

SANGAM OF RELIGIONS IN THE UNKNOWN CHRIST

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The present article deals mainly with one of the main insights of Raymond Panikkar. A tribute to a great scholar Raymond Panikkar who passed away on 26th August 2010 at the age of 91, at his home in Tavertet, is befitting, I thought, perhaps by attempting to understand the deep insight in one of his main contributions: meeting of religions in the 'Unknown Christ'. As if his farewell message in a statement from his residence in Tavertet dated January 26, 2010, Panikkar has expressed as one of his desires that other people may continue "to spread my message and the sharing of my ideals, even without me."¹

Panikkar as a Person:² Born in Barcelona on November 3, 1918, as the son of a Spanish Roman Catholic mother and an Indian Hindu father, Raimundo Panikkar had from the beginning an openness to these two religions. As one who had grown up and worked both in the East and in the West he had the rare opportunity of internalizing the essence of both Christian and Hindu traditions.³ His work as a Roman Catholic priest in the diocese of Varanasi

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¹ <http://www.gratefulness.org/readings/panikkar-farewell.htm>

²For the biographical information I am depending mainly on Panikkar, *Curriculum Vitae: List of Books and Selected Articles* (Santa Barbara [manuscript], 1984) 2-6; also E.H. Cousins, "Introduction: The Panikkar Symposium at Santa Barbara," *Cross Currents* 29 (Summer 1979) 132.

³C. Bhattacharya, review of *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*, by R. Panikkar, in *Religious Education*, 74 (Nov-Dec. 1979) 679.

enabled him to come into closer contact with the people of India, with their culture and their religions. (It is remarkable that after his death "half of his ashes lie in the cemetery of Taverter; and half were scattered into the sacred waters of the River Ganges in Varanasi, according to the Hindu rite."⁴)

He holds three doctorates – in science, philosophy and theology.⁵ His academic works⁶ and the bulk of his writings⁷ are mainly concerned with comparative cultures, the history of religions, comparative religion, theology and hermeneutics. His involvement in other religions is so deep that he could rightly say that he started as a Christian, went through Hinduism and returned to Christianity, but only after passing through Buddhism. "Thus I am at the confluence (*sangam*) of the four rivers: the Hindu, the Christian, the Buddhist and the Secular traditions."⁸

The two rivers Hinduism and Christianity can not only flow parallel, but also both can perhaps flow together *sangam*. Both the religions can move further than merely accepting God as the common foundation for meeting together. There is the mediating mystery in God that enables Him to be in communion with the universe and *vice versa*. This mystery is the source of religion. "Panikkar puts the point concisely, 'Religions meet where religions take their source.'⁹ Both Hinduism and Christianity have experienced this mediating mystery in God. There is "the presence of the one Mystery...in both traditions."¹⁰ Finding this one link, one mediator between God and the world, between the one and the many is crucial.¹¹ Panikkar aims to find out the under-lying, or above-dwelling reality which both traditions are talking about.¹² In this "deepest recess of reality – in what Christian tradition calls the Mystery,"¹³ the two religions can meet.

⁴ <http://www.raimon-panikkar.org/english/news.html>

⁵E. H. Cousins, "Introduction:...", *Cross Currents*, 29 (Summer 1979) 132. Panikkar, "Letter to an Indian Christian Artist." *Liturgical Art* 32 (November 1963) 9.

⁶Panikkar, *Curriculum Vitae*, 5-6. Also <http://www.raimon-panikkar.org/english/laudatio.html>

⁷ E.H. Cousins, "Introduction:...", 132. Also <http://www.raimon-panikkar.org/english/opere.html>

⁸Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd; and New York: Orbis Books, 1981, x. [from now on as *P. Unknown*, (1981)].

⁹H. Coward, "Panikkar's Approach to Interreligious Dialogue," *Cross Currents* 29 (Summer 1979) 184. Cf. Panikkar, R. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964. [from now on as *P. Unknown*, (1964)], 10.

¹⁰*P. Unknown*, (1981), 26.

