

Article

## “Weak Thought” and Christianity: Some Aspects of Vattimo’s Philosophy of Religion, Confrontation with Otakar Funda

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**Abstract:** The article expresses the philosophical thoughts of an Italian philosopher, G. Vattimo and his development of the philosophy of M. Heidegger and essential aspects of Vattimo’s philosophy of religion. In the first part, we clarify Vattimo’s interpretation of Heidegger’s destruction of traditional metaphysics, the occurrence of ontological difference and the historical process of the oblivion of Being. According to Vattimo, the oblivion of Being is Heidegger’s reaction to European nihilism. It brings with it his philosophical questions on metaphysics, the substance of technology and course of technical civilisation. For Vattimo, it was only secularisation which enables one to pose questions about God, sense, and meaning. In a postmodern world, the world of technology and science has an ontological meaning for human beings and awakens them to who they are. In the article, we also focus our attention on some problematic points in his philosophy of religion. The first problem is a conflict among differentiated interpretations. Vattimo claims that *kenosis* has neither anything in common with “indefinite negation of God”, nor does it apologise for any interpretation of the Holy Scripture. In addition, he refuses radical demythologisation. In his opinion, there are no necessary reasons to follow this step. There are some authors who have serious reasons for it and the interpretation of *kenosis* leads to atheism. We will confront Vattimo’s philosophy with the thinking of the current Czech atheistic philosopher Otakar Funda. The next problem is a reduction of soteriology on the process of human being’s emancipation. There is no place for metaphysical evil here.

**Keywords:** “weak thought”; kenosis; interpretation; history; truth; Vattimo’s philosophy of religion; Otakar Funda; atheism

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## 1. Introduction

In his works, Vattimo recalls European philosophical tradition, which in the form of Western metaphysics was based on the idea of sense, progress and history leading to one aim. In several of his works, Vattimo deals with the question of history and connections of transition from modern to postmodern experience—the so-called experience of the end of history—within its context. Vattimo expresses this transition in the sense of the transition from strong thinking to weak thinking.

Vattimo’s thinking is an example of productive connection overcoming metaphysics and a new comprehension of Christianity. He is influenced by Nietzsche’s nihilism and Heidegger’s philosophy, which he discusses more in his works. In 1963, he wrote a book “Being, History and Language at Heidegger’s”, later “Hypothesis about Nietzsche” (1967), “Subject and Mask—Nietzsche and the Problem of Liberation” (1972), “Adventures of Difference. What It Means to Think after Nietzsche and Heidegger” (1980), and in 1981, he published the work “Outside the Subject. Nietzsche, Heidegger and Hermeneutics”.

He holds his philosophy as a “completion” of Heidegger’s philosophy and he admits a parallel between a Western Christian tradition and the thinking of being as *Ereignis*. If we then accept this relation, for philosophy it creates a basis and the assumption for a critical approach to religion, which “returns” again in the postmetaphysical epoch. This criticism pertains to metaphysical religious forms. Within this meaning, Vattimo asks several questions. May, or even must, philosophy really warn against deficiency of “metaphysical” religiosity? Is one of its tasks to alert Christianity about the danger when the religiosity encompasses one specific model, strict fundamentals and rules? Is philosophy capable of showing and giving reasons that the escape from a secularised society and the return to the fundamentals cannot sufficiently satisfy religious needs and desires? Is philosophy able to refer to a higher, statelier (or authentic) form of religious life, which is not “bound” to authority, rigorism and dogmas? Are these philosophical initiatives and this “proof” even possible ([1], p. 111)?

Vattimo, in his works, is concerned with the question of European metaphysics, the problem of truth and also religious experience in the postmodern era. He positioned himself on the side of so-called nihilistic hermeneutics and he critically reviews European spiritual effort to find the only real truth. His position results in the articulation of the question about secularisation of Western thinking and life that he names the fate of the West and simultaneously as a positive opportunity of “emancipation of man” ([2], p. 64). Secularisation is the story of weak thinking. Vattimo’s thinking is the example of optimistic faith in humanity and in change perceived as liberation and emancipation of historical existence. Vattimo’s contemplations again open the discourse of thinking about authentic existence in Heidegger and the *Übermensch* as the transformation of man and a final form of history in Nietzsche. He is inclined to side with Nietzsche’s positive, active nihilism as the individual’s liberation. From a methodological point of view, he stands on the soil of hermeneutics. In the context of the history of Being, he interprets the dynamics of the interpretation as the history of salvation, which is not the idea

of truth, but it is the chance of a new relationship between man and God. The history of salvation is the event of salvation as the history of interpretation. Grace, God's undeserved gift, is the other name for ontological difference, and its hermeneutic circle is the experience of salvation as the deal of anxiety because of finality and mortality of Being. Vattimo emphasises the eventual nature of Being. Hermeneutics is thus understood as the philosophy of historicity in Vattimo [3–5].

Vattimo thinks about being freed from metaphysics in a new way, which overcomes the sovereignty of European ideas about single sense and, similar to Bergson, he points out a dynamic reality that stands out from the world picture as the unifying totality of things. The overcoming of metaphysics is the reversal of a dialogue and not the knowing of truth. Vattimo's weak thinking climaxes in his work "Farewell to Truth" in 2009. It refers to thinking that is articulated by Heidegger in his works after "turnover"—it is called the thinking of Being.

Based on Heidegger's philosophy in connection to Nietzsche's thinking, Vattimo develops one of the contemporary forms of philosophy of religion—one of the potential versions of postmodern philosophical reflection on religion. Vattimo underlines the Christian principle of love/*caritas* and thus, in a new specific way, he follows the authors who defended the preference of Christianity to other religions and perceived it as the universal religion (Augustine, Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa, and others).

One of the very important questions of the present philosophy of religion is the question of to what extent philosophy is able to contribute to the formation of new religiosity? In what way is philosophy helpful to theology and Christian thinking? Undoubtedly, we can even perceive Vattimo's philosophy in this perspective. It is a contribution to the rethinking of significant questions within Christianity, especially hermeneutic ones. It is also the impulse to "re-evaluate values" and a challenge to open new ways of religious thinking.

