian Day* magazine described CAN as “a leader in the anti-Shari’ah movement.”\(^{187}\) In response to this claim, Muslim leaders in the North accused CAN of the intent to “destabilize Shariah in Nigeria and counter Islamic religious propagation by portraying the religion as a religion of intolerance and violence....”\(^{188}\)

In the early years of the military dictatorship in Nigeria, CAN became the sole advocacy group for Christians’ right to religious liberty and the inculcation of democratic principles. The Rt. Rev. Anthony O. Okogie, as the national president of CAN between 1988 and 1995, was renowned for his fierce critique against structures of injustices through advocacy. While focusing on the ills of the military regime, CAN prudently avoided personal confrontation with Islam at the national level. The focal point of CAN under Okogie was a “conciliatory and interfaith understanding” approach that responded to the challenges posed by Islam through direct engagement and collaboration with Muslims in a non-confrontational way. In short, during Okogie’s tenure as president, CAN avoided the conservative evangelical approach that is characterized by prejudices and stereotypes of Islam. This non-evangelical method of dialogue attempts to overcome Islamophobia with Islamophilia.\(^{189}\)

Subsequently, Okogie’s successors—His Eminence Sunday Mbang (1995-2003) and the Most Rev. Peter Akinola (2003-2007)—abandoned this focal point of political advocacy for rigorous evangelism and a confrontational stance towards Muslims. The coming on board of a Christian sect described as “Others”\(^{190}\) into CAN changed its focus and identity. These new

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\(^{189}\) Andrew Shryock, *Islamaphobia/Islamaphia: Beyond the politics of Enemy and Friend* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010).
\(^{190}\) See Anthony Okogie’s interview above.
groups included the Christian National Revivalist group, ECKWA/TEKN, and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria. Before their admittance into CAN, these denominations had attempted but failed to establish a mega/national Church that would counteract the activities of Islam through rigorous evangelism and proselytism. Cyril Imo fostered the debate on the implications of the newly evangelical domination of CAN in the North and its renewed interest in aggressive proselytism and evangelism.

Under the leadership of Mbang and Akinola, (1995-2007), CAN assumed an evangelical and confrontational posture towards Islam. Accordingly, Dr. Mbang included in the task before CAN the development of a strategy to recruit a new crop of Christians who would appreciate and extol the virtues of honesty and accountability to take the center stage in the administration in the country. Mbang’s sermon drew the attention of the Christian youth to importance of bringing faith into politics. Nevertheless, Mbang’s call to responsible citizenship among the youth had pastoral repercussions, as evidenced in the aggressive evangelism embarked upon by the National Youth Wing of CAN, especially in the Northern states.

Further evidence supporting the militancy of CAN may lie in the findings of what Andrew Meldrum vigorously described as Archbishop Akinola’s “call to arms.” In the wake of the 2006 religious crisis, the following remarks were credited to Akintola:

From all indications, it is very clear now that the sacrifices of Christians in this country, for peaceful co-existence with people of the other faiths, has been sadly misunderstood to be weakness....May we at this stage remind our Muslim brothers

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191 These groups developed from SUM and the Canadian-based Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). They adhere to strict exclusive Christology and rigorous evangelism. The COCIN, Church of Christ in Nigeria or Hadaddiyar Ekkelesiyar Kristi a Nijeriya (HEKAN), in Hausa, and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria all traced their origin to the TEKAN. See Iheanyi M. Enwerem, The Dangerous Awakening.


that they do not have the monopoly of violence...in this nation. CAN may no longer be able to contain our restive youth should this trend continue.\textsuperscript{194}

Akinola’s famous anti-Islam utterance in 2006 has been linked to subsequent attacks on the Muslims by Christian youths.\textsuperscript{195} In a related event, Enwerem showed how CAN employed the youth wing of the association in political activism through its study group meetings. “These meetings, which are held rotationally in members’ homes, usually begin with songs from a variety of Christian hymns like ‘Glory, glory, ... His Truth is marching on,’ [‘The Battle Hymn of the Republic,’] ‘Soldiers of Christ Arise and Put your Armor On,’ and ‘Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus.’ As the titles of these songs indicate, they are meant to arouse sentiments of militancy for the Christian faith among the participants.”\textsuperscript{196}

Furthermore, there was a degree of correlation between songs of violence and media sources in the Jos crisis. For instance, the Jasawa respondents to the \textit{Human Right Watch} interview alleged that the Plateau Radio and TV Station played Bob Marley’s lyrics “Get up, stand up! Stand up for your right! Get up, stand up! Don’t give up the fight,” to incite the Christian youth to violence against Muslims.\textsuperscript{197}

Evidence of Christian supersessionism is borne out by research that shows an alliance of CAN with state politics under the regime of President Olusegun Matthew Obasanjo. Ebenezer Obadare describes this era of an unholy alliance between Pentecostal Christian and politics as the period of the “Pentecostalization of the governance and the rise of the ‘theocratic class’ that has

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\textsuperscript{196} Enwerem, 101f.
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\textsuperscript{197} \textit{Human Right Watch}, Interview Jos, October 3, 2001.
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been instrumental in constituting a discursive Muslim other.”

In a similar trend, Kalu Ogbu discussed “the demonization of Islam in Pentecostal rhetoric and practices to Christian Zionist and Hebraic sources of the glory of Israel.”

Responses from both Christians and Muslims pointed to CAN’s political extremism. The Muslim rejoinder to CAN came from Jama’atu Nasril Islamiyya (JNI)—translated Society for the Support of Islam. According to Foloya:

The JNI was the first major Islamic organization in Nigeria in post independence Nigeria, founded by the northern Muslim intelligentsia under the leadership of Premier Ahmadu Bello, the Sadauna of Sokoto...in 1962... According to Abubakar Gumi, one of the JNI’s founding members, the organization was born out of the desire to spread Islam and to educate Muslims about the tenets of the faith...After 1966, JNI continued to promote the interest of the unified north and the Islamic cause...The JNI saw itself as in direct opposition with the Christian Association of Nigeria on the issue of secularity. To improve its position with the struggle with Christianity, JNI spread to the south, seeking support from the Yoruba. It recast its mission as the representative of all Nigerian Muslims irrespective of their particularities of affiliation or beliefs. In 1973, JNI merged with the West Joint Muslim Organization (WESIOMO), forming the powerful Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), which was embraced by most Muslims, and recognized by the government as the main representative organization for Nigerian Muslims.

Both CAN and JNI were deeply polarized, full of hateful rhetoric coupled with the peddling of dangerous rumors. Based on the alleged involvement of CAN in political matters, the Secretary-General of JNI Alhaji Muhammad Kolo Biu had “questioned whether the incumbent National President of CAN [Sunday Mbang] is really a man of God; JNI went on then to accuse CAN of not being a religious organization but a political organization with the sole objective of


opposing Muslims and Islam by manipulating religious differences for selfish ends." Likewise, the founder of the National Association of Religious and Ethnic Tolerance, C. S. Momoh, admits, “I can say without fear of any contradiction that CAN (Northern Zone) and [Jama’atu Nasril Islam, a Muslim umbrella party] are the two main vehicles of religious bigotry and intolerance in Nigeria.

In the Jos Plateau, the late archbishop G. G. Ganaka had referenced the dangerous trend of militancy in CAN as a recipe for future violence and retaliation. Ganaka proposed a non-violence and considerate posture toward Muslims in Jos Plateau.

He opposed the mass demonstration of January 11, 1990, by Christians in the North because of the unnecessary risk to which it would expose Christians.... The Bishop-and the Youth Group wanted CAN to “believe God”, and allow him to change “unjust structures when their cup is full”. ... The prelate and the youth group, by implication, wanted to see CAN with a strategy in which friendly terms are maintained with the government, helping to control social unrest in the country — all with an aim of winning the government’s full respect and trust.

The role of CAN in Jos Plateau came under public scrutiny after the 2004 crisis in Yelwa-Nshar town. President Obasanjo had openly criticized Governor Joshua Dariye and the Reverend Yakubu Pam, the President of CAN in Plateau State, for their mishandling of the crisis. The Rev. Pam of the Assemblies of God, had questioned the judgment of President Obasanjo for showing up when Christians militias killed Muslims and not vice versa. President Obasanjo replied Pam: “You have the audacity to say that you did not hear anything from me. Did I hear anything from you? What meaningful thing have you contributed to make peace in this state other than being chairman of CAN? CAN my foot!” To this end, a ten-point Communiqué was issue by CAN in Plateau State asking President Obasanjo’s apology. “The communiqué titled,  

203 Interview with Archbishop G. G. Ganaka, in Iheanyi M. Enwerem, 171.
“Apologize Now, CAN Tells Obasanjo” was signed by the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) state chairman, Bishop Jonas Katung, Secretary of Baptist Conference, Rev. Nathan Nwachukwu, Methodist Bishop of Jos, Rev. J. Jaja and nine other leaders.**204**

Earlier during the 2001 crisis, Governor Dariye was also said to have been away abroad, despite security warnings of the impending crisis looming on the horizon.205 Dissatisfaction with the situation led President Obasanjo to declare a state of emergency in Plateau State. The treatment meted out to a “Christian state” by a “Christian president” did not augur well with the evangelical and Pentecostal members of CAN in Plateau State.206

From the Catholic perspective, the new Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos sought a middle ground and continued in the tradition of non-violence set by his predecessor Archbishop G. G. Ganaka. Incidentally, when Kaigama arrived in Jos Plateau in 2000, the crisis situation has reached its effervescent point. Obviously, Kaigama could not reverse the trend toward violence and retaliation practices already established by the Christian youth. As Kaigama reports:

During the 2001 crisis when our cathedral parish house and other churches were burnt in Jos, some youths came to me and said, “We are being killed, the Church must do something. Give us arms to fight.” I took them into the chapel and talked to them about non-violence and they listened. During another crisis they said they were targets of attacks. While others had weapons they claimed they only had stones. Once again they said, “We need arms, just as the others have.” My response was, “How do you expect that I order for arms and distribute them to you in the name of the Church?” In the November 2008 crisis, the level of destruction on both sides left us devastated. Many on both sides believe that the only solution is to fight to the end, and that the so-called dialogue and efforts at reconciliation are not yielding the desired results.207

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204 See Daily Champion, May, 14, 2014.
Unlike his evangelical predecessors, Archbishop Kaigama initiated the “Dialogue of Life” with Muslims, as the President of CAN and Chairman of the Inter-Religious Council for Peace and Harmony (IRCPH), in Plateau State. The late Emir of Wuse, Alhaji Haruna Abdullahi, who was the Chairman of the JNI in Plateau State, responded positively to Kaigama’s non-evangelical and non-confrontational method. This mutual co-existence and collaboration approach to inter-religious dialogue between CAN and JNI in Plateau State was the first of its kind in Jos, as well as all of Northern Nigeria. The quick intervention of CAN and JNI under Kaigama and Abdullahi produced lasting results. On account of their efforts, both received international recognition from MISSIO in Germany.208

Although relative progress was made in Jos Plateau among Christians and Muslims as a result of peace talks and other conflict resolution initiatives by CAN and JNI, under Kaigama and Abdullahi, pockets of reservations remained, nevertheless, in core members from both faiths. As Kaigama admits, “Some Christian leaders believe that I am ‘compromising.’ The emir says some of his people say he is a “sell-out.”209 Thus, research on the mutual collaboration between the emir and the archbishop in Jos Plateau supports the view that compromise as an integral component of dialogue is a sine qua non for peace between Christian and Muslims in Jos Plateau.

In sum, Ignatius Kaigama used compromise as a technique for conflict resolution both in Jos Plateau and at the national level as the President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). He denounced the confrontational and evangelistic posture of CAN under the Pentecostal leadership of Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, but the confrontation between Kaigama and Oritsejafor led to the suspension of Catholics from CAN at the national level. This trend raised

208 Kaigama, Peace not War, 157.
209 Ibid, 159.
anew the initial fear about the Pentecostal and evangelicals’ desire to use CAN as a platform to form a mega church with partisan political advancement and participation.\textsuperscript{210}

Thus, we see that the problem of Christian supersessionism over Muslims was never addressed as a possible trigger for religious unrest in Jos Plateau. Neither the Protestant wing of CAN nor the Catholic Church in anyway tackled the issue of inter-religious dialogue from within—by looking inwardly at the role of exclusive Christological rhetoric and how such views might inflame violence against Muslims. Thus, a genuine critique of exclusive Christology was muted in the various recommendations that advocate for peace and mutual friendliness. For this reason, this research seriously presents Panikkar’s point that a genuine ‘intra-religious dialogue’ should precede any serious effort in ‘inter-religious dialogue.’

2.7. Review of Islamic Response to Dialogue in Nigeria

The first official response from Muslims to Christian supersessionism targeted Christian evangelism and subsequently the threat from Western super-ordination. Muslims’ rejoinder came from the Northern intelligentsia with the formation of the JNI in 1962 by the Premier of that Northern region, Sir Ahmadu Bello,\textsuperscript{211} the \textit{sadauna} of Sokoto. Inarguably, “Bello’s era 1951-1966 marked the apogee of Northern unity.”\textsuperscript{212} When the British took over the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903 and until the establishment of JNI in 1962, Islam in northern Nigeria suffered a monumental setback from the British colonial policy of containment, appropriation, and

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{210} See letter from Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, President CBCN to Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, President of CAN. “Our Concern for Christian Unity,” dated 24th Sept. 2012, in \textit{Vanguard}, January 26, 2013.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{211} Sir, Bello was supported by prominent Islamic scholars and figures in the likes of; Alhaji Abubakar Gumi, the first grand Khadi of the northern Nigeria and the association's first chairman; Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, one time secretary-general for the association and \textit{sadauna} of Sokoto; and Ali Akilu, the secretary of the defunct northern Region. See Iwuchukwu, \textit{Muslim-Christian Dialogue}, 47f.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{212} Toyin Falola, \textit{The Power of African Cultures} (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 188.}
surveillance.\(^{213}\) As a result of the disadvantageous position of Islam after the 1960 political independence, the Sadauna took\[it as\] a personal duty to spread Islam to all areas of Nigeria where non-Muslims predominate. The determination prompted him to travel to different parts of northern Nigeria, particularly Southern Zaria, Plateau and the Tiv areas to teach Islam. He was liberal in his use of material gifts—money and other valuable gifts—to encourage non-Muslims to accept Islam.\(^{214}\)

Islam responded to Christianity in Nigeria on two fronts: first, it viewed Christianity as an appendix of Western civilization and culture. Thus, it perceived any democratic system of government as essentially Western in orientation. Secondly, Islam disagrees with Christianity on the definition of secularism and its application to the Nigerian State. For the majority of Muslims, Islam and secularity are incompatible. Consequently, within the context of Islamic constitutionalism, the concept of the Shariah is presented as a corrective for, and an alternative to, liberal Western democracies.\(^{215}\) From this perspective, we can refer to the late Ali Muzrui’s coinage of the word *shariacracy* “[as] a defense against unwanted cultural globalization [... and] an alternate to the Western constitutional and legal inheritance....”\(^{216}\)

As David Ogungbile observes, most Nigerian Muslims are from the Sunni tradition of the *Maliki* School that interprets and governs the Shariah.\(^{217}\) Hence, it needs to be remarked, that on account of the popularity of the Shariah among Muslims in Northern Nigeria, the British colonial authority did not abolish it all through its fifty-seven years of colonialism. Although colonial


authorities enacted policies that restricted the application of the Shariah in its entirety, they never excluded Shariah and its religious claims from the political life of Muslims in Northern Nigeria. It was rather the case, as J. N. D. Anderson observed in Northern Nigeria, that “up till [1960] this was the only place outside the Arabian peninsula in which the Islamic Law, both substantive and procedural, was applied in criminal litigation—sometimes even in regard to capital offences.”

The foregoing demonstrates that the issue of the Shariah is not new in the politics of northern Nigeria, as some circles seem to purport. Shariah has always been part and parcel of the religious identity of the Muslims in northern Nigeria. Though its practice has not been without flaws, it has existed continually in varying degrees and at different levels of emphasis.

The Emir of Kano, Lamido Sanusi, argues against the notion of the seamless practice of Shariah across political systems. For Sanusi, despite the fact that Shariah is fundamental to the fabric of Islam, it has always been understood within a particular political context. Taking a middle-ground position, Lamido argues that the concept of a universal application of Shariah across political cultures and systems by Muslims is problematic. Lamido elaborates further:

With the swearing in of elected executives of Nigeria’s fourth (or is it third?) republic in May 1999 the political system witnessed an explosion of hitherto repressed tendencies. One of the most dramatic was the decision of the Zamfara State government to implement the full provisions of Islamic law or Shariah in the penal code. The decision had a bandwagon (or to use Kissinger’s terminology, domino) effect on other predominantly Muslim states in the North with governors following suit with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Professor Ali Mazrui coined the term “Shariacracy” to describe the phenomenon of implementing shariah in a presidential democracy.

218 There were allusions to agitations from southern Muslims in Nigeria as far back as the 1940s, clamoring for the establishment of the sharia courts. See J. N. I Anderson, ed, The World’s Religion: Animism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism and Confucianism (London: Published by Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1950), 222-223.

The Shariah debate has been the number one response of Muslims to political independence in Nigeria. For the Muslim elite in the northern region, the practice of parliamentary democracy in line with the British political system constitutes another form of colonial domination. Since Western democracy and education are correlatives, any form of democracy will always be to the advantage of the Southern regions, which were the most educated. As such, the concept of Western democracy is seen by many Muslim as suspect. This suspicion is the reason behind the claim that Islam tends to flourish within forms of government other than Western democracy. As Saleem Qureshi admits,

An overwhelming majority of Muslim states consequently are military-ruled or military dominated. The only ideology that seems to be popular and effective in Islamic countries is the military ideology which, if anything, tends to be pro-military and excludes alternative ideology from gaining grounds. Thus, the trend of Islamic politics indicates a permanence of the past patterns of military domination and Islamic ideological support for military government.220

A closer look at the events that transpired during the military era in the Nigerian politics lends credence to Qureshi’s claim. Evidently, Islam regained its organizational stronghold through State support in Nigeria during the sixteen years of military rule (1983-1999). For instance, after the 1976 failed attempt to introduce a Federal Shariah Court of Appeal with Abubakar Gumi as grand khadi mufti, Muslims redoubled their resolve in 1979 during the constitutional debate, coming back with the same proposal of a Federal Shariah Court of Appeal. In 1986 also, under the Ibrahim Babangida military regime, Nigeria—though a secular state—was registered as member of the Organization to Islamic Conference.

Within the context of Jos Plateau, there was evidence of a Hausa/Fulani ethnic group re-organization and re-strategization, supported by a military regime. During this regime, the

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federal government policy was favorable to the migration of northern farmers and herdsmen towards the savannah area of the Jos Plateau. Another support ostensibly granted to the Hausa/Fulani settlers in Jos Plateau by the military decree under the Babangida regime was the controversial creation of the Jos North Local Government Area. This act by the military junta was perceived by Christians to favor the Hausa/Fulani Muslims. As observed by Osayande, since the creation of Jos-North through the State Creation and Transition Provision Decree Number 2 of 1991, the people of the area have known no peace. The once peaceful Jos has become a battle zone where lives and properties are destroyed at regular intervals. Jos, which was once famous for its tin mines, is now notorious as a killing field.221

2.7.1. Islamic fundamentalism: The birth of the Izala Sect.

The birth of the JNI in 1962 marked the beginning of Islamic post-independence organized reformation movements in Nigeria. By design, JNI was founded with the aim to “transcend divisions among Muslims, to promote Islamic schools and medical work, and to give a voice to all Nigerian Muslims.”222 From this, we understand that there was an implicit divide among the Muslim group. This divide is noticeable among the different factions within the Sufi brotherhood.223

A central figure in the JNI controversy was Abubakar Gumi, whose political dream for JNI was short-lived after the brutal assassination of the northern premier, Ahmadu Bello, in 1966. Research in the 1970s provided ample support for the assertion that Gumi’s political

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221 Osayande Omoikaro, “Inter-ethnic, Inter-religious and Inter-communal Conflicts in Nigeria: The Causes and Way Forwad,” in Andrea Konig, ed. Mission, Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence, Glaube und Denken (Peter Lang, 2010), 234.
222 See Iwuchukwu, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, 47.
223 For the political and religious implications for the in-fight between the Sufi brotherhood, see, Iwuchukwu, Muslims-Christian Dialogue, 48f.
ideology for JNI was sidelined by the traditional Sufi shuyak dominant group. Soon after its formation, there was evidence of fierce conflict, in the form attacks and counter-attacks, between Gumi and the mallams of the Tijaniyya and the Qadiriyya establishment over the authentic interpretation of the Shariah in relation to the formation of an Islamic polity. The acrimony between the Izala and Sufi brotherhood was becoming a national nightmare for Muslims.

According to Gumi, JNI needed rebirth and re-strategization in line with the original plan outlined by Sir Ahmadu Bello. The rejuvenation needed by JNI came with the formation of the Yan Izala movement in 1978. Gumi admitted the link between JNI and Izala in an interview: “Yan Izala in response to the efforts of the Fityah al-Islam is to bring the JNI under its control.”

The formation of the Yan Izala in Jos Plateau was accredited as an act of design and not an accident. The choice of Jos Plateau was primarily to counteract the Christian radicalization and evangelism at its source. From this account, we can understand why the two fundamental goals of Yan Izala were geared towards religious proselytism and the re-implementation of the Shariah. More important, however, is the development of an appropriate strategic response to Christian Campus outreach evangelism through the formation of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN). The outcome of the confrontation of the Muslim Students Society and the

228 Loimeier, 225.
Christian revivalists on campus marks the beginning of political radicalism and religious fundamentalism.
CHAPTER THREE
PLURALISM, INCLUSIVISM AND DIFFERENCE: TRADITIONAL
CHRISTOLOGY AND PANIKKAR’S CHRISTOPHANY

3.1. Introduction

It is true that the challenges posed to the Catholic Church and the entire Christian world by religious pluralism are numerous and insoluble. At present, no one theological position or school of thought can claim conceptual mastery of the problematics of pluralism. The Catholic Church’s approaches to the phenomenon of religious pluralism forms one of the most difficult conundrums for scholars. But the fact remains that, religious pluralism is not peculiar to postmodern era. In the words of Leuven theologian Terrence Merrigan, “Is it not something of an exaggeration to describe religious pluralism as the greatest challenge facing the Church of our day? After all, religious pluralism is nothing new. Christianity itself came into being in a world that was bubbling with religious diversity, or ‘religious pluralism,’ as we now call it.”¹ From this statement, it can be deduced that religious pluralism, either as a philosophical concept or a theological category, has been around quite a while; and, with the momentum granted by the postcolonial critique of postmodern meta-narratives, religious pluralism has taken a different dimension and has come to stay.

There are countless books and articles on the nature and purpose of religious pluralism. Most of the works stem from the heart of the theology of religion which emerged shortly before, during, and after Vatican II.² An inclusivist theological approach to non-Christian religion is the

hallmark of the theology of religion that came out of the conciliar documents. However, for proponents of religious pluralism, either an exclusivist or inclusivist model to the theology of religions has become grossly inadequate within both postmodern and postcolonial context. As Panikkar himself acknowledges, “we do not possess so far a theology of religion worth the name for the geographical and historical coordinates of our times.”

Subsequently, the opponents of religious pluralism continue to question its presuppositions as well as its basic assumptions. Foremost is the question of whether pluralists—like John Hick—have not become the victim of their own criticism. Panikkar, for one, opposes the idea of pluralism as mega-system.

Pluralism in its ultimate sense is not the tolerance of a diversity of systems under a larger umbrella. It is not a supersystem.... The problem of pluralism arises when we are confronted with mutually irreconcilable worldviews or ultimate systems of thought and life. Pluralism has to do with final, unbridgeable human attitudes.... We speak then of two different, mutually complementary, although apparently opposite, attitudes, beliefs, or whatever.

By and large, religious pluralism raises the fundamental problem of difference—the difference initiated by the otherness of the other. The central question remains: is the existence of the other religious traditions simply a sociological de facto matter, or is it theological de jure in nature? In a theological sense, the question remains: how does Christian theology seek to maintain the universal salvific significance of Jesus while simultaneously professing Jesus’s particularity? Thus, Jesus Christ’s concreteness and particularity in mediating the divine

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presence in salvation history remains the banner of Catholic theological thinking and as well the subject matter of *Dominus Iesus* (DI).\(^7\)

Throughout their history, Christian theologies have approached religious difference through either rigorous exclusivism, moderate inclusivism, or radical pluralism.\(^8\) Christian exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism\(^9\) models have fallen short in interpreting the reality of the presence of otherness in the other, in that these positions contain some form of either exclusivist or inclusivist views, even though implicit, of Christianity as the religion with universal normativity.\(^10\) Thus, the relevant question of the *de jure* salvific significance of the other religions is left unanswered.\(^11\)

Christian theology is faced with a double dilemma; first, the predisposition to totally ignore the divine manifestations evident in other religions—exclusivism; and second, the tendency not to subsume the other religious traditions—inclusivism. Besides, for Christian theology to be relevant, it cannot simply ignore the other religions or claim to speak on their behalf. As Diane Eck suggests, “the complexity of today’s religious and scholarly worlds

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\(^7\) Merrigan, 72; *Dominus Iesus* will be rendered DI henceforth.


\(^9\) Especially John Hick’s version of pluralism.


\(^11\) In attempting to give a theological response, *Dominus Iesus* referenced *Lumen Gentium*, no. 62, and John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 5, in the use of the term ‘participated mediation,’ to depict the salvific role of non-Christian religions. See Merrigan, 79.
involves every student of religion in multiple conversations, with many voices insistent on being heard on their own terms.”¹²

Christian theology has been in a stalemate since the declaration of *DI* and its critique on religious pluralism. According to *DI*, “The Church’s constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by the relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* but also *de iure* (or in principle).”¹³ The deadlock has been between the defendants of orthodoxy, with renewed commitment to particularity on the one hand, and the urgency for Christological revisionism on the other. Inarguably, the challenges posed by religious pluralism did not disappear with the declaration of *DI*. Rather, the question of religious pluralism, both *de facto* and *de jure*, has stubbornly remained, defying the solutions proposed by various theologies of religions.¹⁴ Hence, the search for an authentic theological method that draws from the Christian traditions, and yet, transcends the tripology of “exclusivism, inclusivism, and monological pluralism”¹⁵ leads to an exploration of Panikkar’s mystical approach to Christian theology.

Instantiating Panikkar’s dialogical pluralism takes seriously the concerns raised by *DI* on two levels. First, it responds to the clarion call to theologians to raise “new questions” by “pursuing new paths of research and advancing proposals” and, second, “to explore” the ways in

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¹³ See *Dominus Iesus*, No.4.

¹⁴ See Francis X. Clooney’s critique of the theology of religions and his advocacy for the comparative theology. According to Clooney, “theology of religions reflects from the perspective of one’s own religion on the meaning of the other religions, often considered merely in general terms. By contrast, Comparative theology necessarily includes actual learning another religious tradition in significant details. In brief, neither replaces the other. Neither is merely a prelude to the other; nor is defective because it does not perform the task of the other.” Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders* (Meldon, MA: Wiley/Blackwell, 2010), chapter 5.

which “historical figures and positive elements from other religious tradition may fall within the divine plan of salvation.” Furthermore, paragraph number 21 of DI is quite impressive in this regard:

With respect to the way in which the salvific grace of God—which is always given by means of Christ in the Spirit and has a mysterious relationship to the Church—comes to individual non-Christians, the Second Vatican Council limited itself to the statement that God bestows it “in ways known to himself.” Theologians are seeking to understand this question more fully. Their work is to be encouraged, since it is certainly useful for understanding better God’s salvific plan and the ways in which it is accomplished.

Although no particular theologian was named as the direct target of DI, there are sound reasons to believe that the document may have been directed, first, at Jacques Dupuis and indirectly to Raimon Panikkar and his other Asian counterparts—possibly Peter Phan. Furthermore, DI speaks about “the eclecticism of those who, in theological research, uncritically absorb ideas from a variety of philosophical and theological contexts without regard for consistency, systematic connection, or compatibility with Christian truth.”

For the most part, under the leadership of Joseph Ratzinger (1992-2002) as the Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, the term “pluralism” has a negative connotation and its use as a theological tool is almost anathema. In DI, Ratzinger strongly opposed the hermeneutics of “tolerance and otherness,” as proposed by pluralist theologians, notably Jacques

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16 Dominus Iesus, paragraphs 3 and 14; quoted in Merrigan, 71.
17 Dominus Iesus, paragraph 21 references Vatican II, Ad gentes, no 7; quoted in Merrigan, 77.
19 Dominus Iesus, 4.
20 Abbreviated henceforth as CDF.
Dupuis and, more lately, Peter Phan. In a significant contrast, he replaces it with the hermeneutics of “preparation and rejection.” As Ih-Ren Mong points out, “By preparation Christianity is linked with other religions in the covenantal relationship, and [Ratzinger] believes that other religions also speak of God and lead people to him…[,] as rejection of the other religions, he believes that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation….” Ratzinger does not hesitate to elaborate further the position that the teaching of the Church about the unity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ in relation to the other religions is not a matter of intolerance but truth.

As these theologians sought to explore new path of research the ways in which “historical figures and positive elements from other religious tradition may fall within the divine plan of salvation, they were censured by the same CDF for propounding theories that advocate religious pluralism, not only de facto but also de jure (or in principle). Cardinal Ratzinger disputes the disproportionate theological importance given to the non-Christian religions that portrays them not as “extraordinary paths of salvation, but precisely ordinary ones.” Ratzinger quotes Scripture: “There is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:7).

Clearly, the document is not coherent in its references to the subject-matter of relativism as synonymous to the movement described as religious pluralism (#20). Seemingly, DI does not

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22 See Dupuis’ response to the CDF in Jacques Dupuis, Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue.
23 The USA Catholic Bishops Conference and the CDF contends that Phan’s work was in violation of the core tenets of Dominus Iesus, namely, the definitiveness, uniqueness and universal validity of Jesus Christ for all religions. See Peter C. Phan, Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).
24 Mong, Dialogue Derailed: Joseph Ratzinger’s War Against Pluralist Theologians.
26 Dominus Iesus, 3 and 14.
27 MacPherson, Critical Reading of Raimon Panikkar’s Thought on the Trinity, 3.
28 Ibid.
differentiate between the various brands of religious pluralism; rather it simply assumes that
religious pluralism justifies relativism,²⁹ which equally endangers the Church’s mission to
evangelize.³⁰

Terrence Merrigan’s simplification of the different nuances of religious pluralism
addressed by *DI* is helpful:

The conviction that there are a variety of equally legitimate ways of relating to
God is at the heart of the so-called pluralist theology of religions. Defenders of
this view of things generally appeal to three major arguments to defend their
position. The first is the so-called historical-cultural argument, namely, that all
our knowledge, including our knowledge of God, is relative. This means that it is
dependent on a particular and limited point of view, a particular and limited
culture, and a particular and limited set of ideas. The second argument is the so-
called theological-mystical argument, that given the mysterious character of God,
the fact is that God will always be more than we can say about him. The third
argument is the so-called ethical-practical argument, namely, that the urgent need
to address the problem of injustice in the world takes precedence over any dispute
about doctrinal claims. We can summarize these arguments as (1) relativity, (2)
mystery, and (3) justice.³¹

*DI* restates the following uncompromising areas as targets for negative theological
distortions offered by religious pluralism.

As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded; for example,
the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the nature of
Christian faith as compared with that of belief in other religions, the inspired nature
of the books of Sacred Scripture, the personal unity between the Eternal Word and
Jesus of Nazareth, the unity of the economy of the Incarnate Word and the Holy
Spirit, the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ, the
universal salvific mediation of the Church, the inseparability—while recognizing the
distinction—of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Church, and the
subsistence of the one Church of Christ in the Catholic Church.³²

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²⁹ *Dominus Iesus*, no. 4.
³⁰ Ibid., no. 2.
³¹ Merrigan, 68; See also, Paul F. Knitter, “Preface,” to *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a
³² *Dominus Iesus*, no. 4.
No doubt the dominant concern of *DI*, first and foremost, revolves around the Christological question and the implication of such on the doctrines of the Trinity and ecclesiology. Thus, from the Christological perspective, Panikkar raises the question of whether a non-relativistic theological investigation can be done without regressing to inclusivist patterns in the theology of religion? Panikkar advances a claim for a non-inclusivist and non-supersessionist Christological framework that responds to the challenges of religious pluralism both *de facto* and *de jure*.

Panikkar’s whole theological endeavor mirrors Vatican II *Ad gentes*, #21, which states that God bestows salvific grace to non-Christians in ways known to Himself. Panikkar will argue further that the unknowable God cannot be adequately comprehended through human logic. God is a mystery who is knowable through myths. Panikkar’s philosophical and theological presuppositions are hinged on his critique of the postmodern monotheistic construct of the Divine that values “the one” over and against “the many,” in a typical binary oppositional fashion.

Panikkar is not alone in this critique of absolute monotheistic systems and its link to the imperialistic structures that pave the way for colonialism. The end of colonialism and the birth of new contextual theological methods raise the greatest challenge to the development of

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34 See Panikkar attempt to construct Theology beyond monotheistic demands in *The Rhythm of Being*, 120-155.
doctrines and the consequent widening of the horizon of Western traditional theologies. According to Jenny Dagger, “Surely, the project of ‘theology of religion’—Christian exclusivism and inclusivism and Christian-initiated pluralism—is compromised by Eurocentric imperialistic attitudes that are resonant with colonial modernity.”36

From the works of frontrunners like Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, it is clear that the epistemological foundations of postcolonial studies within the social sciences now control the field and its content.37 This era calls for a radical retrieval and analysis of texts from the reservoir of cultures and countries once under the shackles of European colonization. Within the context of the hegemonic use of power as knowledge, postcolonial thinking poses the central question of the origin, authenticity, and circulation of literary sources between the colonized and the colonizers. Should the subaltern speak at all? If yes, how should the subaltern speak? In what language can they speak? And upon what subject matter can they authoritatively speak?

Several disciplines have adjusted their hermeneutics of the “other,” in response to the challenges raised by postcolonial studies and pluralism. Theological research among the colonized world is yet to accomplish the level of success recorded by other disciplines with the social sciences. As rightly pointed out by R. S Siguirtharaja,

While these disciplines are coming to terms with the reality of colonialism, what is striking about systematic theology is the reluctance of its practitioners to address the relationship between European colonization and its field. There has been remarkable hesitancy to critically evaluate the impact of the empire among systematic theologians, both before and after the European expansion.38

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Previous research on Panikkar’s religious pluralism has dangerously aligned the philosophical foundations of his pluralism with Kantian epistemology. On the theological front, critics of the pluralism of John Hick, and in some cases Paul Knitter, have uncritically associated their position with that of Panikkar. Others have simply merged Panikkar with Jacques Dupuis. In any case, the above perceptions about Panikkar are partially correct. The truth is that Panikkar’s religious experience transverses the tripology—exclusivism,\(^{39}\) inclusivism,\(^{40}\) and pluralism—to post-pluralism. The argument is that Panikkar is a pluralist \textit{sui generis}. His work, unlike that of the others, provides a corrective to and an exemplar for a contextual theological endeavor that genuinely seeks to understand Faith in the concrete human experience.

\subsection*{3.2. The Challenge to Traditional Christology}

The biblical question\(^{41}\) posed by Jesus Christ to his disciples (Matt. 16:13-16) on the plains of Caesarea Philippi begins the enigmatic quest about “who” is Jesus Christ and “what” plans Jesus has for the eventual salvation of the Jew and the whole world. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents acclaimed Jesus Christ as God. The answers provided by Peter and the other disciples were derivatives from already known categories borrowed from the Jewish prophetic and wisdom literatures. The conflict of interpretations demonstrates that early Christian responses to the question of who is Jesus Christ do not form a consensus. As a result, scholars like Soares-Prabhu differentiate between New Testament and traditional Christologies. He notes that

\begin{itemize}
  \item\(^{39}\) Panikkar was a member of the conservative group Opus Dei.
  \item\(^{40}\) See Panikkar’s view of Christianity as a religion \textit{sui generis} in relation to Hinduism; ‘if Hinduism claims to be the Religion of Truth, Christianity believes herself to be the Truth of Religions. The Unknown Christ of Hinduism’ (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), ix.
  \item\(^{41}\) “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:13-16) See Zaine Ridling, ed., \textit{The Bible: New Revised Standard Version} (USA, 1989).
\end{itemize}
unlike traditional dogmatic Christology, which is exclusivist and works for the imposition of a single “orthodox” Christological model, New Testament Christology is inclusive and pluriform. Every community evolves its own understanding of Jesus responding to its own cry for life. And because life changes, Christologies change too. The New Testament preserves all these different Christologies, without opting exclusively for any one among them, because it does not wish to offer us (as dogmatic theology pretends to do) a finished product to be accepted unquestionable by all. Rather, its pluralism indicates a christological open-mindedness, inviting us to discover our own particular Christology, that is, the specific significance of Jesus in our situation in the Third World today. The New Testament then does not offer us a specific model for our Christology…Instead, [it] gives us our model for christologizing by mediating an encounter with Jesus and inviting us to articulate his significance for the world today in our own local languages, just as the New Testament writers did in their own.42

From the foregoing, it is clear that there exist no ready-made answers to the Christological crisis. Christians have addressed the question with the available philosophical and linguistic tools at their disposal. As a result, most positions were based on perspective rather than on correctness—and no one perspective completely captures both the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ.