¹¹*P. Unknown*, (1981), 48; *P. Unknown*, (1964), 16.

¹²*P. Unknown*, (1964), 68; *P. Unknown*, (1981), 100.

¹³*P. Unknown*, (1981), 3.

CHRIST the Mediator Makes the Religions possible

It is Christ “known or unknown – who makes religion possible.” Only in the Lord is there ‘*religatio*.’ Christ, manifest or hidden, is the only way to God. The unique link between the created and the uncreated, the relative and the absolute, the temporal and the eternal, earth and heaven, is Christ, the only mediator. “Between these two poles everything that functions as mediator, link, ‘conveyor’ is Christ, the sole priest of the cosmic priesthood, the Lord *par excellence*.”¹⁴

Christ, the “only one link, one mediator between God and the rest, ... leads every man to God; there is no other way but through him.”¹⁵ He is the “only mediator between creation and the Father (I Tim 2:5).”¹⁶ Panikkar, like Rahner¹⁷ affirms that only the Son, the CHRIST, can be the mediator in the Trinity.¹⁸

Christ is the ontological Mediator.¹⁹ The Son is the Mediator, the *summus pontifex* (High Priest) of creation and also of the redemption and glorification or transformation of the world. Beings *are* in so far as they participate in the Son, from, with and through him.²⁰ It is Christ, through whom all things were made and in whom all things subsist (Col. 2. 17).²¹ Every being, the whole created existence, is a Christophany, a showing

¹⁴Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man: Icon-Person-Mystery*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, [1970] (1973), 53. “Whatever happens to be the door is door because Christ is there.” Panikkar, “...Christ unique?” *Theoria to Theory*, (1967), 132. Cf. also Panikkar, *Trinity*, [1970] (1973), 49.

¹⁵P. *Unknown* (1964), 16. “Christ is the only mediator, but he is not the monopoly of Christians...” Panikkar, *The Intra-religious Dialogue*, New York: The Paulist Press, 1978, 36.

¹⁶Panikkar, “Christians and so-called ‘non-Christians,’” [1965] *Cross Currents* 22 (Summer/Fall 1972), 292.

¹⁷K. Rahner, “Jesus Christ,” in *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the idea of Christianity*, transl. William V. Dych, New York: Crossroad, 1984, 214-215. Also K. Rahner, “Trinity in Theology,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner, London: Burns & Oates, 1981, 1762.

¹⁸Panikkar, *Trinity*, (1975), 53. “This Beginning and End of all things (Cf. Rev 1:2 etc.) has two natures, though they are not in the same mode or on the same level. It has two faces, two aspects as it were (Cf. Phil 2:7; 2 Cor 8:9; Heb 2:14). One face is turned towards the Divinity and is its full expression and its bearer (Cf. Jn 1:2; 2 Cor 4:4; Jn 6:57). The other face is turned towards the external, the World, and is the firstborn (Cf. Rom 8:29; Col 1:15,18; Rev 1:5), the sustainer (Cf. Col 1:17; 2:10), the giver of the World’s being (Cf. Col 1:16; ICor.8:6). Yet it is not two, but one-principle, one person (Cf. Jn 8:18, 21, 25, 58).” P. *Unknown*, (1981), 156-157. P. *Unknown*, (1964), 126-127.

¹⁹Cf. Panikkar, “Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus. Die innere Unzulänglichkeit einer nicht-christlichen Welt,” *Neues Abendland*, 10 (May 1955) 261.

²⁰Panikkar, *Trinity*, 54.

²¹Panikkar, “...‘non-Christians,’” [1965] *Cross Currents*, 22 (1972) 285.

forth of Christ,²³ and "are on the way to becoming the one Christ,"²⁴ the one Thou of God.

