



〈Response〉

## 기독교와 타종교와의 관계: 개혁주의 공동체안에서의 논의

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Prof. Hulst focused the issue of the relationship of Christianity and other religions mainly to the discussions of the Reformed community, especially of the Reformed Ecumenical Council which was founded in 1946. The discussions and position of the Reformed Ecumenical Council faithfully stand, as presented by Prof. Hulst, in the “exclusivistic” or “particularistic” view point of the Reformed tradition over against the “pluralistic” and “syncretistic” view point of the modern liberal theology. The REC keeps affirming that Christ is the only, the unique way of salvation and there is no truth or salvation in other religions. The REC Assembly in 1966 adopted the Report and Testimony, the “Unique Person and Work of Christ” in which the Uniqueness of Christ was stressed as Savior and Reconciler, as Unifier, as Revealer of the Triune God, as Lord of the Whole

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Created Order, as Manifestation of Truth and Righteousness, as Victor over Satan and Sin, as Final Judge of all Actions, as the Resurrection and the Life, and as Our Hope and Joy.

Prof. Hulst also noted that there was one exception to the exclusivistic position among the discussions of the Reformed Ecumenical Council. Dr. Klaas Runia, in his paper "Why Christianity of All Religions" presented at the 1996 REC Theological Conference, insisted that there were elements of truths in other religions, and he did not admit that all the adherents of the other religions were forever lost.

Prof. Hulst again pointed out that the Report of 1966 admitted the need of interreligious dialogue. He quotes the Report, "Given this unique and exclusive claim of Christian eschatology, is there still a basis for interreligious dialogue? Is there any reason then for evangelical Christians to enter into discussion with the adherents of other religions without denying the exclusive claims of Jesus? The answer is a positive one, primarily for two reasons. First, human beings are image-bearers of God and have the capacity fellowship and communion. They also struggle with questions of purpose, meaning, and destiny. Discussions concerning these questions can be helpful to both Christians and adherents of other faiths. Second, God is concerned with all human being. When we speak with the adherents of other religions, we are not speaking in a vacuum, for God reveals Himself to all in the knowledge of his Godhead, his law, and his immanence" (Report, p25).

Prof. Hulst, however, expressed at the end of his paper his negative feeling about such positive approach to the interreligious dialogue. He said that he was "wondering" about view points such as the fol-



lowing. 1) Dr. Runia's insistence that such statements as all the adherents of other religions will be lost forever go beyond what we are allowed to say. 2) Dr. Runia's statement that "if it is possible that people of other faiths may be saved, it will be only because the Spirit of Christ was active in their lives and because by his work the secret of Christ became manifest to and in them too." Does God then also speak and deal with people in other ways than through an explicit knowledge of Christ?

Dr. Hulst concluded that the issue of the relationship of Christianity to other religions will be a continuing one, and that the REC community of churches will continue to consider this issue, while confessing the uniqueness of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Hulst and the REC community deal the issue mainly from the point of salvation and evangelism, and the evangelism of proclaiming the person and work of Jesus Christ, and they keep holding the "exclusivistic" or "particularistic" view point of the Reformed tradition. Dr. Hulst and the REC community keep stressing the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, while they allow "a small room" (reserved admission) for dialogue with adherents of other religions on the basis of the creation of man in the image of God and God's concern for all human beings. So far so good.

But we are wondering why the Reformed community, if they are really Reformed, did not deal the issue also from the point of creation and social accomplishment. Even an evangelical Lutheran theologian, Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, admitted the need of interreligious dialogue for the sake of socio-ethical accomplishment. I quote Dr. Beyerhaus. "Two of them are acceptable to evangelical Christians. [The one is]



interreligious consultation to establish such socio- ethical principles which are endorsed by the moral teachings of the authorities of all major religions. Today people of different faiths and ideologies of necessity must cooperate politically both on national and international levels. Therefore the establishment of a moral code as the basis for legislation has become imperative.” (“The Authority of the Gospel and Interreligious Dialogue,” p.16). Dr. Beyerhaus also expressed a more positive view of the interreligious dialoge even from the point of evangelism. “Paul in Athens entered into dialogue both with Jews and with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. This kind of dialogue is an indispensable aspect of Christian missions to people of other religions. In this respect its legitimacy and importance is also mentioned in the Lausanne Covenant. Here it is regarded as a precondition to evangelism. ‘Indispensable is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand’.” (Ibid., p.17). Needless to say, we will have to firmly uphold the uniqueness of Jesus Christ while we will have to actively engage in dialogue and contact with all kinds of people of whatsoever faiths or religions for the sake of the glory of God.