The aim of this historical excursion into the genesis of Christology is to point out scriptural variations about the person of Jesus Christ. There was no orthodoxy but heterodoxy in terms of Christians’ responses to the question of who is Jesus during the New Testament era. Although scholars from various Christian denominations and different theological schools of thought may disagree on the primacy of model, yet their disagreement and lack of uniformity, in the words of Galvin, “serve as a warning against facile attempts to reduce Christological reflection to a single title or a single perspective.”43

43 Fiorenza and Galvin, 260.
Consequently, the reliance on this passage later by the Catholic Church to create a certain preference for Christology from “above,” against the Christology from “below,” has been pointed to as the beginning of the Christological debate. The point is that other forms of Christology existed before the development of classical dogmatic Christological formulas in Nicaea (321), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). Helmut Koester, in his work on early Christian Christologies, outlined four basic models of Christology that existed.

1). An initial type, possibly the most primitive of all, conceived of Jesus as Son of man and coming Lord. Eschatological in focus, this parousia Christology continued Jesus’ own future-oriented preaching…. 2). The second Christological trajectory looks back on the events in Jesus’ public life, especially his miracles and exorcisms…. 3). A third trajectory, wisdom Christology, parallels the second in its concentration of Jesus’ public life, but sees him as a teacher rather than miracle-worker…. 4). Lastly, a fourth Christological model directed its attention to Jesus as crucified and raised from the dead.

From the exegetical point of view, other critics like Edwards Schillebeeckx argue that the primordial form of Paschal Christology that prefigured Jesus as an eschatological figure alongside Moses precedes the fourfold model outlined by Koester. Similarly, George MacRea identifies adoptionist Christology as equally primitive in line with Koester and Schillebeeckx’s proposals.
The words of Galvin best illustrate the current status of the Christological debate and scholars’ critique of the Catholic Church’s attempt to sustain a classical Christology that is infallible in construct and final in perspective:

A third position judges the early councils’ doctrine to be a true expression of the reality of Christ, and usually considers itself still bound by their authoritative regulation of Christological language. Nonetheless, it finds the development of dogma marked by a gradual narrowing of the question. While issues concerning Christ’s divinity and humanity are important, they are not the only significant question for Christology to address…. Although the patristic period was moved by stereological concerns; its final formulations do not incorporate an explicit soteriology. Thus the conciliar teaching, while true, neither exhausts the matter nor determines the agenda for all future Christological investigation. In my judgment…Christology is free to develop new terminology and to address issues that the early councils did not face.48

Similarly, Aloys Grillmeier’s *Christ in Christian Tradition* attempts to articulate a systematic presentation of the various philological/philosophical and theological understandings of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) that emerged in the early Church, beginning with the “Jesus of history,” as recorded in scriptures to the emergence of the “Christ of faith and the creed,” of post-apostolic and patristic times up to Chalcedon. After a thorough biblical exegesis of Christological statements in the synoptic Gospels, the Johannine literature, and the Pauline corpus, Grillmeier strongly opposed the dominant views of some Germans scholars impose tension and discontinuity between the Jesus of history and Christ of faith. Scriptural evidence supports the pre-existent Son of God according to the Spirit and also the existent Son of David according to the flesh. These differences do not harm an essential unity.

Furthermore, rather than a narrowing of the subject matter of Christology, Grillmeier draws insight on how during the patristic era theological debates are rejuvenated and kept alive owing to the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity. According to Grillmeier, “the content of

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48 Fiorenza and Galvin, 274.
the *kerygma*, however, was always the person of Christ and his uniqueness. The theological struggles of the patristic period was nothing else than an expansion of this central question; this gives them their continuity.” Drawing on the views of Grillmeier and Galvin, we argue that for the Christological debate to continue in the post-colonial context, other cultural perspectives must be at liberty to ask and even attempt to answer the question about the person of Christ, and his uniqueness from their *sitz im leben*.

Grillmeier also raised the point about the dilemma stemming from Christianity’s double heritage: that of maintaining the Judaistic monotheism and adjusting to the Hellenistic philosophy of logos. The question has been how to maintain a balance between the inherited monotheistic doctrine of Godhead from Judaism and God’s relationship to the Son, the Word made flesh. In order to make the Christian doctrinal statement of the oneness of God, who was and who is in Christ, intelligible to Christians, acceptable to the Jews, and attractive to the pagans and Gnostics, the use of the Greek and Latin languages and philosophy were indispensable. In this whole process, some apologists like Tatian cautioned about the tendency of a Hellenized Christianity, whereas the likes of Justin and Origen saw in pagan philosophy valid ingredients for theological reflection.

In tracing the implications of traditional Christology and its treatment of difference throughout the history of Christianity, we subscribe to Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmeuller’s position: that there is no concrete, coherent and comprehensive strategy in the Bible to address a non-Christian religion.

Many of the biblical themes we have discussed, such as the expansive nature of religious experience, the revelation of God in creation, the recognition of the Gentiles’ capacity to respond to the Gospel and the awed awareness that God and

his Spirit range far beyond the boundaries of human expectation, are some of the aspects of Biblical data that suggest positive links with non-Christian religions.\textsuperscript{50}

Gerald O’Collins\textsuperscript{51} book \textit{Salvation for all: God’s other People} is of inestimable value and is a huge resource in this regard. In Knitter’s view, the fundamental understanding and “attitudes of the Roman Catholic towards other faiths, from the patristic age to the twentieth century, as a teeter-tottering between two fundamental beliefs: God’s universal love and desire to save, and the necessity of the church for salvation.”\textsuperscript{52} This openness and dialoguing with non-Christians, especially the pagan philosophers, is instrumental to the shaping of the logos-theology of the early Church Fathers. Underlying the theology of Justin’s \textit{Logos Spermatikos} (sower), Ireneaus’ \textit{Logos emphutos} (revealer), and \textit{Logos protreptikos} (conventional) in Clement, there is the presupposition that God before His incarnation in Jesus\textsuperscript{53} was already manifest in creation and human history and civilizations.\textsuperscript{54} In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin opined that the Jews before Jesus Christ may be saved if they participated in universal, natural and eternal good.\textsuperscript{55}

The use of the hermeneutics of logos-theology by the Church Fathers as a tool for dialogue had a positive result in their understanding of non-Christians: (1) It furnishes the early Church with philosophical terminologies (language) and (2) it facilitates the development of the concept “of the Logos as a divine ‘pedagogy’ toward things to come or—to use the expression

\textsuperscript{51} Gerald O’Collins, \textit{Salvation for All: God’s Other Peoples} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
\textsuperscript{52} Paul F. Knitter, \textit{No Other name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions}, 121.
which Eusebius of Caesarea would illustrate later as a ‘preparation for the gospels’ (*praeparatio evangelica*).”

Notice that the Church at this time was both a persecuted minority, locally situated and tribally built *sui iuris* under a bishop; sociologically, a tolerant approach to the non-Christian majority was necessary for its survival. It must be within this context that one can understand and apply the controversial axiom of ‘*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*’ (outside the Church, there is no salvation), which has been dangerously established and practiced as the Church’s response to non-Christians up until the twentieth century.

There is no instance in his writing in which Cyprian explicitly applied his saying “No salvation outside the Church” to the majority of people, who were still pagan in his day. According to Sullivan, “We know that he judged Christian heretics and schismatic guilty of their separation from the Church. Did he also judge all pagans guilty of their failure to accept the Christian Gospel and enter the Church? We do not know.” However, it is evident that the historical hermeneutical growth of “No salvation outside the Church” shows that its rigorous and universal application started shortly after Christianity was made a state religion by Emperor Theodosius I (379-395).

The axiom “No salvation outside the Church” in its negative and exclusive format has had a controversial history right from the beginning. According to Küng, the axiom has resulted

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59 See Merigan.
in more or less serious theological errors and has proved open to misunderstandings and duplicity especially in its reference to non-Christians:

Does this negative and exclusivist axiom lead to innumerable misunderstandings which continue to recur in spite of all interpretations both inside and outside the Catholic Church? Even if it were previously of help to the Church and her mission, it is certainly a hindrance to her today. And not only because the Church no longer forces anyone to believe in Christ out of fear of hell. The words are interpreted more often either as intolerance or duplicity: as intolerance when they are understood literally and exclusively in accordance with the old tradition; as duplicity when it means on the one hand that no one would be saved outside the Catholic Church, and on the other hand does not exclude the fact that people outside the Catholic Church are saved, in fact in millions and billions of them, the greater part of humanity.60

From the time of Augustine and his pupil Fulgentius of Ruspe to the Middle Ages and in papal and official church documents, the exclusivistic approach to non-Christian religions has been the model for interreligious relations. However, with the discovery of the New World by the navigators in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, along with millions of people who were non-Christian, a better balance between God’s universal love and desire to save and the necessity of salvation outside the church was orchestrated by the Council of Trent. “If pagans could not be baptized with water (in re), they could ‘through desire’ (in voto). If they follow their conscience and live morally, they were implicitly expressing their desire to join the church, and could thus get through the gateway to salvation.”61

This dilemma and challenge to the limit of an inclusive Church continued through the Middle Ages and through the Reformation and Counter Reformation eras. Central to the debate at that time was the Church understands of itself as sui iuris in relation to the State and other religions. This self-understanding of the Church in this era constitutes her “thesis and

61 Paul F. Knitter, No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward the World Religions, 123.
hypothesis” model of approach to non-Christians which, according John Courtney Murray, would yield different conclusions for Jews, pagans, and heretics.

The thesis asserts two general propositions. First, the state is bound not only on the natural law but also on the positive divine law whereby the church was established. Therefore the state has the duty, per se and in principle, to recognize by constitutional law that the church is a perfect society *sui iuris* and that it is the only religious society who has the right *iure divino* to public existence and action. Since Catholic Church is, by divine law, the one true religion, it ought to be, by law constitutional, the one true religion of the state. Whence it follows that no other religion may have, per se and in principle, a legal right to public existence and action within society. A religion that has no right to exist *iure divino*, can have no right to exist *iure humano*. Therefore, per se and in principle, all false religions ought to be “exterminated,” that is, put beyond the bounds of public life and social action.62

Care for religion, continues Murray, meant limited freedom for the Jews, tolerance for the pagan, intolerance for the heretic.63 The ideal Catholic church-state under the “thesis” model has a divine mandate to exist, is the one true religion, and is *ipso facto* the constitutional religion of the state, whereas the hypothesis model advocates for religious tolerance and a preference for a lesser evil in situations and circumstances where the thesis model cannot hold. However, the historical events of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the enthronement of reason and the Bill of Rights in 1791, which were the product of the Enlightenment among other factors, led to the collapse and downfall of the Papal States in 1859. The various struggles and contributions of John Courtney Murray and Pope John XXIII64 that led to the drafting of Vatican II’s most important documents on interreligious dialogue65 cannot be over emphasized.

63 Ibid., 48.
64 Pacemen Terris, 11, April, 1963.
In a critical appraisal of the council, Paul F. Knitter opines that while “Vatican II forms a watershed in Roman Catholic attitude towards other faiths,” there still remains “a residual ambiguity in its understanding of just how effective the truth and grace within the religions are.” Rahner pushes the question a step further, “Do non-Christians’ attain salvation outside of or within the life of their religions as such? Are such religions salvific in some manner or not? The question is not explicitly answered.”

Despite the apparent ambiguity, in *Nostra Aetate*, we see implicitly the Church’s first officially positive attempt to inclusive dialogue with all religions based on their commonalities about the origin and destiny of man and their effort to search answers to the most existential questions and the meaning of life. The central doctrinal statement of *Nostra Aetate*, “that the Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions,” is an open-ended one and can conversely be reframed in a positive way: “The Church accepts things that are true and holy in these religions.” A question yet remains unanswered: what are the Church’s criteria for judging what is true in other religions and whether that which is true is in any way either different or the same essential category with the fullness of the Truth possessed by the Church? Is it possible to have some values, doctrines, and belief systems as “True” that have possibly nothing to do with “Truth”? The answer is perhaps No. If that is the case, would the Catholic Church accept as “true and holy” the *de jure* salvific doctrine of salvation evident in other religions?

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68 Austin Flannery, *Vatican II* (New Delhi: St. Pauls, 1975), 653.
69 Ibid., 654.
The position of DI aggravates this relationship and raises more question than it sets out to answer. As Anne Clifford observes, DI “sets up walls of demarcation that devalue non-Catholic churches and support Roman Catholic supremacy over other religious traditions.” Similarly, another author remarks:

These men of whom the Declaration speaks all happen to believe sincerely that their own religions are the truth. Yet they were addressed by the council fathers as if they were misguided children who surprisingly manifest on occasion a certain amount of good sense. The overall impression created by the Document is certainly, though not intentionally, one of benign condescension.

In a fundamental way, Panikkar’s critique of traditional Christology rests on two essential but interconnected factors. First, Panikkar claims that traditional Christology functions within a mono-cultural context in attempting to answer the questions of the time. The use of a mono-theistic system to address issues of ultimate concern in an Indian setting proves ineffective. As a result, Panikkar advocates for an approach through multiplicity—the Advaita Vedanta experiencing of the divine. Accordingly, Panikkar’s thought “begins and ends with the affirmation that advaita is the realization of the fundamental oneness of reality without denying the plurality.”

Second, through his cosmotheandric principle, Panikkar reveals the implicit mystical/spiritual paucity inherent in traditional Christology, its inability to handle “difference.” This claim portrays Western Christology as saturated with phobia regarding difference and philia

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71 MacPherson, A Critical Reading of the Development of Raimon Panikkar’s thought on the Trinity.
72 Advaita is the heart of the Upanishads. In this worldview, The Absolute is beyond Transcendence and Immanence...it is neither one nor the combination. Rather all in all. See Panikkar, Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man, 31 – 32
for uniformity. The goal then is “to move from a tribal Christology into a Christophany less
bound to a single cultural current.”\textsuperscript{74}

To this effect, traditional Christology denotes the developments and formulations about
the person and uniqueness of Jesus Christ in Eurocentric settings that have a claim to finality,
immutability and universal applicability. In a broader sense, traditional Christology denotes the
Christology of the Magisterium. For Panikkar, the philosophy and language of doing Christology
is not immutable to change, especially in multi-cultural settings. The challenge before traditional
Christology remains whether it will accept as genuine the Christological reflections from other
cultural contexts.

In a sense, it is advisable to read Panikkar in light of the intellectual tradition and context
of his time. In addition, differentiating between early and later Panikkar aids the proper
contextualization of his main theological thrust. Early Panikkar battled with the supersessionism
implicit in fulfillment theology, which was championed by Jean Danielou and Romano Guardini.
Christianity, according to fulfillment theology, stands at the end of salvation history with all
other religions historically conditioned as precursors. Thus, “the tragedy of the precursor,”
according to Guardini, “is to wish to persist once revelation has arrived…There is a moment
…when the precursor becomes the enemy.”\textsuperscript{75} Panikkar’s early theological works seek to address
Christian supersessionism by charting a different path that calls for mutual respect through
dialogical attitude.

In Panikkar’s estimation, the universal salvation promised by Christianity cannot be
attained in other religious traditions without re-visioning traditional Christology to meet the

\textsuperscript{74} Panikkar, \textit{Christophany}, 162.
\textsuperscript{75} See Romano Guardini quoted in Jean Danielou, \textit{Introduction to the Great Religions} (Notre Dame, IN:
Fides, 1964), 22
contextual demands of non-Christians. Panikkar sees this missing link between Christianity and the religions (with particular reference to Hinduism) in the nomenclature of Christ. Panikkar develops his Christology on the axiom “Wherever God’s grace is, Christ is also there, since God’s activity in the world is always mediated by Christ.” Consequently, for Christianity to be relevant it must experience “the stripping of all external garbs and forms,” all “categories and formulas,” prejudices and judgments, in order to mystically recognize Christ where he is not obviously present, in Hinduism. Panikkar argues that the asceticism/Kenosis required by Christianity towards non-Christian religions is not contradictory to orthodoxy but makes orthopraxis a reality.

3.3. The Task of Christophany

At the beginning of his career, Panikkar considered writing a work titled The Unknown Christ of Christianity, who, he believes, exists in non-Christian religions, though hidden. Such a title suggests that Panikkar might have had in mind an aspect of the life of Jesus Christ that is yet unknown to Christians. From all indications, such a view would be redundant within the prevailing context of fulfillment theology, in which it would have been written. Panikkar’s final title, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism, though, appears to be more palatable at face value. However, it is Panikkar’s book Christophany: The Fullness of Man that encapsulates his critique of traditional Christology—namely, its inability to transcend the mono-cultural formulations that characterize Eurocentric hermeneutics. The hermeneutic key to Panikkar’s text rests heavily on the understanding of his theological anthropology. For Panikkar, the Western

76 Panikkar, Unknown Christ of Hinduism, quoted in Erik Ranstrom, “Christology after Dominus Iesus,” 47.
77 Panikkar, Unknown Christ of Hinduism, 25.
78 Komulainen, An Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion, 58.
79 Panikkar, Unknown Christ of Hinduism, xii.
80 In this work, Panikkar argues that the concept of Christophany is definitive of all. Thus, there is no need for converting the whole reality into Christianity. Panikkar, Christophany: The Fullness of Man, 15, 146.
anthropological construct of the autonomous man that is separated from spiritual sources has enormously influenced Christological investigation outside the Trinitarian realm. Panikkar adheres to the orthodox teaching about Jesus’ divinity and humanity—that he is true God and true man. Like the Fathers at Nicaea and Chalcedon, Panikkar has no qualms with the identity of Jesus Christ as one person, the Lord, Son of man, Son of God, the Logos—sarkos and a-sarkos, human and divine. The Christological question has always been about “the how”—namely, how Jesus’ humanity is related to his divinity and the implication of such a relationship for the identity of non-Christians. In this regard, Panikkar raises the problems involved in thinking about Jesus’ natures in the languages and logic of traditional Christology, which are foreign and incoherent to the context of Indian Christianity. Throughout the early formation of his Christology, Panikkar struggled to create a balance between the Cosmic Christ and the historical Jesus Christ. Thus, Panikkar coined the word “Christophany” to argue that from the context of Adviata mysticism, the conceptualization of Christ—as true God and Jesus the Christ as true man—has enormous implications for intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Panikkar distances himself from the presupposition of Western theological anthropology that separates Man [human] from God and the World. Panikkar’s anthropology forms the discourse on Man [human] on three levels: (a) man as individual at the perceptive/scientific level, (b) man as person in the social relational aspect, and (c) man as consciousness, the spiritual and mystical aspect of man—the adhyatmik level. Consequently, Panikkar thinks that the one-

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81 As attested by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, #464. “The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.”

sided use of man as individual—as an island, as a male, as merely a human being, and as the measure of all things—marks the first reduction of theological anthropology to the realms of the historical.

In Panikkar’s view, traditional Christology has been solely dependent on the understanding of Man [human] as an independent entity and, secondly, outside the realm of the spiritual, the mystical and consciousness. In essence, Panikkar’s “Christophany stands for a manifestation of Christ to human consciousness and includes both an experience of Christ and a critical reflection on that experience.” By critical reflection, Panikkar means an experience that is contemplative, trangressive, and transformative—at the mystical level. Thus in the deepest sense, Christophany is experiencing anew the mystical life of Jesus Christ, to “participate in the same spiritual experience, the same profound intuition that Jesus Christ had.”

For Panikkar, the logic of Christology—Christo-logic—is no longer coherent in the pluralistic context. The task of Christophany, therefore, is to provide an alternative to Western hermeneutics by looking for new grounds for the universality of Christ and its implications for non-Christians. In this sense, Christophany continues the Christological discourse from the purview of Advaita Vedanta. Panikkar begins his Christology by raising the fundamental question: How do Christians and non-Christians alike understand Christ? How do Indian Christians conceptualize Jesus Christ outside the framework of classical theology with its Greek, Hellenistic, and Latin preconceptions? Panikkar’s Christology is an attempt to respond to this question within the framework of orthodoxy without overlooking the challenges of orthopraxy.

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83 X. D’Sa, 1.
84 Panikkar, Christophany, 135-140.
85 Ibid., 90-134.
86 Advaita is borrowed term from Hinduism and Buddhism. It refers to the principle of non-dualism between self (Atman), God (Brahman) and in some sense the World. See John Grimes, Problems and Perspectives in Religious Discourse: Advaita Vedanta Implications (New York: University of New York Press, 1994).
For a full absorption of these ideas, one would need to read Panikkar against himself: namely, by touching his entire philosophical and theological corpus. Such an exercise would be outside the scope of this study.

Thus, it suffices to state that Panikkar’s theological project is anchored in his conviction that the Abrahamic and Hellenistic foundations and heritage of Catholic doctrines are problematic to Christian spirituality and mysticism. Panikkar advances his claim further by using the imagery of the Tiber and Jordan Rivers, which are dependent on the Ganges, to illustrate how Western theological hermeneutics benefit from the multi-plural reality of the Indian Christian experience.

In other words, understanding Panikkar, first and foremost, means not losing sight of his intended audience and dialogical partner. Panikkar’s interest was to think of theology from the perspective of the Advaita Vedanta, a flourishing philosophical principle in Hinduism and some forms of Buddhism. Thus, because Panikkar’s theological insights resist any tendency to be considered as supplanting traditional theology, a parallel reading is recommended. The sole purpose of this differentiation is a matter of emphasis: Panikkar’s methods of doing theology from the dialogical presupposition of the “many” versus the dialectical approach of classical theologians that favors the “one” of monotheistic traditions.87

For Panikkar, traditional theologies have exhausted the resources implicit in the monological system, which he views as spiritually bankrupt. At the source of this spiritual aridity is the duality at the heart of mono-logical thinking that dichotomizes between God versus humans and the world. Thus, the search for wholeness and holiness through the mystical experience has led Panikkar to invest in the cosmotheandric principle derived from Advaita-Vedanta. Rather

than a separate focus on the immanent dimension of God and its implication for humans and the world, the non-dualistic cosmotheandric worldview engages the divine in a holistic manner that involves the entire cosmos as an “organic unity,”—which is a kind of *perichoresis*.

The development of the cosmotheandric has necessary implications for thinking, and in a sense re-thinking, traditional Christology. Fundamentally, Panikkar rules out Christology on account of its mono-cultural claims. By purpose and design, Christological hermeneutics serve an exclusivist or inclusivist function that offers a worldview of “we against them.” In a sense, despite its claims of universal normativity, Christology in Panikkar’s estimation fails the test of the cosmic unification of God, humans, and the world. It is in the context of the “unity and wholeness” of the entire universe that Panikkar introduced the Christological concept of Christophany, which lies at the center of Panikkar’s Trinitarian discourse.

Although Panikkar avoids a classical definition of Christophany in the strict sense, Cynthia Bourgeault’s comparison between traditional Christology and Christophany drives Panikkar’s point home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christology</th>
<th>Christophany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Culturally Embedded</td>
<td>Interculturally oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Metaphysically Embedded</td>
<td>Open to “homeomorphic equivalence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intellectual</td>
<td>“pneumatic”—requires “third eye”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Masculine “aggressively rational”</td>
<td>“Feminine” (contemplative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Implicitly monotheistic</td>
<td>Implicitly Trinitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dualistic (stuck in polarities)</td>
<td>Advaitic (non-dual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. “I-it” perspective</td>
<td>“I-I” perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Closed system, historically oriented</td>
<td>Open-ended, continuously self-revealing and creating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The understanding from this comparison makes Christianity a dualistic religion that is culturally and historically situated within the hermeneutics of the Abrahamic monotheistic traditions, which distinguishes between the Creator and the created, the spiritual and the mundane. Such a worldview contradicts the non-dual cosmovision emanating from the Advaitic traditions of Indian and other Asian contexts. Panikkar proposes a pneumatic (subject-to-subject) inter-abiding approach to the divine. In this cosmovision, the cosmos, the divine, and the human (cosmotheandric) form an indivisible bond—perichoresis.

Furthermore, Panikkar locates Christophany at the heart of the cosmotheandric vision of the Christian Trinitarian reality. Ultimately, Panikkar believes that an understanding of the Trinity grounded in the Western traditions will not suffice. Panikkar constructed his own path from the cosmotheandric vision to a new thinking based on the apophatic doctrinal perspective. Panikkar’s new cosmotheandric ways were deeply rooted in mystery, and he teaches a pattern of kenosis/perichoresis, whereby both unity and difference are preserved through entering into the dance of self-giving love. The journey from Christology (Christ-logic) to Christophany necessitates a shift of paradigm from a doctrinal perspective, which views Jesus Christ “from the outside as the object of faith, adoration or doctrine,” to an inner point of view described by Panikkar as the “third eye”—the mystical way.

Here is the place for the function of the third eye in the mystical intellect. If an Aristotelian epistemology offers the basis for empirical and rational knowledge, the Advaitic vision requires illumination from a superior source of knowledge. This third degree of knowledge comes into being not when we see or know, but when we are conscious that we are seen or known. It is neither sense knowledge nor rational knowledge, yet it is inseparable from both. It is not irrationalism. It emerges when the dynamism of knowledge inverts its direction, as it were: we are

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aware that in touching we are touched, in knowing we are known. It is conscious that there is an illumination from ‘above’. I know fully a thing not when the thing is sensible that I may sense it, or intelligible that I may understand it, but when both subject and object are illumined by a light that comes from neither subject nor object. Then it produces an “understanding” that is more than sense or rational experience; it creates a union between subject and object that is of an order other than a sensuous touch or a rational contact. It is a more holistic participation, which produces a conviction that is more than physical or rational.91

Approaching reality from the perspective of the “third eye” leads to both the mythical and mystical realm of experiencing. Panikkar’s dissatisfaction with the one-sidedness of the logos/ratio epistemology of Western hermeneutics led him to distinguish between logos—the thought, mythos—the unthought, and pneuma—the unthinkable; these distinctions are the underlying principle of his philosophy and theology. “A living myth does not allow for interpretation because it needs no intermediary. The hermeneutic of a myth is no longer the myth, but its logos. Myth is precisely the horizon over against which any hermeneutic is possible. Myth is that which we take for granted, that which we do not question; and it is unquestionable because, de facto, it is not seen as questionable. The myth is transparent like the light and the mythical story—mythologumenon—is only the form, the garment in which the myth happens to be expressed, enwrapped, and illumined. Panikkar enforces the issue further:

Myth is not the object of thought, nor does it give food for thought. Rather it purifies thought, it bypasses thought, so that the unthought may emerge and the intermediary disappears. Myth is the salutary fasting of thinking; it liberates us from the burden of having to think out and think through everything and thus it opens up the realm of freedom of being. When the thinking has not yet landed on the thought so that it cannot yet know what is being thought in the thinking, we are still in the domain of the myth.”92

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92 Panikkar, Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 4-5; see also 342 where he refers to the three dimensions as the “Trinitarian triangle.”
Myth is the house of logos and its interpretative key. These three modes reciprocally include each other. Panikkar insists that both logos and myth are mutually inseparable, yet irreducible; the former is an object of the intellect and the latter, a participatory reality through rituals and symbols. He reminds us that, “The logos must not be abolished, superseded or given up in favor of irrationalism, emotionalism, fideism or some other rebellions, all one-sided. In philosophy the logos plays an irreplaceable double role: that of illuminating, clarifying, and that of critiquing, testing, controlling. If anything contradicts the logos, it cannot be accepted.”

Thus, any attempt to grasp Panikkar’s Christophany must first internalize the realm of the mythos and pneuma—the unthought and unthinkable and it relates with logos—thought. The logic is simple: logos can only rationalize on what is given to thought from the unthought and unthinkable. Therefore, as reason, logos cannot be its own beginning—arkhe. In a sense, if traditional Christology is saturated with logos—the thought, Panikkar’s Christophany dwells in the symbolic realm of—the unthought and the unthinkable. Among other aims, the task of Christophany is “restoring symbols to life and eventually of letting new symbols to emerge.” As a result, Christ remains for Panikkar the only symbol within the Trinity that shatters the logos—thought—and opens a new vista for non-Western cultures that were formerly considered “unthought and unthinkable.” This is made possible only through symbols, beyond concepts and logic. Panikkar himself specifies concerning his method, “My locus philosophicus [and theologicus]…will not be solely in the domain of concepts that forms the current domain of our

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93 Panikkar, Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics, 343.
94 Ibid., 100.
95 Ibid., 8.
96 For ambiguity and controversy raised by Panikkar’s use of the term Christ to described other salvific figures in other religion, see, Peter Slater, “Hindu and Christianity Symbol in the Work of R. Panikkar,” Cross Currents 29, no. 2 (1979): 182.
time, but in the realm of symbols that may more appropriately describe the situation of humanity over its entire historical period.97

Thus, Panikkar’s use of the symbol of Christ in his Christophany must be understood within the context of the unthought and unthinkable. By moving away from the *logos*—the thought, and embracing the unthought and unthinkable, Panikkar admits of the inherent ambiguity involved.

Christ is an ambiguous term. It can be the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah, or it can be the name given to Jesus of Nazareth. One may identify it with the Logos, and with the Son or equate it with Jesus. The nomenclature that I personally would like to suggest in this connection is as follows: I would propose using the word Lord for the Principle, being, Logos or Christ that other religious traditions call by a variety of names and to which they attach a wide range of ideas. I am not making any claim here to solve the problem, and shall thus continue to use the name of Christ, for I believe it is important that the figure of Christ should regain its complete fullness of meaning, but I shall do so in a way that is devoid either of polemic or apologetic. Each time that I speak of Christ I am referring (unless it is explicitly state otherwise) to the Lord of whom Christians can lay claim to no monopoly.98

The foregoing discussion implies Panikkar’s dilemma: namely, the effective balancing of Missiology and inculturation within the Indian and Asian context. The search for an appropriate contextual Christology that explains the universal salvific role of Jesus Christ to non-Christians led Panikkar to develop the Christophany of our times from the symbolic and mythical experience drawn from *Advaita Vendata*.

Panikkar’s development of the sutra is intended to move beyond the inclusivist theological impasse created by the application of traditional Christology in his work *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*. Panikkar’s claim that Christ as the *logos* was already present in Hinduism, though *incognito*, presents an obvious exercise in the theology of religions. He

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asserts, “Christ does not belong to Christianity, he only belongs to God. It is Christianity and Hinduism as well that belongs to Christ, though in two different levels....” 99 This work represents the apogee of Panikkar’s Christological theology. Such an erudite theological exposé indicates Panikkar’s thorough understanding of the Fathers in both Nicaea and Chalcedon, and, as noted earlier, he subscribes to the Council’s identification of Jesus Christ as one person, the Lord, son of Man, son of God, the Logos—incarnate and un-incarnate, human and divine. 100

To differentiate between Panikkar’s Christophany and traditional Christology will lead us to the heart of Panikkar’s theology of the orthodox Christian God vis-à-vis the non-orthodox Hindu Brahman. According to Panikkar,

To modern Hinduism, Brahman is not a person, and in consequence is not looked upon as a personal God, but as the Absolute, and thus identified with God only in the transpersonal sense of Godhead...In a word, the conception of Brahman hardly tallies with the conception of God; both conceptions are almost as opposed as pure potentiality to pure actuality...Moreover,...the Muslim and the Christian conceptions of God, for instance, although very similar at many points, yet differ essentially...If we emphasize the intellectual differences still further we must say that the Thomistic idea of God, for instance, differs from the Scotistic one, nor is the conception of God in Leibniz or Descartes the same, nor is it in Malebranche or Suarez, or in any two thinkers of different metaphysical schools. A fortiori the idea of Brahman is not the theistic idea of God.” 101

Panikkar’s assessment of the inclusivist methods inherent in the theology of religions is evidence of an implicit critique of the theistic idea of the Western God. Consequently, a revisioning of the Christological hermeneutics from its theistic footing led Panikkar to the development of the Trinitarian conception of God alongside the non-dualism of Advaita Vedanta. This marks the beginning of Panikkar’s shift from inclusivism to pluralism.

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100 There are numerous references to the Christian doctrine of God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in Panikkar’s *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*. Most of these references though scattered and uncoordinated yet show the traits of orthodoxy.
Panikkar’s Christophany is situated within the context of the Trinitarian God and developed from the theological tapestry of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. While maintaining the *Nirvana* experience of the absoluteness of Brahman as Godhead/Father, Panikkar points out that speaking about the Father is an exercise in absurdity—an attempt towards impossibility. Whatever there is to be spoken of the Father is already given through the Son. “Everything that the Father is he transmits to the Son.”102 With this in mind, Panikkar develops the concept of Christ—son—as a symbol alongside *Isvara*—the Lord. In this way, the Father empties everything He is into the Son (*kenosis*).

In this sense, Panikkar speaks of the Father through the Son in such a way that it is no longer the Father, but the Son who Creates, Redeems, and Sanctifies.103 Panikkar’s silencing of the Father, in negative theology, constitutes a “devotion to the Father…meets an apophatism of being; it is a movement towards…no place, a prayer which is always open towards…the infinite horizon which, like a mirage, always appears in the distance because it is no-where.”104 It is this mystical and symbolic experiencing of the Father in/through the Son that constitutes Panikkar’s neologism: Christophany.

Christophany is the mode of existence of the Son—the Christ. Panikkar upholds traditional Christological datum that no one goes to the Father except through the Son. However, the Son for Panikkar, that is, the Christ, has multifarious manifestations, of which Jesus of Nazareth is one. Panikkar argues further that the Christ, whether manifested/incarnated or hidden/unincarnated, remains the only way to God the Father. In Panikkar’s word, the “unique link between the created and uncreated, the relative and the absolute, the temporal and the

102 Panikkar, *Trinity and Religious Experience*, 44.
103 Macpherson, *A Critical Reading of the Development of Raimon Panikkar’s Thought on the Trinity*, 76.
eternal, earth and heaven, is Christ, the only mediator.”105 As the only mediator between God and human, the Son becomes the source of relationship and dialogue, whether interpersonal or inter-religious.106 In this cosmotheandric vision of reality, “beings, insofar as they participate in the Son, are from and through him. Every being is a Christophany, a showing forth of Christ.”107

The following nine sutras are the outcome of such an in-depth mystical understanding of Christophany within the confines of what Panikkar describes as the “homeomorphic equivalence.”108

1. Christ is the Christian symbol for the whole reality.
2. The Christians recognizes Christ in and through Jesus.
3. The identity of Christ is not the same as his identification.
4. Christians do not have a monopoly on the knowledge of Christ.
5. Christophany transcends tribal and traditional Christologies.
6. The protological, historical, and eschatological Christ is a unique and self-same reality, distended in time, extended in space, and intentional in us.
7. The incarnation as historical event is also Inculturation.
8. The Church is considered a Site for the incarnation.
9. Christophany is the Symbol of the Mysterium Communionis of Divine, Human and Cosmic realities.109

Through kenosis (self-emptying), God drains God’s self into the Son, thereby initiating the dance of self-giving love—perichoresis—and preserving both harmony and difference. For Panikkar, the kenosis of the Father leads to the divinization of the Son, which in turn makes the condition possible for the divinization of the entire cosmos. At the heart of the dance, the Father maintains unity and difference.

105 Ibid., 51.
106 Panikkar, Trinity and Religious Experience, 52.
107 Ibid., 54.
108 Panikkar argues that Christ takes a new re-visioning in the homeomorphic equivalence, “functional equivalence or deep correspondence going beyond simple analogy that can be established between words and concepts belonging to distinct religions or cultures…e.g. God and Braham, or Christ of the Christians and Ishava of Hinduism.” Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism.
Understandably, then, the nomenclature “Christ” maintains a different conceptual framework in traditional Christology and Panikkar’s Christophany. Panikkar’s approach to the subject-matter has been eclectic and systematic, always sticking to his original point of departure, which is to probe the universality of Christ and the search for a valid “universal methodic” principle toward the Trinitarian in non-Christian religions. For Panikkar, the particularity or exclusivity of Jesus of Nazareth is a stumbling block to such an endeavor.

3.4. Panikkar’s Religious Pluralism

The nature of Panikkar’s pluralism is complex. In some circles, Panikkar is uncritically linked, on the one hand, with the relativist pluralism of John Hick and Paul Knitter and, on the other, with the inclusivist pluralism of Karl Rahner and Jacques Dupuis. Regardless of the views of critics and supporters on this matter, it suffices to say only that among them, there is a general consensus that the idea or doctrine of Christianity’s “uniqueness,” “unique definitiveness,” “absoluteness,” “normativeness,” “superiority,” or “supersessionism” over other religions is at a crossroads—needing a re-vision and radical re-interpretation. The urgency required, in the words of Knitter, amounts to crossing “a theological Rubicon…a move away from insistence on the superiority or finality of Christ and Christianity toward recognition of the independent validity of other ways.”

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110 Panikkar moves beyond the traditional approach to the trinity—the economic and imminent Trinity. In both cases he argues that the trinity as a concept remains the prerogative of separated Godhead outside the realm of the cosmotheandric vision. See Panikkar, The Radical Trinity, 1989.
111 See the manifesto of the gathering of theologians at the Claremont Graduate School in California in March, 1986. The seminar paper was published as, The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions, in 1987.
Panikkar’s understanding of pluralism is beautifully summarized in his Metaphor of the Window.

We all seeing the world from our particular point of view...we see the world through window...the cleaner the window is, the less I see the window and the glass. And the more I am enthused and in Love with what I see. I don’t see my window, I see through the window. I need my neighbor to tell me... 'Look here—you are looking through a window.' But then I have to tell them, “sorry you also are looking through a window. And then we compare notes. And they probably see the same landscape. But perhaps they see a different way, also... I see through my window, and I cannot say that I do not see what I see through my window. I don’t see through the window of my neighbor. But if I love my neighbor, then I will have to hear the description of what my neighbor says. And I say, ‘well, sorry I don’t see that,’ (I see through my window). But I hear you telling me something else...I discover that the other doesn’t see the same world that I see. But also, I discover that I don’t see the whole... Or I haven’t heard him. I hear. And you’ll remember that St. Paul said that faith comes from hearing. I hear the other telling me something about the world, or reality—about what he/she sees through the window, that I don’t. And then...I say, I thought I was seeing the whole, but now you’re telling me I was seeing very little...And here begins the intra-religious dialogue. You say what you hear, you say what you believe, you share your experience, and you are ready at the same time to hear the other telling other narratives, other beliefs, other experience. And then...we dialogue.114

Thus, the humbling fact that one does not know everything about one’s own myth is for Panikkar, the epistemological grounds for the practice of pluralism. Since “the experience of God cannot be monopolized by any religion or system of thought.” it can be argued that “a plurality of religions is required since one single religion cannot provide enough space for the multiplicity of human experiences and divine manifestations.”115

Panikkar opens his contribution in the *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* in a spectacular manner and with a thought provoking question: “Does one need to be spiritually a Semite or intellectually a Western in order to be a

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Christian?" Panikkar proceeds to explore the role of the Holy Spirit in the admittance of the Gentiles during the Council of Jerusalem in AD 49. Rather than clamor for a Vatican III Council, Panikkar advocates for a Second Jerusalem Council, wherein the Holy Spirit will once again confirm as legitimate the religious experiences of non-western traditions. In Panikkar’s view, Christianity cannot continue the narrative of universality without addressing the de facto plurality and de jure pluralism of other religious experience.