On the other hand, his philosophy has provoked plenty of reactions, critics, and disputations. Let us mention some of them: there are not only interpretations but also facts (R. Girard), Vattimo has created a metanarration about weakening Being and identified history with the Western history and culture (W. Welsch), Vattimo must take into account various contradictory discourses as being legitimate, because it is impossible to decide among them in metadiscourse (Peter V. Zima), Vattimo's interpretation of philosophical tradition is "violent", *pensiero debole* claims to be the only possible way to freedom and tolerance (C. A. Viano), the idea of totalising sense is a fabricated myth (P. Rossi), violence does not need any argumentative reason, it remains the same even when we eliminate "strong" metaphysical grounds (M. G. Weiß), the interpretation of *kenosis* is incomplete, because Vattimo faces just the first half of the Christological hymn in the Letter to Philippians and he does not tolerate the passage about the exalting of Christ; further, the universal tendency of *pensiero debole* is not less violent than the right of objective sense (F. Depoortere), the right to decide the interpretation is not only an agreement with somebody, but also a disagreement with a person over something—the interpretation contains in itself a potential violence (Rajský) ([2], pp. 116–33; [6], pp. 151–68; [7], p. 131).

Likewise, we can notice some problematic issues in his philosophy of religion and the questions that he generates. How can we distinguish a religious attitude from his pseudomorph? Is it important for a religious tradition to distinguish "an illegitimate" and "a right" interpretation of the part (a particular part of the text) from the whole conception of its fundamental text (or complete text)? Which ways of receiving criteria in a religious field are applied through which we may distinguish the

legitimate and arbitrary interpretation? Is Vattimo's concept of "Christianity" not perceived rather in a wider context or can being Christian even be differentiated from being "un-Christian"? Doesn't he overestimate the power of human *caritas*? Doesn't he "degrade" the significance of a prayer, which is an inseparable part of a Christian way of existence? Is the relationship to Christ's personality notable for the individual's formation and for his ability to love his neighbour? What does he consider as myth in the Bible? Additionally, what criteria does he apply to distinguish the mythic from the real? How does he grasp a philosophy of religion in comparison to other recourses (for example phenomenological or atheistic)? Does Vattimo understand Christianity as the religion that can also divide in general because Christ also brought a "sword" to the world and came to turn a "son against his father" (Matt 10, 34–35)? Do we have to necessarily bind challenge to love, the refusing of the objective structures of reality and the surpassing of metaphysics to a Judeo-Christian tradition? Does philosophy that surpasses metaphysics have this origin indeed? Does it coincide with biblical thinking, Judeo and Christian tradition to accept homosexual marriage, abortion and euthanasia? Can these religions' previously mentioned points come to "change their way of thinking"?

## 2. Building on Heidegger and European Philosophical Tradition

Vattimo analysed Heidegger's work in detail and points out European nihilism, which outlines the suppression of ontological difference between Being and beings in the process of oblivion of Being and in the concealment of truth. The truth of Being can be shown only as the event of ontological difference. Heidegger asked the question about the meaning of being, addressing it to the whole Western tradition and pointed out the difficulty of traditional metaphysical interpretations of Being in the history of thinking. He subjects a traditional ontological terminology and traditional metaphysical aspects to phenomenological criticism and calls it a destruction of ontological history.

The task of this analysis *Da-sein* in "Being and Time" is to highlight the difference of Being from beings. The difference between emerging beings and that one because to it has emerged or simply "is", Heidegger calls this ontological difference. The very relationship between Being and beings is thus hidden for us and this state of Being remained hidden according to Heidegger from Plato to Nietzsche in the history of metaphysics. Following this fact, Heidegger talks about oblivion and the oblivion of Being. Metaphysics in this meaning is still interpreted as history of hiddenness, epochal "uncovering", "turning over" and the oblivion of Being [8].

He announces the thesis that Being not understood as beings is a historical disintegration. The history of Being is interpreted by Vattimo as the history of disintegration of Being which Heidegger articulates as a historical process of the oblivion of Being, as the oblivion of ontological difference between Being and beings. On one side, Vattimo's thoughts defend the concept of active nihilism with which Nietzsche pursues with an endeavour to re-evaluate all European values. These values are a heritage of the metaphysical tradition of thinking. The active nihilism disintegrates the idea of a single truth, but on the other hand, this process of disintegration takes place in Heidegger's destruction of traditional metaphysics and focuses on the fact that there is no difference between subject and object as a heritage of modern philosophy is no difference. It is (I mean the difference) only between Being and beings. According to Vattimo, the oblivion of Being is Heidegger's reaction to European nihilism. In the centre of Vattimo's attention is located the occurrence of ontological difference and its epochal

forgetting. He brings with himself the philosophical questioning about metaphysics and the substance of technologies and on the tending of technical civilization.

The fundamental metaphysical question: “What is being?” has gradually lost its mode of questioning (*Fraglichkeit*). From this standpoint, Heidegger retraces the oblivion of Being, the essence is literally left abandoned by Being. The greatest result is the so-called “availability” with beings—it means every being is available to man. The beings’ availability has been applied in the epoch of technology, which is imposed by a technical manipulation with items.

In comparison to Heidegger, Vattimo can undoubtedly see a positive contribution of technology, new technological proceedings, and mass media to overcome the world perceived as unity. Heidegger grasps in it a possible rescue of Being. For Vattimo, only secularisation enabled him to again ask the question about God and the question of sense. The world of technics and science has an ontological significance for man, awakening him to who he is. The man can get this chance only when he gains a free relationship with technology. It is comprehended as the turn of a man from instrumental manipulation with technology and also the overcoming of a calculating approach towards essence, oneself, the world and one’s imagination of oneself as the master of technology. Heidegger wants to highlight a change-over of thinking to over-thinking of a mode of being of technology and the fact that “a mankind is subject, there it never was, even there it never will be the only possibility of a mode of being of a man at the beginning of history” ([9], p. 111). The truth of Being will be appropriated for man only when he overcomes himself as a subject.

For Heidegger as well as Vattimo, metaphysics interprets beings, sets the questions about the mode of Being of beings and offers a specific reflection on truth, of truth. Metaphysics thus establishes the foundations of the period of European humankind because metaphysics absolutised, put the level of beings on the absolute extent, and enabled the birth of science in modern times. This science takes every being as object. The world also is continually becoming objectified, taken as objects. The world is changing on a level, which is gradually submitted by man who applies more and more requirements on it. The man understands beings as an object, which is, according to Heidegger, the result of the modern conception of man as a subject. The subject thinks in the specific way that he imagines something that he puts something in front of himself. “Thinking is imagination, perception, the relation in which something perceived is put in front of us (the idea of *perceptio*)” ([9], p. 106). Perception is in the man’s hands. It is a process of gaining power over something and comprehending something, which the man ensures in the distinction of the world. In the process of objectification, there is no possibility to avoid the fact that any being may not avoid the subject’s tendency to make a decision about an object for the subject. This means placing a subject in the world and essential certainty of grasping the subject as being the guarantor of everything that has the validity of certainty, truthness; however, there is a danger that the subject will not manage what is outside his perception and comprehension. The oblivion is shown precisely in objectification, and reduction of Being on beings, while explaining and deriving of Being from “something”. Metaphysics did not keep the thinking of Being in its own meaning, but it interpreted it from some beings. That is the reason why the clarification of its meaning did not remain at the Being of beings and did not respect the ontological difference.

