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# Christianity and Hinduism: An Annotated Bibliography

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## Hinduism and Christianity

Chad Bauman, Arun Jones, Brian Pennington, Joseph Prabhakar Dayam, Michelle Voss Roberts

### Introduction

Christian communities have existed in India since at least the 4th century CE, the likely result of relatively well-established trade connections between India and the Near East in the early centuries of the Common Era. While Christians maintained a lively and well-documented existence in the centuries after that, particularly in southern India, the size of the Christian population, as well as its geographical spread, began to increase dramatically after the arrival of European traders and missionaries in the late 15th century. European contact with India through trade and then, later, colonization led to greater European interest in Indian cultures and religions. While for some that interest was scholarly and dispassionate, for others it grew out of the evangelical impulse, that is, the desire to promote Christianity and “convert the heathen.” That said, some of the most useful ethnographic data and analyses on Indian culture and religion in this era of Indo-European interaction comes from missionary figures, many of whom took at least a quasi-scholarly interest in the people with whom they interacted, most of whom documented religio-cultural beliefs, practices, and events that passed away, or were significantly altered, in the centuries that followed. The relationship between Christian missionaries and the study of India/Indian Christianity is therefore important to keep in mind because of the way it has complicated (and to some degree still does) academic work on the topic. In the bibliography that follows, readers will discover resources about Indian Christianity and its relationship to Indian culture and religion written both from an assumed scholarly distance and from a more committed stance (e.g., by foreign missionaries and/or Indian Christians writing self-consciously as Christians, or by Hindus writing appreciatively of or critically against Christianity). Nevertheless, while the resources listed here emerge from a range of disciplines—history, ethnography, sociology, cultural studies, missiology, and theology—one theme that pervades them all is how India’s Christians have interacted (or *should* interact) with Hinduism and India’s other religious and cultural traditions.

### Journals

While many journals occasionally include articles of relevance to this topic, three do so consistently, and with consistently high quality. Two of them, [Religion and Society](#) and [Vidyajyoti Journal of](#)

**Theological Reflection**, are edited in India and publish work primarily (though not exclusively) from Indian scholars. Both of these journals also emphasize articles from an explicitly Christian point of view. The **Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies** is published at Notre Dame University, and is the youngest journal of the three. It features articles by scholars from around the world, working from a variety of academic and religious perspectives.

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### **Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies.**

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Supported by the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies, the *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* publishes contributions from many of the most respected scholars in the field, especially from those located in India and North America. Back issues are available online. A helpful index of previously published articles appears in Volume 22 (2009), pp. 69–88.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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### **Religion and Society.**

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Established in 1954 by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in Bangalore as the *Bulletin of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society*, *Religion and Society* continues to publish multiple issues a year. Though somewhat hard to come by outside of India, the pages of *Religion and Society* feature articles by prominent Indian and Western scholars working primarily from an openly Christian perspective.

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### **Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Founded in 1938 as *The Clergy Monthly*, and assuming the current title in 1975, this high-profile Indian journal features articles on Christian theological, ethical, and social concerns, and on interreligious dialogue. The journal is produced by Vidyajyoti College of Theology, a premier Jesuit seminary in Delhi.

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## **Indian Christian Histories, General**

There are several factors that make it very difficult to write a history of Christianity in India. The first is the long time span: at least sixteen centuries and quite possibly more. The second is the spectrum of Christian traditions—everything from Syrian Orthodoxy to Pentecostalism—that have found a home on the subcontinent. The third is the vast expanse and geographical variability of the Indian subcontinent to which Christian communities have adapted in various ways. The fourth is the great ethnic and cultural variety of Indian Christian communities. The fifth is the multinational nature of the church in India, beginning with its links to the church in Persia. Finally, we must emphasize the extremely uneven nature of the historical evidence for Christianity in India. For almost three-quarters of the long history of the faith in India, the historian is forced to rely on oral tradition; on scanty physical evidence such as art, architecture, and inscriptions; and on fragmentary documentary evidence produced by foreigners visiting India. The written evidence regarding Christianity in India becomes rich and plentiful from about 1500 onward, but here most of the evidence is produced by foreigners, notably European ecclesiastical officials and missionaries.

