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Book Review: "Philosophy of Religion in Hindu Thought"

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Instead of seeing Christianity and Hinduism as hostile towards each other, or unrelated because of their different origins and orientations, Sister Healy sees them in "Spiritual Relationship" (Chapter V), detailing in Ch. VI her views on "Eastern and Western Paths in Conflict and Complementarity." The optimistic note of the whole work finds its appropriate climax in the last chapter: "Hope in the Spirit as Ground for Union of Christianity and Hinduism." To let her speak for herself: "And so I arrive at a firm hope in the love of Christ in the Spirit as a ground of Hindu-Christian communion. I have faith that this union will one day emerge in the mystery of an Indian faith that will unveil the glory of Christ.... Christ belongs to all men and women. All belong to him."

Sister Healy obviously knows and loves India and has immersed herself deeply into the issues of Hindu-Christian dialogue. She was not satisfied with collecting information about dialogue, but conducted dialogues, which apparently confirmed her belief in the possibility, the necessity and the worth-whileness of Hindu-Christian dialogue. It is only to be hoped that her book will be read by many American Christians, most of whom still cling to a sectarian Western notion of Christ and Christianity, representing all the stereotypes of a "Churchianity" which Hindus resent so much. What is especially refreshing about Sister Healy's "Christ as Common Ground" is her focusing upon the central issues of Christianity instead of on Church politics and wrangling about influence and positions.

On the negative side the reviewer notes that there is no reference to either literature or interviews later than 1980. While it does take time to get books through presses, a whole decade of missing records (a decade in which a great deal of dialogue took place and in which much was written) is difficult to justify when speaking about such a contemporary phenomenon, as Hindu-Christian dialogue in India is. Equally, while accepting the author's disclaimer, that the book does not attempt to provide a survey of Hindu-Christian dialogue, certain omissions of basic literature of dialogue or efforts of a significant and original nature are hard to justify. Thus the bibliography does not contain a basic work like Robin Boyd's *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, which since its first appearance in 1969 has come out in several new editions and reprints and is, undoubtedly, the most comprehensive and most authoritative work on the issue. Similarly, Sister Vandana's ashram and publications would have deserved a place in the book, more so since they reflect an Indian Christian woman's contributions. The author did not follow up her 1980 interviews. Many of the interviewees are no longer alive—a fact which does not find mention in the book itself.

Notwithstanding those flaws, the reviewer wishes to recommend the book highly for what it *does* offer and the spirit in which it is written.

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Philosophy of Religion in Hindu Thought. Anand Amaladass (trans. and ed). New Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989, (Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series No. 93).

DR. GERHARD OBERHAMMER, Head of the Department of Indology at the University of Vienna has been for many years one of the most prominent promoters of scholarly en-

counter between Indian and Western Christian thought. He organized several symposia devoted to central issues in Indian and Christian traditions and is the founder of the "De Nobili

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Research Library," which, besides the proceedings of the abovementioned symposia, has published also major monographs, text-editions and translations, including Anand Amaladass' own thesis: "Philosophical Implications of Dhvani: Experience of Symbol Language in Indian Aesthetics" (1984). Dr. Oberhammer, before devoting himself to Indian studies, studied philosophy at the Jesuit College in Innsbruck at a time when Karl Rahner was at the height of his fame. Many of Karl Rahner's pupils began imitating his very style and language, something which made them difficult to read in their native German. It is all the more admirable that Dr. Amaladass was able not only to read Dr. Oberhammer's difficult Rahnerian prose but to translate it into lucid English—making it much easier to follow than in its original German. The pieces which are collected in *Philosophy of Religion in Hindu Thought* are certainly worthwhile studying, especially for scholars engaged in Hindu-Christian Dialogue. They deal with important issues, are based on thorough familiarity with Indian texts and treat more often than not little known aspects of Indian religious systems or rarely mentioned Indian thinkers. They are amply documented and contain substantial extracts from Sanskrit texts.

While the eight papers contained in the work have originally not been written with a view to form parts of a single book, one can identify a central concern in all of them: salvation. Some, like "Manifestation of Salvation" (No. 2) and "Transcendence as Salvation in Early Nyāya" (No. 4) directly address the issue, others like "Experience of Transcendence in

Hinduism: The Testimony of Paramasamhitā" (No. 5) or "The transcendental structure of human bondage (samsāra) according to Pakṣilasvāmin" (No. 6) implicitly deal with it. The rest, such as "The Structure of Tradition and Revelation" (No. 1), "Man as the Place of Revelation" (No. 3), "God-Experience in Yogic Meditation" (No. 7), "The Use of Mantra in Yogic Meditation: The Testimony of the Paśupatas" (No. 8) offer substantial investigations of issues closely linked to salvation. This should come as no surprise to the student of religion, least of all to the student of Indian religions, in which salvation is and has remained the central issue, towards which all reflection is directed and which gives "religion" its very meaning.

Several of the papers were presented as introductions to symposia organised by the Indological Institute Vienna. Having made such a successful translation of Dr. Oberhammer's contributions, Dr. Amaladass might perhaps be persuaded to try the others as well. Such work not only removes the linguistic barrier between those who publish in German and those who read only English but also fosters intercultural and Hindu-Christian dialogue in and by itself.

The translation has provided in the appendix to the book a brief C.V. of Gerhard Oberhammer and a bibliography, which shows the wide range of Dr. Oberhammer's scholarship.

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Inter-Faith Dialogue and World Community. Ch. Sreenivasa Rao (ed).
The Christian Literature Society, 1991, xxxix + 284p., Rs. 75.00 paper.

THE PRESSURES OF contemporary history throw together people of various faith traditions, cultures and ideologies. At the same time, people of all faith traditions cultures and

ideologies are seeking new forms of community in the search for freedom, justice, dignity and self-respect. In this context the great religious traditions, with their visions for the future of