Just to think of ontological difference has a crucial meaning for Heidegger. It enables him to set a question in a new way. Besides focusing on the changes of Western interpretation of Being and thus inviting it to the discussion, Heidegger brings to the common speech the history of Being in its unique

determination like an *Ereignis*. A new standpoint or distance from a tradition opens a new perspective to make clear and apparent the historical action of Being (*i.e.*, to think from the action that is proper for the *Ereignis*). The already mentioned perspective was concealed as a traditional thought outlining generalisation and objectification. Heidegger made an attempt to raise the borders of metaphysics and tried to overcome it with the thinking of the activity of Being.

In the work “*Beiträge zur Philosophie*”, Heidegger sees reflection as a thinking that thinks inherently historically. This is where thinkers found themselves asking whether there may be a place for a new beginning. Historical thinking enables the birth of something new, because it is the thinking from an opened place, from truth (as *Lichtung*) of Being itself. The new birth is defying statistically catchable presuppositions. Heidegger connects philosophy with seeking a place for setting a question: “What is nowadays and truthfully called philosophy has its own and the only task this: first find a place where the very beginning question may be placed, [found] asked about: *Da-sein*” ([10], p. 20). The place that is already mentioned in “*Beiträge zur Philosophie*” is a historical place, a transition (*Übergang*) to the start of other thinking (*der andere Anfang des Denkens*), the thinking of the very beginning (*Anfänglichkeit*). The end of philosophy does not mean that its questions would lose their validity and meaning, but how they were answered and comprehended would be finished.

Heidegger showed the birth of a new thinking as the manifestation of freedom of a historical man, or, even made him free from his own fantasy and “sticking” to beings. A new thinking is thought from the opened place, the movement of thinking by which we open up everything unable to move. Heidegger talks about the turnover of a historical man who is open for the listeners to further events. Vattimo also emphasises making a sense free towards a thinking of the real and practical. As a result, he grasps it in the secularisation of European sense. The completion of metaphysics does not presuppose anything negative. It introduces the overcoming of metaphysics with other types of thinking. Vattimo has noticed it in a postmodern era. All this helps to explain that Vattimo outlines the prefix *post* in a meaning of emancipation (*Verwindung*) out of Western metaphysical thinking, and he finds that there is a radical image of a critical relationship between Nietzsche and Heidegger towards Western history.

### *The Event of Truth: Hermeneutics of Historical Events*

Vattimo, similar to Heidegger, asserts that Western metaphysics established on a traditional dichotomy must be dissolved and deconstructed. Vattimo deflects the concept to overcome metaphysics (*Überwindung*) and speaks about emancipation (*Verwindung*). According to Vattimo, the whole of our postmodern experience is an interpretation and the only world that we can know is the world of differences, of different interpretations. His work “*The End of Modernity*” describes modernity as the faith in progress, in cumulative progress, and a thinking aimed at truth, confidence, and surety. Postmodern is on one side, the expression of nihilistic experience about the end of history, but not a time change in a historical sequence of events. The other side is perceived as weakening our relations and connections to the modern idea and imagination of the world. Vattimo outlines the infinite interpretability of reality and about “dissolution” of the category of the new. Postmodern is not a new epoch, it does not follow modern times; modernity and postmodernity co-exist in the same space, mutually joined by a critical relation *Verwindung*. A weak postmodern thinking dissolves

traditionally strong structures of modern thoughts, which is metaphysic's thinking, and the oblivion of Being as the event that is not disposable by the essential and which happens as such. The weak thinking is a secularisation of progress. Are we, the people, capable of managing and handling the fate of a modern man interpreted like this?

The crisis of reason, new consciousness about the violence of history, with the realisation in a global context of our situation, led the 20th century man and current man to activities. It contains a new creative potential of new possible interpretations of Christian news. Once again, an eschatological measure of Christianity is opened as the history of salvation that comes out of making free into dangerous. It is the task of philosophy and theology to focus the attention and, in a new way, he expresses non-absolutistic relation to truth.

The new horizons of religious experience, according to us, in the turnover of man are towards the place of living, which is the place of overcoming these differences. Man as a historical being is the place of free action and of the free and mutual meeting of man and God. Eschatological history is the history of the essence of Being, God is not reachable in any theoretical sense. It is possible to follow God through practice, taking care to awaken the senses, looking, after waking up, for the truth of one's own faith.

What does this awakening of a sense for the credibility of one's own faith mean at all? Is it possible to understand it from the position of the philosophical term truth? Can philosophy give an answer to this sense? Vattimo is persuaded that this awakening is on the side of authentic existence that has not been finished and, being open, it can take the burden on itself of religious belief. Authentic existence is of the overcoming of a traditional notion of an autonomous subject.

In Vattimo's works, we meet up with the idea of being open to a non-metaphysical theory of truth. Religion has lost its "patent" for truth by overcoming and leaving metaphysics. The question about God is being left open and does not claim the absolute answer.

Truth, to the extent that it is possible to reach, is aesthetic and rhetorical thanks to a "weak thinking" that does not mean that its truthfulness would be considered as being subjective at all. A strong wave of secularism "pushes" religion into a private human sphere according to Vattimo. Our brain seems to be too weak to realise that we are unable to know everything objectively using it. This realisation presupposes a specific maturity of human being. We assume that Vattimo thinks about it with the intentions of Heidegger's authentic existence, freedom, "unbending", and releasing. Just due to the process of secularisation, "weakening" is a releasing of being, "unbending" from authority, as well as a desire for power, because it enables one to see God not as authority but as a being of love in which one can have a relationship. The Christian God and the truth are not objective in Vattimo's opinion—they do not lead to power but they are being showed as love. "The future of Christianity, and also of the Church, is to become a religion of pure love, always more purified. There is a church hymn that states this succinctly and that also helps us see how far off we are from realizing this promise. 'Where there is love, there is also God.' As this hymn shows, my regarding of Christianity is really not that strange or unorthodox. ... Charity is the presence of God" ([11], p. 45).

