

1998

Introductory Information and Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Coward, Harold (1998) "Introductory Information and Introduction," *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*: Vol. 11, Article 4.
Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7825/2164-6279.1177>

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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. 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.

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The *Bulletin* is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, the *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*, *Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBRR 1975- on CD-ROM*, and the *ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM*, all published by the American Theological Library Association.

Cover logo photograph courtesy of Ronald Neufeldt, University of Calgary.

HINDU-CHRISTIAN STUDIES BULLETIN

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ISSN 0844-4587

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE HINDU TRADITION is no longer found only by travelling to India. It is alive and well in diaspora communities around the globe. Indeed, it is in just such locations that Hindu experience is taking on new forms as it lives as a minority community, often in a host Eurocentric secular Christian context. In urban centres such as London, Vancouver, and Pittsburg, second- and third-generation young people are beginning to find their voice – and the religious experience of which they speak is often different from that of their cousins in India, or in other diaspora locations. One such second-generation scholar, Tinu Ruparell, describes his experience in this regard as “a work in progress” (see this issue’s Viewpoint), and evokes the thought of Ricoeur on metaphor and Stout on bricolage in making sense of it.

This issue also contains survey studies of the Hindu diaspora communities in Trinidad, Australia, the United States, and Europe. Marion O’Callaghan recounts the history of Hindus in Trinidad from 1845 to the present with attention to issues of caste, religious discrimination, pilgrimage, feasts, and interaction with Christians in “re-working crucial aspects of Hinduism in India”. Purushottama Bilimoria offers a similar study of the Hindu experience in Australia from 1787 to the present. In his study of Hindus in the United States, Raymond

Williams focuses on “Hindu-Christian Study and Dialogue” in the immigrant community. He warns Christian conversation partners against reifying either Hinduism in India or in the United States. Speaking from Europe, Martin Baumann assesses the Hindu presence in Great Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Portugal, especially with regard to interfaith dialogue.

This thematic issue of the *Bulletin* makes a contribution to the recent and growing body of literature on the Hindu diaspora. Gaps in our coverage here are given attention elsewhere. For “Hindus in Canada”, e.g., see my article, “The Religions of the South Asian Diaspora in Canada” in *A New Handbook of Living Religions*, edited by John Hinnells (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). A book, *The South Asian Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States*, currently in press with SUNY Press, has separate chapters on Hindus in Britain (Kim Knott), Canada (Harold Coward), and the United States (Diana Eck). Such new resource material will enable courses on Hinduism to expand their focus from India to include the fascinating evolutions of the tradition taking place in diaspora communities around the world.

Harold Coward
Editor

Society for Hindu-Christian Studies: Annual Meeting
Friday, 20 November 1998 – 7:30-10:00 p.m.
Saturday, 21 November 1998 – 9:00-11:30 a.m.
at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL

Discussions of presentations
as well as Annual Business Meeting.
Both parts are open to all who are interested.
Contact: Kay Jordan. For further details, see Reports & News.