In his pluralism, Panikkar moves the debate of unitive pluralism beyond the parameters set by Kantian epistemology. Departing from Alan Race’s threefold approach of exclusivism, inclusivism, and “monological” pluralism, Panikkar developed a practical program for pluralism, based on the cosmovision drawn from cosmotheandric experience. In Panikkar, therefore, we see a paradigmatic shift from a “dialectical pluralism” to what has been recently describe as “dialogical pluralism.” It is dialogical because it is modeled after the Trinitarian reality and not the mono-logical presupposition of a separated godhead.

Using the geographical metaphor of three great rivers—the Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges, Panikkar introduces the theological debate on religious pluralism that is centered on


121 Michael Barnes, Religions in Conversation: Christian Identity and Christian Pluralism; See also reference to dialogical pluralism in footnote 12 on Page 6 above.
Christ as a non-historical logos.\textsuperscript{122} Panikkar argues that this analysis goes a long way to show “that the geography of Christianity cannot be reduced to the Jordan in Palestine, or the Tiber in Italy or the Ganges in India.”\textsuperscript{123} Put in more explicit terms, the symbol Christ cannot be reduced to any one religion—Hinduism, Judaism, or Christianity. Christ is the cosmic and universal principle of unity and wholeness that binds God, humans, and the world. Most important, Panikkar speaks of “Christ” in a mysterious way as “the symbol of the divine-human mystery, which is at work everywhere and elusively present wherever there is reality.”\textsuperscript{124}

While highlighting the various opportunities Christianity has had for dialogue with the other religious and philosophical traditions of its time, Panikkar does not hesitate to critique the dangers of the exclusivism and inclusivism, which stem from the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman legacy, of a dialectical oppositional model to Christianity. In this sense, Panikkar offers the non-dualistic religious experience of Asia and other parts of the non-Western world as a corrective to the “exclusionary and hierarchical” model of Western hermeneutics.\textsuperscript{125}

According to Panikkar, so far, the spiritual resources inherited from the rivers Jordan and the Tiber can no longer address the post-colonial exigencies of the New World Order. Christianity is in dire need of the spiritual and mystical rejuvenation offered by the Ganges non-dualistic experience. As Panikkar observes, “until now, Christianity has absorbed syncretistically

\textsuperscript{122} See Damerest’s paraphrase...“Christ as the non-historical logos, confessed by Christians as Jesus, but known in other religions by different names.” Bruce Damerest, \textit{General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Views} (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1982), 221.

\textsuperscript{123} Panikkar, \textit{A Dwelling Place of Wisdom} (India: Motilal Barnasidass Publishers, 1995), 123.

\textsuperscript{124} Panikkar, “The Jordan, the Tiber and the Ganges: 106, 111; \textit{The Fullness of Man: A Christophany}, 173.

\textsuperscript{125} David Tracy, “Western Hermeneutics and Interreligious Dialogue,” in Catherine Cornille ed. \textit{Interreligious Hermeneutics}. 39.
the ‘good things’ of the Mediterranean religions. Why cannot they do something similar with other religions?”

Panikkar’s observation raises issues that need constant review, namely Christianity’s reluctance in letting go of its Eurocentrism and embracing genuine pluralism. He declares that “either Christianity ‘sticks’ to their ‘Christ’ and becomes exclusive, or they give up the claim, dilute their belief, and become, at best inclusive…” Still, the particularization of the Christ to Judea-Christian settings and the sundry discriminations witnessed during the ages raises more questions about the Biblical provision of Christ as the second Adam—humanity. In this sense, Christ, argues Panikkar “stands for all humanity and in a certain sense for the whole cosmos.”

The mystery that is at the beginning and will be at the end, the alpha and the omega, by and through which all that come into being, the light that enlightens every creature, the word that is in every authentic word, the reality that is totally material, completely human, and simply divine, which is at work everywhere, and elusively present where there is reality, the meeting place at the crossroad of reality where all realms meet, that which does not come with fanfare, and about which one should not believe, that there is here or there, that which we do not know, when we perform a good or evil action, and yet is “there,” that which we are—and shall be—and which we were, that symbol of all reality, not only as it was or is, bit as it shall freely be, also through our synergy, is what I believe to be the Christ.

This tells us that for Panikkar, only in the appropriation of the Christic experience—the perspective of Christ as the universal sacrament/symbol of salvation—can Christianity lay claim to its universality without diluting its concreteness or subsuming the differences of other religions into its Jordan or Tiber. From the perspective of the Ganges’ non-dualism, Panikkar

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127 Ibid., 109.
129 Ibid, 113-114.
offers a general framework for his understanding of pluralism; here, these are summed up in seven propositional formulae for lack of space.

1) Pluralism does not mean plurality or a reduction of plurality to unity. It is a fact that there is a plurality of religions. It is also a fact that these religions have not been reduced to any sort of unity...Pluralism means more than sheer acknowledgment of plurality and the mere wishful thinking of unity...2) Pluralism does not consider unity as an indispensable ideal; even allowance is made for variation within that unity. Pluralism accepts the irreconcilable aspect of religion without been blind to their common aspects. Pluralism is not the eschatological expectation that in the end all shall be one.... 3) Pluralism affirms neither that the truth is one or that it is many. If truth were one, we would not accept the positive tolerance of a pluralistic attitude, and would have to consider pluralism a connivance with error. If truth were many, we will fall into the plain of contradiction.... 4) Pluralism does not allow for a universal system. A pluralistic system would be a contradiction in terms. The incommensurability of ultimate systems is unbridgeable.... 5) Pluralism makes us aware of our own contingency/limitations and the non-transparency of reality. It is incompatible with monotheistic assumption of a totally intelligible being...Yet pluralism does not shun intelligibility.... 6) Pluralism, then, is not a mere symbol. It expresses an attitude of cosmic confidence (in the Spirit which is not subordinate to the logos) which allows for a polar and tensile coexistence between ultimate human value, cosmologies, and religions.... 7) Pluralism does not deny the logos and its inalienable rights. The principle of non-contradiction, for instance, cannot be eliminated. But pluralism belongs also to the order of myth. It incorporates myth, not, of course, as an object of thinking, but as the horizon that makes thinking possible. The myth is the locus of belief. 130

Based on his radical pluralism, which is deep and multi-dimensional, Panikkar strongly criticizes the absolute posturing of monotheism. Accordingly, he contends that pluralism is more than mere plurality.

Pluralism, therefore, does not mean many ways (plurality) but that we detect many forms which we cannot recognize as ways leading to the goal. Pluralism does not mean just tolerance of the many ways. It is rather that human attitude which faces intolerance without being broken. 131

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130 Ibid. 109-110.
Thus, Panikkar distances himself from any system—be it scientific, philosophical, or theological—that leans towards absolutism. “This means that even the monotheistic concept of God has come under very critical scrutiny. Due to this change, traditional theological concepts such as “Absolute,” and “God” are not to be found easily in Panikkar’s later work.”\textsuperscript{132} By rejecting the absoluteness of monologism, Panikkar argues for a pluralism that is dialogical and principally premised on praxis. This means that pluralism is simply not possible within a closed monotheistic framework that delights in “unicity, fixity or stasis” to the detriment of “multiplicity, fluidity, relationality and motion.”\textsuperscript{133}

A cautionary note is necessary with reference to Panikkar’s use of the word “praxis.” For “praxis in Panikkar does not primarily mean the emancipating praxis of liberation theology but refers to a new spirituality,”\textsuperscript{134} one that is rooted in the cosmotheandric reality: the cosmic, God, and the human are both irreducible and constitutive of both consciousness and reality.\textsuperscript{135} An implication of the cosmotheandric principle in Panikkar’s view of pluralism is that because of the \textit{perichoresis}—interrelatedness\textsuperscript{136}—that exists among the triad structures, the human spirit is opened to infinite conditions of becoming and possibilities. This inherent and universal tendency of the human to transcendence can no longer be tamed under monotheistic absolutism. Under the cosmotheandric principle, dialogue is no longer at the dispensation or discretion of particular

\textsuperscript{132} Komulainen, 286. In his work titled \textit{The Experience of God: Icons of the Mystery} (Augsburgh: Fortress, Trans. Joseph Cunneen, 2006), Panikkar intends to correct the erroneous notion that particular religion can lay claim to the totality of experience of “God.” Panikkar describes such notion not only as fragmentary but blasphemous, 38. From a phenomenological perspective of similar critique see, Jean-Luc Marion’s \textit{God Without Being} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and for a historical critique of Judaeo-Christian claim to monotheism, see Robert Karl Gnuse, \textit{No Other God: The Emergent of Monotheism in Israel}, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academy Press, 1997); and Uzukwu, \textit{God, Spirit and Human Wholeness} (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2012).

\textsuperscript{133} Uzukwu, \textit{God, Spirit and Human Wholeness}, 12.

\textsuperscript{134} Komulainen, 288.

\textsuperscript{135} Panikkar, \textit{The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness}, 62.

religions. Because “the experience of God cannot be monopolized by any religion or system of thought,” it can be argued that “a plurality of religions is required since one single religion cannot provide enough space for the multiplicity of human experiences and divine manifestations.”

In the post-pluralism critique offered to The Myth of Christian Uniqueness, critics’ responses seem to overlook Panikkar’s description of pluralism, especially his critique of pluralistic meta-narratives and its potency, to obfuscate the difference within the confines of theistic universal systems. There is a dimension to the responses that appears to have put all pluralist theologians onto one bandwagon. Respondents like Gavin D’Costa, J. A DiNoia, John Milbank, Paul Griffin, and Kenneth Surin specifically labeled pluralism, especially its Western construct, as a mere rhetorical exercise, lacking the substance of any commitment to praxis.

Likewise, Mark Heim’s criticism led to his call for a post-pluralism theology of religion that takes the living faith of the believing community seriously. While the above scholars’ responses on pluralism represent a critique from the heart of Western hermeneutics and methods,

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138 Komulainen, 291.
139 D’Costa, Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered.
140 These scholars argue that: “1) The discourse of dialogue and pluralism are western form of domination obscuring the truth of real differences; 2) Religions are unique cultural-linguistic-social systems not to be integrated into hybrids; 3) The propositional form of doctrines is essential as the only basis to debate religious truth; 4) The praxis solution of collaboration around practical goals presupposes western values (justice, equality and freedom); 5) The manifestation of western hegemony (as embodied in multinational corporations and the free market ideology) obstruct the construction of any supposed ‘global’ theology; 6) Since the ideal goal of conversation is conversion, it must be subject to a hermeneutics of suspicion; and 7) In general, the project homogenizes differences, systematically overlooking the asymmetric of powers, so disallowing real otherness.” See the contributions of: Rowan Williams, Christian Schwobel, M. M. Thomas, Francis X. Clooney S.J., John B. Cobb, Jr., Wolfhart Pannenburg, Monika K. Hellwig, J. A. DiNoia O.P., Lessile Newbign, Jurgen Moltmann, Paul Griffiths, John Milbank, and Kenneth Surin, in Garvin D’Costa, ed., Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1990).
141 S. Mark Heim, Salvations, Truth and Difference in Religion (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995); See also the criticism of Schubert M. Ogden, Is There Only One True Religion or Are There Many? (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992).
there is a need to highlight the structural thought pattern of Panikkar’s advaitic hermeneutics and ways of thinking, which prove as a corrective to the methodological imperatives that undergirds Western thought.

3.4.1. Panikkar and Kant

A robust analysis of Panikkar’s critique of Kant and the Enlightenment philosophy of the Western tradition is a gateway to engaging Panikkar’s entire philosophical and theological project. At the core of Panikkar’s critique lies the claim that Western metaphysics have created a gulf between “the knowing subject and an object to be known.” The chaos created by this demarcation cannot be remedied by the “monochromatic vision” of reality centered on the logos as the interpreter and measurer of reality. Panikkar argues that “man cannot be reduced to the logos,” nor consciousness to reflective knowledge; rather, the human being is open to the (cosmotheandric) reality in which he participates, precisely within a “three-fold veil.”

In *Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics*, Panikkar joins the post-modern scholars who have punctured the ego and arrogance that emanates from the Western metaphysics claim of absoluteness and meta-narratives. In this sense, Panikkar’s critique of Enlightenment philosophy as a system that harbors metaphysical absolutes and a totalitarian agenda is similar to its Western philosophical forebears and reminiscent of Paschal and Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Kant, Heidegger to Derrida, Levinas, Buber, and Marion. These philosophical traditions in Panikkar’s estimation are still locked in the impasse created by the dualistic approach to the philosophical problem of the “One and the Many.”

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142 According to Panikkar, “Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation, of bringing forth significance, of conveying symbols to life and eventually letting new symbols emerge. Hermeneutics is the method of overcoming the distance between a knowing subject and an object to be known, once the two have become estranged.” Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 8

143 Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 8

The crux of the matter, according to Panikkar, “is the problem of mediation which stems from the strenuous effort of the Enlightenment to solve by means of an autonomous epistemology the older ontological question of relationship—i.e., the one and the many.”\textsuperscript{145} Panikkar is perhaps different in his approach. Indeed, Panikkar argues that the insight from the non-dualistic Advaitic Vedanta of Hinduism and Buddhism is the required antidote to the Western monochromatic response to the problem of reality. Non-dualism moves the debate of the “one and the many” beyond the binary oppositional formula.

Rather than a one-dimensional dependence of philosophy on the logos, Panikkar advocates an ecosophy that builds on cosmotheandric non-dualism. Wisdom\textsuperscript{146} and listening to the sayings/ways of the cosmos are the integral elements of the cosmotheandric spirituality. Thus, for Panikkar, the classical definition of Philosophy as the love of wisdom needs further clarification. He says: “I understand wisdom (Sophia) as the art and science of Life…Philosophy (philo-sophia) would then be the love of the art and science of Life, viz., of the praxis and theory of living—and not human life alone: the wisdom of [cosmotheandric] love. Panikkar continues, but “Wisdom does not consist of a monochromatic vision of the world, nor of an amorphous atomization ad infinitum, but rather it is a combination of the valuable colors in a universe rich with polarity because it is full of life.”\textsuperscript{147} The dualism created between epistemology/ontology,

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subject/object, mind/body reduces thinking to “scientific know-how, and intelligibility to rational, almost spatial encapsulation.”

One might ask whether western philosophy—metaphysics—while shying from any mythical or mystical form of mediation has not reduced “thinking to mere calculus: induction and deduction?” Consequently, Panikkar argues that

…the alleged dilemma of the “One and Many,” which translate into the option monism/dualism (plurality) is methodologically an uncritical dilemma because it erects discursive reason (ratiocination) as the ultimate judge of reality. The advaita position I am going to defend is critically aware that the very question which creates the mentioned dilemma begs what it questions.

Thus, understanding Panikkar’s critique of the Western notion of mediation and his proposal of symbolic awareness—as the epistemological solution to mediation requires a brief history of Western philosophy in general and the particular application of Immanuel Kant’s philosophy of religion to John Hick’s liberal pluralism.

Our focus will be on the interface between philosophy as metaphysics and the creation of a post-modern God of onto-theology as the rational mediation of the ontological difference. In this project of the secularization of God, human knowledge assumed total autonomy, becoming the subject, while the God of faith is relieved of His divinity and stripped of mystery. The turn to human subjectivity became the philosophical goal of metaphysics in which being as things ceased to exist in themselves, and are rather viewed to exist in relation to me, for me, and from me.

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149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., 234-35.
151 Ibid.
The anthropological turn to the subject had numerous implications for the post-modern cultural perspectives on the human autonomy as distanced from the realm of the divine. The individualistic and atheistic twist toward human-divine relations that lies in the heart of Western liberal pluralism is responsible for the ferocious attack against post-modern discourse.

A perusal of the history of Western philosophy and a merger of metaphysics and theology is recommended for an in-depth understanding of Aristotle, Aquinas, Suarez, Descartes, Heidegger, Kant, Levinas, Buber, Hick, Marion and Panikkar. On the one hand, the encounter indeed has been over-exaggerated, and on the other, the unification has led to the birth of onto-theology. So far, the outcome has been an inherited metaphysics that is synonymous to both philosophy and theology, which now has become the sole epistemological ground for the Ultimate, the Real, Being, God. As Panikkar insists from his study of western philosophies, the reduction of philosophy to religion, metaphysics, epistemology, and the pragmatic/historical constitutes the greatest error in the Western thinking pattern.\(^{153}\)

An evaluation of Panikkar’s mythic structure of experience and the epistemological ground of the possibility of such experience necessitates a comparison of Panikkar and Immanuel Kant. Panikkar’s indebtedness to Kant’s critical method is fundamental in the transcendental and phenomenological reduction of human experience. However, unlike the phenomenology of Kant and Husserl, Panikkar’s view of experience does not originate in the speculative realm of consciousness; rather, experience is a lived reality within the cosmotheandric world.

The distinction in Kant’s epistemology between the ultimate reality in the *phenomena* and the *noumena* has ontological implications for the self, the cosmos, and God. In his *Critique

\(^{153}\) Panikkar, *Faith, Myth and Hermeneutics.*
of Pure Reason, Kant bluntly rules out any knowledge of the noumena through sense experience. For Kant, although the notion of an Ideal being—God—falls outside the purview of pure reason, such an idea, nonetheless, because of its moral value is indispensable and inescapable.\textsuperscript{154} Borrowing from Kant, therefore, Panikkar develops an epistemological ground for his philosophy and theology that is anchored on the experiencing of God in the concreteness of reality. The intention is to conceive a God that is intrinsically connected to the human and cosmic dimension of reality.

In Panikkar’s estimation, Kant’s critique of the impossibility of making synthetic \textit{a priori} propositions about self, cosmos and God makes sense within the dualistic context of Western hermeneutics. At the heart of Panikkar’s advaitic philosophical tradition is the outright rejection of the Enlightenment and the Kantian dichotomy between the knowledge of things that are—\textit{phenomena}—and that of things themselves—\textit{noumenal}—not observable by sense perception. Through the \textit{mythical} experience of reality, Panikkar bridges the \textit{phenomenal} and \textit{noumenal} perspective of experience in such a way that the absolute God—though transcendent—is experienced in the concreteness of the self and the cosmos.

This experience embodies the cosmotheandric vision of reality in which God becomes properly immersed/incarnated in human experience. The harmonious balance among the three dimensions of the cosmotheandric principle is maintained through authentic “individuality, irreducibility, and reciprocity,” shared by all. Thus, the cosmotheandric experience initiates the non-dualistic hermeneutics that saturates the logical, scientific, or historical decoding of Western dualism. According to Panikkar,

The cosmotheandric principle could be stated differently, namely, that the divine, the human and the earthly—however we may prefer to call them—are the three

irreducible dimensions which constitute the real, i.e., any reality inasmuch as it is real... What this intuition emphasizes is that the three dimensions of reality are neither three modes of a monolithic undifferentiated reality, nor are they three elements of a pluralistic system. There is rather one, though intrinsically threefold, relation which expresses the ultimate constitution of reality. Everything that exists, any real being, presents this triune constitution expressed in three dimensions. I am not only saying that everything is directly or indirectly related to everything else: the radical relativity or *pratitya-samutpada* of the Buddhist tradition. I am also stressing that this relationship is not only constitutive of the whole, but that it flashes forth, ever new and vital, in every spark of the real.\(^{155}\)

### 3.4.2. Panikkar and John Hick

John Hick endorses the major point of consideration in Panikkar’s critique of the Western hermeneutics. Both share in the recognition that the problems of *mediation* are irresolvable within a metaphysics that arrogates universal applicability to categories and properties that have no foundation in history.\(^{156}\) Hick attempted an alternative ideology by restating a neo-Kantian distinction between the “Real” as it is known in itself, the noumenal, and the real that is known by its manifestations—the phenomenal. The reduction of metaphysics to mere calculus—deduction and induction—led Kant to a fundamental way of mediated epistemological claims between critical empiricism and rationalism.

In what is vigorously described as the Copernican revolution in Kant’s epistemology, Kant argues that for reality to be, it must conform to the mind. In such a way, the world/sense perception conforms to the mind as it restructures the categories received from sense perception.\(^{157}\) In this regard, the mind becomes the mediating principle towards *certainty*—Real is then an isolated use of sensory perception. This shift in Kantian epistemology signals the

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\(^{155}\) Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 74.

\(^{156}\) The preference of the word *History* rather than the philosophical concept—*Reality*, is to intentionally read Hick in the context the Historical studies of Ernst Troeltsch.

intention to bridge the transcendental and factual “Real,” necessitating the philosophical task of reconciling Empiricism with Rationalism.158

The use of Kant’s critique of metaphysical knowledge through pure reason led to the pluralistic trend in Hick’s philosophy of religions. Hick, for one, makes the argument that “what the traditions regard severally as ultimates are different and therefore cannot all be truly ultimate... [for] there cannot be a plurality of ultimates.”159 Reviewing the observable facts of experience—of the plurality of religions—Hick seeks to clarify: “How can we understand the situation of a plurality of great religious traditions that conceive and experience the Ultimate, the Real, in such different ways with such different and incompatible belief systems, but which nevertheless seem to be more or less equally effective context of human salvation/liberation?”160 Hick’s query in a sense calls into question the traditional claim of Christian uniqueness.161

Hick’s emergent image of the “Real” is not totally Kantian. In the body of his argumentation on pluralism as a philosophical explanation of religious phenomena, Hick quotes Thomas Aquinas—“Things known are in the knower according to the mode of the knower,”162—to underscore the critical mindset of realist epistemology: namely that, the mind is not a tabula

158 Kant arising from his “dogmatic slumber” intends to merge the Empiricism of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, with the Rationalism of Rene Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm and Leibniz, into a single coherent thesis. In order to achieve this, Kant distinguishes between a priori judgments based on reason and the a posteriori based on experience. Next he distinguished between analytic judgments (predicates contained in subject, drawn from the principle of non-contradiction e.g. all bachelors are unmarried), and synthetic judgments (predicates detached from subjects e.g. all bodies are heavy, adding something new to the subject). Kant proposed four kinds of judgments; a). analytic a posteriori; b). synthetic a posteriori; c). analytic a priori; d). synthetic a priori. Kant argues that while, all analytic and synthetic a posteriori judgments are synthetic because they are informative and require the justification of experience, analytic a priori judgments are not possible. However, synthetic a prior judgment are possible because they lay foundation for Mathematics and natural sciences and are applicable to aesthetic, ethics and political philosophy. The above paraphrases are extracted from Immanuel Kant Critique of Pure Reason (UK: University of Cambridge Press, 1998).


162 Aquinas quote is reminiscent of Aristolte’s formula for aesthetics appreciation, “Beauty is in the eyes of the Beholder,” Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II/II, Q. 1, art. 2. Quoted in Hick, “A Pluralistic View,” 46.
rasa in the process of knowing. Thus combining Aquinas and Kant, Hick presents his thesis for the reason for plurality, difference, and relationality among religions.

To apply Aquinas’ insight, the ultimate Reality is known in accordance with the cognitive mode/nature/state of the knower; and this varies, in the case of religious awareness, from one religio-cultural totality to another. If, then, we distinguish between the Real/Ultimate/Divine in itself and that Reality as humanly perceived, recognizing that there is a range of modes of human cognition, we can at once see how there is a plurality of religious traditions constituting different, but apparently more or less equally salvific, human responses to the Ultimate. These are the great world faiths.\(^{163}\)

Furthermore, Hick provides a theological backing for Kant’s category of the Real—known in itself—\textit{noumenal}. Thus, by aligning himself to the classical apophatic theological traditions,\(^{164}\) Hick interprets the Kantian \textit{in itself}—\textit{noumenal}, alongside the hermeneutical variables of the Unknown God of negative theology. Since the \textit{noumenal} is known only in itself, no concept can be applied to the \textit{noumenal} Real.\(^{165}\) That is to say, the real \textit{ansinh} cannot be spoken about in human terms.\(^{166}\) As such, then, our language can have no purchase on the postulated \textit{noumenal}, the Real.\(^{167}\) Hick stylistically introduced the concept of ineffability by referencing Gregory of Nyssa and Nicholas of Cusa to make this connection.

Gregory: The simplicity of the True Faith assumes God to be that which He is, namely, incapable of being grasp by any term, or any idea, or any other device of our apprehension, remaining beyond the reach not only of human but of angelic and all supramundane intelligence, unthinkable, unutterable, above all expression

\(^{163}\) Hick, “A Pluralistic View,” 47.
\(^{164}\) Hick made reference to, Lactantius, Dionysius the Areopagite, John Scotus Erigena, St. John of the Cross, and the writer of the \textit{Theologia Germanica}. Martin Luther, who once said that he owed more to the \textit{Theologia Germanica} than to any other book apart from the Bible and Augustine’s work rejected attempts to know God’s essence in distinction from God’s purpose, that is, God in relation to us. God is \textit{dues absconditus}, the hidden God, in God’s own infinite nature. Karl Barth, in the twentieth century, likewise stressed the absoluteness and transcendence of God when he spoke of God as the “Wholly Other.” And Paul Tillich spoke of “the God above the God of theism,” echoing Meister Echkart’s distinction between the Godhead (\textit{deitas}) and God (\textit{deus}).
\(^{165}\) Hick, \textit{The Interpretation of Religion}, 239.
in words, having but one name that can represent His proper nature, the single name being “Above Every Name.”

Nicholas: As creator, God is three and one; as infinite, he is neither three nor one nor any of the things which can be spoken. For the names which are attributed to God are taken from creatures, since he is himself is ineffable and beyond everything that can be named or spoken.”

Hick’s encounter with the relativistic position of Troeltsch, “the father of historical relativism,” shaped his view about the Real referent of the Absolute and its manifestation in the respective historical contexts. Accordingly, the Absolute is present to and manifest in history, yet, no historical manifestation of the Absolute can be regarded as the Absolute. Christianity is absolute for Christians, and other world faiths are likewise absolute for their own adherents. Christianity, then, must be viewed as “a purely historical, individualized, relative phenomenon.”

Thus, endorsing Troeltsch’s historical relativism, Hick develops two fundamental thought patterns that run through his entire philosophy of religion. These are the need for Christianity to cross the Rubicon of Christo-centrism and move toward a Theo-centric view of reality and the view that Christ’s incarnation into history can at best be understood at the mythological level.

Right from the dawn of his theological endeavor, although Hick aligns himself to the apophatic traditions of the great Christian mystics, he still maintains an extremely exclusivist Christological commitment that leans strongly towards fulfillment theology. He admits, “I shared the general Christian assumption that it was God’s will that the whole world be evangelized and

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168 See Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, 1.42; Nicholas of Cusa, De Pace Fidei, 7.21. The above quotes are extracted from John Hick, “A Pluralistic View,” 48-49.


that humanity was in fact slowly but surely becoming Christian.”171 Hick’s pluralism and interest in world religions was transformed by the Birmingham experience of collaboration with Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Marxists, humanists and other Christian denominations. At the heart of these religions is the claim of an absolute, which is the ultimate source and fountain of the beliefs’ systems and practices. From a theistic perspective, Hick raises the question of the possibility of singular or similar religious experience.

God is known in the synagogues as Adonai, the Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in the Mosque as Allah rahman rahim, God beneficent and merciful; in the Sikh guru gwaras as God, who is Father, Lover, Master, and the Great Giver, referred to as war guru; and in the Hindus temples Vishnu, Krishna (an incarnate of Vishnu), Rama, Shiva, and many other gods and goddesses, all of whom, however, are seen as manifestations of the ultimate reality of Brahman; and in the Christian churches as the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And yet all these communities agree that there can ultimately only be one God.172

Hick concludes by evoking the Kantian postulated category of the “Real” and the structure of religious consciousness.

If there is indeed only one God, maker of heaven and earth, two obvious possibilities presents themselves. One is that God as known within one particular religion, namely one’s own, is the real God and that all the others are unreal. The other is that God as known to Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and others represent different manifestations in relation to humanity, different “faces” or “masks” or personae of God, the Ultimate Reality. But there is also a third, intermediate position, adopted today by the majority of mainline theologians, that God as known in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism are partial or distorted glimpses of the real God, who is fully known within Christianity.173

Hick adopted a methodology borrowed from Kant that rejects in totality all a priori propositions of the Ultimate Real that have no basis in reality—as lived experience. Thus through encountering non-Christian religions, Hick draws from a wide range of practical postulations from adherents and concludes, for both the moral and salvation point of view, “that

172 Ibid., 38.
one cannot establish the unique moral superiority of any of the great world religions...It therefore seems logical to me to conclude that not only Christianity, but also these other world faiths, are human responses to the Ultimate.\textsuperscript{174}

On the philosophical level, Hick and Panikkar maintained a certain level of metaphysical commitment in their critique of Christian uniqueness and absolutism. Whereas the former deals with the problem of plurality from the ambience of Western theism, the latter applies the knowledge of Western metaphysics as a prelude to advaitic philosophy. Nevertheless, both thinkers uphold the position that the experience of plurality is not regulated by dialectical \textit{apriori} postulations but rather by observable \textit{a posteriori} verities. Trends in the stark reality of plurality are numerous in writings that point to the undeniable \textit{de facto} existence of non-Christian religions.

From the perspective of the philosophy of religions, Panikkar and Hick concur—one from monotheistic and the other from advaitic perspectives—that non-Christian religions possess an intrinsic religious value that regulates the moral and leads to salvation/liberation. Finally, from their personal religious experience, Panikkar and Hick share a similar lived experience and a taste of religious exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. Both, in their own peculiar way, were against the intellectual tradition of their era—in this instance, the rejection of Orthodox fulfillment theology.

In spite of the above similarities, Panikkar’s pluralism distinctively differs from that of Hick. At the heart of this distinction is the issue of context and worldview. While it is true that pluralism has become a universal problem, it is equally evident that it has no univocal solution that is applicable for all peoples, places, times and context. Bearing this in mind, Panikkar’s

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 45.
pluralism developed from a worldview of non-dualism, where the Ultimate Real is neither the “One or the Many.”

Though neither Hick nor the entire Enlightenment philosophical tradition he represents solve the enigmatic philosophical issue of the “One and the Many,” Panikkar’s advocacy for a relational ontology stems from his cosmotheandric vision of reality. Through the inner structural principles of the cosmovision—irreducibility, reciprocity, and individuality, Panikkar addresses the problem of mediation by offering an alternative to Western dualism that is rooted in the mythical and symbolic perspectives. From the standpoint of cosmotheandrisin, therefore, Panikkar punctures the central claims of Hick’s pluralism, characterizing them as having “a claim to objectivity, a reduction of actual difference, and a marginalization of religious perspectives.”

The summary of this long historical excursus is that an exclusive absolute claim by Christianity to the truth and means of salvation could be a huge hindrance for interreligious dialogue. In John Hick’s opinion, “Christian absolutism, in collaboration with acquisitive and violent human nature, has done much to poison the relationship between the Christian minority and non-Christian majority of our world’s population by sanctifying exploitation and oppression on a gigantic scale.”

3.4.3. Panikkar, Paul F. Knitter and S. Mark Heim

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175 Yadlapati, “Raimon Panikkar, John Hick, and a Pluralist Theology of Religion.”
176 Hick, “The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity,” 17. This book contains a series of essays that sets to debunk the traditional Christian attitudes of exclusivism and inclusivism. In general, these essays refute Christianity’s claim as the only way to truth and salvation and also the notion that Christianity is the most “authentic,” and thus “normative,” religion. The authors agreed that the exclusivist and inclusivist model of interreligious dialogue can no longer stand the pluralistic trend and quest of the postmodern era. For this reason, the essays each in their different ways endorse religious pluralism as the hermeneutical key to understanding interreligious dialogue.
In recent studies, John Hick and Paul F. Knitter together have characterized the face of the debate on religious pluralism. The mutual collaboration of Hick and Knitter as editors in their work *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* testifies to their hold on the scholarship for this matter. The book was intended to raise the fundamental question about the nature and purpose of Christ’s uniqueness and the practicality of such uniqueness in light of religious plurality. The publication galvanizes critics and sympathizers from both the philosophy of religion and the theology of religion.

At the initial stage of his pluralism, Knitter answered uncritically Hick’s call of crossing the Rubicon of theological exclusivism and inclusivism to the shores of pluralism. This cross-over entails Knitter’s advocating “a new model of truth”—pluralism—which moves away from the insistence of the “finality of Christ,” recognizing many other “teachers,” “liberators,” and “Saviors” with Jesus and “many other religious paths with Christianity.” Even the title of Knitter’s fullest articulation of this idea—*Towards a Liberation Theology of Religion*—is suggestive. It points to the general purpose of the publication, which is to liberate Christian theology as a whole from the shackles of an Orthodox/traditional theology of religions—the general attitude of armchair theologizing about other religions from the comfort zone of the Christian traditions. According to Knitter, this tradition is constituted by a “cliquish monologue of First World white males who have been patriarchs of interreligious dialogue.”

The following five theses encapsulate Knitter’s initial stance on pluralism.

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1) Given the nature and history of Christology, previous understandings of the uniqueness of Jesus can be reinterpreted. 2) Given the ethical imperative of dialogue, previous understandings of the uniqueness of Jesus must be reinterpreted. 3) The uniqueness of Jesus’ salvific role can be reinterpreted in terms of “truly” but not “only.” 4) The content of Jesus’ uniqueness must be made clear in Christian life and witness. This content, however, will be understood and proclaimed differently in different contexts and periods of history. Today, the uniqueness of Jesus can be found in his insistence that salvation or the Reign of God must be realized in this world through human actions of love and justice. 5) The orthodoxy of this pluralistic reinterpretation of the uniqueness of Jesus must be grounded primarily in the ability of such a reinterpretation to nurture a holistic Christian spirituality that is, a devotion to and a following of Jesus. The proposed understanding of Jesus as God’s truly but not only saving word does meet this criterion.

As suggested by Peter De Mey, a candid analysis of Knitter’s initial stance on religious pluralism outside the entire framework of his appropriation of Ernst Troeltsch’s *Religionsgeschichte* is both uncritical and non-contextual. Troeltsch’s work on the critical historical studies, as articulated mainly in his essays, is foundational for appreciating Knitter’s view on Christianity as one among the historical religions of the world. On account of historical limitations, Knitter contends that Christianity as one of the religions in the world must submit to the critical historical method of studies that is applicable to other religious traditions.

The historical preoccupation of Knitter’s hermeneutics led to the pronouncement of his first thesis about the need to reinterpret Christianity’s uniqueness. Strict applications of Troeltsch’s view on historical reality led Knitter to assert “the possibility that other religions may be ways of salvation just as much as is Christianity.” Knitter’s call for the reinterpretation of Christian absoluteness is based on the historical fact: namely, that there was a time in history when Christianity did not exist.

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180 Knitter, “Towards a Liberation of Theology of Religion,”
181 Peter De Mey, “Ernst Troeltsch: A Moderate Pluralist?”
183 Knitter, *No other Name*, 5, 17.
Consequently, and in accordance with the methodologies of the *Religionsgeschichte*, such an absolute claim from a religion that once upon a time did not exist, needs critical scrutiny. In this sense, Knitter submits that “in so far as every existing reality is historical, it is limited”; thus, he reasons, Christianity as part of the religious consciousness is, by the same standard, limited. Thus as a limited entity within the larger historical framework, the claim to absoluteness and uniqueness can only be demonstrated by *a posteriori* postulations that must consider not only the *de facto* but also the *de jure* of the existence of other religions. Knitter proposed an identity for Christianity based on its distinctiveness among other religions:

In the view of Jesus’ uniqueness we have been discussing, he has to stand with others. We’ve been talking about a relational uniqueness, not a solitary uniqueness that pushes others out of the picture. To affirm Jesus as truly God’s Word is to award him a distinctiveness that is his own; to add that he is not solely God’s Word is also to see that distinctiveness as one that has to be brought into relationship with other possible Words. Jesus is a Word that can be understood only in conversation with other Words.  

Therefore, as a limited entity, Knitter insists, Christianity has no monopoly of religious truth as a limited religion, an assertion that led to his affirmation of “the plurality of religious truth.” As a result of the reality of the plurality of religious truth, Knitter contends the need of a “dialogical imperative” among religions. This, accordingly will assure that “we expand or correct the truth that we have,” and move religions beyond the “limitations of our own viewpoint.”

In this dissertation we will limit our discussion to three issues emerging from Knitter’s critique of Christian uniqueness: 1) an exclusive biblical statement; 2) the necessity of correlative dialogue; and 3) Jesus as both Savior and divine.

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185 Knitter, *No Other Name*, 28.
186 Knitter, *No Other Name*, 36; Jesus and the Other Names, 29, 31.
In sharp contrast to the inclusivist exegetical tradition, Knitter calls for a new way of reading the “One and Only” statement about Jesus Christ as it relates to Jesus as Savior and Son of God, the reign of God, missions, and the Spirit.  