From Vattimo's perspective, in secularisation, the very idea of reason emancipation—emancipation in a sense is being dissolved—is overrunning the idea of universal reason. After the end of metaphysics, our aim will not be seeking and knowing the objective. Absolute truth is but a dialogue. The truth of God is being revealed in speech—in a dialogue, in a vital, living language. Thus, revealed

truth cannot be objective, referring to any object. On the contrary, it is an interpersonal dialogue which enables a radical transformation, the change of which is a part of emerging from metaphysics. Today, it is necessary to talk about God responsibly and to interpret your own response with regard to the truth of God. Secularisation, in the emancipation sense, is neither regression nor progression, but it is a historical event of transformation, of a change. Therefore, hermeneutics is perceived here as the philosophy of historicity.

Vattimo turns to Nietzsche's idea of the death of God and monitors how it is manifested in Western tradition. He perceives the death of God as the death of the metaphysical, moral conception of God, in which a natural religious experience has been lost and has been substituted with an institutional religion. The Christian event has been reduced to cultural phenomena. In addition, a technical-scientific organisation of a current world unifies and makes a new, but not unique, experience. The death of God is not a theoretical idea, but it is the event that has already happened and our task is to explain its meaning. We shall realise how essentially this event relates to us, especially every human and not any general history: "We killed him, you and me!" [12].

Vattimo wants to show us that the absence of God has become natural, that the horizon on natural religiosity has disappeared. We are the witnesses of the absence of the sacred. We have forgotten about the sacred in its traditional image. This fact has been explained by Vattimo historically as the historical departure of man from God (in the meaning of Ereignis).

What is the future of religion like after metaphysics? What is a religious experience like? How can one tell Jesus's story within a new experience while forgetting the sacred? Vattimo provides a space in which it is possible to have an authentic Christian dialogue about God and understand the Christian news. He thinks that the secularised age is the right space for looking for the place of the sacred and that it is the expression of Kenosis.

Western culture without Christianity would have lost its sense. Vattimo is convinced that the joining of a Christian tradition with modern civilisation has led us to the age of interpretation. Instead of dogmas and objectiveness, there are various interpretations that we are trying to bring to a consensus through dialogue. The objective truth does not exist at all. There is only a consensus. This would also be a way to get to the sacred. At the same time, Vattimo relates the ambivalent and paradoxical character of human existence to God and to the world. It refers to the character of the penetration of secular and sacred, between faith and secularisation. A traditional metaphysical ontotheology has gradually made a paradoxical character of religious experience weaker. It also has weakened the secret of faith and God who surprises us when he reveals himself in the boundary of life and death, being close or being very far away. It has, from a well-known God and from faith, made the idea of objective truth. Apparently, this God had to die to wake up a hope that we will see him again. Perhaps, a deeper space in our thinking and expectations, and probably a new space for deeper dialogue, is opening.

### **3. Problematic Positions of Vattimo's Philosophy of Religion**

#### *3.1. Conflict of Interpretations*

According to Vattimo, we cannot demythologise the Christian message with the ultimate validity once and for all. The truth of Christianity has been constituted, revealed and "verified" always in a



dialogue with history. In the history of salvation the Christian message has been released from naturalistic religiosity and metaphysical rest. Therefore, Vattimo, emphasises the historicity of a human being in his works, on potentially new interpretations of Scriptures, and refuses finality, a final validity in the interpretative process.

The problem lies in the various forms of Christianity, in the plurality of interpretations of Christ's message and salvation. As a result, a conflict of interpretations arises. In contemporary philosophy of religion, we also meet with the interpretations of Christianity, which we can characterise as being radical and which do not correspond with Vattimo's perspective. One of the adherents of these interpretations is, for instance, the Czech philosopher Otakar Funda (a former professor at Charles University in Prague), who has proceeded from existential interpretations of biblical texts to humanistic atheism. He has also implemented the "project" of demythologisation radically and from his point of view consistently.

Funda studied protestant theology in Prague and in Basle. After coming back to Bohemia, he dedicated himself to existential interpretation of Christian news. The reason why he separated from the existential, non-substantial interpretation of belief was the inconsistency of this interpretation. It is incorrect to interpret certain biblical texts literally and other sections as they are a myth. The problem emerges in the differentiation of these passages. Another problem is how God is grasped. The answer to this key question "What is in my mind when I am expressing the word "God?", leads him to a separation from theology. It is not sufficient to demythologise Jesus's supernatural birth or his empty grave, but it is necessary to demythologise the very mythical notion/idea of God. The religious belief may not give up the understanding of God as being a supernatural Almighty God and does not refuse His supernatural power that intervenes in human being life and history. To relinquish these contents it means to get into the philosophical field. "Faith without religion is a "pupated", "masked" philosophy. It is faith without God. Faith with religion is real faith. It is strictly said that a non-religious, existential, anthropological interpretation of Christian faith is not faith in God, but it is the faith in a sense. It has the sense of doing something positive and hopeful, even if I do not benefit from it. Faith in a sense is faith in the God of philosophers and not faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Father of Jesus Christ (Pascal)" ([13], pp. 304–5).

The reason to think about God on an anthropological level and not even to perceive God as the organiser of the universe and the guarantor of moral laws is mainly the feeling of absurdity and nothingness. These feelings, worries, and burdens lead a human being to create religious ideas in order to make our world liveable. Religion is considered to be a negative phenomena by Funda based on a fictitious and unrealistic idea of divinity and eternal bliss. He prefers humanism to religious attitude, and he regards the renunciation of religion to be liberating, making a human being free. He does not identify his humanistic atheism with Czech secularised primitive postcommunist atheism. He perceives it as being shallow, ignoring the deep dimensions of Christian faith and anthropology [14].

It is impossible to unite the idea of God with the sufferings present in history. The absurdity of suffering is less absurd without God. The eschatological vision of Christianity is very improbable, it rather refers to a fiction of faith and fictitious hope. He refuses the vision of a future new world following Popper's critics of historicism and messianism. He grasps it as misleading conception. History does not go towards any aim, does not confirm the uniqueness and authenticity of Christianity.

It rather points at its historical conditionality and the relativity of statements relating to faith. History keeps being only the history of man, his acts, and not the history of its supernatural interventions [14].

