

The truth, as I see it, in Cantwell Smith's demand for "a world theology" is that, by its very logic, any constitutive religious assertion can be critically validated as true or credible only by taking account of "the whole religious history of the race thus far"—as well as, I would insist, all the rest of human cultural history thus far, which Cantwell Smith seems to overlook.

But one can do full justice to this truth without becoming "a world theologian." As a matter of fact, one can do precisely this even while being and remaining a Christian theologian in the strict and proper sense of the term. All that is required is (1) acknowledgement that being or remaining a Christian theologian is not logically dependent on being or remaining a Christian believer; and (2) clear recognition that the question of the truth or credibility of religious assertions is not settled either by believing them or by settling the question of their appropriateness, but can only be settled by completely open, unrestricted religious dialogue or inquiry, in which—once they become sufficiently problematic—*all* religious truth-claims, together with all other truth-claims of the same logical type(s), are acknowledged to be equally in need and equally deserving of critical validation in terms of common human experience and reason.

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