Under the influence of the historical-critical approach to the scriptures, Knitter draws insight from the conclusions derived from literary criticism to argue that the “One and Only” texts in scriptural must be read in the “Con-Text” in which they evolve. Knitter suggests reading these statements from the purview of the “hermeneutics of discipleship,” rather than from a distinctive definitive philosophical definition. On a cautionary note, Knitter advocates for a careful reading of Christianity’s “No other Name” exclusivist mantra as it relates to the uniqueness and absoluteness of Jesus Christ:

“No other name” as performative, action language, is really a positive statement in its negative couching; it tells us that all peoples must listen to this Jesus; it does not tell us that no one else should be listened to or learned from. The stress, then, is on the saving power mediated by the name of Jesus, not on the exclusivity of the name: If in our dialogue we find that this power of liberation is experienced through other names then the spirit of this passage in Acts would call us to be open to them.

Furthermore, an approach to Christianity from the purview of Religionsgeschichte puts Christianity in a necessary and unavoidable relation with the other religions. This relationship is not regulated by dogmatic formulations or a priori postulations. For Knitter, Christianity is intrinsically bound by the historical fact of its co-existence with other religions. This existence of other religions prior to Christianity is a prima facie condition for what Knitter refers to as correlative dialogue:


189 Knitter, Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility
A correlational model for interfaith dialogue calls upon all to view and approach other religious believers in such a way that an authentic co-relation can exist among them. The goal is to maintain real relationship, to do all one can to keep from cutting off the relationship or maintaining it by subordinating one participant to another. This means that while I will speak my convictions and my mind clearly and strongly, I will do so in such a way that allows you to do the same. This reflects...making absolute claims in a relative manner. In such a correlational model, all religions are viewed from the beginning of the conversation, not as necessarily being equal or the same in their truth claims (whether that is so can be known only in dialogue) but as having equal rights. Thus if I feel impelled to make normative or absolute truth claims in the conversation, I will do so in a way that still recognizes and allows for my partner to do likewise. This means that I am open to the possibility that my normative claim may be corrected or “normed” by what my partner has to say. So even though...we don’t begin a correlational dialogue with pre-established claims of “superiority,” through the dialogue participants may come to the conclusion that a particular Christian truth claim is superior to a Hindu claim - or vice versa.\(^\text{190}\)

Knitter differentiates between the dialogue that arises from an understanding of Christianity in mutual existence with other religions and one that exists within the exclusive and inclusive context. Mission, proclamation, and evangelization are *ad gentes* within the inclusivism model, whereas under the correlational model, mission, proclamation, and evangelization are *cum gentibus*.\(^\text{191}\) Under the latter, evangelization is one-dimensional, whereas in the correlational model, Knitter argues for the possibility of the Christian being evangelized. He says, “In calling upon Christians to evangelize in the dialogue, I am also calling upon them to be evangelized. If there is a hidden inclusivism in what I am proposing, it cuts both ways.... This, I think, is a determining difference between a correlational and an inclusivist model for dialogue; the traditional inclusivist would find it difficult to allow for this effect.”\(^\text{192}\)

\(^{190}\) Knitter, “Can our ‘one and only’ also be a ‘one among many?’” 154-155.


\(^{192}\) Knitter, “Can our ‘one and only’ also be a ‘one among many?’” 154-155; also *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility*, 136ff.
Finally, in an attempt to explain the Christian concept of Jesus as Son and Divine, Knitter adjusts his view of the Chalcedonean formulation of traditional Christology. The problem for Knitter is not the doctrinal conceptualization of creedal formulations. It is not whether Jesus is human or Divine—but how? How precisely can the union be explained using a posteriori experiential logic that accounts for the other religions? For Knitter, a representational Christology answers this question. “Jesus’ life-death-resurrection saves, not by constituting or causing God’s saving love, but rather, insofar as he re-presents for us the re-creative love of God that is inherent in the divine nature and is poured out on all creation.” While upholding Chalcedon on Jesus’ divinity, Knitter advocates for a representational concept of the uniqueness of Christ that “is open to the possibilities of other representations or revelations of the love of God.” Here, Knitter detects a fundamental difference between traditional portrayals of Jesus and the representational perspectives that have been offered.

When Christians announce Jesus as divine they are attempting to articulate two realities, one functional and the other ontological: (a) Functionally or personally, Jesus is for them the perfect sacrament of God—to meet Jesus is to meet the Divine; in the way he mediates God to them, he is God for them. (b) Ontologically in order to explain the way Jesus functions as such a sacrament, he must have been, and must be, “oned” with God in a manner beyond full human comprehension, his very being must participate in the being of God. If such an understanding of Jesus’ divinity…is valid, then I believe it allows for the possibility that what happened in Jesus in order to enable him to function the way he did (as God’s sacrament) can happen, analogously in other, very different instances or persons.

Knitter’s Christology, in some ways, is identical to Hick’s historical consciousness of Jesus. Hick proposes a rethinking for Christian Christology—the doctrine of the Incarnation and

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193 Ibid., 156-157.
194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., 158.
the Divinity of Jesus—in line with the historical “Copernican Revolution.”

Although the Second Council of Constantinople (AD 553) declares Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, in proposing a linguistic identification between God and Jesus—to say of God whatever can be said of Jesus—the council’s language lacks the theological precision required for current debate. The debate over the identification of the second person of the Trinity with Jesus in traditional theology was defended by orthodoxy in spite of historical inconsistency and rational illogicality. Knitter capitalizes on the lacuna evident in the traditional understanding of the immanent Trinity vis-à-vis the economic Trinity and proposes that “the second person of the Trinity is not identified with the person of Jesus, in which case that Person or the Word of God is free to operate and take seminal form elsewhere.”

The litmus test for the depth of Knitter’s religious pluralism came first from Hick’s criticism that points to the ambiguity in Knitter’s fourth thesis: “The content of Jesus’ uniqueness must be made clear in Christian life and witness.” According Hick, the ambiguity of this thesis lies in the fact that beneath Knitter’s supposed pluralism is a niche for religious commitment, and such a disposition is “capable of being understood in both pluralist and inclusivist ways.” On account of this loose proposition about the possibility of a Christian commitment that guarantees Christianity’s uniqueness, Hick refutes the authenticity of Knitter’s pluralistic claims.

196 According to Hick a rethinking in Christology is necessary due to the following historical reasons: “(1). Jesus himself did not teach that “he was God, or Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, incarnate,” (2). Christian authority and theologians expounded the meaning of the traditional dogma that Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man in an intelligent way, since the following questions are still awaiting their answers from Christian authorities: How could Jesus be at the same time divinely omnipotent and humanly weak and vulnerable; divinely omniscient and humanly ignorant; the eternal, infinite and divine self-existent creator of the universe and yet a temporal finite and dependent creature? (3). the literary meaning of the doctrine of the incarnation does irreparable damage to Christians’ relations with the people of other faith.” See Hick, A Christian Theology of Religion: The Rainbows of Faith (2005).

197 Knitter, “Can our ‘one and only’ also be a ‘one among many?’” 159.

198 Hick, Five Misgivings, 79; quoted in Chester Gillis, “Radical Christologies?” 533.
Hick’s critique of Knitter’s shallow perspective on pluralism leads to the critical analysis in Heim’s Christian theology of religious ends, Knitter’s pluralism having become the target of both Hick’s and Heim’s criticism. Basically, in Hick’s judgment, Knitter’s disposition towards the possibility of religious commitment to the claims of pluralism is at best a betrayal of the central tenets of pluralism. On the other hand, Heim expresses his displeasure of Knitter’s position, describing it still as ambitious without specifics about the necessity of religious commitment as the starting point of interreligious dialogue.

Heim addresses the fundamental issue at the center of interreligious dialogue, namely the problem of salvation or religious ends. He concretely affirms the conditions and grounds of possibility for a Christian theology for such religious ends. Heim endorses a Christian theology of interreligious dialogue that is grounded in the triune God as communion. The Trinitarian concept of distinctiveness and relationality gives meaning to and creates added value for the various religious ends sought by other religious traditions. The Christian Trinitarian economy provides enough resources for thinking about difference, otherness, and the particularities of other religious traditions.199

Heim enters the conversation with a fundamental question that will guide his entire work: namely, “Can religions recognize other ways to religious fulfillment than their own, and if so, how?” In this wise, Heim argues that the theological resources mustered over the ages to address this problem have been dangerously one-sided, tending either towards “exclusivist, inclusivist and pluralist—presuming there is and could be only one religious fulfillment or ‘salvation.’”200

Knitter’s proposal that “one sublets the Christocentric approach to other believers with a theocentric one”\textsuperscript{201} has not been well received from scholars of the inclusivist school. Knitter puts forward a theology of God that is both a mystery and surpasses Christocentric claims. Knitter argues,

As the Divine Mystery we know in Jesus and call \textit{theos} or God, is greater than Jesus, we have to be open to the possibility that other religions may have their own valid views of and responses to this mystery. Other faiths would not have to be unilaterally “included” in Christianity; rather all faiths need to be included in each other as all of them continue their efforts to be faithful to the inexhaustible Mystery or Truth.\textsuperscript{202}

According to Heim, Knitter’s theocentricism is anchorless and lacks the norm for creating communities and belief practices. To put it simply, theocentricism without an authentic faith community is problematic in that it “amounts to playing a game without rules.”\textsuperscript{203} In other words, an unmediated theocentricism is tantamount to a \textit{flatus vocis}—“empty” and “naked.” As Heim states in his work, “To say you want God to be at the center, or that you want to know and follow God, does not take you very far unless you have some definitive way of locating or describing this God.”\textsuperscript{204} As Carl Breaten observes, “Christocentrism is simply the Christian part of being theocentric.”\textsuperscript{205} Thus, without Christ, theocentrism has a baseless claim with lesser or no salvific significance.

According Heim, a theocentric foundational claim for dialogue as proposed by Knitter forces other religions to accept the theistic worldview implicit within the theocentric perspectives. Such a view sounds cryptic and imperialistic. Thus for Heim, the search for a

\textsuperscript{201} Cf. Knitter, \textit{Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility}.
\textsuperscript{205} Braaten, “Christocentric Trinitarianism vs. Unitarian Theocentrism,” 4.
“common ground or goal” for all religious ends, will lead to “theocentric fundamentalism.”

Heim argues for an inclusivism that maintains the essence of Christian particularity while still affirming—though partially—the salvific authenticity of the other religions:

I am a convinced inclusivist.... This book affirms the legitimacy of the Christian confession of Christ as the one decisive savior of the world. But it does so by means that will no doubt seem unusual and perhaps paradoxical to many Christians: Affirming that other religious traditions truthfully hold our religious ends which their adherents might realize as alternatives to communion with God in Christ. These are not salvation, the end Christians long for. But they are real.

In an attempt to differentiate between the theocentric views of Knitter that support a common religious end for all religions and his inclusivist Christocentric visions, Heim differentiates between the terms “salvation” and “religious ends”:

I will use salvation to refer to the human fulfillment that Christians believe is offered to us by God through Christ. This is the characteristic use of the word in Christian theology. It is rarely used in other religious traditions to describe their ends. When speaking of those ends, or sometimes when speaking collectively or comparatively of the Christian end and others, I will use terms like, “religious aim” or “religious fulfillment” or “religious end.

The distinction above clearly identifies Heim’s central proposal, which is a total rejection of exclusivism and the acceptance of some form of inclusivism that seriously emphasizes the centrality, uniqueness and distinctiveness of the salvation offered by Christianity. In the context of the Christian salvation as envisaged by Heim, God is fully presented in its Triune nature—a dimension that is intrinsically absent in the non-Christian religion. “For each of these ends, some dimension or dimensions of God remain hidden. In those aspects, relation with God remains broken and sin thus remains determinative.”

207 Ibid., 7, 8.
208 Ibid., 8.
In response to Heim’s criticism, Knitter appealed to the two sources of his theological revelation: namely human experience and the Christian fact—“our own lives in this world and the person and message of Jesus Christ.”\(^{210}\) Knitter agrees with Heim on the normativity of Jesus Christ, but argues further that the norms derived from the ‘Jesus encounter’ must be based on human experience—that is, *a posteriori* postulations that do not belong to Christians alone.

As a result, Knitter’s question for Heim is appropriate in this context: “Just why does Heim…proclaim Jesus as God’s normative revelation? Certainly, it is not simply because ‘the Bible tells me so.’ Jesus Christ is their normative revelation because he so speaks to their lives, to their human experience.”\(^{211}\) While re-emphasizing the central role of Jesus Christ as the norm and center of the Christian faith, Knitter continues to uphold the theocentric foundations of his pluralism but in a new light. To quote: “With theocentricism, however, I hoped to propose a theological vision of nonfoundationalism; theocentricism poses the sobering possibility that there are no final, absolute norms—that all norms are open to the challenge and ongoing scrutiny of experience.”\(^{212}\)

In the wake of the criticism from exclusivist and inclusivist theologians, Knitter decided to re-consider his theocentric theological presupposition to include issues of ethics and liberational concerns of suffering. To quote: “Today, instead of starting as I did in *No Other Name*? that dialogue must be ‘grounded in the hypothesis of a common ground and goal for all religions,’ I would rather say that it must be ‘grounded in the common trust in and search for that which makes dialogue possible and worthwhile.’”\(^{213}\) This new position leaves Knitter vulnerable

\(^{210}\) Knitter, “Theocentric Christology: Defended and Transcended,” 44.
\(^{211}\) Ibid.
\(^{212}\) Knitter labeled the strict version of Heim and Braaten inclusivism as “anonymous foundationalism.” Ibid.
\(^{213}\) Knitter, “Theocentric Christology: Defended and Transcended,” 44.
to the multiple interpretations that can be derived from such an open-ended statement by both moderate inclusivists and exclusivists, on the one hand, and to distancing by pluralists, on the other hand, who consider Knitter’s revision as a capitulation.

On the whole, Knitter maintains the central tenets of his theocentricism—redefining it anew in the context of the criticisms. He insists, “I was already aware of the dangers inherent in theocentrism. In holding up *theos* as the new center for interreligious dialogue, I did not have in mind the ‘God of theism’—not the well-defined personal creator, or *ipsum esse subsistens*, but rather the Divine Mystery or Truth…seen in certain ways by Christians, yet open to utterly different perceptions by others.” \(^{214}\) Thus, in the general framework, Knitter never gives up the claim of Christianity’s uniqueness; rather, his question is whether Christian Christocentrism exhausts the Divine Mystery?

Panikkar’s pluralism shares both a fundamental resemblance with Knitter’s and much difference from Heim’s. Reading the philosophical, scriptural, and theological foundations of Panikkar alongside Knitter and Heim reveals some similarities though some essential differences. The fundamental difference, to begin with, is the issue of cultural variations. Whereas Panikkar operates from the Asian/Indian cultural worldview with non-dualistic presuppositions, Knitter and Heim function within the Western context of monotheistic traditions.

In all, the trio acknowledges the ineffectiveness that characterizes Christological exclusivism as a method for addressing Christianity’s uniqueness in a pluralistic context. Heim’s Trinitarian theology of salvation as the basis for interreligious dialogue, although parallel in objective, is similar to Panikkar’s understanding of the Trinity. Methodologically, both Heim and

\(^{214}\) Ibid., 45.
Panikkar share a common idea about relationality, individuality, and difference. Heim maintains that a solution can be found within Christianity. For Knitter, however, theocentric commitment among God’s people is not antithetical to Christianity’s uniqueness and Christian identity, whereas in Panikkar’s view, the concept of uniqueness is contradictory to any claim of universality. Panikkar elaborates further:

We face a dilemma. Either we defend the universality of Christ above, behind, or through all cultures, or we bestow universal and absolute value to one single culture or group of cultures, namely, that doctrinal world for which the statement makes sense. In the first case we should fall into utter silence and cannot speak of uniqueness, because the moment we utter a word we do it within a particular culture. A Kenotic Christ is neither unique nor not unique, because “it” does not admit any qualification. In the second case the uniqueness has been transferred to an entire cultural set. And this, in fact, was a common belief during many centuries. It is the very nature of colonialism: Cultural monism. Indeed, we may find a transcendental relationship between what Christians call Christ and what other cultures and religions may express with a set of homeomorphic equivalents. But in this case the uniqueness of Christ has been relativized and brought into the field where it has an accepted meaning. Christ is then the logotype, as it were, of the Christian language. May I recall that the relativity I am espousing has nothing to do with relativism?

3.5. Panikkar, Peter Phan, Jacques Dupuis, and Logos Theology

Panikkar’s approach to naming the reality of God from a cultural standpoint differs considerably from that of Kant, Hick, Knitter, and Heim. Unlike the Western scholars listed, Panikkar shares a similar worldview with Jacque Dupuis and Peter Phan. Thus, conducting an in-depth case study of religious pluralism in India in particular, and the entire Asian continent in general, draws the attention of this study to new perspectives developed by Dupuis and Phan.

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The new attitude towards the other and the world, especially as initiated by the sacramentology of Karl Rahner, who was later followed by Dupuis and Phan, centers on a new resolve to see goodness and grace in the world—hitherto mundane reality. With the searchlight of grace turned on the World, the peoples, religions, and cultures of the world begin to be viewed anew within the context. This new context, as Dupuis will argue, demands new hermeneutics that promote “dialogical openness and mutual enrichment through conversation.”

Dupuis’ theology of religious pluralism drastically moves away from the Church’s fuga mundi approach, which emphasizes the impossibility of “salvation outside the Church,” to more relational hermeneutics that “search more deeply, in the light of Christian faith, for the meaning in God’s design for humankind of the plurality of living faiths and religious traditions with which we are surrounded.” This perspective was championed by the statement published by the Thirteenth Annual Meeting (December 1989) of the Indian Theological Association, entitled *Towards an Indian Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism: Our Ongoing Search:*

We want to express what the plurality of the religions we meet every day of our lives in India means to us as believers, as people who experience themselves as touched and strengthened by the ineffable mystery of existence. As we perceive the signs of the Absolute Presence also in the lives of our sisters and brothers around us professing various religions, we ask in the light of the Divine Truth revealing itself what we shall affirm about these religions, and how we (should) understand the purpose and meaning of their wonderful religious variety around us and its role and function in attainment of salvation....As Christians, we approach these questions from our faith.

It was the context and experiences of the diversity and plurality faced by Indian Christians that led Dupuis to the position revealed in his *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism.*

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219 Ibid., 10.

Religious Pluralism, which offers a theological response to the problem of Christianity’s uniqueness, identity and religious pluralism. He contends that deep within Christian theology, there are resources to construct a robust theology of religious pluralism that creates room for other salvific figures within the divine plan of salvation. With this in mind, Dupuis, in the first part of the book, affirms the traditional theology of the *de jure* salvific role of Jesus Christ: his universality and uniqueness. However, he further maintains that the particularity of the Christ-event in Nazareth does not empty the divine will to save through figures and traditions found outside of Christianity. This opportunity of salvation is not outside the economy of the Holy Spirit.

Relying on the Kantian tradition—the grounding of knowledge on *a posteriori* reality, on the one hand, and Rahner’s radical embrace of the world, on the other, Dupuis expands a theology of pluralism that takes into account the historical consciousness of the non-Christians. The epistemological presuppositions are that *a priori* and dialectical hermeneutics principles negate genuine efforts towards interreligious dialogue. Like the dogmatic methodology of doing theology, “the more deductions are drawn from abstract principles, the more real is the risk of being cut off from reality.”

Gerard Hall describes Dupuis’s methodology as follows:

Dupuis proposes an inductive, contextual and hermeneutic theology. He speaks not of the “hermeneutical circle” but the “hermeneutical triangle” consisting of the mutual interaction between text, context and interpreter. These are interpreted broadly: text includes everything contained in “Christian memory”; context is both a concrete place and time in human history and its theoretical complexities; the interpreter is less the individual theologian than the community of faith to which the theologian belongs. Dupuis is, then, indebted to the hermeneutical theology of mutual and critical correlation, as well as to the Anselmian insistence that theology arises from Christian faith.

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The application of Dupuis’ pluralism has an adverse effect on traditional theology. The issues involved have a range of implications for Jesus’ relationship to the God, the Son, and the Spirit. The first part of Dupuis’ work demonstrates a firm understanding of the Church’s dogmatic theology. Dupuis wrestles with the Church’s methodological posture in fulfillment theology, which insists that the other religious traditions exist “only in a secondary and provisional sense.”

It is all but immediately evident that “fulfillment theology” empowers the theological vision of Christology that is deeply rooted in the narrative of the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ. Consequently, a rejection of “fulfillment theology” has a domino effect on the other articles of faith that so rest upon that foundation. Dupuis’ search for the replacement of fulfillment theology led to an overhaul of the traditional understanding of a low Christology that reduces the role of Christ, putting Christ on a par with the parochial salvific figures in other religious traditions. Against this claim, Dupuis makes the argument that though Christ is the local savior of Christians, He is the universal Savior of the world. To quote Dupuis: “Faith in Jesus Christ does not merely consist in trusting that he is ‘for me’ [for us] the path to salvation; it means to believe that the world and humankind find salvation in and through him.”

The embrace of a radical historical consciousness of reality forces Dupuis to address the issue of the historical Jesus as defined and upheld since Chalcedon (AD 451) and Constantinople (AD 513) declared Jesus Christ to be “true God and true Man.” The apparent theological inconsistency concerning the classical application of “true God and true Man,” vis-à-vis the

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224 Dupuis, Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, 293ff.
biblical representation of God as fully in Christ (cf. Col 2:9: “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily),” led Dupuis to analyze fully the particularity of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, as fully Man, Dupuis presents a picture of Jesus of Nazareth that is limited by the historical consciousness of being fully human. The immersing of Jesus Christ into history is real. Hall puts it even more clearly:

Neither the mystery of God nor God’s saving power can be exhausted by even such a sublime revelation as the Christ-event. This means that, while Jesus Christ is “the universal sacrament of God’s saving action,” he is not thereby the only expression of the divine will to save. Making it clear that the mystery of the incarnation is unique in Jesus, there is room for “other saving figures” to be enlightened by the Word and inspired by the Holy Spirit.\(^{225}\)

Despite Dupuis’ sincere attempt to give a credible orthodox account of the problem of religious pluralism, his early work *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* was cited for notable theological ambiguities by the Roman Curia. Cardinal Ratzinger maintains that the pluralistic twist evidenced in Dupuis’ work contradicts Christian tradition. In response, while Dupuis admitted that his position was slightly different from that of Ratzinger, he maintained that it is not altogether foreign to the Christian faith. Relying on the rich Pneumatological Christian tradition, Dupuis develops a theology that moves beyond the typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. By so doing, Dupuis deflates the exclusivist and inclusivist claims that Christianity cannot learn truth and grace from other religions and somehow refutes the pluralist position of other parallel salvific figures besides Christ.\(^{226}\)

In light of the current debate, Peter Phan’s contribution, which is based on the patristic logos-theology of the *logos asarkos* (unincarnated) adds a new vista to the debate. For Phan, Panikkar’s question about the methodological presuppositions of Western hermeneutics stands at

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\(^{225}\) G. Hall, “Raimon Panikkar’s Hermeneutics of Religious Pluralism,” 50.

the beginning of any genuine intercultural studies: “Does one need to be spiritually a Semite or intellectually a Westerner in order to be a Christian?”227 Within the Asian context, Phan argues that the theological conceptualization of theology using the framework of Western hermeneutics must give way to a genuine inculturation theology that prioritizes the needs and concerns of the local contexts.

According to Phan, “since Christian mission in Asia was intimately bound with Western imperialism, the imported portrait of Jesus was what has been called the ‘colonial Christ,’ that is, Jesus as the white, male, all-powerful lord conquering souls and empires for God and implanting his own Church.”228 In Phan’s estimation, the status of the question of Jesus Christ, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” and “Who do you say that I am?” is still relevant and open, calling for a response from Christians and non-Christians alike.

Jesus is reported to have asked two distinct questions: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” and “Who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:14-16). Interestingly, in Asia the first persons to reflect on who Jesus is from the perspective of Asia’s religious traditions were not Christians but Indian Hindus such as Ram Mohun Roy (Jesus as Supreme Guide to happiness), Keshub Chunder Sen (Jesus as true Yogi), Swami Vive-kananda (Jesus as Jivanmukta, i.e. one who has achieved liberation while alive), Rabin-dranath Tagore (Jesus as the Son of Man seeking the “poor” of the earth), and Mahatma Gandhi (Jesus as the Supreme Satyagrahi, i.e. lover and fighter for truth). They are the “people” of Jesus’ first question. In this article I will rescind from these attempts by non-Christians to find the meaning of Jesus Christ for them.229

Here we see Phan’s intention to situate his Christology within orthodoxy, speaking from a Christian faith perspective. This claim to Christian commitment puts Phan in the same tradition with Dupuis. In a similar fashion, Phan summarizes the challenges faced by Asian Christians under three categories: 1) poverty and oppression, 2) cosmic and meta cosmic religiousness, and

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227 Panikkar, “The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges:” 89.
229 Ibid., 399-400, especially footnote 2.
3) communism and socialism. According to Phan, for theology to be relevant and prophetic in Asia, theologians need to address the exigencies of these challenges. Consequently, Phan proposes a solution that will build on the concept of a “Jesus Christ with an Asian face”—that is, incarnated in the sitz im leben of the Asian people. Thus, the categories for the article are appropriate and methodologically suited.

An appreciation of Phan’s theology means a deeper reflection on the central questions raised: What can Christian theologians who are not poor say to billions of Asian poor who are not theologians? How can Christianity help these people become “subjects” of their future and destiny and facilitate their struggle for liberation from the aftermath of colonization, political oppression, economic exploitation, communist regime, patriarchal domination, and racial discrimination?231

Any attempt to answer the above questions must provide further elucidation of the issue of Christ’s uniqueness and universality, on the one hand, and Christianity’s uniqueness and universality, on the other. Phan insists on the distinction between the concept of the uniqueness and universality of Christ and that of Christianity’s uniqueness and universality on the other.232 This distinction demonstrates Phan’s rejection of the pluralist claim that such lays the foundation for participants in a dialogue to make unique or universal doctrinal claims of faith about the founders of their various religions without necessarily either exclusivist or inclusivist claims.233

Phan agrees with Panikkar on the impossibility of applying the principle of the “phenomenological epoche”—suspension of one’s faith—within the dialogic process. In this

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230 Phan, “Jesus the Christ with an Asian Face.”
231 Ibid., 412.
233 Ibid.,
situation, Paul Ricoeur’s popular dictum is applicable here: “No one speaks from nowhere.” Commitment to faith is an indispensable factor for dialogue. However, Phan argues further that commitment to one’s faith is not a license for exclusive or aggressive inclusivism. For the goal of interreligious dialogue, which is for theologians to engage in the “dialogue of theological exchange is not to construe a universal theology of religion.”

Phan’s discourse on Jesus as the universal Savior begins with a startling reminder of the notion “that God’s redemptive power is still at work in and through Judaism.” From the context of historical consciousness evidenced in Jewish-Christian relations, this acknowledgement constitutes the first obstacle to the notion of Christianity’s absolutism and raises further doubt on the Church’s doctrine of “outside the Church, there is no Salvation.”

The point is that there is something to learn from the Christian perspective of Christ as the universal Savior that also acknowledges Judaism as another valid track of salvation. The Second Vatican Council added four more groups in which exists “elements of truth and grace”: “Muslims; those seeking the unknown God in shadows and images through their religions; those who do not practice any specific religion but sincerely seek God; and those who, without any fault on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God (atheists).” All these

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235 See Phan itemized seven criticism of the presupposition of Pluralism found in D’Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*. 1). Being intellectually imperialistic in similar ways like exclusivism and inclusivism—Western agenda of imposition; 2). Failed assumption for common core religious experience; 3). Neglect of social and historical particularities; 4). Failed to consider forms of religious life and community; 5). Appeal to praxis that leads to relativism and rejection of truth-claim in doctrine; 6). Pluralist do injustice to fundamental values of the doctrines of Trinity and Christology; 7). Misunderstood the purpose of Christian interreligious dialogue—with the attempt to form a universal religion. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, 96


people, the council says, “may achieve eternal salvation,” though of course not without the grace of Christ.\textsuperscript{238}

The continuation of God redemptive work among the Jews has numerous Christological challenges, especially for Christians in Asia who, from the depth of their religious experience as Christians, have proposed a different kind of Christology from the context of religious plurality. Phan elaborates on the root of this challenge:

Christians meet God in the saving power of the person of Jesus Christ and believe that this power is available to people in him. Christians have therefore taught that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. With their recent realization that God’s covenant with the Jewish people is eternal, Christians can now recognize in the Jewish tradition the redemptive power of God at work. If Jews, who do not share our faith in Christ, are in a saving covenant with God, then Christians need new ways of understanding the universal significance of Christ in the light of God’s eternal covenant with the Jewish people.\textsuperscript{239}

One major conclusion is evident with regard to the findings above: namely, if Judaism is still within the purview of the redemptive work of God, therefore the Jews will be saved outside of and without the works of “Christ and Christianity.” If this is so, the \textit{prima facie} evidence of the salvific validity of Judaism falsifies and denies the major thesis of Christ and Christianity’s uniqueness and universality. To allege otherwise without clarifying the historical condition and origin of such a claim will result in some form of supersessionism.\textsuperscript{240}

By way of rectifying the above problem of affirming Christ as universal Savior while not denying the redemptive work of God in Judaism, Phan identifies ten elements of a post-supersessionist theology that will lead to an entire overhaul of the Church’s Christology,

\textsuperscript{238} Austin Flannery, \textit{Vatican II, Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations: LG, no.16 and 22} (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996).
\textsuperscript{239} See The Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations, titled \textit{A Sacred Obligation}; in Phan, \textit{Being Religious Interreligiously}, 137.
\textsuperscript{240} Phan, \textit{Being Religious Interreligiously}, 141.
replacing or rather balancing it with pneumatology.²⁴¹ Phan’s argument reveals that the activity of the Logos and the Spirit that is manifest in other religion is far beyond the ecclesiacentric and Christocentric activities of Jesus of Nazareth, thus rejecting the age-old idea of viewing the other religions as preparation enevangelica.²⁴² According to Peter Phan,

Religious pluralism…is not just a matter of fact but also a matter of principle. That is, non-Christian religions may be seen as part of the plan of divine providence and endowed with a particular role in the history of salvation. They are not merely a “preparation” for, “stepping stones” toward, or “seeds” of Christianity and destined to be “fulfilled” by it. Rather, they have their own autonomy and their proper roles as ways of salvation, at least for their adherents.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 142-1.
²⁴² Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near since he gives life and breath to all things and wants all men to be saved. Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as ‘a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life’” (no. 843). The Catechism is here quoting Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), no. 16. It also refers to Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate), no. 2, and Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (8 December 1975), no. 53. See the US Catholic Bishop’s response to Peter Phan. http://www.usccb.org/doctrine/StatementonBeingReligiousInterreligiously.pdf (assessed December 08, 2009.1pm).
²⁴³ Phan, Being Religious Interreligiously, 65-66; see also, 143.
CHAPTER FOUR
RAIMON PANIKKAR’S THEOLOGY OF DIALOGICAL DIALOGUE

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated the claim that Panikkar’s pluralism, although similar to the proposals of John Hick and Paul Knitter, nonetheless differs considerably. In a fundamental sense and as a middle way, Panikkar redeems pluralism from the bad name it has inherited from its association with ideological super-structuralism and systematic discrimination. He insists “that true pluralism is neither an unrelated plurality nor a new ideological superstructure designed to keep everybody in their assigned cultural slots.”\(^1\) An isolated concept of pluralism that is radically unrelated to praxis tends towards ideological exclusivism. Thus, for Panikkar, authentic pluralism is measured by whether it is inherently dialogical.

This chapter expands the discussion of Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue, its rootedness in the cosmotheandric experience, and its application to the “Problem of the One and the Many.” Panikkar begins his cosmotheandric discourse with a disclaimer that delimits the scope of his claim: “I am offering a synthesis which not only remains open but which allows and even calls for differing interpretations.”\(^2\) The cosmotheandric perspective is defined by theo-praxis which ultimately leads to orthopraxis. Fundamentally, Panikkar’s cosmotheandrism evokes two types of dialogues: 1) an intra-dialogue of multi-dimensional spiritual experiences deeply rooted in all religious traditions and 2) an inter-dialogue between those committed to integral spirituality. For Panikkar, dialogue though a spiritual exercise must incorporate the anthropological and cosmic dimension.

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\(^2\) Ibid., 15.
Most disciplines use basic ideas and theoretical frameworks, which develop over time into stable concepts. These concepts are shared by scholars, and as such, they form a body of knowledge, research, findings, arguments, settled disputes, and major contentions—both proven and unproven. Modern studies of religion follow the conventions of these conceptual frameworks, often split into varying literatures, arguments, and unsettled propositions. Inter-religious conflicts and conflict resolutions also have a “conceptual framework.” For Panikkar, this is rooted in the cosmotheandric vision.

Thus, any attempt to understand Panikkar from the purview of the “conceptual framework” developed within the context of monotheistic/polytheistic traditions will be an exercise in futility. This means that the starting point to understanding his religious experience and his theology must be measured by his suspicion of Western hermeneutics. Panikkar’s suspicion has led to his methodic “bracketing” of Western ideologies. Bracketing is never an act of condescension, but rather a simple awareness of the fact that Western dualistic hermeneutics have been the major source of religious and cultural isolation. For Panikkar, such a worldview possesses a grave danger and stifles any genuine effort for dialogue among religions and culture. He states that “[t]he error [of such a system] lies in two extremes: uniformism, singularism, and narrow-mindedness with its dangers of fanaticism and intolerance, on the one hand and eclecticism, vagueness, and inefficacy with its temptations of irreality, irreligiousity, indifference, and spiritual death on the other.”

Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue critiques the dialectical models found in modern Western philosophy. Thus, leaning more on Heidegger and Gadamer as much as Derrida and Levinas, Panikkar argues that for dialogue to be dialogical, it must move beyond the realm of the

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comfortability of self-consciousness and move towards alterity—openness towards unknown horizons.⁴ Within the sphere of interreligious dialogue, Panikkar is leery about an impositional stance of conceptual frameworks under the disguise of beliefs, doctrine, philosophy, and ethics. Indeed, hermeneutical tools absorbed in self-consciousness subsume the dialogical partner under dialectical categories developed through the arrogance of absoluteness. In a question-and-answer formula, the dialogic partner is isolated and silenced.⁵

In the context of critiquing the absolute posture of Western philosophical hermeneutics, Panikkar shares the following characteristics of modern Western hermeneutics as identified by David Tracy:

1) A strong acknowledgement of the finitude and historicality of all human understanding; 2) the all-important fact that the focus of hermeneutical philosophy must be on the other as an alterity, not as a projected other of the self; 3) the hermeneutical self-experiences an excess to its ordinary self-understanding that it cannot control through conscious intentionality or through desire for the same. Therefore each self must “let go” to the dialogue itself; 4) the dialogue works as dialogue (and not an exercise in self-aggrandizement) only if the other is allowed—through the dynamic of the to—and—from movement of questioning—to become in dialogue itself a genuine other, not a projected other. A projected other is an unreal “other” projected upon some real other by the ego’s needs or desire to define itself.⁶

In light of the above characteristics, Panikkar’s mystical/mythical approach adds a dimension that has been somewhat absent in the conceptual binary thinking of Western hermeneutics: namely, the radical “irreducibility, reciprocity and individuality” of the other in the dialogic process. No form of dialogical dialogue can escape the above trilogy without falling back to the former temptations of the Western hermeneutic—that is, the obfuscation of horizon and subsuming of alterity—rendering it invisible. The understanding and use of symbols remains

paramount in Panikkar’s hermeneutics. It is through symbolic hermeneutics that Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue can be employed as a corrective to Western hermeneutics.

4.2. Panikkar’s Relational Trilogy

Panikkar, it must be said, had a fondness for triadic thinking. The triad Trinitarian structure that Panikkar proposes is bounded by perichoresis—interrelatedness. In fact, he believes that relationality is the hermeneutical key to dialogue. By definition, therefore, his entire hermeneutics is woven into a threefold approach to reality that involves the mapping out of Reality as a whole in a separated but irreducible harmony: (a) reality, as it appears to us—the phenomenological; (b) reality, as getting past appearances to reach the core of problems—the metaphysical and (c) reality, as remaining attentive to the very manifestation of the whole—the sophianic method.

Panikkar’s Trinitarian cosmology also relies heavily upon his perception of “the Threefold Structure of Human Time Consciousness.” The theological anthropology stemming from this structure identifies three trajectories of history: the economic or nonhistorical; the economic or historical, and the catholic [universal] or transhistorical. Reality as divine mystery although visibly immanent in history remains infinitely transcendent, irreducible, and absolutely ineffable. As such, the Divine mystery cannot be reduced to the conceptual framework of any or all of the historical epochs combined.

