Some years ago I asked whether "the real difference between a religion, on the one hand, and a nonreligious world-view, or ideology, on the other, is that a religion, properly so-called, always makes or implies strictly metaphysical claims" (Notebooks, 1987).

More recently, it has become ever clearer to me that and why my question is to be answered affirmatively. If, as I argue (for example, in "Theology without Metaphysics?"), religion answers the existential question; and if the existential question asks about the meaning of human existence in its ultimate setting as a part together with other parts of the all-encompassing whole, and thus necessarily makes or implies statements about the strictly ultimate reality of the whole—then, clearly, religion makes or implies strictly metaphysical claims.

I also see more clearly than ever before how right Bultmann is to insist on a very important distinction between what is properly religious, even if it exists only in an inadequate mythological form, and what is not properly religious, precisely because it does not presuppose "the infinite qualitative difference" between all ordinary realities and strictly ultimate, extraordinary reality. Because mysticism, properly so-called, does presuppose this, it is to be acknowledged as properly religious, even if it is different in type from radical monotheism. Greek idealism, on the other hand, is not to be acknowledged as properly religious, because it does *not* presuppose this. Why not? Because the only strictly ultimate reality it acknowledges is not a concrete reality in its own right, but a mere abstract aspect of concrete realities generally.

But, then, there would appear to be *two* necessary presuppositions that must be made by anything that is to be acknowledged as properly religious: not only that there is a *strictly ultimate* reality that is infinitely qualitatively different from all ordinary realities, but also that this strictly ultimate reality is, in its own right, a *concrete* reality, not a mere abstraction.

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