

If religion may be defined generically as "a means to ultimate transformation" (Streng), the different specific religions can and should be considered analogically as so many different sacraments of the meaning of ultimate reality for us.

Accordingly, all questions about the relative superiority or inferiority (or equality) of the different religions can and should be understood as questions about their relative validity or invalidity as such sacraments—keeping in mind that the *validity* of a sacrament is one thing, its *effectiveness*, something else, and that therefore the relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness of each of the religions depends upon its being appropriated by the existential self-understandings of individual persons in accordance with an appropriately generalized form of the rule, *nullum sacramentum sine fide*.

This means, among other things, that the evidence and argument appropriate to determining the relative superiority or inferiority (or equality) of the different religions are not only such empirical-historical evidence and argument as are required to determine what are, in fact, their normative forms, but also such metaphysical and moral evidence and argument as are required to determine both the truth of their necessary implications for belief and the rightness of their necessary implications for action.

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