

Thesis Title : Jacques Dupuis' Inductive Approach to Religious Pluralism: A Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

In a rapidly integrating world, religion must play a big role in pursuing world peace, justice, and harmony. It should not be the cause of conflict and violence; rather it ought to be a channel of promoting well-being of humanity. Since we as global citizens can no longer ignore other races, nationalities, beliefs, we must learn to accept a more pluralistic world view. But how can we recognize pluralism with our own faith?

A Belgian Jesuit priest Jacques Dupuis (1923 – 2004) who spent almost half of his life in India as a missionary has developed a new way of approaching theology. As he personally encountered people from different faiths in his mission, he developed an *inductive approach* to the study of religious pluralism. This approach is considered highly relevant to this pluralistic world. His positive attitude towards other religious traditions while still retaining the necessity of the role of Jesus Christ makes him a unique theologian. His emphasis on the praxis of interreligious dialogue and of liberation theology suits the mentality of Asian people. As a result, Dupuis' approach has been gaining appreciation in our multi-religious society. This thesis is therefore to study the beginnings of Jacques Dupuis' odyssey to religious pluralism, to analyze his concept of religious pluralism, to

discuss the critiques to his religious pluralism together with its problems and challenges and to apply his approach with the situation in Myanmar.

This study is intended for any researcher with Christian background who may be interested in a research on religious pluralism. The researcher would recommend these interested people to survey Dupuis' theological works. In the eyes of those who do not believe or appreciate Jesus, Dupuis might appear to be still in the school of inclusivism, but his theological works went beyond the person of Jesus. Dupuis perceives Jesus as a protagonist in the fulfillment of God's plan but not in the way traditional Christians look at him. He is convinced that divine revelation is not limited to Christian tradition, but it extends to other religious traditions as well. His central approach to Jesus is that even though Jesus is chosen as a unique savior, God also works in other religions.