As every being *qua* being is a Christophany, there is no real relation outside or independent of Christ; there is no communication without Christ. There is no human relation from which Christ is absent. Wherever there are two or more gathered in His name, there He is present (Mt 18:20).²⁵

Nobody can go to God the Father (in *Advaitic* terms, nobody can become or reach and thus be the Absolute) but in and through Christ. That is to say that the mediatorship of Christ is total and unique. If something or somebody could be the link between God and the world, this would be Christ.²⁶ It "is what Christ stands for. If something links you to other men and to the Absolute that is Christ."²⁷ Only the CHRIST, who began the ontological mediatory function from the beginning of creation, can cause the mediation between religions.²⁸

'CHRIST': Common to Christianity and Hinduism

In speaking of the reality "which Christians call Christ:"²⁹ Panikkar is trying to achieve a meeting of the two religions. For it is impossible to declare something common and a meeting point if it is already possessed and monopolized by only one party. It must be common to both. In fact, Christianity has no exclusive claim over CHRIST, "Christ does not belong to Christianity; he belongs to his Father only."³¹ Panikkar may be reminding us of the words of Paul: "For all things are yours,... whether... the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3: 21b-23). Instead of Christianity possessing Christ, Christ possesses both Christianity and Hinduism. "It is Christianity and

²²Cf. Panikkar, *Trinity*, 54; Panikkar, "...non-Christians'," [1965] *Cross Currents*, 22 (1972) 285; Panikkar, "Dialogue between Ian and Ray: Is Jesus Christ unique?" Raimundo Panikkar and Ian Stephens Ian, *Theoria to Theory*, Vol. I (Jan. 1967), 131.

²³Panikkar, *Trinity*, 54.

²⁴Panikkar, "...Christ unique?" *Theoria to Theory* (1967), 131.

²⁵Panikkar, "...non-Christians'," *Cross Currents* 22 (1972) 292.

²⁶Panikkar, "...non-Christians'," *Cross Currents* 22 (1972) 295.

²⁷Panikkar, "...Christ unique?" *Theoria to Theory* (1967), 131.

²⁸"Only in Christ are the Meeting and the Embrace Possible," *P. Unknown* (1964), 25.

²⁹ *P. Unknown* (1981), 2, 37, 49, 93, 101.

³⁰ *P. Unknown* (1981), 37: The "reality...what Christians cannot but call Christ." Cf. also Panikkar, *Salvation in Christ: Concreteness and Universality, the Superscript*, Santa Barbara, 1972, 79.

³¹ *P. Unknown*, (1981), 54.

Hinduism as well, that belong to Christ, though in two different levels."³²

Presence of CHRIST in Hinduism

CHRIST is not the God of a particular Religion. He is not a God among other gods, nor is He to displace other gods. He is not one of the Avatars. He is the Lord of creation and of History. He is the Lord of the gods. He is the hidden one under the faces of all real and honest beloved gods. In those gods the face of the Lord is hidden, waiting for a full revelation. It is He who receives the prayers of the peoples, when they sincerely and lovingly worship their gods. He is the unknown receiver of all good works.³³ CHRIST is "efficient and present in any authentic religion, regardless of its name and form."³⁴ In fact, the aim of one of the important works of Panikkar is to show, "that there is a living Presence of Christ in Hinduism."³⁵ It is the Christian expectation that "Christ comes at the end of time and that all religions may be pointing towards Him, who shall be the expectation of the peoples (Rom 15:12; etc.)."³⁶ But "Christ is not only at the end but also at the beginning."³⁷ This will help us to realize that "Christ is the beginning and end of all religion."³⁸ It is not very difficult to find the footprints of the saviour in other religions. If religions are relating human beings with the Absolute, then CHRIST, the *religatio* is already there.³⁹ In other religions He may not be recognized as Jesus⁴⁰ or as Christ. The fact that, like Judaism, Hinduism does not accept Christianity does not in any way mean that CHRIST is not there already present.⁴¹ "Christ is not only the ontological goal of Hinduism but also its true inspirer, and His grace is the leading, though hidden, force pushing it towards its full

³²P. *Unknown*, (1964), 20-21; Panikkar, "Confrontation between Hinduism and Christ," *Logos* 10 (1969) 51.

