It seems clear that what Niebuhr refers to as "an ideal possibility that people may hold ultimate religious convictions with a sufficient degree of humility to live amicably with those who have contradictory convictions" is closely related to what I mean by "the distinct alternative of recognizing the truth claim of the Christian religion to be exactly that—a claim—and of being willing to critically validate it through unrestricted dialogue and common inquiry, whenever it is rendered problematic by counterclaims to religious or existential truth" (*The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*: 130; *OTR*: 100 f.).

There does seem to be the difference that Niebuhr does not clearly see the place of "unrestricted dialogue and common inquiry" and does not explicitly accept "the possibility and the risk of Christians ceasing to be [Christians] in face of experiences and reasons that on the whole invalidate their claim instead of validating it." It is still possible, of course, that what he means by "an humble and contrite recognition of the fact that all actual expressions of religious faith are subject to historical contingency and relativity" (134) is substantially identical with what I mean by recognizing that the truth claim of the Christian religion or of any version thereof is exactly that—a claim that, under certain conditions, has to be critically validated. But whether or not this is, in fact, what he means turns upon whether or not he recognizes as clearly as I do that any religion, including the Christian religion and any version thereof, qualifies not as "religious faith" *simpliciter*, but only as one of the many "actual expressions" of religious faith that, as such, can and should be critically validated.

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I entirely agree with Niebuhr that "[t]here is a religious solution of the problem of religious diversity" (*The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*: 134); and my understanding of what that solution is clearly seems to converge with his. But I wonder whether he is as clear as I think I am about the necessary presupposition of such a solution—namely, that one conceive the true religion in relation to all actual religions analogously to the way in which an adequate ecclesiology conceives the true (i.e., visible) church in