While such writings are certainly useful, the absence of Indian voices provides the historian with a significantly truncated and often prejudiced view of the situation of the Indian Christian communities. Despite these immense difficulties, several authors have written, and continue to write, general histories of Christianity in India. One of the most important current projects is that of the Church History Association of India, which is slowly producing a multivolume history that is ecumenical in scope and authorship, and views this history as "an integral part of the socio-cultural history of the Indian people rather than as separate from it" (Mundadan 1984, p. vii). Mundadan 1984, Thekkedath 1982, and Hambye 1997 are part of that series. Still, it is difficult for these authors to trace the interactions between Christians and their neighbors of other faiths, since so much of the documentary evidence pertains to the internal workings of the Christian communities. Other histories take various approaches. Firth 1976 is aimed toward a Christian audience, while Fernando and Gispert-Sauch 2004 is aimed toward Indians of other faiths. The two-volume set of Neill 1984 and Neill 1985 employs the lens of Christian mission until 1857, and Frykenberg 2009 attempts to cover all of the major Indian Christian traditions in depth.

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**Fernando, Leonard, and G. Gispert-Sauch. *Christianity in India: Two Thousand Years of Faith*. New Delhi: Viking, 2004.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The authors, both Roman Catholics, aim to describe Indian Christianity to Indians who do not know much about the faith. They therefore discuss Christian worship, the Bible, and the figure of Jesus particularly in the Indian context before moving to history, and end with a sociological description of Indian Christians.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Firth, Cyril Bruce. *An Introduction to Indian Church History*. 3d ed. New Delhi: ISPCK, 1976.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

First published in 1961, the third edition (which is the last revision) has additional material on Indian church union and Christianity in the Northeast. While dated in its approach, the book is still highly popular in Indian theological institutions because it is both brief and comprehensive.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Frykenberg, Robert Eric. *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A recent one-volume history of Christianity in India by a distinguished and prolific historian. Its great strength lies in the coverage of South Indian Christianity until the mid-19th century. After the 18th century, history is approached topically rather than chronologically.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Hambye, E. R. *History of Christianity in India*. Vol. 3, *The Eighteenth Century*. Bangalore, India: Church History Association of India, 1997.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

As in the previous volumes of the series, the history of Christianity is related region by region. Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and various Protestant traditions are treated individually. There is a great deal of fresh research here based on primary materials, along with welcome chapters on cultural contributions of Christians.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Mundadan, A. Mathias. *History of Christianity in India. Vol. 1, From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century (up to 1542)*. Bangalore, India: Church History Association of India, 1984.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The first in a multivolume, multiauthored ecumenical history project, the work naturally begins with the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala who were linked to the church of Persia. A little over half of the book is devoted to the 16th century and the changes caused by the arrival of the Portuguese.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Neill, Stephen. *A History of Christianity in India. Vol. 1, The Beginnings to AD 1707*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984.**

DOI: [10.1017/CBO9780511520556](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511520556) [Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Drawn mostly from papers of various church and mission archives, both Volumes 1 and 2 present in some detail the development of Christianity from the apostolic age to the mid-19th century. The great drawback to these volumes is that Indian Christian history is presented basically as the history of missions and missionaries. Volume 1 covers the topic from the earliest Christian communities until the death of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1707.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Neill, Stephen. *A History of Christianity in India. Vol. 2, 1707–1858*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Volume 2 covers the history of Indian Christianity from the death of Aurangzeb to the Indian Mutiny/Rebellion. Like Volume 1, Volume 2 focuses primarily on missions and missionaries rather than on Indian Christians themselves.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Thekkedath, Joseph. *History of Christianity in India. Vol. 2, From the Middle of the Sixteenth to the End of the Seventeenth Century*. Bangalore, India: Church History Association of India, 1982.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The second volume in the Indian church history project proceeds methodically through various regions of the country: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh; Western India and North India; and Bengal and Orissa. The author provides general contextual information before proceeding to the history of Christians in each area.