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7 According to Frank Podgorski, Panikkar’s concept of interrelatedness is “the hermeneutical key to understand and ‘stand under’ the mythos which both reveals and yet conceals reality.” Frank Podgorski, “The Cosmotheandric Intuition,” in The InterCultural Challenge of Raimon Panikkar, 107.
9 Panikkar, The Cosmotheandric Experience, 79.
10 Ibid., 24, 32, 46, 80. Numeric
11 For the four perspectives of the Divine, see Panikkar, Rhythm of Being: The Unbroken Trinity (Maryknoll, Orbis Books).
Panikkar is not alone in applying the triad structure of the Trinity\(^\text{12}\) to explain the human religious experience of the divine. Dupuis, for example, similarly opines that “[t]he affirmation of Christian identity is compatible with a genuine recognition of the identity of other faith communities representing in their own right distinct facets of the self-disclosure of the Absolute Mystery in a single but complex and articulated divine economy.”\(^\text{13}\) For Panikkar as well as for Dupuis, the Christian experience of the Trinity must extend beyond its dogmatic and ontological understanding of God’s inner self and confront the diversity of the world religions within the larger context of creation and salvation history. Panikkar writes:

I prefer the term theandric to the term trinitarian to describe this synthesis and the whole catholic (\textit{kath’holon}) spirituality in which it culminates. The first reason for this is that current theology has too often relegate the Trinitarian mystery to the exclusive sphere of the Divinity, “theology” in the Greek use of the word i.e., the study of God-in-himself totally or almost independent of the “economy” or study of God in his “temporal manifestation” i.e., creation and incarnation. A Trinitarian spirituality in the strict sense of the word might run the risk of not conceding, or at least of not sufficiently manifesting, the necessity of the dimension of incarnation, of humanity, without which every synthesis remains inevitably impoverished. Another reason for avoiding this term is that, since the Trinity is the central dogma of Christianity, it is in Christian faith where this essential mystery of the divine life, even of the whole of reality is thematically developed, whatever the “adumbrations” of it that may be discerned elsewhere, while I would prefer a term without such direct Christian connotations.\(^\text{14}\)

It is important to note that Panikkar’s distinction between theandric and Trinitarian in the above quotation serves a heuristic purpose. Although Panikkar’s religious experience draws inspirations from the Hindu and Buddhist tradition,\(^\text{15}\) the assumption that his cosmotheandrisim is

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\(^{12}\) Dupuis had made similar point: namely, that the triad structure of the divine Trinity is open to all humans, even in a sometimes hidden or anonymous manner. See Dupuis, \textit{Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism}, 276-77.


\(^{14}\) Panikkar, \textit{Trinity and Religious Experience}, 71-72.

\(^{15}\) For way in which Panikkar’s Trinitarian theology converges with Hinduism on the apophatic (nothing) and kataphatic (incarnations) of icons and persons, see, David Ray Griffin, ed, \textit{Deep Religious Pluralism} (Louisville, KY: WJK Press, 2005), 46; in Ronald Faber, \textit{Divine Manifestation} (New York: Lexington Press, 2014), 34.
neither Christian nor Indic nor Buddhist can be misleading. To some extent, such a postulation glosses over Panikkar’s indebtedness to the Christian apophatic tradition. On hermeneutical grounds, the foundation of his Trinitarian theology is nonetheless different from that of Tertullian or the formulations of Karl Rahner, Karl Barth, and Jürgen Moltmann. All thinkers attempted to develop an “open theology” that places the revelation of God—self-disclosure within the context of the entire oikonomia—beyond the confines of the particular theological systems that represent orthodoxy.

As Faber describes it, Panikkar’s “trinity of the nameless beyond all names (apophatic divine), the named in many names (kataphatic divine), and the immanence of these movements in the khoric space of their reflection (connex), indeed, reflects modes of multiplicity.” Panikkar has generally defended his theandric approach to the Trinity as “authentically orthodox” because it “gives to God true right (orthos) honor and glory (doxa),” but this approach to God-talk “goes beyond the traditional idea given by Christianity.”

Cosmotheandric vision is Panikkar’s tool for the critique of the Western imprisonment of the Trinity within ontological Trinitarian perspectives. According to MacPherson, “theandrism for Panikkar incorporates the full language and the teachings of Christianity; moreover, its foundational use in his thought serves as a special groundwork for what will follow—the non-

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17 See “Tertullian’s distinction between the divine substantia (which is one) and divine oikonomia (multiple administrations, dispensations or activities) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” in Claude Welch, *In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1952), 293.
19 For Barth’s understanding of the economic trinity as the revelation of the mode God’s Being within creation as creator, reconciler and redeemer, see, Ben Leslie, “Does God have a Life?: Barth and Lacugna on the Immanent Trinity,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 378.
21 Faber, *Divine Manifestation*, 34.
22 Panikkar, *Religious Experience*, 6, 43.
dualism of advaitic Vedanta.” Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision is an exemplar of the possibility of comparative theological dialogue between the West and the East. In this vision of reality, the looming question is posed by Thatamanil: “Is a Christian nondualism possible?"

The idea that the Christian doctrines…and Eastern notions of nonduality are absolutely incompatible becomes far less plausible once appreciation for the vital diversity within Christian tradition grows. This is not to say that difference will vanish and homogeneity reign. More likely is a new and growing appreciation for the importance of subtle difference, difference discovered by way of careful comparison rather than posited before comparison begins.

Obviously, and for methodological reasons too, Panikkar’s distinction between theandrism and Trinitarianism serves the purpose of a careful and non-banal comparison between traditional theological positions and the new cultural amendments from nondualism. Fundamental to Panikkar’s analysis remains the fact that for Panikkar, the ontological presuppositions underlying the Trinitarian dogma of the Western tradition render its hermeneutical foundations inadequate for a pluralistic theology of religions. Yet, Christian theology is deemed relevant (especially) in the pluralist context of India, if it is rooted in the reality of the economic Trinitarian divine life of the absolute, a reality far more encompassing than the rigid immanent trinity-logical paradigms of Western theologies. Consequently, the argument against Western hermeneutics rests in Panikkar’s insistence on the mystery of the Trinity as the Christian’s ultimate foundation for pluralism.

Panikkar further contends that the triad structure of cosmotheandric vision lies within the Trinitarian reality. By uniting divine, human, and ecological concerns, he developed a Trinitarian theology drawing from the advaitic Vedanta that proves a corrective to the Western dualistic

23 MacPherson, A Critical Reading of the Development of Raimon Panikkar’s Thought on the Trinity, 14.
25 Ibid., 6.
solutions to the problem of Divine mystery. In line with traditional Trinitarian discourse, he also approaches the subject matter of the divine mystery from a triadic structure of reality which he considered as the “human invariants” — the cosmotheandric reality. Thus, for him, the cosmotheandric vision remains the sine qua non for approaching the divine—for theologizing. He says,

Chief among these is the triadic (or Trinitarian or non-dualistic) patterns of the “three worlds,” at its simplest perhaps, a below, an above and an in-between: traditionally, the domains of the Gods, the Humans, and Nature; in personalistic terms, the mystery, the noetic and the aesthetic; and in the terminology of these essays, theos, anthropos and cosmos. In short the “cosmosthendric” reality.

Panikkar’s account intends to promote and transcend the Western philosophical and theological traditions. It must be stressed that Western hermeneutics had on various occasions reduced the triad dimensions of the “human variants” to the oneness, the monist dimension, or inadvertently, applied the triadic dimensions in a rather isolated and unrelated manner. He states, “To oversimplify, or rather to eliminate or ignore what we cannot easily assimilate, is a universal human temptation—and reductionism a common philosophical sin.” This dualistic approach necessarily leads to the fragmentation of reality into isolated modes and a tendency to reduce reality to either substance or existence monism. Panikkar argues that the establishment of philosophical monism and its rigorous pursuit of absoluteness, especially among religions, necessarily inclines to exclusivism, wherein, “intelligibility demands a reduction to unity.”

Addressing the issue of religious pluralism, Panikkar suggests that it must first begin with the retrieval of lost fragmented perspectives from other religious traditions that have been

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27 Perfectly construed as the human existential condition...universal conditions of what all human beings embody. We sleep and wake up and structure our days in a certain rhythm. Human rhythm in turn mirrors and adjusts itself to cosmic rhythm: the rhythm of the day and night, the rhythm of the seasons, the rhythm of music and dance, the harmony of the universe.” Panikkar, The Rhythm of Being.


29 Ibid., 1.

30 Ibid., 7.
submerged either under monistic categories of “oneness” or the pluralistic dimension of “many.” In his comparison of the dualist worldview with non-dualistic perspectives, he notes, “We cannot allow any religion, culture or fragment of reality—even if it is labeled a “leftover” by a subsequent civilization, or a broken shard by some higher level of consciousness—to be forgotten, neglected or thrown away, if we were to achieve that total reconstruction of reality which has today become imperative.”

4.2.1. Trinitarian discourse: Father—apophatism, Son—theism, Spirit—monism

The doctrine of the Trinity presents a challenge to Christians and non-Christians alike. Contrary to the Western handling of the Trinitarian debate, Panikkar begins his discourse on the Trinity with a caution: “Let us emphasize here that we are not speaking about conceptions of divinity but of the more concrete problem of the relation of God to the world, for it is in the world that the Christian event will make its appearance.” What would be of the Incarnation without a world and Humans? Thus, for Panikkar, the experience of God as the Real is obtainable within the cosmotheandric relativity of the radical Trinity. Radical Trinity means, therefore, that all Reality is Trinitarian. This means that Trinitarian discourse is not confined to a divine reality situated outside the world in an insurmountable dualism; rather, it embraces all existing reality, which comes to be a cosmotheandric reality. In a nutshell, Trinitarianism for Panikkar is synonymous to cosmotheandrism.

For Panikkar, the concept of “radical” Trinity is essential and remarkable. He argues that “the Trinity is not the prerogative of a God (Substance, Supreme Being), but rather the defining

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characteristic of the Real."35 Before the word ‘Trinity’ was coined by Tertulia (using the Greek philosophical concept of Substance), the world and the entire reality was Trinitarian. The foundation of Panikkar’s Trinitarian structure is rooted in Reality, wherein everything is intimately related and thus Trinitarian. He holds that “the question about God is not first a question about Being but rather a question about reality.”36

On these grounds, Panikkar submits that it is not only God, the Father-God, the Son-God, the Holy Spirit that are in a constitutive relationship, but also God-Man-Cosmos (cosmotheandrism) and Heaven-Earth-Man that are in eternal perichoresis.37 The radical Trinity complements the Christian Trinitarian insight of the immanent Trinity, whereas, the cosmotheandrism vision of God-Man-Cosmos relates to the economic Trinity, the perichoresis of God with the world and with man.38 Panikkar is acutely aware that the doctrine of the Trinity emphasizes both unity and otherness.

On the basis of the cosmotheandric vision, Panikkar argues further that the mystery of the Trinity as conceived in its isolated ontology and devoid of relations poses a grave challenge to theology in general and interreligious dialogue in particular. In other words, he outlines the three historical approaches to God-talk and their implications:

In the dualist vision, in which God is the “absolutely Other” there is an infinite distance between Creator and creature… The monist vision, which in theological terms would be pantheism. Everything is God, and we all experience God insofar as we all experience things… The non-dualist vision (advaita), in which divinity is neither individually separated from the rest of reality nor totally identical with it.39

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Panikkar’s critique of dualist and monist perspective does suggest that Trinitarian discourse does not thrive in a worldview that conceptualizes God in binary oppositions. The cosmotheandric vision of Reality shows itself to be incompatible with the theistic dualism that reduces reality into *ad unum.* As a result, he asserts:

...that the trinity is not a simple, accidental modification of monotheism...To say that God is not one means that the rationalizing human mind cannot reduce reality *ad unum,* and at the same time cannot make unity an abstraction. If, in the monotheistic perspective, there is one absolutely omniscient being who embraces and understands all of reality, that is not the case for the Trinity.\(^41\)

A crucial point of Panikkar’s critique of the Christian dogmatic understanding and application of the immanent Trinity rests in its monistic and dualistic compositions. Consequently, he proposes non-dualism as a corrective to monism and dualism. He states,

…In the simplest terms, a great part of the wisdom the East offers to the West is the non-dualist vision of reality. Yet this vision also suggests a more complete image of the trinity...God is neither the Same (monism) nor the Other (dualism). God is one pole of reality, a constitutive pole...this pole is nothing in itself. It exists only in its polarity, in its relationship. God is relationship, intimate internal relationship with all.\(^42\)

The non-dualism vision addresses the ontological relations within the Trinity while at the same time not abandoning the implications of such relationality on the cosmos. Karl Rahner holds a similar opinion: namely, that the study of the ontological relationship in the Trinity cannot be done independent of God’s revelatory actions in creation. This view led to the popular maxim on the Trinity that is attributed to Rahner: “The immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity.”\(^43\) Similarly, Rahner posits (like Panikkar)

\(^{40}\) “A theist can certainly think of a God who does not require the existence of any creatures in order to be real, but this ‘God’ does not exist because the actual God, the God that in fact exists, is God with creatures. That God ‘can be’ (without creatures) is a phenomenological feature of God, not an ontological statement about ‘him.’” Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience,* 151.


\(^{42}\) Ibid., 63.

that therefore any claim of the knowledge of God outside what God has done in creation can only be sustained in monistic and dualistic contexts.

Panikkar’s cosmotheandrisism significantly identifies the “immanent and economic” Trinity in ways that preserve and solidify the connection between, God, creation, and salvation history. In such a profound way, cosmotheandrisism encompasses all dimensions of reality, thus serving as an experiential value for dialogue with the religions of the world. Rather than situating dialogue in the ontological realm of the Trinity, Panikkar introduces the Trinity within the cosmotheandric vision. In view of this, the relationality of the triune God extends beyond mere theoretical formulation, embracing the entire cosmos and its inhabitants—peoples, cultures, and religions—in a holistic way.

As a principle for dialogue within God-self and with the cosmos, Panikkar argues that the Trinity is a sine qua non for intra and inter-religious dialogue. On logical grounds, he makes a case for the existence of the universal Trinitarian principle in world religions, since human life does not exist only in Christian form. Thus, in dialogue with Hinduism and Buddhism respectively, he employs the Advaitic Vedanta and Nirvana principles to enhance his Trinitarian theology. From his experience in belonging to multiple religions, Panikkar develops three spiritualities corresponding to the main doctrinal principles of these religions. For instance, from Buddhism, Panikkar appropriates the concept of Nirvana in relation to his Father-spirituality; from Christianity, a Son-oriented spirituality; and from Hinduism the Advaita is linked to a Spirit-oriented spirituality. It is crucial at this point to note that although Panikkar undoubtedly...

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45 MacPherson, A Critical Reading of the Development of Panikkar’s Thought on the Trinity, 43.
agrees that “Trinity” is a Christian term, he argues that the trinitarian structure—that is, the threefold pattern, *Theos-anthropos-cosmos*—are invariants of all religions and cultures.\(^{46}\)

Panikkar’s Trinitarian discourse is *apophatic*. It is deeply rooted in the experience of God that transcends the Western philosophical categorization, which equates God to Being—*onto-theology*. In this sense, apophatic silence before an iconic representation of the Divine threatens the foundation of *onto-theology* and the absoluteness of Reason. Panikkar shares similar convictions with Martin Heidegger,\(^{47}\) Emmanuel Levinas,\(^ {48}\) Jacques Derrida,\(^ {49}\) Jean-Luc Marion,\(^ {50}\) and a host of other philosophers and theologians who have wrestled in the words of

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\(^{46}\) Ewert H. Cousin, points to this innovativeness as Panikkar’s *Advaitic Trinitarianism*. It covers the lacuna of the earlier Christians in its inclusiveness of the advaitic Hinduism and yet remains traditionally authentic. Ewert H. Cousins, “Advaitic Trinitarianism,” in Joseph Prabhu, *The InterCultural Challenge of Raimon Panikkar*, 120.

\(^{47}\) Heidegger’s critique of the God of *onto-theology* as absolute ground of possibility for being is based on its strangeness and arbitrariness; because we “can neither pray nor sacrifice to this god [of philosophy]. Before the *casu sui*, man can neither fall to his knees in awe nor can he play music or dance before this god.” Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 72. See also Merold Westphal, “Overcoming Onto-theology,” in John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, *God the Gift and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 147. Elsewhere in his *Seminar*, Heidegger further laments this ‘ unholy’ transaction that has taken place within the onto-theological project, “If I were to write a theology—to which I sometimes feel inclined—then the word *Being* would not occur in it. Faith does not need the thought of *Being*. When faith has recourse to this thought, it is no longer faith. This is what Luther understands.” Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtansgabe 15 Seminare* (Frankfurt: Klosterman, 1986), 436-37. See also Merold Westphal, “Overcoming Onto-theology,” 149.

\(^{48}\) According to Emmanuel Levinas, “philosophical discourse therefore should not be able to include God, of whom the Bible speaks—if this God does have a meaning. But as soon as he is conceived, this God is situated within ‘being’s move.’ He is situated there as an entity per excellence…in thematizing God [thus] it brings God into the course of being.” Emmanuel Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” in Graham Ward, ed., *The Postmodern God*, 52-53.

\(^{49}\) Jacques Derrida’s whole iconoclasm, his position about an *Impossible* God due to difference and his perspective on the *aporia* of the Gifts could only be understood against the background of his ‘radical alterity’ of God as the wholly Other. “The elliptical formula, “every other is wholly other” is Derrida’s translation of a deeply religious experience; giving words to his experience of the impossible…in the formula *tout autre est tout autre*, one moves back and forth between God—God is wholly Other, God is every other, every other is God—each man or woman: every other human being is wholly other, every other is *like God.*” See Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*. Trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago, Press, 1995), 87; John D. Caputo, *The Tears and Prayers of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Indiana: University of Indiana, Press, 1997), 209-210. See also, Emmanuel Levinas’ *Totality and Infinity*, for the dimension of the “Other” that is totally open to the infinity of the ‘face,’ the ‘neighbor’ and of ‘God.’

\(^{50}\) Marion’s attempt to free God from the fact of Being remains the central piece of his work under the titled *God Without Being*. Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, trans. Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), xx; Marion argues further that the replacement of onto-theology with phenomenology signals the end of the metaphysic of Being; See Marion in John Sallis, *Delimitations: Phenomenology and the End of Metaphysics* (Indiana: University of Indiana, Press, 1995), 283.
Panikkar, “to liberate the Divine from the burden of being God.…”⁵¹ It is not unusual that the assertion of apophatism goes hand-in-hand with a non-dualistic theological approach. For according to Panikkar, the “discourse about God is radically different from every other discourse on every other subject because God is not an object. Were God to be spoken of as object, God would become nothing more than an idol.”⁵² Thus, speaking about God requires a certain preliminary interior silence that is recommended by apophatic spirituality and also the phenomenological perspectives of God as icon, “for divinity is perceived here as a meta-ontological reality. Every thought on its subject would be idolatry.”⁵³

Liberating God from the grasp of Being would mean for Panikkar a return to the fundamentals of the Trinitarian discourse within the confines of his cosmotheandric vision, which is rooted first in the Christian traditions and then in the advaitic Vedanta. Panikkar reiterates that his idea of non-dualism is rooted in the Christian tradition. He argues, “In itself, the Christian event constitutes a challenge to both monism and dualism. The principal dogmas of Christianity are non-dualist: Christ is neither uniquely God nor uniquely human; at the same time he is not half-God and half-human. Neither an absolutely “Other” God, any more than a God who is All, fits into the conception of Christ’s divinity.”⁵⁴ This endeavor is aimed at keeping theology within the realm of the symbolic, the mythical, and the mystical—where even the most intellectual articulation of cataphatic discourse remains thoroughly inadequate. For as Panikkar observes, “it is quite obvious that reason [Being] cannot have the last word in a matter where, as part of reality, its own position is itself under question.”⁵⁵

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⁵³ Ibid., 36; see also Marion’s treatment of “Idol and Icon,” and “Double Idolatry” in God without Being, 7-24; 25-52.
⁵⁴ The Experience of God: Icons of the Mastery, 65.
⁵⁵ Ibid., 63. [Emphasis mine].

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As a symbol of the divine, therefore, Panikkar argues that the Trinity is not entirely an exclusively Christian phenomenon. Christianity cannot lay an absolute claim to the Trinity in the sense that it does not own God, whose symbol is re-presented to humans as the Trinity. In effect, he boldly asserts that: “the Trinitarian vision of reality is nothing less than the human variant that is found, implicitly or explicitly, in practically all the traditions of humanity…[thus] to pretend to situate God on our side, against others, is quite simply a blasphemy.”56 This analysis shows that no one instrument, culture, religion, ideology, and civilization can confine the Trinitarian reality as its solely God-given principle. In this form, therefore, the Trinity as Divine reality is said to be present in all authentic religious traditions where the Divine is experienced as such.57

Panikkar’s approach to the Trinity is holistic and mystical. Accordingly, he distinguishes between the “conceptual and symbolic” discourse about God. In view of this distinction, he offers as the parameters for God-talk, should it ever occur, that it:

ought to be as a symbol of another order, a symbol that serves to uproot the absolute of every human activity, a symbol that expresses the contingency of all human enterprise, thus a symbol that makes impossible every totalitarianism of whatever type there may be…The word God is a symbol that both reveals and veils itself in the very symbol of which we speak. Every symbol is such because it is, and not because it is interpreted within an objective context of knowledge. There is no possible hermeneutics of the symbol, because its proper interpretation is found in itself. The symbol is symbole (“to throw together” in Greek) when it establishes a relationship with us—that is, when we recognize it is as such. Unlike concepts, which are univocal, at least in intention, symbols bear several meanings. The symbol is eminently relative, not in the sense of relativism, but in the sense of relativity, of the relation between a subject and an object.58

As symbole, the relational God in Panikkar’s Trinitarian discourse is the Divine that manifests, reveals God’s self in the context of non-dualism that evades the interpretation of

Western conceptual frameworks. Because “every symbol is such because it is, and not because it is interpreted within an objective context of knowledge,” Panikkar’s Trinitarian theology remains a conundrum for the Western mind. In other words, the reality of the Divine in its symbolic equivocal sense is beyond the traditional Christian theoretical dogma of the Trinity which conceptualizes God as Father, Son and the Spirit. As Panikkar illustrates:

The Trinity is as much a challenge to monism as to dualism. If there is one and only one God, the Trinity is either superfluous or no more than a simple modality. If there are three gods, the Trinity is an aberration. And if God is neither “one” nor “three,” what does the Trinity mean? Precisely that: God is neither one nor three. God does not allow himself to be enclosed in any number. Qui incipit numerare incipit errare (Who begins to count begins with a mistake), says Saint Augustine. Hence it is inaccurate to say that God is three persons. The concept of person applied to the Trinity, to Father, Son, and Spirit, is not univocal (three absolutely equal persons would be three Gods), nor is it analogical. As Saint Thomas says, speaking of three persons is a concession to current language and nothing can be called “three” in the Trinity.59

His Trinitarian achievement moves the debate of the Trinity from its conceptual monotheistic and dualism framework into the realm of what Panikkar describes as “the neti neti [not this, not that] of apophatic mysticism.”60 A special feature of his Trinitarian theology is the enrichment and harmonization of insights from the apophatism—silence—of the Father, and the kataphatic tradition—how to speak—of the Son.61 Richard Kearney’s intriguing analysis of the anatheism movement as the meeting point of the apophatic and kataphatic traditions is an excellent example of the critique of meta-narratives. Therefore, “if apophasis…tends to place God too far beyond being…” writes Kearney, “the kataphatic is sometimes tempted to reduce

59 Panikkar, The Experience of God: Icons of the Mastery, 64. This quote however is not an understatement of or even a suggestion that the Christian concept of the Trinity is universally applicable to all religion. Rather Panikkar points to the fact that the Trinity is an equivocal term that is open to more than one interpretation beyond the Western anthropology, metaphysics and monotheism.

60 Ibid., 65.

God to being." Panikkar’s cosmotheandric approach to the apophatic and kataphatic dichotomy is enriched by his embrace of the Christian Trinitarian insights. This merger of thought patterns accounts for Panikkar’s holistic Trinity, where the “Father-Son-Spirit [category] would correspond to what Christian theology calls the immanent Trinity, divine interiority; [whereas] God-Man-Cosmos would correspond to what that theology calls the economic Trinity, the relationship of God with the world and with man.” As an equivocal reality, the Trinity lends itself to new ways of understanding the relationality of the Father, Son, and Spirit in a non-dualistic context.

In line with the Christian tradition of apophatic theology and the specifications in the Nirguna Brahman of Hinduism and Nirvana of Buddhism, Panikkar develops a distinctive theology of the person of the Father as the divine absolute, without name, uncreated, transcendent and unknowable. For even when all is observed with regard to the person of the Father, “nothing can be said of the Father ‘in himself,’ of the ‘self’ of the Father. Certainly he is the Father of the Son and Jesus addresses him as Father, but even ‘Father’ is not his proper name, though he has no name.”

In other words, all attempts at conceptual and intelligible discourse of the immanent Trinity end in silence. Any comparison will result in sheer impossibility, for the Father, “is not.” Panikkar’s negation of the Father is not the product of philosophical nihilism, which either upholds the nonexistence of a monstrous God or proclaims the death of such God. In short, as far

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62 Kearney’s search for the mediation between apophatic and kataphatic is rooted in the fear that negative theology tends towards the eclipsing of the divine from the secular arena. Thus anatheism is the constant remainder of the return of the narrative of God, re-enfleshing it in the secular. “But, this re-affirmation can only come after a “transversal of the Abyss.” https://godaftergod.wordpress.com/2012/12/09/the-apophatic-way-part-2-of-the-anaphatic-way/#comments. Accessed 10/20/15 at 12pm.
64 Panikkar, Trinity and Religious Experience, 46.
65 Panikkar, Trinity and Religious Experience, 44.
as Panikkar is concerned, the Father ‘is not’ and ‘does not’ give Himself to thought, to conceptual mastery. All that is to be known of the Father is revealed in and through the Son.

In order to gain more understanding of Panikkar’s theology of God the Father, it is necessary to revisit the importance of *kenosis*. According to him,

…the absolute of the father, is not. He has no *ek-sistence*, not even that of Being. In the generating of the Son he has, so to speak, given everything. In the Father’s apophatism (the kenosis or emptying) of Being is real and actual...In begetting the Son he gives up everything, even, if we dare to say so, the possibility of being expressed in a name that would speak of him alone, outside any reference to the generation of the Son.\(^{66}\)

Kenosis entails the complete and unreserved outpouring of the Father into the Son to the extent that the Father ceases to be an object of thought and conceptuality. Panikkar refers to this divine self-emptying of the Father into the Son as the “cross in the Trinity,” or the “immolation of God of which the Cross of Christ and his immolations are only the images and revelations.”\(^{67}\)

Hence the Son is the Christ in which the fullness of the Spirit of the Father is both revealed and made manifest. Panikkar calls this epiphany of the Christ in Christianity as well as the other world religions a *Christophany*.\(^{68}\)

Panikkar’s rejection of the univocal understanding of the “biological anthropology” that constitutes the traditional Christian Trinitarian structure of Father, Son, and Spirit has implications for the particularity and historicity of Jesus Christ and his identification as the second *person* of the Trinity.\(^{69}\) In the cosmotheandric Trinitarian perspective, the question about

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\(^{68}\) Panikkar, *Christophany: The Fullness of Man*, 5f.

\(^{69}\) See the response of D’Costa and Heim in their disagreement with Panikkar and their attempt to foster a normative universal Christology within the Trinity that responds to the need of interreligious dialogue. See Joas Adiprasetya, *The Imaginative Glimpse: The Trinity and Multiple Religious Participation* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2013).
the identity of the second person of Trinity is raised within the context of what Panikkar describes as the “radical relativity” of the Trinity.

Radical relativity, an irreducible connection between the Source of what is, that which Is, and its very Dynamism; Father, Son, and Spirit; Sat, Cit and Ananda; the Divine, the Human, the Cosmic; Liberty, Consciousness, and Matter; or however we might name this triad that constitutes the real. Reality is Trinitarian, not dualist, neither one nor two. Only by denying duality (advaita), without reducing everything to unity, are we able consciously to approach it.70

It is within the perspective of the complete kenosis of the Father that he develops the identity of the Son. Because it is not possible to go to the Father except through the Son, he affirms, “It is the Son who acts, who creates. Through him everything was made. In him everything exists. He is the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega. It is the Son, properly speaking—and the Son was manifested in Christ—who is the Divine Person, the Lord.”71 Thus, the Christ, as either manifest or hidden, remains the absolute and only mediator of God the Father.72

On the basis of these insights, Panikkar argues that the revelation of the Father through kenosis constitutes the Christ—the Christic principle—that is discernable in the religions of the world. This Christ, the Son, becomes the dialogical principle within the cosmotheandric vision—and source of personal relations, dialogue, and communion.73 For this reason, “[b]eings in so far as they participate in the Son, are from, with, and through him. Every being is a Christophany—a showing forth of Christ.”74

71 Panikkar, Trinity and Religious Experience, 62.
72 Ibid., 63.
73 Ibid., 62.
74 Panikkar, Trinity and Religious Experience, 54. Panikkar extends the classical notion of found in works of Maximus the Confessor and Maister Eckhart, namely that of ‘creatio continua to incarnatio continua.’ By this he means “the continuous incarnation of the Son in every creature.” See also, Panikkar, Christophany, 179.
Furthermore, Panikkar roots the theology of the second person of the Trinity within the cosmotheandric Trinitarian structure. First, it is important to note that Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision departs considerably from the traditional Christian conception of the divine which emphasizes the “biological and anthropological” structuring of the Trinity into strict “Father, Son, and Spirit” categories. Panikkar’s point that “the Trinity is not the prerogative of a God (Substance, Supreme Being), but rather the defining characteristic of the Real” can be easily forgotten. In his own words, “It is all Reality that has a Trinitarian structure in which everything is intimately related. It is not only God the Father-God the Son-God the Holy Spirit that are in constitutive relationship, but also God-Man-Cosmos, Heaven-Earth-Man.” As a consequence, he discusses the Trinity within the wider horizon of the cosmotheandric awareness that predates Christianity.

In the attempt to create a complementarity in the Trinity that strikes a balance between Christianity and the world religions, Panikkar proposes a change in the theological debate, centering on application of the biological anthropology to the Trinity. In his view, the greatest conundrum facing the Trinity lies in its nomenclature and the understanding of the relationality of persons. A reduction of the Trinity to its univocal perspective—that is, either “one” or “three”—is at the heart of this misunderstanding. He illustrates further:

But we have to know for a long time and under almost all latitudes that One is not a number; it is rather the symbol of intelligibility. That is the challenge of the Trinity and non-dualism. The concept of the person in the Trinity, therefore, is equivocal. The difference between the “persons” is infinite. There is no divine nature apart from the persons. It is not without reason that the Greeks in the early

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75 Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Consciousness of Man.*
76 For Panikkar’s of the notion of person as it applies to the Trinity, see, Panikkar, *The Experience of God: Icons of the Mastery.* 64-65.
79 See Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Intuition.*
church controversies preferred the concept of *hypostasis*. The One is neither three nor persons. We just as well could say *sun, person, and wind*.  

In sum, Panikkar’s theological discourse of the Son hinges on making a distinction between the Christ and Jesus Christ. This distinction is further illustrated by his analysis of the “identity and identification” of the Christic principle. He states, “Christ is the Christian parameter for speaking about God. God has pronounced one and only one word: Christ. This parameter, given to us two thousand years ago, permits us to speak about God—on condition, of course, that we always remain conscious of the cultural and historical burden this parameter entails.”  

Panikkar depicts the question of the identity of Christ as a question that is deeply rooted in the *kenosis* of the God—the Father. Here it becomes clear that Panikkar’s apophatism of the Father relates to Christ—Son—that has universal theistic characterizations beyond one of its manifested in Jesus of Nazareth.  

Epistemologically and historically, Panikkar’s distinction between the identity of Christ and the various identifications of the Christ in the various historical contexts of its manifestation is central to the cosmotheandric vision of reality:  

To approach the theme of the experience of Jesus, we must distinguish between the identification and identity. Many Christians are satisfied with the identification of Jesus as a man, the son of Mary, who lived in Nazareth and died on a cross under Pontius Pilate, who rose again, and whose existence contains all the other data that tradition has handed down to identify him…. The identification of Jesus of Nazareth, which permits us not to confuse him with anyone else, is not the same as his identity, the identity that would allow us to know him.  

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81 Ibid., 68.  
82 Of particular importance to intercultural and interreligious dialogue is Panikkar’s use of traditional Christological language to make the case for the Concept of Isvara as Christ and Lord in his earlier work, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964). Panikkar argues, “I would propose using the word Lord for that Principle, Being, Logos or Christ that other religious traditions call by a variety of names.” See Panikkar, *Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, 119-113.  
Panikkar approaches the identity of the Son within the context of the *kenosis* of the Father; since the Father cannot be spoken about except through Son, and no one can come to the Father except through the Son. Thus, the transcendent, invisible, and ineffable God as Father becomes immanent, visible, and effable in God the Son—the Christ. Panikkar acknowledges the identification of Jesus as Christ, but clearly states that the Christ is not identical to Jesus.\(^8^4\) Put in a different way, the identification of Jesus as Christ does not completely exhaust the identity of the Christ.

Panikkar also underlines the dynamics of understanding the Spirit in the context of the transcendence of the Father and the revelation of the Father in the Son and Spirit. For Panikkar, the Spirit is the immanence of God in the person of Christ. In order to escape the traditional Christian heresy of the subordination of the Spirit to the Son as the latter to the Father,\(^8^5\) he develops a pneumatology that locates the immanence of the Spirit within the divine life itself. However, according to Panikkar, “the Spirit cannot be separated from the spirit of Christ, but … the Spirit is not subordinate to the logos.”\(^8^6\) The transcendent God and the immanent Spirit cannot be revealed except through the Son—Logos, which means that “Transcendence ceases to be when it reveals itself; immanence is incapable of revealing itself.”\(^8^7\) Taken together, Panikkar affirms, “The Spirit is the communion between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is immanent to the Father and the Son jointly. In the same manner the Spirit passes from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father in the same procession.”\(^8^8\)

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\(^8^4\) Ibid.  
\(^8^5\) Ibid., 85.  
\(^8^6\) Ibid., 86.  
\(^8^7\) Panikkar, *Religious Experience*, 59.  
\(^8^8\) Ibid.
While divine transcendence and immanence present a challenge for the Trinitarian debate, it can be addressed through the use of *symbole*. For this reason, Panikkar insists that God’s transcendence (Father) and God’s immanence (Spirit) can become the subject-matter of the hermeneutic of Love through the revelation offered in Christ (Son). If the *Logos* is given to thought and conceptual mastery, the transcendent Father and the immanent Spirit are what saturates human rationality. In the words of Panikkar, “We are not able to rationalize or rationally justify the spiritual field. The Spirit is not constrained by rationality, for the Spirit manifests itself as freedom, and we cannot rationalize freedom. The Spirit is unpredictable; we need to be carried away by it.”

4.2.2. Spiritualities: Iconolatry, Personalism, Mysticism

Panikkar identifies three irreducible spiritualities—iconolatry, personalism, and mysticism—as foundational to the cosmotheandric vision of reality. Ultimately, for Panikkar, these spiritualities are grounded in all religious traditions in that they exist to alleviate the human condition of—fear, hope, and finality. For this reason, he believes there is a need to distinguish between religion and spirituality.

One of the features that differentiates a spirituality from an established religion is that the former is far more flexible, for it is disconnected from the mass of rites, structures, etc. that are indispensable to all religions. One religion, in fact, may include several spiritualities, because spirituality is not directly bound up with any dogma or institution. It is rather an attitude of mind one may ascribe to different religions.

In significant contrast to the dogmatic claims that are characteristic of theological positions in traditional studies, Panikkar proposes cosmotheandric spiritualities as an exercise

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90 These spiritualities relates to the Hindu ways of action [karmamārga], devotion [bhatimārga] and knowledge [jnanamārga]. See Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience*, 10.
91 Ibid., 9.
outside the realm of dogmatism. He claims that his “schema is authentically anthropological inasmuch as it is in correspondence with the actual constitution of man as man.”\textsuperscript{92} In other words, cosmotheandric spirituality, like the concept of the Trinity itself, is not the prerogative of any particular religion. Rather, it is constitutive of Reality, which of itself is Trinitarian.

Hence, Panikkar speaks of iconolatry, personalism, and mysticism as distinctive parts of the religious experience so much so that iconolatry-Action, personalism-Love and, mysticism-Knowledge become the genuine path to devotion, to spiritualities, and to authentic religious experience. For this reason, Panikkar holds that the three forms of spiritualities together constitute an integral part of the cosmotheandric reality. In this vision, the basic attitude of humans toward divine transcendence and immanence is re-defined with a great emphasis on “relativity—not relativism—of the concept of God. God is only God for the creature and with reference to it. God is not God for himself…He never says ‘I am my God!’ but I am your God. God is our God.”\textsuperscript{93}

Panikkar defines iconolatry as a euphemism for idolatry. Iconolatry is not discussed in a derogative sense, but rather in the context of the unavoidable meeting of the divine and human and the false worship or religiosity—idolatry—that results from such an encounter. Iconolatry denotes the “primary and primordial attitude of man in front of the divinity or the mystery.”\textsuperscript{94} For Panikkar, iconolatry has a divine origin, in that man was created in the image and likeness of God. This divine attribute in human beings is necessary for divinization.

In this sense, Panikkar argues that for theosis to occur, some form of iconolatry is needed. Yet, iconolatry remains problematic in that instead of being formed in God’s own image, the

\textsuperscript{92} Panikkar, \textit{The Trinity and the Religious Experience}, 9.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 11.
reverse becomes the case: man creates God in his own image and likeness.\(^{95}\) In this sense, Panikkar critiques biological anthropomorphism—Father-Son, within the Trinity—as an exemplar of conceptual idolatry.

Iconolatry has deep roots in the Ancient Near Eastern religions. This also obtains for the religions of Israel and that of the surroundings nations. Panikkar asserts that:

Jahweh exists in the Ark and dwells in his Temple just as Ashtaroth, Baal and Dagon do in theirs. The Hebrews speak of, behave towards, and pray to Jahweh in the same very manner as the Canaanites speak of, behave towards, and pray to their gods. They worship him just as an idol is worshipped, the essence of iconolatry not consisting...in the material character of the idol but in the act of attributing to God creaturely qualities and attributes which are refined to a greater or lesser extent and can be ascertained by various procedures.\(^{96}\)

One of the most enigmatic theological questions in the entire Old Testament is the theophany of Exodus 3:14 (the burning bush episode). God escaped the conceptual mastery evident in the other gods—namely, that of nomenclature. God shields God-self from the arrow of being—any characterization or classification that results from naming.\(^ {97}\) As Richard Kearney suggests, “We might do better to interpret the God of the Exodus 3 neither as ‘I who am,’ nor as ‘I who am not,’ but rather as ‘I am who may be’—that is, as the possibility, which obviates the extreme of being and non-being.”\(^{98}\)

Regardless of theological opinion, for the Jew, the tetragrammaton is an attempt to shield YHWH from conceptual idolatry. The second commandment—Thou shall not take the name of the Lord in vain (Deut. 5:11)—is well intended in this situation. Iconolatry, strictly speaking for Panikkar, consists of the “projection of God under some form, his objectivation, his

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\(^{95}\) Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, 11.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., 13.