In the Czech philosopher's opinion, a transition to atheism is a legitimate leap that comes out of the substance of gospels. Christ himself reinterpreted God as the God of love and thus he opened the way to atheism. The event of the last part of Christ's life and his cry on the cross (exclamation to his Father), we can not only interpret in a traditional way of belief. A new interpretation emphasises divine silence, inactivity, and the absence of God. Jesus's outcry on the cross pre-heralded that Christianity as the only religion results—from its origin—inevitably in atheism. "Atheism is, from Jesus's initiative, a conjectured Christianity. Christianity, clearly said, begins with the event of Christ on the cross. Jesus with his yell on the cross set the direction of future Europe to atheism. Humanistic atheism did not come into existence in culture of any other religions, but in Judeo-Christian culture." ([15], p. 22).

Funda is aware of the advancement in interpretation of Jesus's cry and its further interpretations. Therefore, he speaks about a philosophical actualisation of Jesus's calling his Father, which comes out of the intention hidden in its calling, not from "the correct exegesis". Similarly to Vattimo, we also see a reference here to the character of Jesus, who is the exeget of the old testament's message, and simultaneously, a model for other subsequent interpretations. Jesus was the "incorrect" exeget because he wanted to update, bring new motivation, and fulfill Moses' law. According to Funda the advancement in his own interpretation is legitimate, concerning being a model and also a challenge for him with Jesus himself. The philosophical interpretation of New Testament texts searches for a hidden motivation, the intention of statements. The key passage of philosophical reflection is for him the same as for Vattimo, the second chapter of the Letter to Philippians and the central subject of God's *kenosis* [14].

Funda perceives *kenosis* in a radical way, in a sense of the peak of God's humiliation, his self-deconstruction and, concurrently, in religion's self-destruction. "Leading Christianity to atheistic humanism is scrupulously grasped as the Christian confession of God's *kenosis* and of God's incarnation to Jesus Christ." ([15], p. 25). Christianity is the only one of the world religions that opens the way for the deconstruction of your God. The Christian religion is the only religion from which atheism, as the legitimate human alternative, would have arisen. God is man's creation, the man who "creates" in situations in which he fully expresses humanity ("the absolute side of humanity"), its deepest dimension, which we can call God [14].

Funda agrees with Slavoj Žižek on this point. According to the Slovenian thinker, Christ sacrificed himself, accepted and actively effected his own "destruction". The revelation of Christ and his death is the death of God. "In this sense, Christ's appearance itself effectively stands for God's death: in it, it becomes clear that God is NOTHING BUT the excess of man, the "too much" of life which cannot be contained in any life-form, which violates the shape (morphe) of anthropomorphism." ([16], p. 132). In Žižek's opinion the only chance to "escape" from a traditional solving of problems in Christology and in the doctrine of redemption is to emphasise love. We can see in this significant gesture and acting in love, that Christ was not sacrificed by anybody and not for anyone, but he sacrificed himself. In this way it repeals a traditional vision of Christ as being a mediator between God and man who opens and leaves "the room" for the Holy Spirit. People and God are mutually identical—God is nothing more than the Holy Spirit in the believers' community. Christ need not have died at all in order to establish a direct communication between God and humankind because there is not any transcendent God as the partner in communication with man. Christ's sacrifice is senseless in a radical way, comparing it to the

situation when the human being would prove his love through a useless heroic gesture by which he would make himself extremely exhausted or even finally destroy himself. According to Funda, Žižek thinks scrupulously out of what D. Bonhoeffer enunciated: Jesus's God and, at the same time, God in Christ is not omnipotent, but powerless and suffering.

The deepest dimension of man, according to the Czech philosopher, "encipher" with the term God only in the case we still have reasons. "That is God as a "cipher" of the deepest humanity dimension, that is absolutely other/different God, atheistic God, God who has been created by people. He has not been created by theories but by practice." ([15], p. 26).

Funda, however, assumes that Žižek's category of "emptiness, void" is closer to Buddhist nirvana rather than to the Christian conception of God. He agrees with him and follows him on three points: 1. Humankind is probably getting closer to a certain definite point; 2. It is possible to talk about God in an unreligious and atheistic way; 3. Multiplicity is the last ontological category ([17], p. 290).

"Christianity stands and falls on witnesses about Christ's resurrection. Whereas there was no resurrection...then Europe grew up in lies." ([18], p. 926). Subsequently, Funda wonders what the quality of this fabled truth is. According to Funda, the Christian Churches acquire courage, as it was stated by the German protestant theologian Gerd Lüdemann, to declare that the statement about Christ's resurrection does not have basis and support in reality; it is a fraud fabricated by honest belief. If European culture has grown on Christian foundations, it has grown on deceit and therefore, the positivity of Christian ethics and anthropology has lost its credibility for a modern man. Thus Funda, from the position of belief, goes on the "other side" and becomes the atheist. From his point of view, all of the statements of Christian confessions are penetrated by mythology and supranatural, religious metaphysics. History, in its absurdity, ambivalence and evil, does not speak in any way, about the Lord whose power is over it, over history [14].

According to Funda, the message of Israeli prophets radicalised by Jesus and his cry on the cross are considered to be the prelude after which European atheism continues. Certain statements contain in themselves power that exceeds beyond what has already been said affecting a new event, at a new level, in a changed historical context. It builds on the philosophical and theological tradition of atheistic speaking about God. He agrees with the authors who say that the essence of Christianity is love and God, "is acting" (is real) in co-being with others, in interpersonal relationships, in humanity itself. Humanistic atheism is the heir of Christian tradition. European atheism was preceded also with a Hebrew concept of God whom we cannot depict and express in a metaphysical category. The Hebrew God is "happening", "becoming an event" in man's history.

O. Funda's philosophical approach gets closer to the ideas of G. Vattimo and S. Žižek in the way that he emphasises love as the only substance of Christianity, which can never be demythologised and relativised. As it is stated by the philosopher Etela Farkašová, an attitude such as this one leads him to postulate the thesis about humanism without religion, to form the conception of so called "biological humanism" that is based on respect for life. "A philosopher can see in it a universal, cultural and interreligious basis of ethics, therefore. According to him, amoral is considered to that what does not support conservation of life, what comes to opposition to nature." ([19], p. 192).