³³Panikkar, *Die vielen Götter und der eine Herr: Beiträge zum Ökumenischen Gespräch der Weltreligionen*, Weilheim/Oberbayern: Otto Wilhelm Barth, 1963, [from now on *Die vielen Götter*, (1963)], 16.

³⁴Panikkar, "Inter-Religious Dialogue: Some Principles (Editorial)," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12 (Summer 1975) 409: "Christ is present and effective in any authentic religion, whatever the form or the name." Panikkar, *Intrareligious Dialogue* (1978), 36.

³⁵P. *Unknown* (1964), ix; Coward, "Panikkar's...Dialogue," *Cross Currents*, (Summer 1979) 185.

³⁶P. *Unknown* (1964), ix-x.

³⁷P. *Unknown* (1964), x.

³⁸Coward, "Panikkar's...Dialogue," *Cross Currents* (Summer 1979) 185.

³⁹Panikkar, *Trinit*, (1975), 53. Panikkar, "...non-Christians'," [1965] *Cross Currents*, 22 (1972) 282.

⁴⁰Panikkar, "...Christ Unique?" *Theoria to Theory* (1967), 131.

⁴¹Cf. Panikkar, *Die vielen Götter* (1963), 133.

disclosure (Jn 1:1; 9-10)."⁴² A Hindu is saved in the total religious context provided by that religion. Though it may be true to say that a Hindu is saved not on account of Hinduism, he or she is not saved in spite of it, but in and through it.⁴³

The Unknown Christ of Hinduism and of Christianity

The CHRIST present in Hinduism is the Unknown Christ. It is not "The Hidden Christ, as though Christians knew the secret and Hindus did not."⁴⁴ The Unknown Christ is neither one who is unknown to Hindus and known to Christians nor vice versa. The 'unknown' Christ of Hinduism can be either unknown, or known *qua* Christ, to Christians and Hindus alike.⁴⁵ The unknown Christ is unknown both to Hinduism and to Christianity.⁴⁶ There is a reality which is unknown, *qua* Christ, to both Christians and Hindus.⁴⁷ It is the mystery hidden for long ages in God.⁴⁸ He is, for the moment, veiled.⁴⁹ The real face, image-*éikon*-of the living God and the saving truth is hidden or distorted by a veil.⁵⁰ The unknown or hidden aspect shows the superior nature of the mystery. It is this mystery CHRIST that is present in Hinduism. The 'Unknown Christ of Hinduism' remains unknown "and yet continues to be Christ."⁵¹ CHRIST, even though unknown, is not a stranger to Hinduism. He is the real light that illumines everyone in the world.⁵²

The mysterious, unknown aspect of Christ is not totally unknown to the mystical understanding of Christian tradition.⁵³ He is the expectation of the peoples (Gen 49:10), His spirit is at work among

⁴²P. *Unknown*, (1964), x.

⁴³J.B. Chethimattam, CMI, "Indian Approaches to Christology: R. Panikkar's Approach to Christology," *The Indian Journal of Theology* 23 (1974) 219-220. Cf. also P. *Unknown* (1964), 59-60.

⁴⁴P. *Unknown* (1981), 26.

⁴⁵P. *Unknown* (1981), 26.

⁴⁶Cf. P. *Unknown* (1981), 20-6; Slater, "Hindu & Christian Symbols...", *Cross Currents* 29 (Summer 1979) 181.

⁴⁷To this unknown "the name 'Christ' could be applied once it is made clear that both sides can make a meaningful use of it." P. *Unknown* (1981), 26. Cf. also P. *Unknown* (1981), 50.

⁴⁸P. *Unknown* (1964), 25. In P. *Unknown* (1981), 59.

⁴⁹P. *Unknown* (1964), 25. In P. *Unknown* (1981), 59.

⁵⁰Cf. Panikkar, "...non-Christians'," [1965] *Cross Currents*, 22 (1972) 297.

⁵¹P. *Unknown* (1981), 30. "...any religion is mysteriously orientated towards Christ and Christ, mysteriously but no less really, works within it." Panikkar, "Church and the World Religions," [1966] *Religion and Society*, 14, (no. 2, 1967) 63.