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## **Indian Christian Histories, Regional**

One of the ways of dealing with some of the difficulties inherent in writing a history of Christianity in India (see commentary under [Indian Christian Histories, General](#)) is to divide the history by region and time period. The problem of European-based and -biased documentary sources, however, still challenges the historian who focuses on specific regions and periods. Yet, there are ways to try and

balance the overwhelming European perspective. One is to search for and utilize material written by Indians that is deposited in various locations, such as government, church, and mission archives in various parts of the world. Knowledge of the Indian languages involved is indispensable in this task. In [Hudson 2000](#) and [Bergunder 2008](#), the authors do an admirable job of locating and surfacing Indian voices and perspectives. Another way to compensate for the European bias in primary sources is to understand thoroughly the total Indian religious and social context of the region and period under study, so that one can arrive at well-informed hypotheses and conclusions regarding the thought and life of Indians. Naturally, understanding as much as possible the thought world of missionaries, colonial officers, and other foreign producers of texts also furthers the historian's task of critically assessing the materials that confront her. Finally, interviews with Indian Christians provide a much needed perspective on Indian church history; [Bergunder 2008](#) is partly based on extensive interviews. Thus, through a combination of various reading strategies, a historian can arrive at what the African church historian Paul Kollman has called an imaginative inference of what was actually occurring. The Church History Association of India has commissioned a number of regional studies for the 19th and 20th centuries, and two of these have been completed, one on Tamil Nadu ([Grafe 1990](#)) and one on Northeast India ([Downs 1992](#)). [Webster 2007](#) will actually form the basis of a third volume in the series. [Webster 1976](#) and [Alter 1986](#) provide important information on Protestants in North India in the 19th century. [Bergunder 2008](#), while limited to studying Pentecostals, does cover all the South Indian states. [Hudson 2000](#) is the most focused history, and such focus enables the author and [Bergunder 2008](#) to provide excellent examples of how one can ably reconstruct from a variety of sources the ways in which Indian Christians thought of themselves and the world around them.

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**Alter, James P. *In the Doab and Rohilkand: North Indian Christianity, 1815–1915*. Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1986.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A history of three Christian missions in Uttar Pradesh: Anglicans in Meerut, Presbyterians in Farrukhabad, and Methodists in Moradabad. The work thus uses the case study method to undertake a regional history. Though mostly an account of missionary work, the study pays some attention to Indian Christians.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Bergunder, Michael. *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A rich study that is divided into two parts: a historical section that foregrounds the divisions as well as the connections within South Indian Pentecostalism, and a section on beliefs and practices that explores both the internal workings of the churches and their relationship to other Indian religious traditions.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Downs, Frederick S. *History of Christianity in India*. Vol. 5, Part 5: *North East India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Bangalore, India: Church History Association of India, 1992.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The author takes a sociocultural approach to his subject matter, and argues that Christianity helped the "tribals" of Northeast India adjust to new political, social, cultural, and religious realities that came with the imposition of British rule and then the formation of the Indian nation state.

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**Grafe, Hugald. *History of Christianity in India. Vol. 4, Part 2: Tamilnadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Bangalore, India: Church History Association of India, 1990.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The result of more than twenty years of research in both church-affiliated and secular libraries in India and Europe, this work describes the Tamil context, the churches, and the Christian communities, as well as Christian encounters with other faiths, their initiation of social change, involvement in politics, and interaction with Tamil culture.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Hudson, D. Dennis. *Protestant Origins in India: Tamil Evangelical Christians, 1706–1835.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

While beginning with the mission of Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau, this study goes on to chart the development of the Tamil evangelicals over a century and their contested endeavors to form a church that fit into the South Indian context, especially with respect to caste.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Webster, John C. B. *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India.* Delhi: Macmillan, 1976.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A study of the work of the Presbyterians in Punjab and the United Provinces from the 1830s to the eve of World War I. It documents the changing nature of the Presbyterian community, both Indian and American, in the evolving social, religious, and political context of North India.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Webster, John C. B. *A Social History of Christianity: North-West India since 1800.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An ecumenical history of Christianity in the Punjab, the study narrates the birth and growth of the Christian community in its particular social and religious context. One strength is its focus on Indian Christians and their relationship to other Indians around them. It also pays particular attention to Dalit communities.

