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Introductory Information and Introduction

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The Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin is an annual scholarly journal published jointly at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, Canada, and at the Institute of Philosophy and Culture, Madras, India. The *Bulletin* is the official publication of the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies.

The aim of the *Bulletin* is to create a worldwide forum for the presentation of Hindu-Christian scholarly studies, book reviews, and news of past and upcoming events. Materials selected for publication will be balanced between historical research and contemporary practice and, where possible, will employ analytical and theoretical analysis set within the context of our shared contemporary experience. Contributions are invited and may be addressed to either the Editor or the Co-Editor. Articles of 3000-3500 words are preferred. Send manuscript in paper form as well as on diskette. A stylesheet is available on request. The *Bulletin* adopts a policy of non-gender specific language where applicable. All articles are subject to review before acceptance and may receive editorial modification in the course of publication.

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HINDU-CHRISTIAN STUDIES BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

SOME YEARS BACK I wrote a book examining the way scripture functions in each of the major religions (*Sacred Word and Sacred Text: Scripture in World Religions*. Orbis, 1988, recently republished in India). In it I showed how both Hindu and Christian scripture begin as oral poetry and only later became written text. I also argued that the transforming power of the word is in its oral form. More recently Wilfred Cantwell Smith published a comparative historical analysis of the form and concept of Hindu and Christian scripture (*What is Scripture?* Fortress, 1993). And the 1991 issue of this *Bulletin* examined Protestant Bible translations in India as an early form of Hindu-Christian dialogue.

In this issue of the *Bulletin* the role and function of scripture in Hinduism and Christianity are the focus. Hindu and Christian scholars discuss scripture as a source of knowledge and a means to release or salvation. Rambachan, basing his analysis on classical Hindu philosophy, shows that scripture, namely the Veda, is understood to be a source of valid metaphysical knowledge but limited in relation to everyday life where perception and inference have higher authority. Sugirtharajah finds the Christian Bible to be judged differently in different contexts: in the parish as the confessional word of God; in academia as a historical or literary document; and in the pluralistic

context as but one of many sacred texts.

The role of Hindu scripture in salvation or release is studied by Allen and Yadav. They offer a careful technical discussion of the contrasting roles of scripture in Śāṅkara and Kumarila and find the latter to be closer to the Christian view (especially as found in the Gospel of John). In both, the words are efficacious and action oriented, leading to salvation/release. Finally DeRoche offers a balanced presentation of the Christian understanding of the relation between scripture and salvation – especially helpful to our Hindu readers.

Other articles in this issue include a response to the discussion of the thought of Sri Dharampal in the 1995 issue; an analysis of Bishop Reginald Heber (the second Anglican Bishop of Calcutta, 1783-1826) and his contribution to Hindu-Christian dialogue; and David Scott notes that 80% of dialogue occurs not at the level of the theological elites of Hinduism and Christianity (where most academic analysis has focused) but rather at the level of popular religiosity. He calls our attention to several studies of popular religious interaction by Carl Diehl, P.Y. Luke, John Carman, and David Mosse.

Harold Coward
Editor

Society for Hindu-Christian Studies: Annual Meeting

Saturday 23 November 1996 - 9:00 a.m.

at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, New Orleans

Discussion Topic: "The Hindu Experience in North America as a Context for Hindu-Christian Studies". Presenters: Raymond Williams (Wabash College): The experience of Hindus who have come to North America; Sri Tamal Krishna Goswami (Perkins School of Theology): The experience of North Americans of non-Hindu background who have become Hindus.

A brief business meeting will follow the discussion. At this meeting we will elect several new board members, and a new vice-president to succeed Vasudha Narayanan, who becomes president at the end of the meeting. Nominations are welcome. Contact Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Theology Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3806, USA, Phone 617 552 3884, Fax 617 552 8219.