\(^{97}\) For the possibility of naming of God, or the impossibility of such, see, Jean Luc Marion, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, in Grahan Ward, ed., *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader* (Massachusetts, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1991).

personification in an object which may be mental or material, visible or invisible, but always reducible, to our human ‘representation.’”

The relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites was defined by a constant struggle as evinced in the first four commandments (Deut. 5:1-15). Still, the stipulation in the Decalogue does not prevent Israel from the temptation of iconolatry. Panikkar does not hesitate to state “that the spirituality of Israel [is] based on the conception of a God who speaks, punishes, pardons, is jealous, ordains laws, can be offended and also appeased, who commands, promises and concludes pact with men.”

It is important to realize that in spite of Israel’s acknowledgment of Yahweh as the principal idol/icon among the others, as Elohim, Yahweh still refuses to be named or known and worshipped like the other gods. For to be named is to be mastered through either mental category or gender construct. Although Yahweh is not an image in the material sense, nevertheless, he is cast in a mental image constructed in the image and likeness of the human male—Adam, Father, He and Him.

Morphologically, Panikkar sees no difference between the iconolatry of Israel and those obtainable among the Canaanite religions. However, his distinction between idolatry and iconolatry forces a break in Israel’s identity as worshippers of the one and true idol—Yahweh. There exists a causal relationship between idol and icon. The former is the condition of possibility of the latter. In this sense, Panikkar submits that, “idolatry is not false qua latria (worship) but it is false qua objectification of this adoration. All latria presupposes an idol, icon,

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100 Ibid., 14.
101 Ibid., 12.
102 Idolatry, understood as the transference to a creature of the adoration due to God alone, i.e. an adoration which stops short at the object, without going beyond it in an ongoing movement towards the Creator, the Transcendent, is without doubt the gravest of sins Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, 16.
103 But iconolatry which commences by adoring some object upon which has descended the glory of the lord, and takes this object as a point of departure for a slow and arduous ascent towards God, cannot be condemned and abnegated so facilely. Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, 16.
The denial of false latria by Israel is constitutive of their identity as the chosen people over against the goim (nations) whose latria is considered to be false idolatry (Is. 44:9ff; I Cor. 8:4ff). The identity of Yahweh as the “true and only” God is derived by difference. From the perspective of God-Icon spirituality, the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim identity means the identification of God with ethical monotheism. The Jewish root of such ethnic and ethical monotheism has an adverse effect on the Trinitarian debate.

Panikkar’s second spirituality is Personalism. It offers the greatest challenge to the Trinitarian understanding of God. In his opinion, Christian Personalism grows out of “the ancient Old Testament concept of Jahweh, the God-Idol of Israel.” Nevertheless, Panikkar acknowledges the contributions of philosophical personalism to the development of Western theology and the comprehension of the Christian faith. However, he focuses his criticism on the form of personalism that is attached to the genre of biblical theism. Panikkar even compares the application of the Jewish God-icon traditions to the theological events that led to the death of Jesus Christ. In this regard, it seems the controversy surrounds the interplay between the concepts of the Jewish God-icon and the personalism of the divine sonship of Jesus. Panikkar writes:

Whatever were the reasons for which Jesus was condemned, it was not for calling himself divine—this idea of the divinization of man is neither so new nor so scandalous—but for proclaiming himself the Son of God (in the Trinitarian, as it was later called, meaning of the phrase), viz., begotten by God, equal to Him, coming from Him; in other words, for having dared to present himself to the people of Jahweh like the divine icon itself…. The crime of Jesus…was that he dared to oust Jahweh, the icon of Israel…. If the “people of God” had refused to adore “other gods” they must certainly cast out from their midst even more vigorously one who presumed to assert that the Messiah was not a king in the

104 Panikkar, The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man, 17.
105 Ibid., 19.
“line” of David but the true icon of the Divinity, the perfect image of Jahweh, begotten directly by Him.\textsuperscript{106}

Panikkar suspects that Christians in the early centuries, for whatever reasons, departed from the theological challenge to offer an explanation about the identity of Jesus Christ within the Jewish (Yahweh-icon-idol) theological framework. Put in a different way, how possible was it for Jesus to reflect the image of Yahweh, when according to the Jewish religious traditions, “it is impossible to make images of God on earth because there are no archetypes in heaven to which they may correspond.”\textsuperscript{107} In Panikkar’s view, the claim of Jesus Christ to Divine-icon status—the Trinitarian scandal—offered Christians in the first century the opportunity to break away from the God-icon spirituality. A defense of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of its appropriation presumes a certain corrective to the inherent monolithic monotheism of the Jewish tradition.

Over against the God-icon spirituality of Orthodox Judaism, Panikkar proposes continuing the Trinitarian debate alongside the Trinitarian scandal of Jesus’ claim to be the icon of Yahweh. From both a historical and doctrinal point of view, thinking of Jesus as the icon of Yahweh is ultimately a stable approach toward the Trinity and divine mystery. The fact that Christianity yielded to the temptations of iconolatry affirms Panikkar’s criticism of early Christianity: namely, its inability to defend the divinity of Jesus within the Trinitarian discourse.

For a great number of Christians the Trinity became simply a highly abstract notion and for them God remained the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the great Idol whom it behooves us to worship, to appease, to please, and to obey. He was still the Judge, Creator, Preserver, Revealer, in fact, the Other. There was, besides, a very good and real excuse for this \textit{viz.}, the simple recognition of the qualities of the Divine in the person of Jesus…. This development leads to a

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{107} Panikkar, \textit{The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man}, 20.
parallel and complementary development in Christian consciousness, resulting in what we may call in our day personalism.\textsuperscript{108}

The most common perception of Christian personalism relates to the fundamental principle of love. For this reason, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son as ransom…” (cf. Jn 3:16). God’s love for the Son and the world becomes the source of the religious exercise that personalizes the projection of God as the basis of personhood. In religious personalism, thus, “Love is no longer the outburst of spontaneous affection or unconscious ecstasy but mutual giving.”\textsuperscript{109} The personalization of divine love through the human act of love has been acknowledged as a veritable substitute for the apophatism of the Jewish God-icon spirituality. This question of love implies not only the self-annihilation of the lover but is also necessary for the principle of non-violence. In the sight of the problems of evil and in an unanswerable way, love is either silenced or becomes egoistic. In either case, love creates a tendency toward re-othering which, in Panikkar’s view, “leads to an identification, that seems to destroy [the] reciprocity.”\textsuperscript{110}

Personalism attempts to overcome transcendence by arguing for the necessity of the divine immanence-incarnation of the Divine in person. In personalism, God reveals Himself as a person on account of love; a somebody, a “someone who loves, judges, pardons, punishes, rewards—in short, does everything a person does. Remove the imperfections of the created being, cause what remains to proceed by stages upward along the path of eminence and you will find the divine person at the end of the process. We call God a personal being because we ourselves are person. We consider God a Being because we ourselves are beings.”\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{109} Panikkar, The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man, 22.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 22.
Personalism in its narrow and subjective sense poses grave danger to interreligious dialogue, especially when applied as the only form of Divine manifestation. To this end, Panikkar disputes the identification of Christianity in the West with personalism. In his words, “it has been concluded that Christian faith cannot take root where the concept and the experience of what is meant by a person are unknown or insufficiently developed, since it is impossible, so it is claimed, to enter into a filial relationship with God when he has not been discovered as person.” There are other forms of divine manifestation. Hence, according to Panikkar, personalism “has no more right...to identify itself with religion, since it is incapable by itself of exhausting the variety and richness of the experience of the Absolute.” Since the absolute is neither One nor many, to reduce the Divine to the axis of any will is for Panikkar “the highest point of idolatry... [for] if the desire for incarnation characterizes the first dimension of spirituality and its temptation is false idolatry, the thirst for immanence is the driving forces behind personalism and its greatest temptation is anthropomorphism.”

To curb the excesses of iconolatry and personalism, Panikkar proposes a third way. This form of spirituality called the advaita—the way of the spirit. Advaita abhors the temptations of both the exclusivist and the universalist that are found in iconolatry and personalism. For Panikkar, the events preceding the first council of Jerusalem in 49 AD indicates that the early Church never severed its link with iconolatry and personalism. This assertion led to the question, “Has not Christianity remained morphologically a Semitic religion?” On theological grounds, an affirmative answer is implied, for Christianity itself is of Semitic genesis.

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113 Ibid., 23.
114 Ibid., 24.
115 Ibid., 29.
116 Ibid., 25.
Evidently, for Panikkar, Israel remain the chosen and privileged people of God. He equally holds the Old Testament as revealed literature. However, he insists that the primacy of Israel does not represent the finality of God’s dealing with the world. Israel constitutes “only a part” of the entire creation; thus, God cannot be reduced to the metaphysical axis—the expression in the One—and neither is God equal to the plurality of gods, as conquered by the One—Elohim. Hence, neither monotheism nor polytheism adequately expresses the notion of the Absolute.

4.2.3. Cosmotheandrisnm: Cosmos, God and Humans

In The Cosmotheandric Experience, Panikkar begins his inquiry with this question: “Is it possible for our epoch to have a unified vision of reality?” Underlying Panikkar’s question is the assumption that under the tutelage of the disciplines of philosophy, science, and technology, humanity has drifted from its original source and has become more estranged from the Divine and the world. In a way, science and technology have been identified as obstacles to the way of peace. In this regard, Panikkar cites W. B. Yeats: “Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.” The danger remains that the dualism proposed by the scientific culture provides an account that celebrates specificity and individualism. This view nonetheless, obfuscates and alters the correlation that exists within the primordial conception of space—“that not only are things in Space, but Space is also equally within things.”

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117 Panikkar, The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man, 27.
118 Panikkar, The Cosmotheandric Experience, 5.
Subsequently, Panikkar critiques the division of space by modern science into ‘inner and outer’ space, with the latter representing the spiritual realm and the former material reality. This dichotomy of reality produces a twofold cosmology: the spiritual and transcendent realm with God above, and the mundane and immanent world with humans below. Thus, reality is separated along cosmic, human, and divine dimensions. Panikkar’s cosmotheandristm attempts to balance this spatial differentiation between God, Humans, and the World. In his words,

The Cosmotheandric principle could be formulated by saying that the divine, the human and the earthly—however we may prefer to call them—are the three irreducible dimensions which constitute the real, i.e., any reality inasmuch as it real. It does not deny that the abstracting capacity of our mind can, for particular and limited purposes, consider parts of reality independently; it does not deny the complexity of the real and its many degrees. But this principle reminds us that the parts are parts and that they are not just accidentally juxtaposed, but essentially related to the whole. In other words, the parts are real participations and are to be understood not according to a merely spatial model, as books are part of a library or a carburetor and a differential gear are parts of an automobile, but rather according to an organic unity, as body and soul, or mind and will belong to a human being; they are parts because they are not the whole, but they are not parts which can be “parted” from the whole without thereby ceasing to exist…They are constitutive dimensions of the whole, which permeates everything that is and is not reducible to any of its constitutes.122

In the cosmotheandric vision of reality, Panikkar places limits on the modern interpretation of space and time. The central insight of cosmotheandristm is its critique of the excesses of modern science, especially its objectification and localization of space as an extension of the physical realm.123 Space itself is a mystery and “for practically all traditions, space is a fundamental symbol.”124 Here, the dichotomization of space into “inner and outer” realities is at the heart of the modern malaise.

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124 Ibid., 11,
Panikkar points out that a genuine effort to distinguish between physical and metaphysical space is possible without separation. The alternative notion of an understanding of reality drawn from non-advaitic relations makes this relation possible. In the words of Panikkar: “We neither identify inner and outer Space, nor differentiate the two in such a way so as to make only one of them the real Space and the other a subordinate concept.”

Any interpreter can learn anew the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for the World and Humans. Panikkar’s cosmotheandric spirituality emanates from what is vividly described as the *theanthropocosmic invariant*, which is located at the heart of the human consciousness. The West African Igbo name “Som-adina” translates Panikkar’s approach to reality: “I am not alone in the world—calling “world” everything that is around me.” At the heart of the cosmotheandric vision is the call for a renewed anthropology, which ceases to think of *man* in isolation from God and the World. He elucidates further:

> All of us are aware that we have to eat, that we speak, love, and the like. Furthermore, we are aware that we do not know everything, that there is a Mystery in life. We are aware that the mystery embraces everything we call World, something we call Man, and something that many cultures call the Divine. The awareness of this triad belongs to our very nature, though the names and conception of the three differ widely.

Panikkar’s cosmotheandrisim belongs properly to the order of the “Rhythm of Being.” The Divine dimension encapsulated by this reality can be understood only within the context of mystery and the language of symbols. It follows that the understanding of the three dimensions of reality—God (*theos*), Man (*anthropos*) and Cosmos—is not in accordance with the modern

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125 Ibid.
128 See Panikkar’s main thesis in *The Rhythm of Being*, which is “to proffer [a] triadic structure of Reality comprising the Divine, the Human, and the Cosmic in thoroughgoing relationality.” Ibid., xviii.
usage of the terms. Panikkar appeals further to the triadic structure of Nicholas of Cusa: “We may agree that the world is threefold; a small [world, which is] Man, the greatest [world, which is] God [and], the great [world which] is called the universe.” Thus, cosmotheandrism is not so much a term as it is a symbol. Because of the perichoresis that exists between the three poles of the cosmotheandric reality, Panikkar affirms that, “There can be no God without Man and World. There is no man without God and World. There is no World without God and Man.” In any case, an isolated reality outside the cosmotheandric vision constitutes an absurdity.

Panikkar’s cosmotheandrism reexamines the western hierarchical cosmology, which harbors the dualist and monist vision that conceives God in isolation from the Cosmos and Humans. It calls for a new relational cosmology. The notion of God and the cosmology of the dualist and monist (although scientific in nature) have produced an incomplete picture of reality. As a result, Man has exploited the Earth and de-enthroned God. Rightly so, Panikkar states, “the modern world has undertaken a thoroughgoing de-anthropomorphization of the meaning of the word God. It has also tried to de-ontologize God. In the same process, Man has equally devitalized the Earth. The Earth has been left for dead by the same token that Heaven has been deserted.”

The theological approach resulting from this view produces either a God that is outwardly transcendent or inwardly immanent in nature. In addition, as Panikkar points out, such “a transcendence without its corresponding immanence would be contradictory and

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129 Ibid., 265.
130 In Panikkar’s estimation, the epistemological crisis of the middle Ages began with the replacement of Symbols with Terms, which in a way signal the history of the separation between the sciences and arts. See Panikkar, The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emergence of Religious Consciousness, 3, 55; Panikkar, Blessed Simplicity, 77.
132 Panikkar, The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emergence of Religious Consciousness, 149.
133 Ibid.
irrational...All this amounts to saying that an absolutely single Being does not exist. Being is relation.”

Panikkar agrees with Jules Monchanin that the Being of God—if it is to be known—is a ‘Being with,’ for God’s esse is a co-esse, an esse ad alterum, a being for and towards the other as other.”

Furthermore, on the one hand, the cosmotheandric vision rejects the notion that Humans are superior to the rest of reality. Hence, the purpose of Human existence cannot be achieved in isolation from the rest of reality. The human task of creating meaning and salvation is achievable through interdependence and interconnectedness with the divine and cosmic realities. On the other hand, the “divine dimension is not an umbrella superimposed over beings, nor a merely extrinsic foundation for them…. Thus, simply to ignore the order imposed by the triadic reality represented in the cosmotheandric intuition leads to the stifling of the divine dimension—the beginning of violence. In other words, cosmotheandrisism means “both the cosmic and the divine are irreducible dimensions of the real which cannot be co-opted by Man, although they meet in Man, just as Man meets in them.”

By saying this, Panikkar points out that cosmotheandric spirituality forms the summation of the three spiritualities—iconolatry, personalism, and adviata. Against the undercurrent of a misbalanced notion of Divine transcendence and immanence, Panikkar’s approach to the Trinity provides a “trans-historical consciousness,” which moves beyond the Western binary opposition

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134 Panikkar, The Experience of God, Icon and Mystery, 37.
137 Ibid., 150.
that formulates the “either” “or” superiority categories. The essays in *Rhythm of Being* demonstrate Panikkar’s resolve “to liberate the Divine from the burden of being God.”

To sum up, the cosmotheandric God cannot be equated to pure transcendence nor reduced to immanence—in whatever historical or incarnational form. Such a cosmotheandric approach acknowledges the fundamental relationality between the Divine, Human, and the Cosmos. As Panikkar explains, “If I climb the highest mountain, I’ll find God there, but likewise if I penetrate the depths of an apophatic Godhead I shall find the World there…. In neither case have I left the heart of Man.” It may seem that Panikkar’s view relates closely to “pansyntheism—everything with God,” and suggests a worldview that is panentheistic and is sometimes overtly conceived to be pantheistic. Yet, Panikkar is unambiguously clear in his description of the cosmotheandric intuition:

In this vision, the World is not a habitat or an external part of the whole or even myself…. My relationship with the World is ultimately no different from my relationship with myself…[for] God is not an absolute Other…. Nor is God the same as us…[for] God is not only the God of Man, but also the God of the World. A God with no cosmological and therefore no cosmogonic functions would not be God at all, but a mere phantom…,[for] Man here is ultimately more than an individual. Man is a person, a knot in the net of relationships not limited to the spiritual “thous,” but reaching out to the very antipodes of the real. An isolated individual is incomprehensible and also unviable…so isolating Man from God and the World equally strangulates him. There is no Man without God or without the World.

### 4.3. Panikkar’s Christophany and Interreligious Dialogue

Panikkar’s approach to the subject-matter of interreligious dialogue revolves around the cosmotheandric principle that promotes “individuality, irreducibility and reciprocity,” between

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139 Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emergence of Religious Consciousness*, 68.
140 Ibid., 151.
the divine, human, and the cosmos. Within the cosmotheandric cosmology, reality consists of the relati\nalitiy that exists between God, humans, and the world, making dialogue as such unavoidable. In the theological sense, Panikkar’s cosmotheandri\sm is anchored on his understanding of Cosmotheandric Christ—the Christian symbol of the whole reality. Thus, this Cosmotheandric Christ which is present at all times and everywhere holds all things together (Col: 1:17).

Panikkar’s hermeneutics is inspired by his desire to make Christ the cosmological principle and ontological link between the human and divine. Here it becomes obvious that for Panikkar, the Christic principle is the measure of reality. In Panikkar’s view, reality is known in and through its dialogic relationality involving the Divine, the Human and the Cosmos. This cosmotheandric revelation of Mystery finds its fullness in Christ. For Panikkar, “[Christ] is not only the historical redeemer, but also the unique Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the only ontological—temporal and eternal link between God and the World.”

Panikkar did not always have a developed theory of Christophany. He has always argued that Christ refers to Christians’ ultimate reality, beginning with The Unknown Christ of Hinduism through its later revision, Christophany: The Fullness of Man. Yet for Panikkar, the reality of Christ is not the monopoly of Christians. His popular axiom, “Jesus is the Christ, but

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144 Panikkar, Christophany: The Fullness of Man, 183, as quoted in Cythia Pinto, Encountering the Suffering Humanity (Mt 25:31-46), 145.

145 Panikkar, Christophany: The Fullness of Man, 147, as quoted in Cythia Pinto, 145.


147 Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism, 83, 154-162.

148 See Komulainen’s view of Panikkar’s new Christology under the title of ‘Christophany’ in An Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion: Panikkar Pluralistic Theology of Religion, 125, n1.

149 Panikkar, Christophany: The Fullness of Man.

the Christ is not only Jesus,” explains this reality. Panikkar substantiated the problem further in his 1991 lectures, where he states, “From the Christian perspective the entire modern problematic concerning inter-cultural and interreligious questions hinges upon the vision of Christ.” Although Panikkar acknowledges the doctrinal importance of traditional Christology, yet in continuation with his distinction between the “Historical Jesus-Christ event,” and “Cosmic Christ-Christ reality,” he points to the limit of the historical Jesus as straightforward hermeneutical key for interreligious dialogue.

Panikkar also admits that difficulties and problems ensuing from distinguishing between the historical consciousness of the “Christ Event” and the trans-historical universality of the “Christ Reality.” This distinction, though confusing, is paramount for a proper understanding of the meaning of “Christ” as applied in the symbols—theandanism and Cosmotheandanism—and the implication of such in Panikkar grand scheme for intra-religious dialogue.

In his early works, Panikkar employs the symbol of theandism to explicate his understanding of the God-Man, God-Christ, God-Holy Spirit, and Nature-Culture relationships. By theandism, therefore, Panikkar means “the classical and traditional term for that intimate and complete unity which is realized paradigmatically in Christ between the divine and the human and which is the goal towards which everything here below tends—in Christ and the Spirit.” However, in Panikkar’s later work, the cosmos as a pole of reality was added to the theandric symbols; hence the beginning of the cosmotheandric principle.

152 Panikkar, “A Christophany for Our Time” in ThD 39, 1992, 3. Panikkar is not alone on the assumption that Pluralistic Theology religion begins and ends with the Christological debate. See also Knitter, No Other Name, 171-172; Dupuis, Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, 190-193.
153 Still, Panikkar sides with orthodoxy his view about the centrality of Jesus Christ as the meeting place of finite and infinite, human and divine, material and spiritual, male and female, high or low, heaven and earth, time and eternity. Panikkar, “A Christophany for Our Time,” 20.
The cosmotheandric vision of reality was introduced by Panikkar to show, on the one hand, that the transcendence of the Divine is not compromised by the immanence of the Christ, and on the other, that Christ through the Christic principle is accessible to all humanity. Thus, if all beings are a manifestation of Christ, dialogue becomes an ontological category of being: an inescapable imperative. The question remains for the pluralist: Does the Christic principle amount to many Christs or simply to different manifestations evident in other religions? Panikkar responds:

The Christian pluralist will not affirm that there are many saviors. This is a nonpluralistic assertion. The pluralistic Christological assertion will begin—as with the Trinity (Qui incipit numerare, incipit errare, “[who begins to count, begins to err.]” said Augustine) by denying the meaningfulness of any quantitative individualization in the Mystery of Christ. The saving power which Christian calls Christ—is neither one nor many.155

In other words, Panikkar does not waver in his claim that “Christ stands for that centre of reality, that crystallization point around which the divine, the human, and the material can grow.”156 For Panikkar then, Christ is the source of the dialogue within the cosmotheandric reality. Therefore, Christ remains the unquantifiable divine mystery, broken into, but not reduced to the pre-historical, the historical Jesus and Christ of Faith. Panikkar has been eclectic and systematic in this regard; always sticking to his original point of departure, which is to probe the universality of Christ and the search for a valid “universal methodic,”157 which he thinks is needed for an authentic interreligious dialogue among religions and across cultures.

4.4. Panikkar and the Problem of “the One and the Many”

155 Panikkar, The Jordan, the Tiber and the Ganges, 111.
156 Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany, 27.
157 A term devised by Panikkar to indicate the universal validity of the Trinity as principle of reality. Panikkar argues that the concept of economic and imminent Trinity is not the prerogative of separated Godhead outside the realm of the cosmotheandric vision. See Panikkar, The Radical Trinity, 1989; later published as The Rhythm of Being: The Unbroken Trinity.
Even though the concept of the “One and the Many” refers primarily to the philosophical problem\textsuperscript{158} of what constitutes the “Real,” it may also be used to define the current theological impasse occasioned by religious pluralism—the interpretation of one’s own religion as the “real” in relation to the others. For Panikkar, the problem of the “One and Many” remains, to a large extent, unresolved today in the West because the Western hermeneutic is stuck in an ontology that conceptualizes reality in “binary opposites.” This ordering of reality yields a worldview that is “hierarchical and exclusionary.”\textsuperscript{159} Thus, rejecting the Western hermeneutical tool of “binary opposites” as the underlying hermeneutics of relativity, Panikkar points to the \textit{advaita} nondualistic principle as a necessary solution to the problem of the “one and many.”

The most common conception in scholarly circles of interreligious dialogue relates to the challenge of finding a common ground. The question remains: What constitutes “common ground”—is it found in the “one” or obtainable through the “many”? The pluralistic nature of today’s society and the \textit{de facto} reality of the many religious traditions and cultures makes the problem of “the one and the many” even more relevant. This time, it raises a central theological question for Christianity in the post-colonial conversation on religious pluralism: namely, how can the other religious tradition contribute to the self-understanding of Christianity, without the risk of being reduced to “sameness or oneness”? On the other hand, how can Christianity maintain its identity in the process of dialogue?

Panikkar’s \textit{advaita} principle transcends the pitfalls inherent in monistic and dualistic thinking. He rejects in its entirety the binary oppositional model of the “monistic and dualistic”

\textsuperscript{159} David Tracy, “Western Hermeneutics and Interreligious Dialogue,” in Catherine Cornille, \textit{Interreligious Hermeneutics}, 39.
solution proffered by the West to addressing the problem of the “One and the Many.” He advocates instead

for an advaitic or non dualistic approach. Its theological horizon is the philosophical dilemma that takes the form of a God who cannot be totally different from or totally identical with man and/or World without disappearing. Ultimately, it is a challenge to monotheism and to polytheism alike. At this level atheism belongs morphologically to monotheism. I am here making the plea that God is neither the Other nor the Same but the One: the one pole in a cosmotheandric insight.¹⁶⁰

By the same token, Panikkar argues that advaitic thinking provides a much needed alternative to the dialectical logical systems of Western philosophy. In and of themselves, the strategies and solutions provided by Western dialectical hermeneutics are not only insufficient but also “unconvincing”¹⁶¹ in grasping the mystery embedded in the other religious traditions. Evidently, the need for an alternative dialogical principle led to the relevance of Panikkar’s “Christic principle.”

Within the context of interreligious dialogue, Panikkar proposes the “Christic principle” as the solution to the conundrum of pluralism. In this regard, the common ground for interreligious dialogue is situated at the transcendental level. At this level, he makes distinctions in the meta-ontological character of religions on three levels.

a) The social-cultural level—r¹: denoting all equivalent and historical facts about religion. Particular religions like Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the African traditional religions (ATR) belong to this category.

b) The sacramental level—r²: based on the shared characteristics in r¹, religions are complimentary but not necessarily the same on this level.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.
c) The r³ is based on both r¹ and r². Panikkar speaks on the mystical advantages that are obvious on this level of religious experience: He says:

My approach to religion 3 is always limited depending on r¹ and r². So that I cannot say regarding religion 3 that it is one or many; there is neither one nor many. I see it in and through r¹ and r² reaching as far as I can r³…I am not saying that we are saying the same thing with different names. First, because r³ cannot be properly described; and secondly, because I am not a nominalist, so that the name I give belongs to the thing in a certain way…the name is fundamental. Because this name is the way in which religion 3 reveals itself to me.¹⁶²

Panikkar describes the relation further:

I think that here a radical humility is called for. I cannot have access to r² and r³ if not through r¹. I do not come from Mars nor from the moon to go straight into the heart of the matter. I have my parents, my education, my language, etc… And those who reject r¹… and get out of the church, they should also get out of the planet.¹⁶³

In establishing a relationship between the three levels religious consciousness, Panikkar manifestly solves the problem of the “one and the many” at the transcendental level of r³. Yet, he reiterates the importance of r¹—commitment to particularity. Panikkar names this level Faith, which in his work is similar to T. W. Willy’s description of faith as a transcendental category of the divine that is a given.¹⁶⁴ It is integral to all humans, irrespective of religious affiliations and cultural differences. To establish the difference even further, Panikkar distinguishes Faith from belief—for even though Faith exists through belief, it cannot be reduced to it. Faith transcends belief.¹⁶⁵ In the same way, belief denotes “an intellectual, emotional and cultural embodiment of that Faith within the framework of a particular tradition.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Panikkar, Intra-Religious Dialogue, 12.
Hence, it follows that for Panikkar, the essence of religious pluralism cannot be found in the historical particularities of the \( r^1 \) and \( r^2 \). Still, an isolated application of \( r^3 \) is not only simplistic but also unrealistic. Pluralism rests on the mystical realm. As Panikkar reminds us, “The mystery towards which the religious experience of humankind tends is neither the same nor different, neither one nor many; it is non-dualistic; it allows for pluralism.”

4.5. Panikkar’s Religious Pluralism: Multiple Belonging or Multiple Participation?

In the postcolonial context, the debate on religious pluralism has raised the question of identity and the commitment of the interlocutors to a particular religious community. Panikkar’s insistence on the need of multiple religious belonging is based on lived experience. He says about himself, “I ‘left’ as a Christian, I ‘found’ myself a Hindu and I ‘return’ a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian.” Panikkar upholds this form of transcendental identity elsewhere: “I am at the confluence (sangam) of the four rivers: the Hindu, Christian, Buddhist and Secular traditions.” Panikkar states that, this spiritual journey is made possible “by living religion as an experience rather than as an ideology.”

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169 Panikkar warns: “I need hardly add that not everyone is called to such an undertaking, nor is everyone capable of it. Besides a particular cast of mind, it presupposes perhaps a special constellation of one’s character and background that enable one to undergo the experience without a taint of exorcism, exhibitionism or simply unremitted intellectualism.” Panikkar, *Intra-religious Dialogue* (New York: Pauline Press, 1978), 36; quoted in Terrence W. Tilley, *Religious Diversity and the American Experience: A Theological Approach* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 173.
Thus, understanding his multiple religious belonging must always depend on the appreciation of his Christophany and its implications for Christian identity. In his contextual definition of Christian identity, he identifies five ways of being Christian.

a) The ontic Christian, in whom the divine spirit is a living principle. In this sense, any human being or any being is Christophany…. b) The ontological Christian, in which there is a certain consciousness of the immanent-transcendent mystery that enlivens one’s life. That person does not need to use the Christian vocabulary, not even a theistic one…. c) The historical Christian, for whom the Christian language makes sense and who has appropriated it while retaining the freedom to finding a more and more acceptable interpretation. Christ becomes then the name for that Symbol…. d) The sociological Christian, which could also be called the ecclesia one who owes allegiance to one of the existing Christian groups or churches…. e) The Catholic Christian, who embodies in a very particular way that mysterious consciousness. I would like to retain the scandal and concreteness of the geohistorical symbol of Rome at least for those first two millennia and in spite of the possible arrogance of the word “catholic” if interpreted as universal and not as the call to concrete wholeness—of everyone. A Roman Catholic would in fact mean, for me at least, not the fan of the pope (whoever he may be) or the spiritual citizen of the Vatican (without criticizing this loyalty), but the person whose spiritual pedigree passes through those two millennia of Roman history, not to get entangled in it, or glorify it, as the historical springboard from which the Catholic tradition may still jump into the tranhistorical Unknown.174

Panikkar raised and addressed the question of Christian identity within a pluralistic setting, wherein the question of “[w]ho and what is Christian is answered neither by a personal subjective feeling, nor by an impersonal objective doctrine.”175 In other words, as far as he is concerned, “there is no single answer as to who a Christian is or what a Christian identity may be.”176 This is so because “Christian identity expresses itself differently at different times and different places, according precisely to the peculiar self-understanding of both individual and

174 Panikkar, “On Christian Identity: Who is a Christian,” in Catherine Cornille, Many Mansions, 139-140. 175 Ibid. 176 Ibid., 121.
community.” Because of the relative component of the term Christian identity, any univocal, or equivocal, and even analogous understanding of this concept is delusional.

For Panikkar, the acceptance of multiple religious belonging is always difficult within Western dualistic thought patterns, where the divine is conceivable only on bi-polar grounds—either as “one” or the “many” as understood through the lens of the “one.” From the perspective of Western dialectics, multiple religious belonging constitutes an impediment to alterity in the dialogic process. Theologically, it constitutes a threat to mission and evangelization. There is the fear that openness to the religious other may lead to conversion. As Panikkar observes, “The religious person enters this arena without prejudice or preconceived solutions, knowing fully well that he may in fact lose a particular belief or a particular religion altogether. He trusts in the truth. He enters unarmed and ready to be converted himself. He may lose his life—he may also be born again.” Subsequently, Panikkar argues that because Christians have reduced the horizon of Christianity’s identity to its historical and sociological perspectives among the organized religions, the fight over one’s religious belonging is not unconnected to the “will to power.” For this reason, Panikkar submits that “the worry about identity may turn pathological…”

Several contemporary theologians like Jacques Dupuis, Peter Phan, and Catherine Cornille, to mention but three, agree on the complementarity of Christianity with other

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177 Ibid., 123.
180 Dupuis cautions: “while it may be true that there exist a mutual complementarity between Christianity and the other religions, it cannot be said that this mutual complementarity is a symmetric one.” Dupuis, Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, 61; quoted in Terrence W. Tilley, Religious Diversity and the American Experience: A Theological Approach, 173.
181 Phan observes the educational disparity between pioneers of multiple religious belonging and later followers. These pioneers, “were highly competent in the classical languages of these religions, and intimately
religions. Yet there is a caution against the religious hybridity and superficiality that characterizes New Age syncretism. The question remains: what is the Christian attitude towards identity and alterity in the process of interreligious dialogue? Or wider still, what is dialogue for the Christian in the context of God’s revelation in other religions? Panikkar concept of multiple belonging will be understood in the context of the universality of God’s revelation wherein all effort at religious encounter ends in ecumenical ecumenism.

Panikkar acknowledges the position of Christian inclusivists in the sense that authentic dialogue is premised upon the pre-condition that its “interlocutors …remain rooted in the particular religious community from which and for which they speak.” The question for Panikkar is whether interlocutors can make more than one commitment to various religious communities? For Panikkar, the question of authentic dialogue is not measured solely by one’s participation in a particular faith community but on openness to the truth of the transcendence evidence in other religions. Whereas the historical particularities (r₁ and r₂) of faith communities present an important dimension of identity—a sine qua non for religious encounter—a fuller understanding of identity is not reduced to the subjectivity of a faith confession. Reasoning from the cosmotheandric vision of reality, Panikkar situates multiple religious belonging at the familiar with their sacred texts, and even hold doctorates in Hinduism and Buddhism…. [W]ithout this hard and patient intellectual work, multiple religious belonging runs the risk of shallowness and trendiness.” Phan, 2003, 511.

For Cornille, the experience of double religious belonging runs the risk of shallowness and trendiness.” Phan, 2003, 511.

183 Catherine Cornille, The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue, 4.

184 See Marianne Moyaert, “Absorption or Hospitality: Two Approaches to the Tension between Identity and Alterity,” in Catherine Cornille, Interreligious Hermeneutics, 61ff.

185 See Dupuis discourse on divine revelation in other religions in relation to the fullness of salvation history in Jesus Christ. See Dupuis, “Trinitarian Christology as a Model for a Theology of Religious Pluralism,” in Terrence Merrigan and Jacques Haers, (eds.), The Myriad Christ, 87.


transcendental of level \((r^3)\) called Faith. This Faith is the basis for the complementarity of religions.
5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we argued that Panikkar’s religious pluralism differs significantly from the Western perspectives built on Enlightenment philosophical traditions, in which the urge to universalize the “one” over the “many” remains the prevalent dialectical solution to difference. Christianity in the West as a product of Western civilization has, on numerous occasions, identified itself as the “one”—the source and the finality of reality over and against non-Western traditions and cultures. Panikkar’s *Unknown Christ of Hinduism* is a classical response to Christianity’s claim to universalism and to fulfillment theology. It critiques Christian supersessionism and emphasizes the importance of rethinking Christian identity in ways that enhance the dignity and truth that abounds in the other religious traditions.¹

Rethinking Christianity within India’s religious heterolog y calls for a radical pluralism. For Panikkar this entails the total rejection of the “Western Syndrome,” which he characterizes as “any thought form with monistic or imperialistic taint.”² Unarguably, Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue draws insight and inspiration from the experiential situation of religious plurality, as practiced in India. This experience of plurality, Panikkar contends, calls for a cosmotheandric approach to the particular problems arising from the context of religious difference and otherness. In this sense, pluralism contradicts principles that support universality and exclusivism. Panikkar writes,

> My thesis is clear: a universal theory of whatever kind denies pluralism. Any alleged universal theory is one particular theory, besides many others, that claims universal validity, thus trespassing the limits of its own legitimacy. Further, no theory can be absolutely universal, because theory, the contemplation of truth, is

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neither a universal contemplation, nor is (theoretical) “truth is all that there is to Reality.”

While paying greater attention to the rudiments of orthodox doctrines, Panikkar’s contextualized studies dwell fundamentally on the implications of transcendence on the demands of orthopraxis. He begins his theology, as it were, from the known (experiential) and proceeds to the unknown (mysterium). The dialogue between transcendence and orthopraxis results in the cosmotheandric vision of reality, wherein the Divine, the Human, and the Cosmos constitute a web of mutuality and are “wrapped in radical relativity.” Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision of reality has serious implications for Christology. For one, it calls into question the universal validity of Christology and the legitimacy of supersessionism. This way of viewing reality is totally foreign to Western orthodoxy. In all its ramifications, Panikkar’s theology not only differs from, but also dis-identifies with Western Christological patterns and construct.

5.2. Supersessionism and Dialectical Christology

The root of supersessionism is always traceable to the historical consciousness and within the religious context of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. From the biblical point of view, Rm. 11:29 “for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable,” possesses a serious exegetical challenge for supersessionism, namely, it raises anew the question of whether God’s redemptive power is continually at work in and through Judaism. The question then remains: if God’s “gifts and calling [of the Jew] are irrevocable,” how does one explain the universal claim of Christian salvation in Jesus Christ? This question highlights an apparent dilemma. Panikkar sees a serious flaw in approaching religious pluralism de jure from a purely

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3 Panikkar, Invisible Harmony, 161.
4 Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 58.
Christological viewpoint. In its inclusive posture, the logic of Christology is not open to the cross-cultural perspectives of non-monotheistic traditions. In situations where Christian dialogue has prevailed, it has done so by supersessionist Christological dispositions.

