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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

WITH THIS ISSUE the *Bulletin* becomes the official journal of the newly formed Society for Hindu-Christian Studies. The *Bulletin* has played a key role over the past six years in bringing together a core group of some 40 scholars from India, Europe and North America which has now resulted in the formation of a society to foster Hindu-Christian scholarly studies. The first President of the new society is Francis Clooney, S.J., with Vasudha Narayanan as the first Vice-President, Lance Nelson as Secretary, and Anantanand Rambachan as Treasurer. I continue as Editor of the *Bulletin*. More details as to the organization of the new society, its officers, and how to become a member are included on the inside of the back cover. Society meetings will take place each year in conjunction with the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion, on the Saturday morning. Thus the 1995 Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday 18 November, 9:00–11:30 a.m. in Philadelphia. The program is being organized by Vasudha Narayanan.

This issue features Francis Clooney as a

guest editor for the focus of the first set of articles on Prof. Dharmapal's *Bhāratiya Chitta Manas and Kāla*. The discussion offered focuses on issues familiar to the Christian tradition in its struggle with modernity. The commentators, two Hindu and two Christian, raise critical issues that are often new or different to the Christian experience. The dialogue format is intended to generate comments from our readers, both Hindu and Christian. We particularly look forward to a response from Prof. Dharmapal, to be published in our next issue. This issue also contains stimulating articles from Anantanand Rambachan and Michael Stoeber which offer contrasting assessments of the role of personal experience in Hindu-Christian dialogue.

Also new in this issue is a cumulative index covering 1988 to the present. For this the *Bulletin* is grateful to Shirley Embra, who compiled the Index with technical assistance from Ludgard De Decker.

Harold Coward
Editor

**Society for Hindu-Christian Studies: Annual Meeting
Saturday 18 November 1995 – 9:00–11:30 a.m.
at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Philadelphia**

At the Saturday morning session of the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (details of time and place will come in the AAR Program), the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies will take up as its topic for discussion "Polytheism as a Religious Reality". Following the discussion, the Society's Annual Meeting will be held.

This topic follows from issues raised at last year's meeting. To focus our discussion on polytheism – what does the word "polytheism" mean, how does polytheism function in the various Hindu traditions, how do Hindus and Christians respond to it – we will consider the case of Srivaisnavism – a religious tradition which on the one hand seems nearly monotheistic (Visnu, with the Goddess Sri) while on the other celebrating a diversity of vivid, vital, smaller deities. Several respondents will open our discussion. There will be a small package of preliminary readings available from Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Theology Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3806, USA.