

of theories that allow one to judge all other religions of the world as inferior to one's own, absolutely speaking, even if that superiority is only slight. The primary reason for conversation with a member of a differing religion under this model would be an act of kindness that helps that person make up for the deficiencies in his or her religion. A general name for this cluster of positions, one suggested by Stadler in his essay, is Mission. In the other camp lie a group of theories that claim that it is possible to maintain one's own religious identity and integrity while genuinely respecting the validity and integrity of those in other religions. The primary purpose of conversation with a member of a differing religion, in this case, would be a sharing of religious experiences and witnesses, trusting that wherever all this might lead, it will turn out to be mutually beneficial. A general name for this group of theories, the other half of Stadler's dichotomy, is 'Dialogue'. One way then of summerizing this debate over interreligious relationships would be to characterize it as the 'Mission-Dialogue Problem'."

These discussions reveal a sense of caution or uneasiness on the part of both the 'mission' and 'dialogue' groups. The former is more and more inclined to the disavowal of their earlier strict exclusivistic or absolutist position and is prepared to be sensitive to the needs of contemporary relationships among religions. The latter also experiences a certain amount of uneasiness for it is less theoretically or historically oriented than the 'Mission' group. Both exercise the caution that accompanies the exploration of unknown territory.

The book deals with a very vital issue in the life of a religious believer. It manifests the honest and sincere concern of Christians to understand other world religious inspite of the tension and risk it brings to the seeker, for true religious dialogue involves the risk of change and, presumably, in true dialogue that change will be genuine, authentic and reinforcing.