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## **Indian Mission Histories, General**

Ever since the founding of Christianity, mission work and missionaries have been an important subject for Christian literature, with the book of Acts in the New Testament probably being the earliest mission history of the church. Most of this literature through the centuries has been highly hagiographical, and a great number of missionaries (beginning with St. Paul) have been canonized. This strong tendency toward hagiography did not in any way diminish with the European Enlightenment beginning in the 18th century. However, beginning in the 18th century, and gathering force in the 19th and 20th centuries, *anti*-missionary literature produced in nominally Christian societies began to appear. This literature was often as polemical as the traditional view was

hagiographical. Even today, it is difficult to find well-balanced histories and assessments of missionaries and their work, which is perhaps understandable but also unfortunate, given that missions and missionaries were often agents of profound change, and continue to be so. Listed here are recent academic works dealing with the history of Christian mission in India. While certainly having their opinions on missionaries and mission work, the selected works do maintain some critical distance and perspectives on their subject matter. [Studdert-Kennedy 1998](#), [Cox 2002](#), and [Hardiman 2008](#) look closely at the connections between the British Empire and Christian missions in India. [Cox 2002](#) and [Hardiman 2008](#) also examine the internal workings of the Christian missionary endeavor, as does [Županov 2005](#), although the latter's focus is on the Jesuit missions in South India during the 16th and 17th centuries. [McPhee 2005](#) provides a recent missionary biography of a bishop whose work in India continues to have an important impact on American church life through the Church Growth Movement. One of the most understudied aspects of the historic missionary enterprise is the role and place of women missionaries in the world. By 1900 women made up about two-thirds of the missionary workforce, yet their initiatives and activities continue to be overlooked in historical scholarship. Dana Robert, editor of the volume in which [Heim 2002](#) appears, has probably done more than any other scholar to probe the American women's missionary movement. While significant studies of women missionaries in China do exist, there have been very few such studies with a view toward India. The essays in [Brouwer 2006](#), [Heim 2002](#), [Khan 2010](#), and [Lambert-Hurley 2006](#) shed some light on the work and ideology of women missionaries in India. [Kent 2004](#) (cited under [Interaction of Christianity and Indian Cultures/Religions, Historical](#)) is also relevant here.

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**Brouwer, Ruth Compton.** "Learning and Teaching about Birth Control: The Cautious Activism of Medical Missionaries in 1930s India." Paper presented at a workshop held in Dhaka, December 2002. In *Rhetoric and Reality: Gender and the Colonial Experience in South Asia*. Edited by Avril A. Powell and Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, 154–184. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The topic of birth control drew women medical missionaries into a public conversation in both India and the West in the first part of the 20th century. The essay explicates the variety as well as some fundamental commonalities of female missionary responses to this new subject of discussion.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Cox, Jeffrey.** *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A history of Protestant missions in the Punjab, the study draws on archival material from different missionary societies and examines how mission institutions were formative in the life of the Indian church. It is particularly helpful in shedding light on racial, gender, class, and caste tensions within the various missions.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Hardiman, David.** *Missionaries and Their Medicine*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2008.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Traces the history of the Anglican Church Missionary Society's medical work among the Bhils in what is today southern Rajasthan and northern Gujarat from 1880 until well after 1947, arguing that missionary medicine was part of a broader program of "therapy" intended to modernize and Christianize these tribal peoples.

