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## A TELEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF JOHN HICK'S THREEFOLD TYPOLOGY

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### ABSTRACT

This research critically investigates the soteriological ground of John Hick's religious typology and his understanding of Religious Pluralism. It begins by considering the criticisms of Gavin D'Costa who, in his early work, favored Hick's typology in *Theology and Religious Pluralism*, but later became critical of it in his work, *Impossibility of a Pluralist view of Religions*. It will also consider Paul Knitter's alternative fourfold typology introduced in his work, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, and Mark Heim's ideas concerning religious pluralism in his work *Salvation*. Finally, the paper will investigate Zen Buddhism's view of a "positionless position" as a "non-common denominator" from Masao Abe's *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* to see if Hick's idea of ultimate reality is viable basis to defend religious pluralism. After demonstrating these critiques of Hick's main soteriological grounds of this threefold typology, the research defends a new framework of threefold typology, not built on soteriological grounds, but on teleological grounds, in order to fulfill Hick's own wishes for promoting peace both spiritually and socially. This is a new framework which can embrace the beliefs of not only pluralists, but also exclusivists and inclusivists, and those who comprise the majority of Christians in the world today.