In addition, it is quite interesting and paradoxical at the same time that, for this Czech philosopher, life is valuable and concurrently absurd. Life has got its own value and its value must not be reasoned from other "higher" principles. On the other hand, for any other human sacrifice for the other person,

the act of love, is finally, absurd. Funda finds recourse out of this situation only in responsible rational thinking, in awareness that it is impossible to overcome the absurdity of horror by the imposing act of “the absolute of human beings” [14].

Why is this example mentioned? For Vattimo, the greatest paradox and scandal in Christianity and about Christianity is God’s incarnation, *kenosis*. However, we might ask: isn’t there only the big scandal of Christian revelation, the scandal relating to an interpretative, hermeneutic one, relating to the conflict of interpretations? Thus, there is the tension between only one message and the number of interpretations, the only salvation and its various meanings, the tension between demythologisation and refusing demythologisation, the conflict among the interpreters of Christ’s message. We assume that Vattimo’s philosophy does not bring a sufficient resolution to the conflict of the interpretations of the Christian message. The atheistic and Vattimo interpretations of *kenosis* are both equally legitimate. They are equally legitimate and illegitimate because there is not any criteria about how we may assess interpretations and differentiate these from misinterpretations. The conclusion is that one Christian message and differentiated “Christianities” exist. Even in an extreme case, the interpretation of *kenosis* leads to atheism and the “reduction” of Christianity. Nevertheless, *caritas* is still kept as the only principle. Christianity has led us to the epoch of interpretations, has fulfilled its “mission”, and has opened a door to atheism. Alternatively, it has found its ultimate form in it. Can we think about it in this way at all?

We may presuppose that Vattimo would understand differentiated interpretative versions of the Scripture as personal, individual, free access. He would probably consider his own interpretation to be a “middle” position between a strict church/ecclesiastical interpretation and a radical atheistic interpretation of the Christian message. He also claims that *kenosis* can be perceived neither as “the indefinite negation of God” nor justify every arbitrary interpretation of the sacred Scriptures ([20], p. 67). In Vattimo’s view, the Catholic attitude to the Scripture is considered to be more desirable than Protestant “sola scriptura”. Despite this fact, at least two questions may be asked: how is the arbitrary interpretation determined and in what way does Vattimo perceive his own interpretation of *kenosis*? Is the interpretation privileged, historically contingent, is it just one of the others? Vattimo himself refuses a radical demythologisation. In his opinion, there do not exist any necessary reasons for this step. However, as we can see, there are some authors who have serious reasons for it (evil present in our world and a real absence of loving, gracious God in history). “Revelation” (“discovery”) of Christianity can lead to weak thinking and, at the same time, to atheism. Christ enabled not only the development of post-metaphysical philosophy, as is said by Vattimo, but he also opened the way to atheism supposed by Funda.

In Vattimo’s point of view, philosophical atheism is not necessary and entirely the absolute philosophy proves the inaccuracy of religious experience. According to O. Funda’s atheistic approach, atheism surely has its own reasons and can be “documented with evident indication”. Both approaches thus defend their plausibility.

Let us therefore ask a question: Are there any defensible, stronger arguments for accepting one of these interpretations? We suppose that Vattimo’s philosophy is not absolutely relativistic and allows argumentation. The problem and the fact in spite of this is—as it has been already said—that in contemporary philosophy, there are some differentiated and divergent interpretations of *kenosis*. The

interpretation of *kenosis* can lead to atheism or eventually *kenosis* is interpreted from the position of atheism.

It is proven too that philosophical theology is possible nowadays. There exists a philosophical speaking about God that does not come out of the belief and revealed truth, because it does not recognise the revealed truth. In addition, atheistic philosophy of religion “invites God to the process of thinking” and it regards the question of God as legitimate. Besides that, we can see some authors (believers and atheists) who put stress on love. Therefore, *caritas* is the “bridge”, penetration and the place where philosophical theology and religion (belief, Christian thinking in fact) meet.

From our perspective, Funda’s aforementioned conviction that Europe “grew up” on “the deceit of Christianity” is incorrect. Thus, he doubts the basic beliefs and recourse for a large group of people, the whole religious tradition and the history of Christianity. From the point of view of Christian theology and Christian philosophy, his interpretation of *kenosis* is unacceptable, it is “violent”—it relates to misinterpretation of the meaning of *kenosis*. We can ask Funda and Vattimo a common question: “Do you consider your own interpretation of *kenosis* to be just one of other perspectives?” If their answer is “yes”, then they are philosophically right and correct, because philosophy does not have any criteria on which it would have preferred one interpretation over another one. From the perspective of Funda’s philosophy, Vattimo is inconsistent as far as he refuses God’s intervention in the world, history and personal human lives, and he also refuses the only climax of history. He can do it from the position of being a philosopher, but he robs Christianity of important content. Then, it is incorrect to talk about Christianity. We suppose that Funda would voice a critical objection to Vattimo: when Vattimo asserts himself as being a semi-believer, then his Christianity must be understood as semi-Christianity. Moreover, Funda would definitely ask Vattimo this question: “Do we need any other God besides an atheistic God?” Do we need any other God except that one who is “happening” in human love, who is being present in human self-sacrificing relationships? We must be satisfied with an atheistic God because we don’t have any other power or help. There exists only one reality, the idea of another “saving reality” is philosophically untenable.

We may ask why it is so important for Funda to speak about God atheistically, to “support”, to “sustain” this thinking, this theory and to not relinquish it. Funda provides this explanation: European humanism (if it has not disappeared yet) very often has a shallow superficial form. Human beings are very optimistic when looking at themselves, uncritically trusting their own humanistic ideals, projects and strengths to realise them all. In addition, it is exactly here that the European tradition of talking about God—Hebrew and Christian—has a strong influence. It contains in itself a very significant message, memento and idea: we are definite creatures, not gods. The project of atheistic interpretation has one essential and irreplaceable function: to protect the human being in order not to deify himself [21]. We can see that some lines of the contemporary atheistic philosophy of religion regard it as very substantial to protect talking about an atheistic God in order to remind human beings of their definitiveness, the possibilities of their rationality and failures. Vattimo’s philosophy of religion undoubtedly includes the same ideas in spite of other recourses. Therefore, it is interesting that atheism can also come to the same conclusions as Vattimo did: he underlines the Hebrew-Christian tradition which has formed the history of Europe, puts the emphasis on love and recalls that the human must be aware of his limits, his humanity which he cannot deify.