In “A Self Critical Dialogue,” Panikkar identifies pluralism first as an attitude and then as an indispensable method for cross-cultural encounter and dialogue. Panikkar raises the question of religious supersessionism within the context of the distinction made between dialectical and dialogical dialogue. Both forms of dialogue presuppose the understanding of relationality and alterity of the other. However, as Panikkar observes, the temptation to supersessionism remains:

To be sure, each tradition, seeing itself from within, considers that it is capable of giving a full answer to the religious urge of its members and, seeing other traditions from outside, tends to judge them as partial. It is only when we take the other seriously as ourselves that a new vision may dawn. For this we have to break the self-sufficiency of any human group. But this requires that we should somehow have jumped outside our own respective traditions. Herein lies the destiny of our time.

The backbone of Panikkar’s theology is set within the critique of the totalizing tendencies inherent in Western culture and, by extension, Christian supersessionism. The question remains: What does it mean to take the other religion seriously? To what extent can one go? Are there limits to be reached or boundaries to be respected? Clearly, while these questions entail for Panikkar the issue of taking one’s religious identity seriously and yet not subsuming the other under the categories of one’s religious belief, it also means, as he maintains, “a deep human

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9 As it is observed: “[although]...Judaic exclusionism, Catholic inquisition, Islamic fundamentalism, Marxist extremism, Nazi fanaticism, and scientific obsession, with ‘objective’ thinking to name a few [are Western product]. It cannot however, be said that the Western tradition is the only worldview prone to extreme fanaticism, and yet a historical analysis suggest that it is more common within the Western tradition.” See Peter Raine, Who Guards the Guardian? Intercultural Dialogue on Environmental Guardianship (Lanham, Maryland: University of America Press, 2003), 89.
honesty in searching for the truth wherever it can be found; a great intellectual openness in this
search, without conscious preconceptions or willingly entertained prejudices; and finally a
profound loyalty towards one’s own tradition.”

The critical point is that while Christianity has its identity to protect, it can no longer trust an all-powerful reason as the measure of the intelligibility and reasonableness of the other in the dialogic process. Clearly, the other cannot be reduced to mere principle that can be used or discarded. The development of religious hermeneutics in the West goes hand in hand with enthronement of the dialectics of the logos.

For Panikkar, the success of dialectical hermeneutics relies upon its historical foundations and the cultural consciousness of the Western world. In this regard, dialectical hermeneutics yields to a particular perspective that is not open to all. So too, were earlier Christological formulations, in that “all Christology is a reflection on Christ…rooted in human experience.”

In Panikkar’s view, history as such is always a perspective of reality, not the sum total of it. It is in view of this redaction of history—namely, the impossibility of having history outside experience—that Panikkar speaks of dialectical Christology as a one-sided portrayal of the story of Jesus Christ from the Western perspective that has no relevance for the Indian context. Panikkar adds that “no culture, tradition, ideology or religion can today speak for the whole of humankind” without resorting to indifferentism or supersessionism.

In the context of the dialogue between religions, supersessionism poses clear hermeneutical question in that it assumes that religions are closed and parallel to each other. To this end, when supersessionist thinking is employed, it promotes alienation and indifferentism at

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10 Panikkar, The Unknown Christ, 35.
13 Panikkar, Invisible Harmony, 113.
the center of its theory and practice. Panikkar indicates further that indifferentism, in turn, breeds parallelism and its ripple effects, exclusivism or inclusivism. This explains why Panikkar in addressing the need for radical relativity and interconnection among religions in dialogue, disapproves of the tendency of Christianity to be subversive, reducing the other through conquering and conversion. Panikkar writes,

(It is an) almost self-evident fact that the Western Christian tradition seems to be exhausted, I might almost say effete, when it tries to express the Christian message in a meaningful way for our times. Only by cross-fertilization and mutual fecundation may the present state of affairs be overcome; only by stepping over present cultural and philosophical boundaries can Christian life again become creative and dynamic. Obviously this applies to the other religions as well: It is a two-way traffic...The meeting point is neither my house nor the mansion of my neighbour, but the crossroads outside the walls, where we may eventually decide to put up a tent—for the time being.

To this end, Panikkar once again re-echoes the urgency of dialogical dialogue among religions:

Alone and isolated, Hinduism is threatened, Christianity is impotent, Islam is in ferment, Buddhism is dissolving, Marxism is bankrupt, secularism is self-destructing. It is not unthinkable that cross-fertilization among the traditions could reconcile the original insights of the various cultures and make the stilled voices of the sages audible once more over the abysses of time.

All through the ages, Christianity has struggled with questions rising from its self-identity to exclusive and inclusive soteriological claims with particular reference to Judaism, on the one hand, and in a wider perspective with the other world religions, on the other. An assertion of the universal normativity of the Christian revelation in Christ—his person and works—has been the

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15 Inclusivism here is understood as tolerated pluralism; in line with Peter Raine’s critique: “With the raise of pluralism, the secular worldview has increasingly relied on inclusivism to soften reaction to its truth claim. Inclusivism has become the ‘easy way out’ for those who are tired of conflict and see no need for a path to meaningful dialogue.” Raine, *Who Guards the Guardian?* 90.
center of this claim. Throughout its formative history, Christian Christology in its various forms has maintained the superiority of its truth claims through supersessionism or has, at best, replaced one form of supersessionism with another. As observed above, in the colonial and post-colonial setting, Christian supersessionism has been mimetically co-joined with Whiteness and power.\textsuperscript{18}

Panikkar’s critique of Christian supersessionism responds to the question of theological legitimacy and authenticity: namely, whether people of color can still think about Christ outside the hermeneutical perimeters of whiteness defined by Western theology. Christology today, he states, “is a tribal Christology of the last two thousand years which is centered almost exclusively on its own concerns, with almost total neglect of the other human religious experience, a Christology for the internal purposes of Christians, perhaps even to conquer the world.”\textsuperscript{19} It is not by accident that Panikkar’s stance on Christian supersessionism is critical of European cultural imperialism and the dialectic Christology of a Christ that is not rooted in human experience.\textsuperscript{20} In the words of Ilia Delio, “with such a ready-made Christ image, other peoples of the world have found Christ either an exotic figure or a suspicious construct.”\textsuperscript{21}

Panikkar’s refusal to endorse dialectical hermeneutics indicates awareness that the analogy between Western Christology and dialectics must be eradicated. He understands that analogies drawn from this association creates a dialectical Christology which lays the grounds for the “duo-logue, a duet or two set of ideas” among organized religions with the intention that truth can be reached through the juxtapositions of ideas, through the pure reason of Western

\textsuperscript{20} Panikkar, \textit{Christopher the Fullness of Man} (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 4.
philosophy. In this sense, truth is accessible and obtainable through the one-way hermeneutics of the ideas/logos. The legitimacy of dialectical thinking rests on the logos-structure reality in which things are considered to exist as separate and independent monads.

This view gave rise to the self-righteousness of dialectical Christology that creates a sense of uniqueness with an exaggerated claim to universalism. Panikkar describes this universalization of the “one” by the West as the Western Syndrome: “Universal means catholic, and catholic means true. What is true and good (for us) is (also) true and good for everybody.”22 Here Panikkar’s coined motto for pluralism is most evident: “There is no ‘One’ that can be imposed on the Many…and there are no Many that will be reduced to the One.”23

Contrary to other views of dialectics, Panikkar argues for the hermeneutics of *dialogos*—a piercing through the logos to arrive at the truth that transcends it.24 He distinguishes between dialectical and dialogical dialogue as follows:

Dialogical dialogue, which differs from the dialectical one, stands on the assumption that nobody has access to the universal horizon of human experience, and that only by not postulating the rules of the encounter from a single side can Man proceed towards a deeper and more universal understanding of himself and thus come closer to his own realization.25

Thus, by rejecting the dialectical worldview, Panikkar proposes a dialogical dialogue that builds on the idea of mutual reciprocity. Participants of dialogue are once again reminded “that we all share in a reality that does not exist independently and outside our own sharing in it, and yet without exhausting it. Our participation is always partial, and reality is more than just the sum total of its parts.”26 Panikkar continues:

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23 See Jyri Komulainen, *An Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion: Raimon Panikkar Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, footnote 77
As long as I do not open my heart and do not see that the other is not another but a part of myself who enlarges and completes me, I will not arrive at dialogue. If I embrace you, then I understand you. All these is a way of saying that real intrareligious dialogue begins in myself, and that it is more an exchange of religious experiences than of doctrines. If one does not start out from this foundation, no religious dialogue is possible; it is just chatter.27

5.3. Logos-Pneumatology: Grounds for Dialogical Dialogue

Approaching Panikkar’s theological references to the terms “Logos,” “Spirit,” and “Christ” demands an in-depth understanding of these terms within Panikkar’s cosmotheandric Trinitarian framework. Many times, mainstream theologians rush in to interpret and correlate Panikkar’s theology with Christian orthodoxy. To understand Panikkar’s theological use of these terms, it is imperative to discover the concept of divinity within the cosmotheandric vision of reality. Outside this purview, these terms are difficult to grasp, especially for the Western mind. This characteristic of Panikkar’s work, as pointed out by Komulainen, “turns his thinking into an impenetrable jungle of various influences,”28 fraught with subtleties and nuances. One such area that is problematic is Panikkar’s critique of the conceptual framework of logos-thinking: his distinction between the incarnated Logos, Christ, and Spirit.

In general, the understanding of Logos, Spirit, and Christ does not form a single pattern of thought in Panikkar’s philosophy (ontology) and theology (trinitarian). In his philosophy of being, “Logos” and “Spirit” are used interchangeably in relation to being (on) and thinking (logos). In some cases, Panikkar applies logos (with the small letter) to describe the Western philosophical approach, which tends “to reduce Logos to an exclusively immaterial or

intellectual phenomenon.” On the contrary, he emphasizes that Logos is not reason alone. “Logos means language, but also word, reason, intellect and love as well.” Thus Panikkar rightly hopes to repudiate the Western intellectual tradition that forms the basis of the thinking that subjugates the Logos to the scrutiny of logos. This temptation to reduce Logos to only the intellectual domain remains one of the greatest conundrums facing the conceptualization of Western Christology as it remains independent from the mythical and pneumatic domain.

Yet another problem of Western philosophy during the medieval era was the disconnection between logos and being, on the one hand, and logos and pneuma, on the other. For this reason, Panikkar affirms that the compartmentalization of logos and its reduction to the realm of intelligibility have led to a scientific understanding of reality that is devoid of the mythos and pneuma. He argues for unity between being, logos, and pneuma. He says, “the on [being] is bigger than the logos. The logos may be coextensive with the on [being], but still there ‘is’ the pneuma ‘between,’ and where Spirit, freedom. And where there is freedom, thought cannot dictate, foresee or even necessarily follow the ‘expansion,’ ‘explosion’ life of Being.”

Another stark and complicated usage of Logos, Being, and Spirit is found in Panikkar’s articulation of his pneumatology: “If the Logos is the transparency of Being, the Spirit, is paradoxically, its opaqueness. The Spirit is freedom, the freedom of Being to be what it is. And this is, a priori as it were, unforeseeable by the Logos.”

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30 Ibid.
32 Panikkar, The Rhythm of Being, 337
33 See Panikkar, Invisible Harmony, 151.
In general, Panikkar’s use of the terms “Logos,” “Spirit,” and “Christ” forms a bloc that describes a transcendental cosmotheandric reality as opposed to the dualistic vision created by the Western philosophical compartmentalization of logos as thinking. For Panikkar, Western Christo-logos (Christology) as a product of logos lacks the necessary theological resources for any critical analysis of religious pluralism. In this sense, logos needs liberation and transformation that can occur only in a worldview of interconnectivity which unites and separates the Cosmos, the Divine, and the Human in radical individuality, irreducibility, and reciprocity.

Contrary to notable attempts in Christology to achieve a conceptual mastery of Jesus Christ through logos, Panikkar situates his opposition to the hermeneutics of Christo-logos within the apophatic tradition. To minimize the risk of a Gnostic understanding of logos (knowledge), Panikkar introduces another dimension of logos as the word to break forth the silence of the Father. In this sense, both silence and the word are authentic sources of revelation. For out of Silence (eternal) comes the word (finite), and the word as language equally reveals silence. Panikkar shows their interconnectedness this way: “When silence and word are kept separate, the Silence is terrifying and word ceases to be word of God…, becoming only our words about God; theology loses its sacredness and becomes our scrutiny of the inscrutable.”

This means that although the word reveals the Father, it does so to some degree, since for Panikkar, “Christ will never be totally known on earth, because that would amount to seeing the Father whom nobody can see.”

In this sense, Panikkar’s notion of Christ is intrinsically linked to the apophatism of the Father who through kenosis gives Himself to the Son and the Spirit, which in turn returns to the

36 See Panikkar, *The Trinity*, 46; quoted in Knitter, *No Other Name*, 156.
Father in an endless *perichoresis*.\(^{37}\) However, Panikkar cautions on this relationality by differentiating between the *logos* and Spirit. “There is, however the spirit, and the Spirit is not the Logos. It is infinitely different, according to classical Christian theology. There is nothing finite in the Trinity. We cannot and should not separate the Spirit from the Logos, but we should not confuse them either.”\(^{38}\) In the most mystical sense, the Silence of the Father and the infiniteness of the Spirit prevent any conceptual mastery. Departing from the classical tradition of the West, Panikkar upholds that an independent *logos* as *rationes* and *intellectus* cannot scrutinize the divine. Hence in Panikkar’s epistemology, it is absurd to dissect the *Theos* through the instrumentality of *logos*. In the strictest sense, all forms of Christo-*logos* and pneumato-*logos* inevitably lead to some form of subordinationism—Christ and the Spirit being subservient to *logos*.\(^{39}\)

To resolve this conundrum, Panikkar identifies three important epistemological models for a mutual coexistence between religion and philosophy: (a) *logos*—the thought, (b) *Pneuma*—the unthinkable and (c) *Mythos*—the unthought. Panikkar attaches a corresponding theological virtue to each of the triads; *logos*—Faith, *Mythos*—Hope and *Pneuma*—Love.\(^{40}\) As succinctly explained by Joseph Prabhu, “*Mythos* is the unthought because it is the background, the source and origin of what is thought, and therefore, cannot be made the object of thought. In this sense, *logos* cover the whole range of thought; from sensibility at the ‘lower’ end of the cognitive spectrum to speculative ideas at its higher end….The *pneuma* is the new, the unpredictable, the

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\(^{37}\) Panikkar, *The Trinity*, 45-47.

\(^{38}\) Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being*, 192.

\(^{39}\) Ibid, 189.

\(^{40}\) Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 342.
wind that blows where it will.” Invariably, Panikkar questions the soundness of a logos without its pneuma; for Faith (logos) without Love (Spirit) is dead.

In accordance with the cosmotheandric vision, Panikkar recognizes the role of logos in the cognitive process through rationes and intellectus, yet he maintains that a conceptual mastery of the divine through logos alone amounts to an epistemological impossibility. For Panikkar, the problem of Western philosophy is precisely that it has remained imprisoned under the confines of logos, thereby ignoring the other dimension—the mythos and pneuma. By its refusal to reconcile logos with its sources—namely, mythos and pneuma—Panikkar argues that Western philosophy runs the risk of being logocentric and imperialistic.

Panikkar believes that the rise of logocentrism in the Middle Ages led to the replacement of symbols with terms. This process widens the polarity between philosophy and religion, on the one hand, and science and arts, on the other, thus establishing a system in which reason and dialectics remain the only means of resolving polarity. In answer to the question, does the logos repair the polarity between the problem of the “One and the Many” in Western philosophy? Panikkar says no:

The challenge consists in doing justice to this polarity—that is, in overcoming duality without falling prey to monism. That is the proper function of advaita, or non-dualistic approach, which is the hermeneutic key to everything I am going to say. Advaita overcomes the strictures of logos, integrating the spirit to our approach to reality, or as a western classic says...“reflectens ardor” (rebounding love) belongs to the ultimate nature of the whole. In fact, an attempt to master the just mentioned polarity by reason alone is at the origin of the dialectical method: sic etnunc. Advaita amounts to the overcoming of dualistic dialectics by means of including love at the ultimate level of reality. In other words, the holistic attempt tries to “reach” the Whole not by a dialectic synthesis, not by means of an

42 Panikkar, The Invisible Harmony, 119.
43 Panikkar, Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics, 342.
immediate contact with the Whole, defying the dualistic object/subject epistemology.\textsuperscript{45}

Furthermore, Panikkar is convinced that logos, as the root of the “—ology” of the humanities disciplines, cannot be applied to Christ without qualifications. Thus, Christ-ology as a branch of the logic of logos in Western thought shrouds the mystery of Christ, reducing it to the particularity of Eurocentric understanding. Evidently, logos is in need of liberation and rejuvenation; for without pneuma-Love, the logos as Faith is dead. Consequently, Panikkar falls back to the apophatic tradition, to explain that “logos is not everything,” and consequently, does not “know the knowing of the knower or searches the depths of divine emptiness.”\textsuperscript{46} As thought, logos cannot think emptiness and silence.

As such, logos need the complementarity of the pneuma as its guiding hermeneutical tool. The growing acceptance of the hermeneutics of the logos in the West signals a corresponding neglect for pneumatology. To acknowledge this fact, Panikkar writes, “The unthinkable does not exist in itself as a fixed dimension; at any given moment it is the provisional, the historical, that accomplishes itself in the future, in hope…Receiving the pneuma is a permanent passage, pascha, a pilgrimage: the procession from mythos through logos to pneuma is endless. Precisely this pneumatic dimension guarantees the constant openness into which we may take a step forward.”\textsuperscript{47} In another sense, Panikkar kept the gradual procession under his understanding of perichoresis in a fashion that departs from the theological underpinnings of subordinationism.

What is at stake in Panikkar’s critique of the intellectual propositions of logos and the symbols derived from mythos is that both trajectories aided the conceptual thinking that paves

\textsuperscript{45} Panikkar, \textit{Rhythm of Being: The Unbroken Trinity} (Panikkar’s Gifford Lectures, unpublished draft), 34.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Panikkar, \textit{Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics}, 347.
the way for monocultural (theistic) systems, together with their imperial institutions and global designs. Through this critique, Panikkar intends to establish a priority for pneuma-Love, as the epicenter for dialogical dialogue; for the spirit breathes where it wills in all religions.  

As against the imagination of his critics, Panikkar’s dynamic vision of the pneuma is not a total rejection of logos and mythos all together; but a *perichoresis* of the triad. As Panikkar says, “even a ‘pneuma-tic’ theology has to use the logos, that is, words… Logos is not everything, but we cannot dispense with it.”  

The result of maintaining this criticism of the “purity and priority” of logos is to demonstrate its inherent paucity as an autonomous source of knowledge. Panikkar continues, “[W]e discover that reason alone is not the only instrument to live meaningfully in the universe. In addition, experience introduces us to a dimension of reality that is impervious to reason, and to the fact that thinking alone is not the ultimate judge of reality.”  

Panikkar finds the polarizing effect that underlines the conceptual frameworks of logos most problematic for intrareligious dialogue. In this account, a dualistic hermeneutics of logos is gravely dangerous for Panikkar’s Trinitarian cosmotheandric, wherein the logos, mythos and pneuma interdependently create the authentic fusion of horizons necessary for dialogical dialogue. As Knitter says, “for Panikkar, when it comes to God as to religion, the free-wheeling, unpredictable Spirit will always be one step ahead of Reason or Logos. We’re never going to be able to wrap our minds around what the Spirit is up to.”  

Put in other words, Panikkar submits,

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48 Panikkar, *Rhythm of Being: The Unbroken Trinity.*  
49 Ibid.  
50 Ibid.  
51 See Panikkar’s reference to Gadamer in *Rhythm of Being: The Unbroken Trinity*  
“It is quite obvious that reason cannot have the last word in a matter where, as part of reality, its own position is itself under question. Otherwise, reason would divinize itself.”

The question remains, can a Christian dualistic theology of Christ as Logos be the ground for a pluralistic theology of religions? Panikkar agrees on this point: namely, that there can be no solution to the problem of religious pluralism with a dualistic concept of logos as the defining characteristic of Christ-ology. Panikkar proposes an advaitic trinitarian pneumatology that is based on love and openness to infinite transcendental possibilities. The symbol of Christ as Logos becomes the nucleus of this advaitic pneumatology, which generates the vitality and dynamism needed for dialogue among religions. As such, Christ-logos cannot be the starting point for this universal pluralistic theology, since logos relies heavily on conceptual frameworks and hermeneutics that are not open to all.

The matter becomes still more complicated in Panikkar’s dichotomy between Logos and logos, wherein the former symbolizes the universality of Christ and the latter the particularity of Jesus of Nazareth. The goal for Panikkar is to find an “authentically universal” Christ as “a living symbol for the totality of reality: human, divine, cosmic.” The quest for such a universal Christ is a *sine qua non* for intrareligious dialogue. In this regard, Panikkar argues that the identity of Christ is not to be mistaken through identifying it with the historical consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth. To quote Panikkar: “the identity of Christ is not his identification…we can know the objective identification of Jesus, he was born and died at specific times and in specific places…but his identity can still escape us…To know his identity we need love, we need faith … we have to encounter his person.”

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Panikkar’s description of “Christ” differs considerably from an orthodox rendition. In his own words, “When I call this link between the finite and the infinite by the name Christ, I am not presupposing its identification with Jesus of Nazareth.”

To put it differently, for Panikkar the reality of Christ as the transcendent and un-incarnated Logos, does not contradict the immanence of the incarnated logos, Jesus of Nazareth. For theologians on the side of Orthodoxy, Panikkar’s dichotomy between Logos and logos is problematic. For instance, Jacques Dupuis opines that, “Panikkar’s thought does not appear to preserve the indissoluble link between the Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History. It betrays this link, weakening it and threatening...to reduce the Christ message to a kind of gnosis.” To make this point better, Dupuis referenced Robert Smet, who states: “The Christian can perfectly well admit a presence of the logos outside the Christian and Jewish traditions, but is not disposed to believe that the logos act elsewhere in identical fashions.”

The distinction between identity and identification becomes particularly important in the theology of Panikkar when dealing with topics of such obvious importance to Christology as the relation between Christ and Jesus. His most polemic affirmation is “Jesus is Christ, but Christ cannot be identified completely with Jesus.” This has to do with the Panikkarian conception of pars pro toto, which in this case applies to symbolic knowledge: “Jesus is the symbol of Christ,” “the icon seen in the Taboric light of revelation.” To understand what Panikkar means by this, it is necessary to understand his conception of “symbol.” Thus, for Panikkar saying that “Jesus is the symbol of Christ” is not contradictory to the dogmatic assertion that Jesus “is the Christ,” but the inverse affirmation, “Christ is Jesus” cannot be made, since Christ cannot be restricted to the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, although he is made manifest through him.

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56 Panikkar, Unknown Christ of Hinduism, 1981, 27. Gavin D’Costa points out the seeming contradictions evidenced in the earlier publication in 1964 wherein Panikkar asserts that the Logos as Christ is fully revealed in Christianity, “the place where Christ is fully revealed, the end and plenitude of every religion.” Panikkar, Unknown Christ of Hinduism, 1964, 24; quoted in Gavin D’Costa, Christianity and World Religion: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions (Malden, MA: Willy-Blackwell, 2009), 14.

57 See Macpherson, A Critical Reading of the Development of Raimon Panikkar’s Thought on the Trinity, 99.

In order to do justice to Panikkar’s Logos/logos dichotomy, it should be remembered that Panikkar operates from an epistemological presupposition that suspects the entire history of Western Christianity of supersessionism. It critiques further the Western Christianity diachronic presentation of Christ that is somewhat alienated from the experiences of other cultures. The question arises: are the methods inherited from the Greek and Roman traditions the only option for theological reflection? In opposition to this hermeneutical trend, Panikkar calls for the dekerygmatization and dehistoricization of classical Christ-o-logy in favor of the Christic principle that is rooted in the human experience as elucidated in the cosmosmotheandric vision. 59

This highlights Panikkar central claim: that the comprehensibility of the logos itself is measured only by its degree of relativity to the mythos and the pneuma. Essentially, a concept of the logos as existing by itself remains insufficient as the underlying principle of reality. With this understanding as the starting point, Panikkar begins his critique of development of the logos in Judaism and in Greek philosophy as it relates to the imperialistic monotheism that ensued after the edit of Milan under Constantine. 60 The result of this historical excursus leads Panikkar to the conclusion that the classical Christology developed thus far in this sense fails the “diatopic and pluritopic” 61 hermeneutical test of crossing over to other cultures who do not share similar patterns of understanding and intelligibility. 62

Christo-logos as a Western perspective have become the universal absolutizing theory about the story and history of Christ. 63 Panikkar observes further that “any alleged universal

59 Panikkar, Christian Mission, 121.
61 For the use of these terms to designate the current form of hermeneutics needed for post-colonial setting, see Medina V. Tlostanova and Walter D. Mignolo’s “On Pluritopic Hermeneutics, Transmodern Thinking and Decolonial Philosophy,” in Encounter Vol. I. 2009.
theory is one particular theory, besides many others, that claims universal validity, thus trespassing the limits of its own legitimacy.”64 Therefore Panikkar advocates for Christophany, which situates dialogue in the realm of the mythos and the pnuema (human consciousness and cosmotheandric reality). This proposal means that genuine dialogue is no longer achievable within the limits of the Christo-logos.

Hence Christology within the confines of the logos leads to dialectics and soliloquy (monologue) within a closed system. Such an enterprise ends in substituting apologetics for theology. In this regard, Panikkar warns that “we must eliminate any apologetics if we really want to meet a person from another religious tradition.”65 Within the cosmotheandric vision, genuine dialogical dialogue is such that it “must begin with my questioning myself and the relativity of my beliefs (which does not mean their relativism), accepting the challenge of a change, a conversion, and a risk of upsetting my traditional patterns.”66

Panikkar is not alone in his post-colonial critique of the shape and content of classical Christology and its supersessionist tendencies.67 This critique has witnessed a new resurgence in pneumatological studies, first as a kind of reaction to logos Christology and second, as its replacement. A common thread binds these researchers: namely, the search for a genuine non-supersessionist Christology that will address religious pluralism—de facto and de jure. Undoubtedly, many aspects of Panikkar’s subtle pneumatology demands further scrutiny. Yet,

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his bold step in announcing a movement from logos Christology to pneumatology as the ground for pluralism must be acknowledged.

5.4. Towards a Pneumatology of Charity and Hospitality

In *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, Panikkar identifies the human-divine polarity created by the Western philosophical traditions as the underlying factor responsible for the human predicament. This division and apparent lack of interconnectivity between transcendence and immanence is also noticeable in theology (Trinity, Christology, and Pneumatology). Panikkar takes aim at classical Christology as deeply responsible for a Trinitarian theology built on a cosmology that creates a chasm between God, the Human, and the Cosmos.

In *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, as well, Panikkar proposes a stark and uncomplicated opposition to dualism and modernism. As the title of the book indicates, Panikkar is clear that the logic inherent in *logos* (*rationes* and *intellectus*) has devaluated lived experience and religious encountering of the other. For Panikkar, the cosmology inherent in the God-world dualism of classical Christology has theological consequences for an interpretation of the incarnation within the realm of strict anthropocentrism. The “ology” in anthrop-ology and Christ-ology merges to design a world that enthrones human knowledge as the measure of reality. Panikkar’s advaitic Trinitarian cosmology, on the other hand, rejects such an

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72 A sense of the Spiritual daftness and isolation created by the Cartesian Modern man (Me, myself and I Spirituality) is captured in Richard Dawkins’ *God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006).
73 Panikkar would extend the same critique to the subject matter of pneuma—ology. See Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being*, 189.
anthropocentric view of reality. Indeed, as he argues, “The whole universe is called to share in the Trinitarian perichoresis,”\textsuperscript{74} which hinges on the individuality, irreducibility, and reciprocity between God, the cosmos, and humans.

At the heart of Panikkar’s advaitic Trinitarian theology is his reference to St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians 4:6—God above all, God through all, and God in all.\textsuperscript{75} Here, “God in all” for Panikkar depicts the activity of the Spirit operating in the entire cosmos. The universal dimension of the Spirit transgresses the particularity and historical consciousness of Jesus Christ and, consequently, of Christianity as a religion among others. Thus in Panikkar’s estimation, Christo-logos as the discourse about Jesus Christ within the comfort zone of Euro-centrism, at best responds to the monolithic needs and lived experiences of Christians within that hemisphere.

The challenge is that Christo-logos fall short in addressing the lived experiences of countless Christians of other cultures. In Panikkar’s words, “Today’s Christology is not catholic or universal, nor does it need to be. Independent of its content, the very parameters of intelligibility belongs to a phylum of human culture, but a single phylum after all.”\textsuperscript{76} It is here that the term “Christophany” differs essentially from “Christology.” Openness to the transcendental possibilities found in the lived religious perspectives of humanity and of the cosmos constitutes the mystical dimension of Christ.\textsuperscript{77} Panikkar goes on to add that “Christophany takes nothing away from Christology but is open to the reality of the Spirit, which separates logos from the pneuma, does not subordinate the former to the latter.”\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{74} Panikkar, Christophany: The Fullness of Man (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 147.
\textsuperscript{75} Panikkar, The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man, 68.
\textsuperscript{76} Panikkar, “A Christophany of our Time,” 4.
\textsuperscript{77} Panikkar, Christophany, xx.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 10.
Panikkar thus indicates his decision to move toward a pneumatology of Love, that is the antithesis of logos Christology and its accentuation on doctrines. The Spirit, as it were, comes to the rescue of the logos. Panikkar believes that it is in the Spirit that “our prayers meet, intentions coalesce and persons enter into communion.”

Still at the fundamental level, Panikkar defends the importance of the knowledge of Faith gained through logos philosophy, yet he admits that experiencing the Spirit in Love remains the only possibility for mutual interactions between cultures and religions. For Panikkar, “the meeting of Spiritualities can only take place in the Spirit. No new ‘system’ has primarily to come out of the encounter, but a new and yet old spirit must emerge.”

It is within the context of the Spirit that Panikkar raises the question of the Father. Since the Father is not in the apophatic sense, the experience of the Father “is an encounter in the Presence of the One who is already present in the hearts of those who in good faith belong to one or the other of the two religions.”

5.5. Hospitality as Ground for De Jure Pluralism and Soteriology

Panikkar’s concept of hospitality is intrinsically linked with the radical relationality and the notion of communion that is inherently cosmotheandric. As a divine attribute, hospitality is the way of relationship that stems from the Trinitarian perichoresis, otherwise referred to as the coherence of intra and inter abundance. Panikkar’s example of hospitality clearly indicates that radical relativity within the Trinitarian perichoresis is a matter of principle and not a union of convenience or generosity. Thus as a hermeneutical tool, the concept of hospitality has attained a new vista in both philosophical and theological hermeneutics. Put simply, hospitality is about

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79 Panikkar, Interreligious Dialogue, 57.
80 MacPherson, A Critical Reading of the Development of Raimon Panikkar’s Thought on the Trinity, 42.
81 Panikkar, Interreligious Dialogue, 58.
difference (alterity) and the receptivity of truths claims from the guest (invited) and the stranger (uninvited) alike.

A political philosophical understanding of hospitality wrestles with the ethical issue of the law, obligation and freewill. Scholars like Levinas and Derrida reject such a juridical concept of hospitality. \(^{83}\) Derrida proffers a solution that distinguishes between “absolute hospitality,” which is freely given, and “conditional hospitality,” which is based on cultural preconditions and legal preference. He writes:

The law of hospitality, the express law that governs the general concept of hospitality, appears as a paradoxical law, pervertible and perverting. It seems to dictate that absolute hospitality should break with the law of hospitality as right or duty… \(^{84}\)

Derrida’s interruption of the juridical concept of hospitality aligns with Panikkar’s cosmotheandric Trinitarian formulae characterized by the individuality, reciprocity, and mutuality of the host and the guest. The concept of hospitality as a vital hermeneutical tool for dialogue raises the question of identity. It does mean that interreligious dialogue calls for a deeper mystical encountering of the other that is beyond mere generous acknowledgement of plurality *de facto*. It searches further for *de jure* grounds for establishing the elements of truths that are abandoned in the religious narrative of the other. An intrinsic link exists between Panikkar’s radical pluralism and the kind of hospitality that is needed for the practice of

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\(^{84}\) Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 25.
dialogical dialogue. For Panikkar hospitality involves opening oneself to “accepting the challenge of a change, a conversion, a risk of upsetting my traditional pattern.”\textsuperscript{85}

Panikkar agrees with Derrida’s critique of the legalistic interpretation of hospitality and goes on to stress the human and mystical dimension of hospitality. Panikkar affirms that hospitality is neither a doctrine of a particular religious group nor a tool for inter-religious proselytism; rather, it is an attitude “essential to anyone who harbors the feelings that are fully human…”\textsuperscript{86} It is written in the human heart where the Spirit dwells. In other words, hospitality springs forth from the depth of Panikkar’s intrareligious disposition. That is why for Panikkar, “intrareligious dialogue and hospitality always go together.”\textsuperscript{87} The mystical connotation for this connection between hospitality and interreligious dialogue becomes evident as Panikkar explains how this connection is experienced in real life. Hospitality within the context of dialogue “implies that the way in which we experience our religions opens us up to a mystery over which we do not have exclusive property rights. Even if we are convinced that we are touching upon the truth, we are incapable of plumping its depths.”\textsuperscript{88}

To know what Panikkar means here, it is important to reiterate his position as explained under the previous sub-heading (“Towards a Pneumatology of Charity and Hospitality”), which demonstrates that interreligious encounters with the other is made possible only through Love in the pneuma and not by the conceptual mastery of logos through Faith/Knowledge. Remarkably, Panikkar returns the issue of interreligious dialogue to its pneumatic locus of lived experience gained through the dynamics of similarity and difference.\textsuperscript{89} What is at stake for Panikkar is that,

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\textsuperscript{85} Panikkar, \textit{Intrareligious Dialogue}, 74.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} See Pierre-François Beithune, \textit{Interreligious Hospitality: The Fulfillment of Dialogue}.
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“hospitality cannot be reduced to mere theory. It invariably demands practice, action, and, unequivocally love—love that is a precondition to knowledge: thus the importance of hospitality is not only for dialogue but for there to be peace for all humans.”

Speaking about the indispensability of hospitality within the context of human experience, Panikkar writes of hospitality as “the meaning of life for each of us when we live out our religion,” not in isolation but in sharing in the religious lives and truth of the other. The other as a stranger is always unknown and as such the source of mystery. Hospitality is strange and mysterious. On the deeper mystical sense, Panikkar observes that “we do not need to know, to love.” In genuine hospitality, receptivity towards the truth narrative of the stranger is given priority over the conceptual mastery of narratives. Indeed, it is precisely because love (pneuma) transcends knowledge (logos) that the notion of “generosity and tolerance” towards the stranger is finally deemed inadequate.

Panikkar employs the concept of strangeness, arbitrariness, and mystery to qualify the activity of the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit blows wherever it wills in all religions and cultures, creating what Panikkar refers to as hospitable truth. Truth in this context is a posteriori and is always relational. According to Panikkar, interreligious hospitality as the prerequisite to dialogical dialogue departs considerably from the structures of knowledge and moves beyond the

parameters of cultural generosity and tolerance—the at-home experience. But as Derrida would argue, “hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home,”96 attitude that constitutes the encounter between the “host and the guest.”

In interreligious circles, numerous scholars see too much risk in hospitality than its prospects for dialogue and peace-making.97 The idea that there can be preconditions to hospitality in the dialogic process has led to the problem of anxiety and phobia. In a sense, offering hospitality to a stranger—that is, sharing a meal—could be dangerous. As Panikkar observes,

To invite a stranger to partake in a meal is the essence of hospitality. Traditionally, the stranger was a pilgrim; he could well have been an angel, but in any case he was to be treated with due respect. Today, unhappily, there is reason to fear that the stranger may turn out to be a thief or a terrorist. Such a regrettable trend is probably attributed to the individualism that characterizes the modern world and is accompanied by a desacralization of the human person.98

In light of this quotation, it can be argued that Panikkar is not naïve about the impending risk and vulnerability involved in hospitality and its consequences for interreligious dialogue.99 At first sight, “hospitality” and “hostility” both share the Indo-European root word “host” which among other things translates into “ghost”—the unknown phenomenon.100 The guest or the strange-one, like the “ghost,” defies epistemological categorization. Because of its indeterminate characteristic, the concept of the strange-one spawns fear and is always met with suspicion, hostility, and hatred.101 For Panikkar, “enemy” and “scapegoat” imagery thrives

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100 See Catherine Cornille, ed., The Willey-Blackwell Companion to Inter-religious Dialogue.
within dialectic hermeneutics and its use of reason to conceptualize the other. Thus, the “unreasonable” strange-one becomes the source of fear and anxiety.102

Hospitality is not characteristically a Christian virtue. According to Panikkar it is “essential to anyone who harbor the feelings that are fully human; feelings, I might go so far as to say, that are indicative of a good state of health.”103 However, in the history of the Christian tradition, hospitality has been dangerously reduced in meaning to mere generosity, and more especially in the act of giving, especially of material wealth or possession from a benefactor—in most cases, one that belongs to higher class—to a beneficiary who is often considered of lower status.104 Along similar lines, “Christendom Christianity” became the benefactor religion of the world, giving generously from the bounty of its fullness and yet unwilling to accept in return the spiritual wealth of other religions.105 The Christian concept of generosity has historically been conditioned as a one-way exercise: from the haves to the have-nots. The result is the supersessionist attitude of Christianity towards other religions.