⁵²"...that unknown reality, which Christians call *Christ*, discovered in the heart of Hinduism, not as a stranger to it, but as its very *principle of life*, as the light which illumines every Man who comes into the World (Cf. Jn 1:9)." P. *Unknown* (1981), 20.

⁵³Cf. P. *Unknown*, (1981), 26.

non-believers (Rom 15:21, quoting Isa 52:15). He is already found by those who do not seek Him (Rom 10:20; cf. Isa 65:1). He is the hidden God of Isaiah 45:15; and the unknown God of Acts 17:23. He is the one present in the hearts of people of good will (Cf. Luke 2:14).⁵⁴ Just as the kingdom of God is not visibly noticeable, so too after the resurrection Christ himself is not always recognizable (Lk 24:13-16ff; Jn 20: 14).⁵⁵ Christ's thirty years of hidden life continues down through the centuries.⁵⁶ And it will always continue, for "...Christ will never be totally known on earth, because that would amount to seeing the Father whom nobody can see."⁵⁷

The Unknown Christ: the Link between Hinduism and Christianity

The acknowledgement of the presence of Christ in Hinduism⁵⁸ gives us a vision of the relation between Hinduism and Christianity,⁵⁹ between "the cosmic religions and the religion of his Son."⁶⁰ Hinduism is not another religion, another *dharma*, altogether, but a part or stage of the same *sanatanadharma*, eternal religion: this is the self designation of Hinduism which Christianity also claims to be.⁶¹ Hinduism is the concrete expression of the existential *dharma*.⁶² Therefore, in the historical unfolding of God's revelation there is a kind of pluralistic continuity held together by what Christians call Christ. Thus the existential *dharma* of Hinduism belongs to what Christians call the economy of salvation.⁶³ This claim is substantiated by Christian faith itself: that God, who has spoken through the prophets and *rishis* (sages),⁶⁴ and the expectation of the peoples,⁶⁵ "has sent once for all his living and personal Word – one with him – to fulfil all justice, all *dharmas*."⁶⁶ This brings a "peculiar dialectic"⁶⁷ of Hinduism and Christianity, such as "potency-act, seed-fruit,

⁵⁴P. *Unknown* (1981), 88.

⁵⁵P. *Unknown* (1981), 13.

⁵⁶"...not only is God a 'hidden God' (Is 45:15), but also that Christ is having a follow-up of twenty centuries of his thirty years of occult life" (Cf. Jn 7:3-5; Col 3:3; etc.) P. *Unknown* (1964), xiii.

⁵⁷P. *Unknown* (1981), 8.

⁵⁸Cf. P. *Unknown* (1964), 19. Cf. P. *Unknown* (1981), 50.

⁵⁹Cf. Panikkar, "Eine Betrachtung über Melchisedech," *Kairos* 1 (1959) 10.

⁶⁰P. *Unknown* (1964), 59.

⁶¹Cf. P. *Unknown*, (1964), 19. Panikkar, *Vedic Experience. Mantramañjarī: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration*, Los Angeles & Berkeley: University of California Press, and London: Darton, Logman and Todd, 1979, 876.

⁶²Cf. P. *Unknown*, (1964), 19; P. *Unknown*, (1981), 50.

⁶³P. *Unknown*, (1981), 50.

⁶⁴P. *Unknown*, (1964), 19. Cf. P. *Unknown*, (1981), 50.

⁶⁵Cf. Panikkar, "...über Melchisedech," *Kairos* 1 (1959) 10.

⁶⁶P. *Unknown* (1981), 50-51, 89. Hebrew 1:1. Cf. P. *Unknown* (1964), 19.