Funda also points out other atheistic interpretations of the New Testament, namely, the book of French philosopher A. Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. He is convinced that the way that Badiou reinterprets Paul reinterprets Christ's words on the cross. He considers both of these approaches to be philosophically legitimate. Naturally, we must be aware of differences among these approaches of A. Badiou, O. Funda and G. Vattimo. Badiou reads Paul as being atheist. Funda read the New Testament at first as being a believer, and later he became the atheist. Vattimo neither comes out of atheism, nor proceeds to it, though he does not read Paul and the New Testament in the same way as the Catholic theology and plenty of other believers in the past and present. In addition, the question concerning how to define misinterpretation of the meaning of *kenosis* has not been answered for him yet. His way of thinking does not allow him to respond to this stated question.

J. Zimmermann notes: "In his incarnational ontology, divine revelation becomes encapsulated in a certain postmetaphysical ontology and becomes a purely immanent, faceless, impersonal and monological principle without the transforming and emancipating power he desires. In other words, Heidegger's ontology determines his Christology to such an extent that Vattimo's end product, the weakening of all structures in the name of charity as the eventing of historical Being, loses the very transcendent quality that gives emanation a charitable, human-divine face. To state this theologically, when faith in Christ becomes faith in a modalistic kenotic principle, *kenosis* is no longer Christian...In the end, Vattimo's incarnational faith sacrifices transcendence on the altar of interpretation." ([22], p. 251).

### 3.2. The Problem of Salvation and Transcendence

According to Vattimo, secularisation is the sense of the history of salvation which consists in recognising that "Being is event" and in a recognition that I can go actively into history, into a certain historical situation ([20], p. 87). On this point, Vattimo fundamentally diverges from a traditional concept of salvation in Christianity. He reduces soteriology to the process of man's emancipation. "The term soteriology disappears in this perspective because of the problematic substance of evil relating only to man's freedom and his own faults, which we can redress—there is not any metaphysical evil which would require redemptive intervention of divine principle." ([2], p. 130).

Vattimo is not interested in religion primarily from the reason of God's speaking to man as, for example, K. Rahner did in his philosophy of religion (*Hörer des Wortes*). Preferentially, he does not draw his attention to a human being who is being addressed by the Other—God and being redeemed by Him. "Vattimo's interest in religion is motivated likewise by a primary concern for the conditions of emancipation, for freedom from the violence of authority. It is nevertheless apparent that, in their "discourse on God", these philosophers draw on a fund composed of such received religious values as love, hope and charity. Caputo and Vattimo appeal to these values to frame a set of questions as fundamental to philosophy and theology alike: questions of social and ethical responsibility." ([23], p. 91).

Vattimo determines himself to be against a tragic thinking or tragic Christianity: He does not want to connect the question about God with a tragic human existence (God as a final solution all tragedies in the world). It is understood by him as remnants of metaphysical ideas and insufficient notion of *kenosis*.

We believe that human beings do not only desire a democratic society without objectivistic metaphysics, but additionally for a religion also reduced or made free of metaphysical elements, for personal happiness and the right relationships without violence. Vattimo leaves, or as it can be said in other words, transforms a significant question concerning the ontological problem of evil. As Richard Rorty claims, history does not contain any internal dynamics and any inherent teleology: “There is no great drama to be unfolded, but only the hope that love may prevail” ([24], p. 35).

On this point, Funda and Vattimo coincide. According to the Czech thinker, history does not lead to any aim or target. There is merely a human history, not the history of God’s interventions. Though, we can see one substantial difference. Funda has been talking and writing about one thing for a long time—that no hope exists. “Where shall we look for hope for our Earth, Europe, humankind, and nature? He insists that all resources of hope have dried out and we don’t have anything in our hands.” ([25], pp. 153–54). Vattimo’s hope in the power of human love has disappeared here. Love is the recourse and sense of our actions and behaviour but not a sufficient reason for hope for a human being and for the future of his life.

It is possible, however, to object to Vattimo: there is not a violent and metaphysical basis in the idea of redemption. We can accept a Christian theory about a real chance to be redeemed without admitting a metaphysical way of thinking, or rather, an ideology of advance leading to a certain aim. Similarly, we understand a Christian principle of love. Christian comprehension of salvation history doesn’t mean a devaluation of profane history, even it does not eventuate from the fact of how the power of evil is exaggerated in the world and, as a result, is looking for a Saviour. Evil in various forms, evil which we can witness, does not need to be exaggerated. Rather, we can say, that not only once do we stand before evil with a question without an answer. For some atheistic philosophies of religions—as it has been already mentioned—evil is “evidence” of their radical interpretations and “supports” this interpretation. Evil in these conceptions is neither exaggerated nor ironically treated. On the contrary, it is a strong witness against the existence of God. The representative of the contemporary atheistic philosophy of religion, O. Funda, is convinced that despite insufficiency of critical rationality, it is still considered to be the most effective solution of problems of our powerlessness. The problems are always new and their resolution is always temporary. There is no other resolution ([15], p. 47).

The idea of God as a judge can become known as anthropomorphic. We can deny three postulates of Kant’s philosophy and his “out-of-date” philosophy. It does not mean at all that evil will not remain in question. His resolution is not regret over committed guilt or any possible human atonement. Vattimo in his contemplations stays within the level of morality, and he skirts or avoids the issue at an ontological level.

Consideration of salvation is closely connected with the consideration of transcendence. However, we must be careful not to simplify Vattimo’s thoughts about transcendence. He does not want to eliminate transcendence, he just claims that it is given, offered in a continual modification in a plan of salvation (*dico solo che essa si dà nella modificazione continua di un piano di salvezza*), which still goes on ([26], p. 17). He puts stress on God’s closeness, His “belonging” to our world, an everyday friend’s closeness, not His inaccessibility, restriction and superiority of the Ruler. God cannot be in another world, in some other reality, in the reality of different order, because there does not exist another reality. It would make the understanding of *kenosis* impossible. God’s *kenosis* “as being hidden is simultaneously in the most intimate closeness to this earth” ([7], p. 271).

Transcendence is a strongly metaphysical concept that covers itself in the difference between natural and supernatural order. It is necessary to rethink this concept once again and consider its new meaning more. On this point, Vattimo's thinking is admittedly a challenge for the theology and philosophy of religion. How can we think about transcendence at all? In what way can we rethink again the difference, link and closeness of the eternal with temporary, definite with indefinite? Or is it inevitable to completely leave these pairs of categories? From a certain point of view, it is really possible to eliminate the concept of transcendence. We can interpret *kenosis* either as the abolition of transcendence or as unification of heavenly and earthly, immortal and mortal and thus we can create a great unity of fourfold.

