

January 2005

Reports & News

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Recommended Citation

(2005) "Reports & News," *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*: Vol. 18, Article 13.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7825/2164-6279.1346>

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REPORTS AND NEWS

2004 Annual General Meeting San Antonio, Texas

Friday, November 19, 2004

7:30 – 9:30 PM: A panel discussion of "Hindu *Ekklesia*, Christian *Sampradaya*? A Gift Exchange" was held, which brought a comparative perspective to ritual and theological visions of religious community and the question of community reform. Although defined quite variously throughout Christian history, the specific identity of the religious community as an *ekkleisia*, or church, has always been held as one of the core elements of Christian faith. In a comparable vein, the question of participation in the correct *sampradaya*, or teaching tradition, is a very prominent aspect of Hindu discussions around bondage and liberation. In their contributions, panelists offered new analytical insights into the specific nature, scope and mission of the religious institution or religious community *qua* religious community. Thus we were able to explore questions of religious institution and religious community in the mode of a "gift exchange" between and among Hindu and Christian traditions.

Many thanks to **Reid Locklin** of the University of Toronto for organizing the panel. **Rachel McDermott** (Barnard College), presided and initiated conversation. The panelists were: **Timothy Dobe**, Harvard University, **Reid Locklin**, **Michael McLaughlin**, Saint Leo University, **Rita Sherma**, Binghamton University, **Lise Vail**, Montclair State University.

Saturday, November 20th, 2004

9:00 - 10:45 AM: On Saturday morning, a panel discussion was held on the topic of "Book Banning and the Spectacle of Censorship in Hinduism and Christianity."

This panel was organized by **Deepak Sarma**, Case Western Reserve University, in response to the controversy stirred by historian James Laine's representation of Shivaji in his book, *Shivaji: Hindu King in Muslim India* (Oxford University Press, 2004). On January 5th, 2004, groups angered by what they took to be the author's defamation of Shivaji's character attacked the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, India. With the aim of achieving greater understanding of this and similar controversies, this panel undertook a historical and comparative examination of the reception of scholarship on religion by communities of faith. The panelists were: **Gerald J. Larson**, UC - Santa Barbara, **Daniel Sheridan**, St. Joseph's College, Maine, **Adheesh Sathaye**, UC - Berkeley, **Jeffrey Kripal**, Rice University.

10:45 AM: A Business meeting was held. **Rachel McDermott** presided. The assembled members of the Society elected two new members to the Board of Directors: **Reid Locklin**, University of Toronto, and **Harold Coward**, emeritus, University of Victoria. **Corinne Dempsey**, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, was elected as Vice-President.

Thanks were extended to outgoing board members **Ronald Neufeldt**, University of Calgary and **Leslie Orr**, Concordia University for their years of service to the Society. And a special note of thanks was given by the in-coming President, **Deepak Sarma**, to Rachel for her leadership over the past two years.

For more details, please see the Society's website (newly updated by web-master **Tinu Ruparell**):
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~shcs/minutes/MinutesAAR04.pdf>

Submitted by Eliza F. Kent, Secretary