Theo-Logical Positions vis-à-vis Syncretism

How to relate to the mixing of religions, porous borders between religions and the impurity of religion (as opposed to “pure” religion) that is a part of human lived experience? One can ignore the social reality of syncretism and theologize as if such did not exist. If acknowledging its existence, one can condemn it as a failed form of one’s religion. In such a case there is the possibility of choosing an expression of religious faith as the pure and faultless one serving as the measuring stick to the rest, which seems to be a natural choice if one believes strongly in something. Another position allows, however, one to admit that there is no perfect lived reality of religion but rather that all forms of one’s religion are more or less corrupt. However, the idea of the religion is correct and true albeit not at hand. Other positions are such that they let the fact of syncretism guide the theological work. One can end in a pluralist position where the plurality of religions and their syncretistic relations are regarded as a surface layer covering the deeper level where all religions are basically one. Another possibility is to claim that it is not advisable to pursue the truth or true religion. Finally, one can admit the reality of syncretism and claim that this is actually how true theology should be like, e.g. because of incarnation.