In spite of this, we suppose that when we eliminate a vertical transcendence, Other's thinking, then there is a menace that God will "dissolve, reduce" himself in a text and its interpretations, in the continuity of tradition, which the text passes on. Transcendence and verticality will be substituted by horizontality and immanence (secularisation). Thus God himself "emptifies" and loses his redemptive power. In an interview with M. G. Weiß, Vattimo agrees with the German author's statements—"thus as Being (Sein) is nothing else than as the history of the understanding of Being (Seinsverständnisse), it seems that God is nothing else than Being concerned as the history of speaking about God (Rede von Gott)." ([6], p. 181). Furthermore, he responds: "I would not state that at first there is God and then there is the Bible which either indicates to Him in the form of denotative expressions and reports on Him." ([6], p. 181). By this way, God is "closed" in a text, tradition, and interpretations.

In Vattimo's point of view we may be saved just by human *caritas*. In addition, this conception causes fears and anxiety. Accordingly, when we eliminate a strong approach to weak thinking, when we change our attitude, only then we come to a new listening, openness and thoughts about redemption. Heidegger's statement: "Only some God can save us", has not been just a rhetoric formula in the history of Christianity, but it has been the statement about a real God and real redemption. Even nowadays, there is still a chance to accept this reality. It is perceived that Vattimo's philosophy of religion refusing salvation in its traditional conception does not rely on the formation of the new in a radical meaning following the apostle John's words in Revelation: "*Et dixit qui sedebat in throno ecce nova facio omnia*" (Rev 21, 5).

A new heaven and new earth are not the expressions and products of naivety, immaturity and metaphysics. They were and still have been the content of Christians' belief in Europe in the first and also in the 21st century. The novelty of earth and heaven is considered to be the novelty par excellence because it does not have its origin in this world; it is not produced by any other final power and it is not conditioned by available circumstances or possibilities. This kind of philosophy of religion removes, reduces and transforms significant content of Christian belief. The history of Christianity has not been construed just as "the time of being examined", "the acquisition of merits" or as the emancipation process, even as the "process" of weakening absolute, metaphysical principles. It was and has always been perceived as the history of real salvation that started in the event of *kenosis*. Vattimo does not dare to covert to atheism. He still believes that he believes, but on the contrary, he is not willing to accept a real man's salvation by God.



#### 4. Conclusions

We assume that there will still be some challenges for both sides—for the representatives of a traditional religiosity and those who, at many times, form new radical interpretations. Both sides may not end in a closed system. The power and influence of the authentic, basic (Revelation and the Bible) and the urgency of the new (new epoch challenges) are much stronger than human capability can manage. In this relationship, let us remind readers about the meeting of some very important philosophers' discussions about a phenomenon of religion that took place on the island of Capri in 1994. H. G. Gadamer, in his contribution to the conclusion of their common published issue, talks about Heidegger's decisive impact on their philosophical reflection. Both main initiators of the meeting and moderators of the dialogue, J. Derrida and G. Vattimo, focused on their common task—on one side to be free from dogmatism which finds only deceit and delusion of man in religion and on the other side, that the return to religion does not mean the return to church teachings at all. Accordingly, it was not deemed acceptable to follow the lines of natural theology. Thus, Heidegger's thoughts and his endeavour to "get over" metaphysics is obvious. At the same time, Gadamer asks the question about whether it is viable to seek out a real solution of these tasks. It probably refers to the ways and aims which are for human being's thinking insoluble and in dispute. It was also understood by Heidegger who outlined it in his very popular statement: "*Nur ein Gott kann uns retten*" ([1], p. 247).

Vattimo reads Heidegger in a nihilistic way. Vattimo's metaphor of weak thinking outlines a situation of postmodern philosophy when a philosophical sense has entered into its hermeneutic epoch. It is the epoch that took a critical attitude towards requirements on absolute knowledge of sense. Even Gadamer reminds us with a concept of "a historical experience" that the power of reason or sense does not exist in the way that the products of reason or sense would not be written in speech tradition which is a representative feature of humankind. In every hermeneutic situation, we are not capable of managing either without a certain pre-comprehension which is determined by all of our historical experience or without active interaction between a textual object that is supposed to be interpreted and an interpreter. Vattimo follows Gadamer and his perception of historical experience. He interprets religion from a hermeneutic perspective as a mutual and critical correlation between a fundamental Christian experience and our historical experience. This experience respects a certain historicity of man more and more in comparison with the image of an ideal history. Vattimo simultaneously points out an analysis between a self-confident modern European thinking and religious faith.

Let us together with Vattimo ask one question: "What is our experience like today?" What is a basic Christian experience? The Christian experience, the experience of God is not an interpretation according to us. It permanently witnesses something that is radically new, about a new experience of a living reality that is established in a personal relationship of man and God and the novelty of gospel. The new is not articulated here as something that arises following the old principles, but it moves on after something. The new has a creative nature and refers to the experience of the birth of event. It is the expression of finality, definity and time character, and dynamic nature, which we may not enclose into any model or paradigm. The interpretation never overcomes. Christian tradition has its connection to the tradition from which it arose and has its own historical reference in a sense of having its foundations in the beginning events.

Vattimo's philosophy must critically express authoritarian and metaphysical elements in religion and must highlight insufficient "reading of the epochs". On the side of religion, feedback arises up. Can or even does religion have to protect philosophy from too much connection to a concrete, historically conditioned type of thinking? Is one of the "missions" of religion to put emphasis on the thinking of being unilateral and conditioned by a certain period of time, similarly, as the role of philosophy is to take up a critical standpoint towards religion?

In conclusion, let us ask whether Vattimo's Christianity is constantly considered to be Christianity that believes in the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and in "Jesus's Father". While reading Vattimo's text, a reader can get the impression that the Italian author is the proponent of a negative theology. He believes in a God who is unable to be proven, eliminated, defined or even "enclosed" in human thinking. The Christian God thus remains unknown and, therefore, we can call Him "absolutely Other". If he does not accept God the Father and the reality of the future redeemed man with his resurrected body, he creates one of the "Christianities", or *vice versa*, he constitutes un-Christian Christianity. In Vattimo's theory, Christianity falls apart into the plurality of Christianities including un-Christian Christianity. Within this meaning, his God is "absolutely Other" rather than the Christian One.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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