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## Cook's "Faith in a pluralist age" (book review)

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# Book Reviews

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Cook, K.V. (Ed.). (2018). *Faith in a pluralist age*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books. 154 pp. \$20.00. ISBN 9781532609947

*Faith in a pluralist age* is a collection of nine essays that explore the argument expressed by Peter Berger, Professor Emeritus of Religion, Sociology and Theology at Boston University, that pluralism, not secularism, best explains the cultural changes that have been accompanying modernization. In the book's first essay "Faith in a Pluralist Age", Berger states that many social thinkers argue that modernity produces secularism and religion is marginalized, however, through cultural globalization, religion has flourished and is proliferating throughout the world. In part, Berger argues that modernity produces religious pluralism and subsequently space is created for secular discourse and secular institutions. To maintain a peaceful religious pluralistic society, it is vital to accept secular and diverse religious spaces.

Edited by Kaye Cook, Professor of Psychology at Gordon College, the following essays, which are written by college professors, either critique the claims Berger makes in his essay or explore Berger's proposition in different cultural settings. For instance, in his essay "Faith and Politics in a Pluralist Age", Paul Brink, Professor of Political Science at Gordon College, uses the political dimension to demonstrate the challenges that pluralism creates for society. He contends that both the religious and secular have to make sense of the new pluralistic world and politics provides opportunities to explore the difficulties that surface with pluralism due to its efforts to appease different views. Also, in the essay, "Evangelical Christianity and Women's Roles in Contemporary Brazil: Marginalization or Modernization", Ruth Melkonian-Hoover, Associate Professor of Political Science from Gordon College, points out how pluralism is effecting the culture in Brazil. She claims that pluralism has led to a growth of Evangelical Christianity amongst Brazilian women.

With all the responding essays written from a Christian point of view, all but one lack Peter Berger's much larger view of pluralism. That essay covers religious persecution by Hindu nationalists in India. Without this broader view, the reader misses Berger's point that through modernization and globalization, pluralism has effected different cultures and religions throughout the world. He claims that through his travels he has seen Iranians celebrating Shia festival of Ashura in New York City, a group of

white Hare Krishna in Vienna, and Christmas displays and music in the shops of Tokyo during Christmas. The book would have benefitted from a broader world and religious view of pluralism.

That being said, I did find the subjects of the essays very interesting and believe that both undergraduate and graduate students would benefit from the ideas presented in *Faith in a pluralist age*. We are being told that modernity has brought forth a secular age. However, Peter Berger has strongly demonstrated that in truth, religion is thriving throughout the world and that it is pluralism on the rise. I recommend this book for all institutions of higher education.

**Reviewer**

Samuel S. Richardson, University of Tennessee at Martin