On the contrary, in Panikkar’s cosmotheandrism, hospitality depicts a transcendental reality drawn from the Trinitarian perichoresis, wherein priority is given to mutuality and reciprocity. In this activity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are conjoined in an endless dance of “giving” and “receiving.” Trinitarian perichoresis as the hermeneutical lens for hospitality deconstructs “the have and the have-nots” polarity ingrained in Christian generosity.

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104 This sense of Christian entitlement has led to the Catholics’ “Outside the Church no Salvation” and recent Protestants’ “outside Christianity no salvation.” According to Karl Barth, Christianity alone has the commission and authority to be a missionary religion, i.e to confront the world of religion as the one true religion, with absolute self-confidence to invite and challenge it to abandon its ways to start on the Christian way.” See John Hick, *God has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 8.
The principal target of this criticism seems to indicate that for Panikkar, the Trinitarian perichoresis does not rest on the concept of generosity but on the hospitality that is guaranteed by the “individuality, irreducibility and reciprocity” of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Drawing from the Trinitarian mutuality, Panikkar argues that the human is attuned to the rhythm of being, that is conditioned by receiving as well as in the giving. In this sense, being human is being hospitable, being caught up in the rhythm of being that truly depicts the Trinitarian life. In the strict theological sense, Panikkar argues that humans as part of the cosmotheandric rhythm cannot claim to be the source of hospitality. Herein lies the major difference between hospitality and generosity. Hospitality belongs to the ontological order of reality, and the human person has an intrinsic connection to reality as a pole in the cosmovision.106

Panikkar’s comparison between cosmotheandrisrn and Trinitarian perichoresis leaves little doubt that he regards relationality as the bedrock for hospitality. The consequences brought about by this perichoretic union are that the identity of each Trinitarian person is neither subsumed by all nor isolated by the other. Hence, the dynamism of Trinitarian union is constituted of and held by the relationality of each member to the other. Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision of reality proposes a similar principle between God, humans, and the cosmos. It suggests also that the principle of “give and take” within the Trinitarian life can be a veritable model for interreligious dialogue and mutual coexistence among religions. Panikkar believes in the idea of the mutual fecundity of religions as the effervescent point of hospitality,

wherein the guest and the host engage each other. For Panikkar, the fruitfulness of intercultural dialogue rests upon this cosmotheandric process.107

As the fundamental virtue for Christian and Muslim dialogue, “hospitality and truth” are corollaries. Genuine hospitality creates the room for reciprocal respect. As Panikkar argues, “in order to know a religion (and therefore be in a position to talk about it) it is necessarily to share in the lives of those who believe in it.”108 Thus, in advocating the concept of sharing, Panikkar points to the Eucharistic character of hospitality—that is, its locale within the meal setting, coupled with the idea of the brokenness of the bread; for it is only a bread broken that can be shared.109 It follows then that in Panikkar’s view, while the Eucharistic model emphasizes otherness and irreducibility, yet it must guard against the prevalent hermeneutics of normativity and its tendency to dominate and impose.110 Hospitality is about difference and the différance111 of otherness. This, after all, differentiates hospitality from all attempts toward similarity.112

Yet, a question arises at this juncture: what is the ultimate purpose of hospitality? What is the point of reference between Panikkar’s hermeneutical theology of hospitality and the proposal of a de jure pluralism and soteriology? What lessons can be drawn from the classical Trinitarian perichoresis and Panikkar’s cosmotheandrism? At the immanent Trinitarian level, the answer is contained in the question, meaning that God has no reason to account for God’s own being, or God’s non-being, as the case may be. God is not a God for Godself, but rather a God in relation

107 Panikkar, Intrareligious Dialogue.
109 Ibid., x.
110 See also Paul Ricoeur use of the concept of ‘Eucharistic hospitality,’ ‘interconfessional hospitality’ and ‘linguistic hospitality,’ to argue that genuine translation must maintain a certain irreducible difference and otherness in the interpretative process of the guest language by the host. See Ricoeur, 2008; in Kearney, “Welcoming Strange Gods,” 166-81.
111 This term draws from Derrida’s understanding: ‘the difference that shatters the cult of identity and the dominance of Self over Other,’ Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
112 See Cornille’s on hospitality and Similarity, in The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue, 189-196.
to the Cosmos and Humans.\textsuperscript{113} Divine hospitality therefore means simple participation of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the Trinitarian Godhead. That is to say, Trinitarian relationality (perichoresis) is not only a matter of fact (\textit{de facto}), but also of principle (\textit{de jure}).

Therefore, the task at hand is to approach the mystery of the Trinity at the cosmic and economic level, where Trinitarian hospitality becomes prototypical for human hospitality. Hospitality in this sense becomes part of the rhythm of being—both a \textit{de facto} and \textit{de jure} condition of possibility of human encountering within the cosmovision. It is not difficult to see how for Panikkar hospitality remains part and parcel of the cosmotheandric reciprocity—mutual fecundity.\textsuperscript{114} Panikkar recognizes that the future and fruition of inter-cultural, interreligious dialogue rest upon this cosmotheandric process. Based on these convictions, he cautions, “it is not possible to know another religion without practicing hospitality, not the way its believers live it out. If we fail to experience hospitality we only have our own impression of that religion to go by, not what it really is.”\textsuperscript{115}

The intriguing implication of Panikkar’s hermeneutic theology is that it raises a further question about the nature of identity and truth.\textsuperscript{116} Panikkar accounts for truth in relationality and difference. This allows him to affirm the possibility of religious pluralism \textit{de jure} from the perspective of the guest and also from the purview of the stranger. In the theology of hospitality, Panikkar resolves the \textit{de jure} conundrum by positing a hermeneutical theology patterned by the

\textsuperscript{113} Panikkar, \textit{The Experience of God}, 64.
\textsuperscript{114} Panikkar, \textit{Intra-religious Dialogue}.
\textsuperscript{116} On truth, see Vatican II, \textit{Dignitatis Humanae}, Declaration on Religious Liberty, # 3, “The search for truth, however, must be carried out in a manner that is appropriate to the dignity of the human person and his social nature, namely, by free enquiry with the help of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue. It is by these means that men share with each other the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in such a way that they help one another in the search for truth.”
Trinitarian perichoresis in the face of other theological opposition and the deadlock of nomenclature—exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralist.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Middle-belt and Northern Nigeria is notoriously known as the epicenter for ethnic and religious warfare. The hostility between the two dominant religions—Islam and Christianity—has a beginning that pre-dates the British colonial occupation in 1903. This study examines Panikkar’s pluralistic theology and its application as correctives to supersessionist claims. Dialogical dialogue is a key concept in Panikkar’s pluralistic theology, and it forms the backbone of the Cosmotheandric vision. By means of a short summary, this dissertation has presented Panikkar’s Trinitarian theology of dialogue, which corresponds in particular to the Indian tradition, and has proposed it as relevant for presenting a pneumatology of difference and hospitality for interreligious dialogue in Jos, Plateau. From the scrutiny of contextualization, it is valid to ask why one would instantiate Panikkar (Asian) in the Jos (African) terrain, knowing well that Panikkar’s background consists of an encounter between Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Secularism? The answer is not farfetched. In their postcolonial critique, African (American and Caribbean) and Asian scholars share a deep commitment to rejecting colonial thinking and global design, along with the ripple effect it has on cross-cultural hermeneutics.

Post-colonialism attacks the central claim of the Western philosophical tradition: namely, its totalizing and isolationist trends that deny otherness and difference. For good or ill, Nigeria and India share a similar colonization experience. Contextual theologies resounding from the frontiers of these nations register a strong opposition to the colonial mission’s attempt to deify Jesus Christ as an imperial God, saddled with the responsibility of conquering other gods.\(^1\) Panikkar’s entire theological enterprise involves a distillation of the historical contaminations

associated with Western Christian identity as it evolves from “Christianity, Christendom, and Christianness.” He states:

In simple terms, a growing number of our contemporaries want to be religious, believing, and even Christian, but without the contaminations they feel have been added to these words. They aspire to rediscover their roots in order to grow in a soil that has not been spoiled by either the fertilizer of ancient times, the shrubs of the middle ages, modern pesticides, or the radiations of modernity. Such a struggle for renewal is innate in the human person; it has always been so, but in our time it is acquiring historic, even cosmic proportions. Christianness...means, first, liberation from a fixed and determined political order, which until recently was regarded as indispensable for the practice of “Christian values” (Christendom). It is also a liberation from identifying being Christian with the acceptance of a determined series of Christian doctrines (Christianity)...Christianness is neither a new political form nor a new intellectual creed; it is a commitment which, although it needs specific expressions and a concrete political order to manifest itself, does not identify itself with any of these things.²

For Panikkar, colonization, globalization, and universalization are products of monoculturalism, that is, Eurocentric perspectives. Thus, doing theology for Panikkar entails a full-fledged rejection of a belief in Western cultural superiority and its “hermeneutics of suppression” and claim of intellectual sovereignty and dominance through the dialectical dualism.³ Precisely, Panikkar’s rejection of Western dualism leads to his proposal of a non-dualistic approach to the Divine.

Through this conviction, Panikkar finds in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Secularism the appropriate linguistic categories to convey the core message of the Christian faith in addition to Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Christianity. In this cosmotheandric reality, embracing the cosmos, the secular, and the mundane translates the matter and form for divinzation. It is the vocation of human to make sacred the secular realm. Panikkar points out:

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To put forward my thesis straightaway: only worship can prevent secularization from becoming inhuman, and only secularization can save worship from being meaningless… the liturgical nature of man, thus considering worship to be an essential human dimension, while, at the same time, recognizing secularization to be a major phenomenon of our age, a phenomenon which, from now on, is assuredly destined to assist the growth of man’s consciousness. Today, anyone who is not exposed to secularization cannot hope to realize his humanity to the full, at least not in terms of the twentieth century. On the other hand, man without worship cannot even subsist.4

The background chapter provides an overview of the context of the study that is deeply rooted in the colonial struggles that depict the people’s reaction to the institutionalization of the hermeneutic of suppression orchestrated by the British colonial authority and later by the Fulani hegemony. The introductory chapter also identifies the research questions, the sources consulted in dealing with the questions, and the methods applied. Because of the connection of the research questions to the reality of colonialism, a post-colonial critical approach was adopted as the frame of reference in studying Panikkar. The preference for post-colonial critique in this research hinges on three fundamental issues: first, the factors that led to the establishment of cultural superiority by the British colonial administration; secondly, the adoption of a similar cultural superiority by the Fulani hegemony over the Middle Belt minority ethnicities; and thirdly, the creation of a Christian response to the first and second issues identified above from ethnic minorities in Jos, Plateau.

From an insider’s perspective, the problem of interreligious dialogue in Jos, Plateau, is traceable to the problem of alterity (otherness) and identity. Put differently, the colonial apparatus ferments a triangulation of identity, between the British, the Fulani (Muslims), and

ethnic minorities (Christians). At various times and out of sheer convenience, coupled with political and economic gain, the British had taken sides with both ethnicities through a policy of “divide and rule.” The results of this policy gave rise to the notion that the British tolerated the flourishing of Islam in the North while simultaneously welcoming Christian missionaries in the South. As a result, Jos, Plateau (Middle-Belt), became the melting point of Muslims and Christians, constituting a religiously volatile situation. Thus, given the British colonial role in shaping the socio-political, economic, and religious landscape in Northern Nigeria as a whole, it became necessary to include the British colonial rule as an integral part of the study.

As already observed, the pre- and post-colonial response of Islam in the Sokoto Caliphate to the British colonial rule does not form a single pattern. Support for or against the British was registered along sectarian lines. With the fall of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903, the split between the Islamic sects turned into an open arena of confrontations. Not all Muslims accepted the fall of the caliphate as the Divine will. While the Qadiriyya and Tijanniyya sects adapted easily to the new reality of colonialism, the remnants of the Salafiyy/Wahhabi strongly opposed the British rule on philosophical and theological grounds. For the Wahhabi, any form of collaboration with the British is tantamount to support for Christianity, and it is deemed heretical. Interestingly, however, both opposing sects agreed when the British jurisprudence tended toward upholding the sharia—either partially or in its entirety.

The British, for lack of the required human resources to govern the vast geographical area covered, maintained the socio-political structures of the defunct Sokoto Empire. As Umar argues, the British had no choice other than to follow the colonial policies of “appropriation,
containment, and surveillance” of Islam. The British, through the indirect rule system, appropriated the Qadiriyya and Tijanniyya sects to counter and thereafter contain the radicalized tendencies of the Wahhabis. Consequently, these policies had an adverse effect on Islam; it impeded its external growth and created internal disharmony. The most visible outcome was the formation of an institutionalized version of political Islam, which would continue to be at loggerheads with its revivalist counterpart. The cause of the sharia controversy and the insurgence of newly Islamic fundamentalist sects in northern Nigeria are traceable to this development.

In Jos, Plateau, the British continued to maintain its policy of indirect rule, although by proxy—that is, the use of the Fulani hegemony over ethnic minorities. This arrangement did not last, as the British thought it a matter of political expediency to return the traditional stool of leadership to the BAA minority. This event in itself constitutes the root cause of ethnic and religious violence in Jos, Plateau. The Fulani hegemony interpreted the British endorsement of BAA as the subsequent dethronement of the Fulani as a “sub-imperialist” superior ethnic group. The decision contradicted the “born to rule” narrative already in place by the Fulani ethnicity. Jos saw its first wave of organized crisis in 1932 and 1945 when this axiom was challenged by the growth in population of minority ethnicities, who became Christians.

Chapter 2 analyzed the hermeneutics of exclusion introduced by the British colonial authority in their support for indirect rule of ethnic minorities by proxy. In the pre-colonial era, the city of Jos and the entire Plateau had been annexed to the Bauchi emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate; however, it never fell under the complete jurisdiction of the Bauchi. For lack of geographical knowledge of the hilly terrain, the jihadists had lost most wars on the plateau,

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leaving the natives with a sense of esteem and pride in remaining unconquered until the arrival of the British. Before then, the ethnic minorities had always maintained their autonomous right to self-governing with the Bauchi emirate through diplomatic relations—that is, the amana contract agreement.

Upon takeover of the Sokoto Caliphate, the British abrogated the customary amana agreement between the ethnic minorities of Jos, Plateau, and the Bauchi emirate, thereby subjecting the entire Benue-Plateau region under the new Bauchi province of the then Northern Nigeria. This decision had both political and religious implications. Politically, it was a final victory for the Fulani hegemony—a feat unachievable by the jihad. Religiously, it opened an entire avenue for the propagation of Islam among the natives who were predominantly adherents of African traditional religion.

The switch of loyalty from the Fulani hegemony to ethnic minorities by the British sparked the “settlers and indigenes” controversy. Changes in demographics led the Christian majority, which consisted of the ethnicities of BAA, to the claim of being the rightful owners and authentic indigenes of Jos. Thus, the descendants of Hausa/Fulani ethnicities raise the question of their own indigene-ship as well as rejecting the appellation as “settlers.”

What was at stake in the disputations between the “indigenes and settlers” was the issue of land, politics, religion, and the question of ethnic belonging. For the BAA ethnicities, the time had come for both political and religious emancipation and autonomy from the Fulani political class. Hence the need for the Fulani hegemony to curb the political enthusiasm of the indigenes, and their arrogant claims to lands and cultural identity led to the Jos crises of 1932, 1945, and 1994. Similarly, the 2001 crisis and its reprisals in 2004, 2008, 2010, and 2012 all had their genesis in ethnic-religious incitement to hatred and wanton destruction of lives and property.
The discovery of tin and iron ore in Jos led to an influx of immigrants into the city. The new railway project brought workers from South Nigeria while the need for subsistence agriculture saw the mass exodus of Hausa/Fulani nomads from the North into the plains of the Plateau. In addition to the flow was the presence of huge number of expatriate and non-expatriate (West Africans, Igbo, Yoruba, etc.) professional mine workers in the city. The presence of a large population of migrant workers in Jos, mostly Christians, triggered a pastoral need that would warrant the British’s justification to grant full permission to Christian missionaries to operate within restricted areas of the North. This news was indeed good news for ethnic minorities, who viewed Christianity as a tool for liberation from Islamic domination.

Despite the difficulties experienced by initial attempts to establish Christianity within the core northern territories, the High Commissioner, Frederick Lugard, continued to nurture the idea of advancing the gospel among the Middle-Belt ethnic minorities. This plan led to the formation of the Sudan United Missions (SUM), an interdenominational missionary group whose primary goal was to curb the advance of Islam through rigorous evangelism. SUM consists of the Church of Scotland, the Wesleyan Methodist Church of England, the Methodist Church of England, Congregational Church of England, and the Calvinistic Methodist Missions of Wales. SUM evangelism, through a rhetoric of supremacy over Islam, led to the implantation of the hermeneutics of exclusion and supersessionism, which later characterized the Christian response to Muslims in Jos, Plateau. In addition, the nationalistic tendency of the SUM fueled existing biases among the dominant Christian indigenes toward their perceived Muslim opponents.

Furthermore, Catholic response to Christian exclusivism through Nostra Aetate from Vatican II claimed that the Church rejects nothing that is true from other religions. Through this teaching, the Church gradually moved away from exclusive claims of religious superiority and
embraced religious pluralism _de facto_. That would mean that for the Catholic Church, Islam exists in its own right as another religion. However, the recognition of Islam _de facto_ did not erase the deep seated biases created over the years by the exclusivist hermeneutic established by the SUM and employed mostly by evangelical and Pentecostal Christians today. The crisis faced by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) remains a testimony to this con-fusion of perspectives.

The ambivalent nature of the relationship between Christianity and Islam raises the question anew: is Islam one of the religions of the book (Judaism and Christianity) and thus a part of God’s saving plan (_de jure_)? In essence, castigating the other religions as a reflection of a ray of the truth, the Catholic Church constitutes itself to be the ultimate religion with an absolute monopoly of truth, which the Church alone possesses in fullness. More problematic is the fact that the Protestant hermeneutics drawn from Christian nationalism hinder collaborative dialogue. At this level of discourse, both Catholics and Protestants share a similar hermeneutics of superiority (of Jesus Christ and of Christianity) over Islam and the African traditional religion. The result has been an unbridgeable gap, which exists between the exclusivist claims of supersessionist classical Christology and the challenge of the reality of _de facto_ and _de jure_ religious pluralism.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed analysis of Panikkar’s reaction to the central claim of supersessionist thinking. Panikkar sees his theology as deeply rooted in the confluence of religious experience whereby an acceptance of difference becomes the hermeneutical key to dialogue, away from the presuppositions of suppression, superiority, and supersessionism. This critique leads Panikkar to a critical stance towards the exclusivist and inclusivist tendencies inherent in traditional Christology, which he considers not too respectful to otherness and
difference. Panikkar tactically traces the history of traditional Christology and finds it grossly inadequate on two grounds for cross-cultural hermeneutics; first, it thrives well only in monotheistic backgrounds, and second, it is rooted in dualistic perspectives. Hence, the search for an authentic theology of Christ that draws from the Christian traditions and yet transcends the tripology—exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism—lead Panikkar to an exploration of the mystical approach to Christian theology—Christophany: that is, “to move from a tribal Christology into a Christophany less bound to a single cultural current.”

Panikkar intends to create a methodology of interreligious dialogue that adequately addresses the signs of the times as well as the state of the religions. A radically pluralistic world demands a radical pluralism that takes the relationship between the Cosmos, God, and Humans seriously and sheds a new light. The search for an authentic pluralism of difference that is rooted in Christophany ushers in a notion of Christ that transcends the mono-cultural formulations that characterize Eurocentric hermeneutics.

A good starting point, according to Panikkar, signals a return of the Christological debate to its Trinitarian locus where Christophany reveals the perichoretic reality that Christ not only shares with the Father and the Spirit, but with the entire cosmos and humans. This will mean creating a new theological anthropology that situates humans within the cosmotheandric vision, and not as atomic individual units devoid of spiritual connections. In the light of this analysis, Panikkar argues that an authentic theology of Christ within the framework of Christophany must transcend the particularities of culture while still responding to the needs of the universe (as cosmos).

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6 Panikkar, Christophany, 162.
In a way that is consistent with the language of postmodernism—that is, a critique of meta-narratives and post-colonialism—Panikkar exposes the danger inherent in strict adherence to mono-logical claims about ultimate mystery. He says, “We must accept that some religious traditions are mutually incommensurable,” consequently, religions like Christianity must “give up any pretense to monopoly of what religion stands for.” It is here, within the critique of monotheism, that Panikkar sees pluralism as the attitude that recognizes perspectives in ways that promote “irreducibility, individuality, and reciprocity.” Another name for pluralism as an integral principle of the cosmotheandrimophobia is perichoresis—interrelatedness.

Although the claim that Panikkar qualifies as a pluralist sui generis is defensible, yet the need to qualify the limits of his pluralism against the trends and critiques of his contemporaries is paramount. Panikkar’s theology, on the one hand, shares a perspective with Kant, Hick, and Knitter that gives credibility to experience and historical narratives. The emphasis on narratives means that no religion, regardless of its claim of uniqueness, can escape the scrutiny of history. On the other hand, Panikkar agrees with Heim about the need for religions to maintain their individuality and difference. Notwithstanding their shared areas of similarity, Panikkar’s emphasis on non-dualism sets his pluralism apart from the Western perspectives represented in the works of Hick, Knitter, and Heim. To acknowledge that Panikkar and the other scholars offer similar accounts of interreligious dialogue that stresses the importance of alterity is not to say they handle the problem of the “One and the Many” in the same way. A further comparison will show that Panikkar tried to solve this dilemma at the mythical or mystical level beyond the Western conceptual dualism of epistemology/ontology, subject/object, and mind/body.

From the Asian perspective, a subtle resemblance exists between Panikkar, Dupuis, and Phan. In some cases this resemblance depicts areas of their studies that are either overlapping or complementary, showing contraries and contradictions as well. All the same, these theologians, each in his peculiar style, reject the notion of Christian supersessionism and the perceptible doctrinal positions that construe other religious traditions as preparation for Christianity.

In Phan’s case, claims to the universal validity of one’s religion derive from the particularity of religious experience and, as such, do not preclude adherents of other religions from similar acts of religious faith. There is indeed something to learn from the Christian perspective of Christ as the universal savior that also acknowledges Judaism as still another valid track of salvation. In offering a theological response to the problem of Christian identity and religious pluralism, Dupuis contends that deep within Christian theology, there are resources to construct a genuine theology of religious pluralism that create room for other salvific figures within the divine plan of salvation. In doing so, Dupuis affirms the traditional theology of the de jure salvific role of Jesus Christ: his universality and uniqueness. However, he further maintains that the particularity of the Christ-event in Nazareth does not empty the Divine will to save through figures and traditions found outside of Christianity. This opportunity of salvation is not outside the economy of the Holy Spirit. This means that the other religious traditions do not exist “only in a secondary and provisional sense.”9 They have rights both de facto and de jure to exist within the realm of history and human consciousness.

Chapter 4 vividly describes the philosophical background and the spiritual perspective of Panikkar’s theology of dialogue. Dialogical dialogue belongs rightly to the realm of reality

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which Panikkar describes as the mythical. The incommensurability of the mythical phenomenon extends beyond the confines of the dialectic of logos. Drawing attention to the concept of the “incommensurable” of myths as the soul and nature of all religions, Panikkar argues that the attempt by particular religions to monopolize claims relating to Ultimate Mystery has been the fundamental barrier to interreligious dialogue. Panikkar describes this predicament as the dethronement of myths and the enthronement of the hermeneutics of logos—that is, dialectics.

The knowledge of the incommensurability of both the phenomenon of religion and that of the Ultimate Mystery is for Panikkar the prerequisite to entering the mythical realm. The mythical experiencing of the divine surpasses particular doctrinal formulations of religions. It is the presence of the other that reveals my myth. Thus, the humbling fact that one does not know everything about one’s own myth is, for Panikkar, the epistemological grounds for accepting and practicing pluralism.

Ultimately, for Panikkar, the cosmotheandric principle has implications for religious pluralism. Most important, Panikkar’s advocacy of the perichoresis—interrelatedness—that exists between the cosmotheandric triad structures reveals that the human spirit is open to the realm of infinite possibilities. This inherent and universal tendency of the human to transcendence can no longer be tamed under monotheistic absolutism. It is supposed that non-theistic traditions share a capacity similar to that of transcendence. Under the cosmotheandric principle, dialogue is no longer at the dispensation and discretion of particular religions because “the experience of God cannot be monopolized by any religion or system of thought.”

Consequently, it can be argued that “a plurality of religions is required since one single religion

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cannot provide enough space for the multiplicity of human experiences and divine manifestations.”

Panikkar’s concept of “dialogical dialogue” forms the central and connecting thread of his Trinitarian spirituality and cosmotheandrisms principles. It deplores traditional theological ideas built on the mono-polar structures of absolute egocentric categories. Panikkar’s cosmotheandrisms is deeply rooted in the Advaitic Vedanta—non dualism. Through this reality, Panikkar advances an epistemic, linguistic, and theological alternative to the Western problems of the “One and Many,” and “Being and beings.” In many instances, Panikkar reaches the conclusion that an advaitic approach to Christianity is not only a possibility but also part of divine plan.

Panikkar’s theology of multiple religious belongings provides concepts for interreligious conflict management and resolutions. He implants this framework into the dialogical literature shared in part by Martin Buber’s encounter of the familiar and the stranger, the classical “I and Thou” paradigm. Panikkar links them to interreligious peace, the central goal of cross-cultural hermeneutics. He thus provides ways to interject the starting point of a peace movement. Those are the rules of encounter and dialogue. Panikkar identifies nine rules for effective dialogue:

1. It must be free from particular apologetics.
2. It must be free from general apologetics.
3. One must face the challenge of conversion.
4. The historical dimension is necessary but not sufficient.
5. It is not just a congress of philosophy.
6. It is not only a theological symposium.
7. It is not merely an ecclesiastical endeavour.
8. It is a religious encounter in faith, hope, and love.

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11 Komulainen, 113f.
9. Intra-religious dialogue has primacy.  

In part, these rules suggest predispositions for dialogue that is geared towards peace-making and peace-keeping. An understanding of Panikkar’s “rules for religious encounter” hinges first on the hermeneutical distinction between faith and belief. Panikkar describes faith as the “constitutive human dimension” derived from the transcendental category of the divine embedded in all peoples, cultures, and religions. It is not the prerogative of the few. Panikkar acknowledges further that one does not possess faith like doctrines. Faith is a given, “the ever inexhaustible mystery, beyond the reach of objective knowledge.” Panikkar situates Faith in the inter-transcendental realm. Hence, “Faith cannot be equated with belief, but faith always needs a belief to be faith. Belief is not faith, but it must convey faith. A disembodied faith is not faith.”

The term “belief” for Panikkar refers to a set of doctrines, rituals, and ideologies by which a religious tradition is identified by symbol, the “vehicle by which human consciousness passes from myth to logos.” Belief accentuates that which is culturally valued, that which is subject to change with the passing of time. Yet in the midst of change, the discourse of belief is kept alive only through symbolic systems. It is here, at the level of symbolic discourse (not doctrinal), that Panikkar locates interfaith encounter—dialogical dialogue.

Panikkar distinguishes yet a second layer of his “rules of religious encounter,” by differentiating between “dialectical dialogue” and “dialogical dialogue.” Panikkar summarizes the difference thus:

The dialectical dialogue is a dialogue about objects, that interestingly enough, the English language calls “subject matters.” The dialogical dialogue, on the other
hand, is a dialogue among subjects aiming at being dialogue about subjects. They want to dialogue not about something, but about themselves: they dialogue themselves. In short, if all thinking is dialogue, not all dialogue is dialogical. The dialogical dialogue is not so much about opinions, (the famous endoxa (ἐνδοξά) of Aristotle about which dialectics deals) as about those who have such opinions and eventually not about you but about me to you.20

In light of the analysis undertaken in this research, Panikkar’s criticism of dialectal dialogue is guided by his rejection of the principles of logic and dialectics. The application of these principles mutes the voice and reduces the presence of the “other” in the dialogic process. At its best, dialectical dialogue hinders the mutual openness of self to the other. On the other hand, dialogical dialogue ensures openness. As Madhuri M. Yadlapati argues, “the aim of such openness is to place the other in a position not simply of equality but even of priority.”21

In this regard, priority and openness are the *sine qua non* for dialogical dialogue. The idea of giving “priority” to the other religions amounts to being respectful and truthful to these traditions. Finding truth in the other religions and acknowledging it as such is, indeed, an integral part of witnessing. This form of inter-personal hermeneutics, according to Panikkar, leads to mutual trust and reciprocity, given that “what the other bear is not a critique of my ideas but witness to his own experience, which then enters our dialogue, flows with it and awaits a new fecundation.”22

At first sight, Panikkar’s critique of dialectical approach can be perceived as entirely negative. However, he draws attention to the positive values inherent in dialectics but specifically warns against its unbridled brand:

Dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other, just as dialectics pursues truth by trusting the order of things, the value of reason and weighty arguments. Dialectics is the optimism of reason; dialogue is the optimism of the heart. Dialectics

20 Ibid., 29-30.
21 Madhuri M. Yadlapati, “Raimon Panikkar, John Hick, and a Pluralist Theology of Religions.”
22 Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 244.
believes it can approach truth by relying on the objective consistency of ideas. Dialogue believes it can advance along the way to truth by relying on the subjective consistency of the dialogical partners. Dialogue does not seek primarily to be duo-logue, a duet of two logos, which would still be dialectical; but a dial-logos, a piercing of the logos to attain a truth that transcends it.23

Furthermore, Panikkar’s concept of “dialogical dialogue” has implications for religious pluralism. By application, this research draws attention to the two major factors of “monotheistic absolutism” and “dialectical totalitarianism” that has prevented mutual conversation among religions. Based on his radical pluralism, which is deep and multi-dimensional, Panikkar strongly criticizes the absolute posturing of monotheism. Accordingly, he contends that pluralism is more than mere plurality. He states: “Pluralism, therefore, does not mean that we recognize many ways (plurality) but that we detect many forms which we cannot recognize as ways leading to the goal. Pluralism does not mean just tolerance of the many ways. It is rather that human attitude which faces intolerance without being broken.”24

Thus, Panikkar distances himself from any system—be it scientific, philosophical, or theological—that leans towards absolutism. Consequently, “this means that even the monotheistic concept of God has come under very critical scrutiny. Due to this change, traditional theological concepts such as ‘Absolute’ and ‘God’ are not to be found easily in Panikkar’s later work.”25 In the Rhythm of Being, Panikkar defends the notion of the divine that is founded on the cosmotheandric vision of reality. By so doing, he intends, “to ‘liberate’ the

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25 See Panikkar, The Experience of God: Icons of the Mystery Trans. Joseph Cunneen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 38. From a phenomenological perspective a similar critique can be found in Jean-Luc Marion’s God Without Being (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and for a historical critique of Judaeo-Christian claim to monotheism, see Robert Karl Gnuse, No Other God: The Emergent of Monotheism in Israel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academy Press, 1997).
Divine from the burden of being ‘God.’”26 This way of viewing the divine amounts to a total rejection of the absoluteness of monotheism.

A deeper analysis of Panikkar’s concept of cosmotheandrisum sums up this holistic perspective. Panikkar’s entire theological endeavor culminates in his discovery of cosmotheandrisum, which opens the debate on religious dialogue on many fronts.

First, cosmotheandrisum binds the human, the cosmos, and the divine in an indissoluble union while at the same time maintaining the individuality of all. On this level, the apparent division between transcendence and immanence is bridged through the pneumatic activities of the Spirit. Through the lenses of the Spirit, reality is neither “one nor many.” In short, reality as a whole depicts the Trinitarian mystery, in which the Father, Son, and the Spirit dwell in an eternal perichoresis.

Second, Panikkar’s cosmotheandrisum creates a “new anthropology” for man as an integral member of the cosmic reality. Involved in this cosmic rhythm, man ceases to be the measure of all things but is perceived as co-creator. This new cosmology ingrains in man the spirituality of otherness. Because of this intrinsic ontological connection between man and otherness, the practice of religion is conditioned by relationality: namely, by giving respect to the relative value of all religions while eschewing relativism.

Third, Panikkar intends to avoid the mistake he tags as the “Western syndrome”: namely, its superficial interpretation of the Trinity within the philosophical problem of the “one and many.” Through the cosmotheandric approach to the divine, Panikkar’s Trinitarian discourse situated the revelation of God—self-disclosure within the context of the entire oikonomia—beyond the confines of particular theological systems, or orthodoxy. Such a theological outlook

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has tremendous implications for Christology and pneumatology. Systematically, for Panikkar, the apophatism of the Father defines the salvific role of the Son and the Spirit in a new, unorthodox light. Consequently, it is no surprise that Panikkar surmised that classical Christology with its historical baggage of exclusivism and mitigated inclusivism cannot be the hermeneutical grounds that grant alterity to religions in the pluralistic setting.

Thus, only Christophany can provide this tran-historical epistemology necessary for pluralism to thrive. Similarly, Panikkar’s advocacy for a “new Christology”—which he calls “Christophany”—indicates awareness that the apophatic theology of the Father provides the hermeneutical key for understanding the “Christic principle” that grounds his “symbol Christology.” Besides the fact that Christophany opens the horizon for universal ontology, some other ramifications are manifold, especially with respect to the question of the universal validity of Christ in whom the fullness of the revelation of the Father dwells. Christophany salvages Christology, rebranding it anew within the pluralistic context where a movement away from the exclusivist claims of classical Christology becomes the sine qua non for the practices of religious pluralism de jure.

Fourth, the cosmotheandric vision brings a profound re-definition of identity, which is contextualized by relationality. Nothing stands alone, everything that exist stand in relation to something else. Thus, in line with Panikkar’s cosmotheandris, it is an absurdity to conceptualize God without humans and the cosmos. When carefully analyzed, Panikkar’s symbolism of the perichoretic relationality of God—Human—Cosmos is not only constitutive of reality but also serves as the principle for being and existence. In other words, “to be” means being “wrapped in radical relationality,” for nothing exists in “total ab-solutus, solutes ab.”

27 Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 58.
With this cosmotheandridsm, Panikkar goes on to argue that Christianity as a religion is not outside of this communion, nor can it be exonerated from this commitment to otherness.

As our theological investigation draws to a close, it will be profitable to retrace our steps in order to consider the implications of Panikkar’s theological pluralism on Christological supersessionism and its repercussions for the Christian and Muslim dialogue in Jos, Nigeria. To this end, the application of Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue to the framing of Christian subjectivity and the reconfiguration of Christian identity in Jos in the face of the irreducible other, the Muslims, without constituting supersessionism remains the litmus test for the practice of religious pluralism. As demonstrated above, the history of Muslim and Christian dialogue in Jos Plateau has been marred by instances of dialectical dialogue, characterized by the monopoly of perspectives. By and large, Christian response to the crisis has not departed from the inherited Christological hermeneutics borrowed from colonial Christianity.28

In the context of progressive revelation, therefore, the presence of Islam becomes for Christianity an authentic source of revelation, not to be conquered or overthrown but to be revealed, reverenced, and respected. Dialectical dialogue in this sense threatens progressive revelation. The continuous practice of the semblance of dialectical dialogue prevents Christianity in Jos, Plateau, from viewing Islam as an authentic source of revelation. As a result, the evangelical and triumphalistic tendency of Christians to monopolize and “lord it over” Muslims has been identified as a dangerous recipe for religious violence and war.

Therefore, the search for mutual fecundation between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau, has led to a consideration of Panikkar’s cosmotheandridsm, wherein his non-dualistic Trinitarian perspectives provide some theological variations that can help overthrow

Christological exclusivism. At the very center of Panikkar’s hermeneutics is the disposal of all exclusive Christological claims of superiority, thus leading to a situation where Christians will accept Muslims as equal dialogical partners and as an other with the de jure right to salvation/redemption.

Theologically, Panikkar’s concept of relativity between the Father (apophatic sense), the Son (Christic principle) and the Spirit provides the principle for this communication: namely, that both Christianity and Islam can maintain their “individuality, irreducibility, and reciprocity” within the dialogic process. We re-state Panikkar’s motto: “There is no ‘One’ that can be imposed on the Many…and there are no Many that will be reduced to the One.”\textsuperscript{29} Just as in their “individuality” and “irreducibility” an identity is maintained, so too in “reciprocity,” religious identity is transformed in the process of give and take. Panikkar’s definition of Pluralism is located at this point of the “give-and-take” wherein the unpalatable and unbridgeable characters of individuality and difference are acknowledged and accepted as such.

Given the ambiguity in Panikkar’s theology, this research offers a way to understand and contextualize his Trinitarian cosmotheandrism by arguing for a pneumatology of charity and hospitality. Such hospitality requires commitment (from both the host and guest alike) to respect and acknowledge the truth value inherent in each other’s religions. Within this overarching framework of hospitality, the religious tradition of the guest is not to be considered a preparatio evangelica, but an unconquerable and irreducible myth. Amidst other social, political, and ethnic factors, the lack of recognition of the truth value inherent in each other’s religion remains the greatest obstacle to Muslim and Christian dialogue in Jos, Plateau.

\textsuperscript{29} See Jyri Komulainen, An Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion: Raimon Panikkar Pluralistic Theology of Religions, 77.
Indeed on the part of the Christians, exclusivist Christological claims have blocked genuine empathy towards achieving difference and alterity. Therefore, there are good reasons to submit that, when carefully analyzed, Panikkar’s dialogical dialogue, which emanates from his Trinitarian cosmotheandrisim, discloses a veritable alternative to supersessionist Christology. Adopting a dynamic pneumatology of charity and hospitality enables us not only to overcome the flaws of supersessionist thinking, but also to create the necessary environment for the flourishing of religious pluralism de jure.
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