⁶⁷P. *Unknown* (1964), 58

forerunner-real presence, symbol-reality, desire-accomplishment, allegory-thing in itself."⁶⁸ "Hinduism is the starting point of a religion that culminates in Christianity."⁶⁹ Hinduism is the precursor.⁷⁰ It is Christianity in potency;⁷¹ it already contains "the symbolism of the Christian reality."⁷² In Hinduism there is a desire for fullness and that fullness is Christ; and so Hinduism is already pointing towards it.⁷³ This does not mean that mere natural prolongation will eventually lead from one to the other.⁷⁴ The transit is neither a natural nor an automatic one. It is not an immanent evolution.⁷⁵ Christianity is not just "a continuation or merely natural prolongation of an earlier religion, but... [it is] the actual new and decisive step towards fullness."⁷⁶ Such a decisive step is necessary for Hinduism. The dialectic involved is not merely reducible to the relationship between *Old* and *New* covenants.⁷⁷ For if Hinduism and Christianity both move in the same direction, yet the transition from one *to* the other implies a conversion, a *pascha*,⁷⁸ a mystery of death and resurrection.⁷⁹

Recognizing the Unknown Christ by Hinduism

"Hinduism is the desired bride whose betrothal was celebrated long ago in...Vedic times." But she is not yet his spouse.⁸⁰ The marriage still remains in the mystery of history.⁸¹ For CHRIST has not unveiled his whole face, has not yet completed his mission in Hinduism. He still has to grow up and to be recognized.⁸² Christianity discovers Christ in Hinduism. Christ appears there, "somewhat as a prisoner in a body which still has to die and to rise again, to be converted into 'Church' in the precise theological sense of the word."⁸³ The Christian belief in the mystery of death and resurrection is an example. The Christian "is born a 'pagan' and must first be converted – he must die and rise again in order to become a son of God, a partaker of the

⁶⁸P. *Unknown* (1981), 71, also, 90.

⁶⁹P. *Unknown* (1964), 58; Panikkar, "...über Melchisedech," *Kairos* 1 (1959) 14.

⁷⁰Cf. Panikkar, "...über Melchisedech," *Kairos* 1 (1959) 13.

⁷¹Cf. P. *Unknown* (1964), 59.

⁷²P. *Unknown* (1964), 60. Cf. P. *Unknown* (1981) 90.

⁷³P. *Unknown* (1964), 60; P. *Unknown* (1981), 90.

⁷⁴P. *Unknown* (1964), 58.

⁷⁵P. *Unknown* (1964), 60.

⁷⁶P. *Unknown* (1981), 90.

⁷⁷P. *Unknown* (1964), 58.

⁷⁸P. *Unknown* (1964), 58.

⁷⁹P. *Unknown* (1964), 60; cf. 17-18.

⁸⁰P. *Unknown* (1964), 17-18.

⁸¹P. *Unknown* (1964), 18.

⁸²P. *Unknown* (1964), 17.

⁸³P. *Unknown* (1964), 18.

divine life."⁸⁴ Christ's encounter with Hinduism calls for death. "The Christ that confronts Hinduism presents himself as its death and resurrection."⁸⁵ By the work of the *antaryamin*, the inner guide, which Christians call Christ,⁸⁶ Hinduism must "descend into the living waters of baptism in order to rise again transformed."⁸⁷ It is this death that Judaism and Hellenistic religions have already experienced. Hinduism is to rise again, "but then as a risen Hinduism, as Christianity. The case of Judaism presents a unique historical feature indeed, but the analogy still holds."⁸⁸

As death is not a total annihilation, conversion is not a total replacement of tradition, or religion. It is a changing into a new life, a new existence, a new creation, which is precisely the old one – and not another – transformed, lifted up, risen again.⁸⁹ What will emerge out of the water of death will not be 'another thing, another religion.'⁹⁰ For the Christian mystery of resurrection is not an alienation.⁹¹ What emerges from the waters of baptism will be the true Hinduism,⁹² a 'better form of Hinduism,'⁹³ consciously acknowledging the CHRIST, the redeemer, the *antaryamin*, that was present in it unknown. Then, passing from "the previous limiting beliefs concerning the nature of Man,...[Hinduism] will be 'resurrected' in true knowledge of the cosmotheandric reality."⁹⁴

The Duty of Christianity of Finding the Full Face of Christ

Christianity also must find the true full face of Christ. Hinduism and Christianity both meet in death.⁹⁵ "Christ who is already present in Hinduism and whom Christians can recognize and revere there has not yet completed his mission here on earth, either in Christianity or Hinduism. 'If the grain of wheat does not die...'"⁹⁶ So death is needed not only on the part of Hinduism, but also on the part of Christianity.⁹⁷ If by death Hinduism realizes consciously the living

⁸⁴P. *Unknown* (1964), 18.

