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## Briefly Noted

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involved on the Vedānta side. He might have done better to read one or another whole Upaniṣad, along with a traditional commentary, to see how claims regarding the identity of the human self and the ultimate Self functioned in some actual context. This process would obviously have been more time-consuming, and other comparisons would have been left out, but the result would have been more fruitful.

Since Bracken legitimately relies on secondary sources, he would have strengthened his case by evaluating the philosophical status of this borrowing. Just as he uses Whitehead's categories in a legitimately vague manner, he needs also to assess the philosophical status of the secondary and derivative representations he makes of Asian traditions. It is one thing to generalize from materials in which one is expert, and quite another to draw conclusions about less familiar traditions, based on summations gleaned from secondary sources. Though such conclusions are inevitable, it is important not to think of them as "windows" on the actual philosophical thinking of the culture. Rather, they represent a complex cross-cultural derivation in which concepts such as "Vedānta" and "Taoism" vacillate in status between being iterable entities and elusive

processes. In the end, perhaps, the entire comparative philosophical process is itself properly ambiguous and properly vague; this is fine, but it must be noted as such.

Since the core of this book is very much his own philosophical adventure, perhaps Bracken should have been more autobiographical too, so that we could better assess the creative and dynamic nature of his project. Has his notion of "creativity" changed due to the studies undertaken in this book? Does he read Whitehead differently, because of his readings of Vedānta and Taoism? No indication is given here of what changes might have taken place. Is this because Whitehead got things right in the first place?

In any case, *The Divine Matrix* invites us to undertake further comparative philosophical and theological exercises: for example, a focused rereading of Whitehead in light of the categories of some particular school of Buddhist thought; or a more prolonged and focused reflection on the Thomistic language of being, in light of Vedānta. Indeed, we look for such works from Bracken's own pen.

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## Briefly Noted

*Inter-Faith Dialogue and World Community*. Ch. Sreenivasa Rao (Ed.), Madras: The Diocesan Press, 1991, xxxix+282 pp.

This collection of 27 articles represents papers given at a five-day International Seminar on Inter-Faith Dialogue for National Integration and Human Solidarity, conducted at the Madras Christian College in 1986. The Seminar focused on two central problems of religious pluralism in modern society: one at the social level, the other at the theological level.

The editor, a scholar of comparative

philosophy and religion, in particular Hinduism and Christianity, provides an introductory overview of Hindu-Christian dialogue during the past 150 years which he concludes with a brief outline of Hick's theory of pluralism. The book contains five parts beginning with "Inter-Faith Dialogue and World Community", followed by "Religious Pluralism and Peaceful Co-Existence", "Dialogue and Religious Studies", "Inter-Faith Dialogue and World Community", and "Dialogue of Religions for Communal Harmony and World Peace".

Among the Christian contributors are Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, Rev. Dr Wesley Ariarajah, Dr Klaus Klostermaier, Rev. Fr Bede Griffiths, Rev. Dr Russell Chandran, and Rev. Fr Thomas Michel. Hinduism contributors include Dr Karan Singh, Dr Santhosh Sen Gupta, Dr Ramgee Singh, and Dr S.S. Raghavachar. Papers by representatives of Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Judaism and Bahaism are also included.

*Current Dialogue*. World Council of Churches, Switzerland, No. 29, January 1996.

Editor Rev. Hans Ucho's "Travel Report from India" covers workshops he attended on Hindu-Christian relations held between 2 and 18 October 1995.

A workshop on "Issues on Hindu-Christian Relations", held at Kamaraj University, Madurai, invited Hindus and Christians to say what they thought about each other as a first step toward developing

mutually derived guidelines for future dialogue. The participants produced a statement which is appended to Rev. Ucho's report.

"Working for Harmony in the Contemporary World: a Hindu-Christian Dialogue" was the subject of a workshop sponsored by the Federation of Asian Bishops held in New Delhi at the Indian Social Institute. Areas of disharmony in economic, social, and political affairs were first identified, followed by a comparison of Hindu and Christian concepts of harmony. Examples of collaboration between Hindus and Christians were also identified.

The role of religion in exploring modern-day threats and obstacles to the quest for human community with a view to developing an ecclesiology and missiology relevant in a religiously plural world was the topic of another workshop, held at United Theological College, Bangalore. A participants' report is included, and the papers will be published by the UTC.

### ***Recent Articles of Interest***

Chethimattam, Fr. John B. "Hundred Years of Hindu-Christian Dialogue", *Prabuddha Bharata (Awakened India)*, (centenary issue), January, 1995, pp. 393-4.

Coward, Harold. "The Ecological Implications of Karma Theory", *Religious Studies and Theology*, 3&4 December 1995, pp.48-54

Eck, Diana L. "Reflections on Religious Diversity", *Sikh Review*, 43,4, April 1995.

Hirudayam, Ignatius, S.J. "The Mental and Mystical Journey of Fr. Bede Griffiths", *Prabuddha Bharata (Awakened India)*, (centenary issue), January 1995.

Klostermaier, Klaus. "Reflections on Divine Names in Hindu and Biblical Traditions", *Journal of Vaisnava Studies*, 2,2, Spring 1994.

Nayak, G.C. "Religious Language and Religion: The Periphery and the Core", *Religious Studies and Theology*, 13-14, December 1995, pp.94-102.