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Book Review: The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue

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the global, dynamic, and multi-sited nature of transnational religion, these two sentences, both without citation as to the author's subjectival referent, are emblematic of the author's tendency to speak in general terms of theories or scholarship on transnational religion. This tendency weakens what is a very strong work, and leads educated readers to conjure exceptions, mentally accumulating a bibliography of scholars who address the multi-sited and global dynamics of transnational religion. Further, by detailing both the Indic and US contexts from precolonial to present, Kurien holds high expectations for one book. While she is largely successful, there were times when a more contextualized investigation into any one of these foci may have been useful, particularly the differences between various Asian ethnic congregations in the United States, since her data complicates a scholarly consensus in this field. She concludes, "it is important not to

take the studies of East Asian American Christians as the last word on the interaction between race and religion [in the United States]" (242). Agreed, but how would the data look if we included research on Asian non-Christians or non-Asian ethnic minority Christians? Certainly, we cannot sound the death knell for ethnic congregations in the United States when for many ethnic and religious minorities they remain the primary sites for worship.

In short, Kurien's book is wonderful to think with and provides a provocative, evidence-driven account, which complicates existing conventions in scholarship. That is to say, it is solid, well-crafted, substantive scholarship, which will be useful and effective for scholarly and undergraduate audiences alike.

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The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue.
Edited by Terrence Merrigan & John Friday. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xi + 259 pages.

THEOLOGICAL discourses on interreligious dialogue within the Roman Catholic Church flourished especially after Vatican II (1962-65). In this volume, Terrance Merrigan and John Friday compile some of these theologies and theologians into a conversation. Written primarily for those committed to critical reflection on interreligious dialogue and its study and practice, these essays discuss the historical antecedents, current trends, and future possibilities for the field. This volume is a sure sign of the maturity of interreligious dialogue as a field of study and a welcome addition to the continuing conversations.

The volume is divided into three sections to focus on the past, present, and future of the theologies of interreligious dialogue. Part I, comprising the first five chapters, interprets various canonical documents that influenced the basic attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church towards other faith traditions and thus contributed to interreligious dialogue. The writers focus on doctrinal nuances in the church documents related to dialogue and summarize select theologians who contributed to the field of interreligious dialogue. This part is a helpful and engaging introduction to the history of interreligious dialogue in the Catholic Church.

In Part II, the focus shifts from the church tradition to religious experience. The writers unequivocally acknowledge religious experience as a valid source of theology. In order to buttress their argument, they draw insights from both Evangelical and Hindu traditions as well as the writings of William James and Bernard Lonergan. They creatively and courageously point to sources of theology beyond the canonical documents and scriptures and skillfully demonstrate how these can contribute to the theological enterprise. For example, Michelle Voss Roberts draws from the Hindu aesthetic tradition and demonstrates how *rasa* contributes to one's understanding of and experiences with God.

Part III, the most inclusive, edifying, and assuring among the three sections, suggests ways to include the historically marginalized "Others" in the discourse. As promised in the section title "The Acknowledgement of Otherness," the five chapters in the section acknowledge the possibilities of learning from religious others and suggest ways to do so while rethinking interreligious dialogue. The writers challenge the claims of supremacy and parochialism within the Christian communities and admit the limits of human

knowing. Boldness to compare with and humility to learn from the social and religious margins mark the section.

This attempt to bring together those engaged in studying interreligious dialogue to critically examine this growing academic field and analyze the emerging trends within the Roman Catholic Church is much needed and commendable. The book certainly showcases conversations within the Roman Catholic Church and their possible contributions to the field of religious dialogue beyond the Catholic Church. It provides an engaging conversation between 13 highly respected experts in the field, mostly trained in comparative theology. However, alerting the reader of the scope of the conversation either in the title or in the introduction would have rightly and humbly acknowledged the growing and robust conversations about interreligious dialogue in other confessional and religious communities and thus subtly invited others to the field of interreligious dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church. This note aside, the volume is a tremendous gift to the study of interreligious dialogue.

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***The Human Icon: A Comparative Study of Hindu and Orthodox Christian Beliefs.* By Christine Mangala Frost. Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co, 2017, xv + 368 pages.**

IN her Prologue, Christine Mangala Frost indicates to her reader that *The Human Icon* sets out to achieve two primary goals. First, she wishes to map "the spiritual terrain" of both Hinduism and Eastern Orthodoxy Christianity, thus providing a model for how Hindu-Christian interreligious dialogue might proceed most fruitfully (1). Second, she

intends her study to be "an exploratory effort in comparative theology that is conducted thematically" (7), and, as one might expect, she explicitly engages both Francis X. Clooney and Raimon Panikkar on multiple occasions throughout the text. *The Human Icon* is thus an ambitious work in terms of its scope, and like most ambitious works it succeeds quite