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Introductory Information and Introduction

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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. It 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.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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For subscription information within India, please write to the Co-Editor, Anand Amaladass, at the address above.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I began the Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin in 1988 out of a felt need for a world journal to focus on Hindu-Christian scholarly interaction. After a slow beginning the journal has "come of age" in the last few years. This is due in no small measure to the dedicated contributions of Shirley Embra, the Bulletin's volunteer Production Assistant, who has worked hard at increasing our list of individual and library subscribers. In India, my co-editor Anand Amaladass has seen to the printing and distribution of each issue in that country. Overall our India and North America/Europe distribution now exceeds 400 copies for each issue. Also peaking at this time is scholarly interest in Hindu-Christian Studies – as evidenced by the strong attendance at our panel sessions held in the AAR/SBL Annual Meetings.

As my retirement from The University of Victoria approaches, I am pleased to announce that beginning with the 2002

Issue, Bradley Malkovsky will take over from me as Editor – and his institution, Notre Dame University has agreed to provide an office along with secretarial and type-setting support. The move from The University of Victoria to Notre Dame will take place in August 2001 after the mailing of the 2001 Issue.

As a founding group of scholars prepares to hand over to a new generation, it is an appropriate time to ask "how has our thinking changed"? Murray Rogers, who has been living Hindu-Christian dialogue over half a century, reports that "I used to think... that becoming in any way Hindu, sharing their presuppositions, would be a loss, almost a disaster, to me a Christian! Now... I sense that their Hindu way and experience is an immeasurable gift to me." This change he illustrates in his perceptions "then and now" of the Kumbh Mela.

Society for Hindu-Christian Studies: Annual Meeting
Friday, 16 November 2001
Saturday, 17 November 2001
at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion /
Society of Biblical Literature
Denver, CO

Panel Discussions on "Poverty, Politics & Religion", and
"Hindu Readings of a Christian Classic" as well as the Annual Business Meeting.

Both parts are open to all who are interested.

Contact: Kay Jordan, Secretary of the Society at kjordan@runet.edu, or see
www.acusd.edu/theo/hcs-l)

For further details, see p. 35.

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Seshagiri Rao offers a Hindu perspective on Hindu-Christian dialogue, and how his thinking on it has changed. He describes how he first encountered Christianity under Gandhi's influence that led young Hindu students to study the Bible and the Gita. After recounting the impact of the "Christian Triumphalism" of the Colonial era, Rao describes his dialogue experiences, especially through the World Council of Churches, and concludes that through such dialogue "I have understood much about Christianity, but also much about my own religious tradition." He also calls for Christianity and Hinduism to work together against the tides of violence and materialism so as to humanize humanity.

Anantanand Rambachan reflects on how his encounter with other religions, such as Christianity, has changed his assessment of the Advaita doctrine of God. Instead of a complete separation between *nirguna* (higher) and *saguna* (lower) *brahman*, with the latter being reduced to a worldly object, Rambachan invokes the Christian concept of God as both immanent and transcendent as be a better reflection of Upanisadic teaching. Instead of diminishing the value of the world and human existence within it, Rambachan's reading finds *nirguna* and *saguna* to be complementary rather than

exclusive and hierarchial – pointing to a creator Brahman that is both immanent and transcendent.

In his very timely article William Cenkner examines the development of Hindu-Christian studies over the years. He finds that dialogical approaches have more to offer than dialectical or contextual studies. The dialectical suffers by not reaching the foundational insight of the other, and emphasis on context does not always lead one back to the originating text. Inter-religious dialogue, especially as manifested in the metaphorically rich Hindu and Christian traditions, avoids these limitations in Cenkner's scholarly experience.

Kenneth Cracknell in his "Viewpoint" recounts how the thinking of each of us has been changed by Martin Buber, Wilfrid Cantwell Smith and Ninan Smart. Each found ways through "the impasse of mutual misunderstanding, suspicion, and cultural arrogance" which marked the old relationship between the Hindu and Christian traditions. The challenge of each of us is to build on the insights present in all of these "changes of thinking."

Harold Coward, Editor
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NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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