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Introducing the Bulletin

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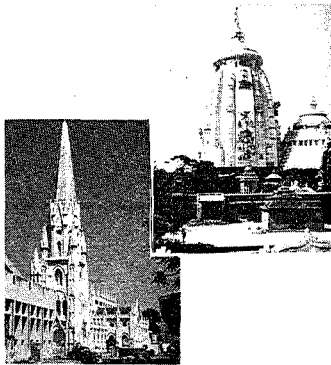
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HINDU-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

BULLETIN

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Introducing the Bulletin

The Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin is a scholarly journal published jointly at the Calgary Institute for the Humanities, Calgary, Canada and at the Institute of Philosophy and Culture, Madras, India. The annual issues will present articles, book reviews, viewpoint essays and news items on Hinduism and Christianity and their interrelationship based upon historical materials and contemporary experience.

Materials selected for publication will be balanced between historical research and contemporary practice, and, where possible, should employ analytical and theoretical analysis set within the context of our shared human experience. The aim of the journal is to create a world-wide forum for the presentation of Hindu-Christian scholarly studies, book reviews and news of past and upcoming events. Contributions are invited for the next issue and should be addressed to either the Editor or Co-Editor. All articles are subject to review before acceptance and may receive editorial modifications in the course of publication. In the early stage of the Bulletin's development only brief articles of no longer than 10pp double spaced typing with notes at the end will be accepted for consideration. Please send news items of publications, books to be reviewed, conferences, dialogue meetings, research activities, special events, etc. to the Editors. Your comments on this first issue are welcomed by the editors. It is our hope that this Bulletin will serve to foster solid scholarship in the area of Hindu-Christian Studies.

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Hindu-Christian Dialogue: A Review

Hindu-Christian dialogue has had a long and checkered history. Up until the beginning of this century most of the Hindu-Christian interaction took place in India. The first half of this century saw the expansion of Hindu-Christian discussion to Europe and North America. World-wide pluralism in the decades since the Fifties has resulted in a gradual intensification of this interaction at both the lay and scholarly levels. But aside from sporadic events, there has been no broad and sustained Hindu-Christian dialogue.

Recent scholarship has shown that there was considerable trade and intellectual contact between India and the Graeco-Roman world during the first few centuries after Christ.¹ Hindu thought seems to have influenced the Neo-Platonists and is specifically commented upon by Clement of Alexandria (C.E.200). During the Medieval Period, however, this early interaction deteriorated into a Christianized myth based on Biblical allegories which painted India as a land

griffons, monsters and demons lying somewhere East of the terrestrial Paradise.² There is much speculation regarding early Christian activity in India. According to the fourth-century Christian historian, Eusebius, St. Thomas was allotted a mission territory reaching across northwest India as far as the Indus, although no definite trace of Christianity can be found in that region. Tradition, however, continues to connect Thomas with India. Gregory, Bishop of Tours (ca. 580 C.E.), mentions that Thomas's relics rest in an elaborate church in South India and Marco Polo (ca. 1290) locates this church in Mylapore just South of Madras. There is definite evidence of a Persian, perhaps Nestorian, Christian community in Southern India in the seventh or eighth century, but there seems to have been little Christian impact upon Hinduism.³

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