⁸⁵Panikkar, "...Hinduism and Christ," *Logos* (1969) 51.

⁸⁶P. *Unknown* (1981), 93.

⁸⁷P. *Unknown* (1964), 60.

⁸⁸P. *Unknown* (1964), 17.

⁸⁹P. *Unknown* (1964), 18.

⁹⁰P. *Unknown* (1964), 60.

⁹¹P. *Unknown* (1964), 60.

⁹²Just as "the true Aristotle is that of thirteenth century," as St Thomas Aquinas tried to explicate what is in the philosophy of Aristotle. P. *Unknown* (1981), 167.

⁹³P. *Unknown* (1964), 61.

⁹⁴P. *Unknown* (1981), 93-94.

⁹⁵Cf. P. *Unknown* (1964), 18. P. *Unknown* (1981), 49.

⁹⁶P. *Unknown* (1981), 50.

⁹⁷Panikkar, *Kerygma und Indien...* (1967), 9-10.

presence of the unknown Christ and confesses CHRIST as the Lord, by death Christianity realizes the real, the total, the unknown face of Christ. This death has a 'missionary' motive too. When Christians have found the full and real face of Christ it will be easier for Hindus to acknowledge the same Christ working in them. "The more Christ shines in Christians and in Christianity the easier will it be for Hindus themselves to make the discovery."⁹⁸ Of course Christianity must not undergo a second death, a second baptism. But a special asceticism, a stripping off of all externals, of garb and superficial form, and a lonely vigil with the naked Christ, dead and alive on the Cross is needed.⁹⁹ If the goal of Hinduism is CHRIST and Christianity, it is not the present form of Christianity or the present image of CHRIST held by Christianity. But it is a perfect Christianity that seeks to embrace the fullness of Christ. In search of this perfection there is need for the "real mysticism, an immediate contact with Christ which carries the Christian beyond – not against – formulae and explanations. Only then is it possible to discover Christ where he is, for the moment, veiled; only then is it possible to help unveil or reveal the mystery hidden for long ages in God."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

The Hindu-Christian *Sangam* is through 'the unknown Christ of Hinduism.' By the confluence both Hinduism and Christianity will come to the understanding of Christ, as the cosmotheandric reality.¹⁰¹ Panikkar finds the presence of CHRIST in other religions. At the same time he avoids to name the unifying mystery 'Jesus,'¹⁰² the historical manifestation or symbol of the saving mystery.¹⁰³ He tries to make CHRIST, as universal. Panikkar's intention is to give momentum for an ecumenical ecumenism, unity between Hinduism and Christianity without losing their plurality. Now the "and" between Hinduism and Christianity, passing from mere integration, assimilation or conversion, has to achieve a higher harmony or, rather, a full symphony. The model for this is the "and," ambivalent and transcendental, in the Trinity: Father and Son and Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁴

Panikkar's vision is that the unity of Hinduism and Christianity is in "the *who* whom Christians see in Jesus."¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸P. *Unknown* (1964), 61.

⁹⁹Cf. P. *Unknown* (1981), 59; cf. also, ix-x.

¹⁰⁰P. *Unknown* (1981), 59.

¹⁰¹P. *Unknown* (1981), 94.

¹⁰²Panikkar, "...Christ unique?" *Theoria to Theory* (1967), 131.

¹⁰³Panikkar, *Salvation in Christ...* (1972), 71.

¹⁰⁴P. *Unknown* (1981), 96.

¹⁰⁵Panikkar, *Salvation in Christ...* (1972), 72.