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Review of "Cultures and Religions in Dialogue: Part One: Pluralism and Interculturality," by Raimon Pannikar

Hans Gustafson
University of St. Thomas

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should be of considerable interest to anyone interested in possible lines of intersection between Buddhism and Christian theology.

This otherwise commendable volume is marred by simple errors that are evidently the result of careless editing. There are many errors in the transliteration of Sanskrit and Pali terms, such as **Siddhārta* in place of *Siddhārtha* (xviii). Such mistakes are unfortunate, given P.'s defense of the need for careful transliteration of these terms (41). While the publisher undoubtedly is not used to editing Sanskrit and Pali terminology, this is a manuscript for which a skilled editorial consultant should have been hired. There are also many spelling mistakes (**ghandaran* rather than *Gandharan*, xv; *bhkti* for *bhakti*, 3) as well as inexplicable editorial lapses. For example, the list of "Abbreviations" (xi–xiii), begins with a subtitle "Hindū Scriptures," despite the fact that the list includes all of the abbreviations used in the text, for Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian biblical works, as well as scholarly works. But these are minor irritants in what is otherwise a fine volume.

David B. Gray
Santa Clara University, California

Cultures and Religions in Dialogue: Part One, Pluralism and Interculturality. By Raimon Panikkar. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018. Pp. xviii + 222. \$90.

"Pluralism and Interculturality" is part 1 of the two-part volume 6: *Cultures and Religions in Dialogue* of the twelve-volume *Opera Omnia*, which is an impressively daunting collection of Panikkar's works that "ranges over a span of some seventy years ... [and explores] the meaning of a more justified and fulfilled human lifetime" (v). This review only reflects on book one of two in volume six of this collection. While book one brings together several of P.'s essays on "pluralism" and "interculturality," which serve as "the foundation for any possible understanding among peoples" (xi), the second book develops the theme of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue as "the only path toward survival" in a world of intercultural and interreligious conflict.

This book has two sections. Section 1 focuses on pluralism and section 2 focus on interculturality. Anyone who has spent time with P.'s work knows well his intimate command of languages, cultures, and religious traditions. His writing moves seamlessly from one tradition to another, often incorporating non-English words, non-Western concepts, and non-Christian ideas in order to drive home ideas with great eloquence and precision.

Section 1 on pluralism provides P.'s vision of pluralism insofar as it models the nature of reality as he understands it. He teaches that the problem of pluralism surfaces as the fundamental challenge for humankind in the unavoidable and looming conflict that "arises only when we feel—we suffer—the incompatibility of differing worldviews and are at the same time forced by the praxis of our factual coexistence to seek survival" (5). Pluralism is not a super- or meta-system. It does not refer to

the reality of religious diversity or a view that reduces all religions and truth to a universal unity. Nor does it refer to “just tolerance of many ways” (22). Rather, it is a “fundamental *human attitude*” (27) that “accepts the stance that reality may be of such a nature that nobody, and no single human group, can coherently claim to exhaust the universal range of the human experience” (28). Religions, akin to ever-flowing and ever-changing rivers, function by revealing “different facets of Truth because Reality is itself pluralistic” (65). Religion remains important, to be sure, but it is most certainly “not independent of culture. Religion gives culture its ultimate contents, but culture gives religion its language” (112). Hence, P.’s theme in section 2: interculturality.

Interculturality involves engaging different worldviews, seeing yourself in the other, and seeing the other in you. Such encounters, for P., are “basically” religious, since they investigate “the ultimate meaning of life and reality” (204). These encounters are “not a luxury” (123). They are a “matter of life or death” (123) and “a human imperative for our times” (189), since they promote the “intercultural dialogue [that] takes place with a stranger, who, in the modern world, may be our geographic neighbor or, as is often the case, the immigrant, the refugee, or those who are distant” (161). The author is effective in articulating interculturality as challenge, because it is *subversive*, *enriching*, and *difficult*—for the “encounter with other visions of the world that are incompatible with ours makes us feel uneasy, insecure, and unbalanced” (190). *Subversively*, it “destabilizes us [and] profoundly challenges deeply rooted beliefs that we take for granted” (190). It *enriches* us by allowing “us to grow, to be transformed [and] stimulating us to be more critical, less absolutist, and it widens our scope for tolerance” (190). It is also *difficult* because it requires transformation, self-reflection, self-critique, and pushes us to fundamentally reevaluate our worldview and lifeways in the face of the other. In short, “it is easy to talk about dialogue and reconciliation in theory, but to implement it is very hard” (192).

P. covers significant ground in this collected set of his essays on pluralism and interculturality. After reading them, I have a sense of their incompleteness perhaps due to not having yet read part two on “Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue,” which will be published in December 2018. Regardless, part I is required reading for any scholar of P. seeking to understand pluralism or interculturality in the context of his overall system. Those interested in the interdependence of religion and culture set within the context of social cohesion, dialogue, and reconciliation, will also come away from these essays with perhaps a renewed appreciation for their gravity and importance. P. succeeds in demonstrating how pluralism, as a fundamental facet of reality as such (including religious traditions and identities) provides, above all, an “attitude” with which progress towards flourishing, not war and conflict, can, to some degree, be achieved.

Hans Gustafson

Jay Phillips Center for Interfaith Learning, University of St. Thomas (MN)