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Introduction
Henk Vroom (1946-2014), a Dutch philosopher of religion, did extensive research to find common grounds for fruitful interreligious dialogue. In his anthropological approach towards religion he sees religion first of all as means of interpreting fundamental human experiences. Vroom states that every religious tradition has several basic insights. These basic insights refer to basic human experiences, such as the finitude of human existence, human responsibility and failing, the experience of good, happiness, peace, well-being and meaning. (H.M. Vroom (1989), Religions and the Truth. Philosophical Reflections and Perspectives. Amsterdam: Rodopi)

Based on this anthropological view on religion, the Dutch theologian Anbeek (1961) developed an experiential theology which relates a special focus on basic human experiences to the vulnerability of life. In her view, the experience of the vulnerability and fragility of life can lead to a quest for meaning. Traditionally religious traditions offer frames of meaning, but nowadays due to secularization in the Western world, a religious framing is no option any more for many people. For those who do not belong to a religious community which shares several basic insights and offer interpretation that appeals to them, they seek new ways to interpret their experiences of vulnerability when they occur to them. The need for interpretation is of course still there. (C.W. Anbeek (2013), Aan de heidenen overgeleverd. Hoe de theologie de 21ste eeuw kan overleven. Utrecht: Ten Have. Delivered unto the Heathens. How Theology Can Survive the 21st Century)

Paper
In this paper we will read parts of Tillich’s works through the eyes of Vroom and Anbeek. Tillich wanted to make Christianity understandable for outsiders, so there could be a meaningful conversation. He applied traditional Christian language in order to answer questions brought up by existentialism which was one of the challenges of the time in which he lived. Tillich’s writings remain however within the Christian language field. This paper is an attempt to relate the approach of Tillich’s works with the approach (and language) of Vroom and Anbeek. The goal of this attempt is to uncover within the Christian language more general accessible language and narratives that could be recognized by people from different life views. In this way we hope to explore new possibilities for the interreligious dialogue, taking into account that secular life approaches have consequences for the philosophical approach and the language that can be used.

This paper will refer especially to part IV of the Systematic Theology of Tillich. In this part Tillich studies the ambiguous life experiences and the quest for unambiguous life. This field of theology relates strongest to the anthropological approaches of Vroom and Anbeek.

The central question of this paper is: What does part IV of Tillich’s Systematic Theology reveal about fundamental human experiences and their religious and/or secular interpretation.

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