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Heim, Melissa Lewis. "Standing Behind the Looms': American Missionary Women and Indian Church Women in the Devolution Process." In *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Dana L. Robert, 47–61. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An analysis of the ambiguities and conflicts facing American women missionaries and Indian women churchworkers during the transfer of ecclesiastical authority and power from American mission to Indian church in the 1930s in the American Madura Mission.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Khan, Susan Haskell. "From Redeemers to Partners: American Women Missionaries and the 'Woman Question' in India, 1919–1939." In *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960*. Edited by Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, 141–163. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An examination of how changes in the social status and conditions of women in India in the early 20th century pushed missionary women to change their perceptions of, their rhetoric about, and their work with, Indian women.

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Lambert-Hurley, Siobhan. "An Embassy of Equality? Quaker Missionaries in Bhopal State, 1890–1930." Paper presented at a workshop held in Dhaka, December 2002. In *Rhetoric and Reality: Gender and the Colonial Experience in South Asia*. Edited by Avril A. Powell and Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, 247–281. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An investigation about the extent to which the Quakers' traditional emphasis on gender equality affected their work, carried out mostly by women missionaries in Bhopal, where they also emphasized conformity to Indian social norms and standards.

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McPhee, Arthur G. *The Road to Delhi: J. Waskom Pickett Remembered*. Bangalore, India: SAIACS, 2005.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A vivid account of the life of one of the most important missionaries in India during the 20th century. The lack of footnotes, endnotes, and bibliography is frustrating, and the academic reader needs to consult the author's dissertation for these. Also lacking is a critical assessment of the subject.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Studdert-Kennedy, Gerald. *Providence and the Raj: Imperial Mission and Missionary Imperialism*. New Delhi and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1998.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A collection of essays by the author that explore the particularly Christian religious forces motivating the supposedly secular British Empire in India. Chapters 4 and 5 on the Madras Christian College

are of special interest to historians of Christian mission.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Županov, Ines G. *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India (16th–17th Centuries)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A series of seven studies on the earliest Jesuit missions to South India, as they developed in the tension of European and Asian realities and imaginings, which in turn were influenced and changed by the transcontinental flow and movement of goods, persons, and ideas during that era.

[+] **Find this resource:**

## **Interaction of Christianity and Indian Cultures/Religions, Historical**

Earlier histories of Indian Christianity tended to focus on the growth and development of institutions, on the numbers and accumulation of conversions. More recently, and inspired in part by the work of historian Robert Frykenberg, a group of scholars have begun to focus more on Indian Christians themselves, rather than the institutions of which they were a part, with particular emphasis on the ways that Indian Christians negotiated their individual and collective identities informed not only by European missionary religious/cultural norms, but also by those deriving from other Indian religions and Indian culture more generally. [Powell 1993](#) (cited under [Theological Interactions, Early \[to 1857\]](#)) was among the first to do this, by exploring the interaction of Indian Christians and Muslims, but a steady stream of works following this model emerged after 2000. Chapters authored by many of the leading and earliest scholars in the field comprise [Brown and Frykenberg 2002](#) and [Frykenberg 2003](#). [Robinson 2003](#) is a more general work demonstrating the approach. [Kent 2004](#) and [Mallampalli 2004](#) both apply it to more focused investigations. The texts included here have much in common with those included in [Interaction of Christianity and Other Indian Cultures/Religions, Ethnographic](#), save for the fact that whereas the former are more historical, the latter are more ethnographic.

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**Brown, Judith M., and Robert E. Frykenberg, eds. *Christians, Cultural Interactions, and India's Religious Traditions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Appearing in the same Eerdmans series (Studies in Christian Missions) as [Frykenberg 2003](#), this edited volume strikes many of the same themes, and includes some of the same authors (with key additions such as Bengt Karlsson and John C. B. Webster).

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Frykenberg, Robert E., ed. *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A collection of essays by Frykenberg, Richard Fox Young, Indira Viswanathan Peterson, Geoffrey Oddie, and others that attempt to dismantle unhelpful confections of Christianity and colonial power/Western culture, while arguing that Indians were active agents (rather than merely passive recipients) both in the adoption of Christianity and in its "Indianization."

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Kent, Eliza. *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Discusses the effects of Christian conversion on South Indian attitudes about the proper behavior and treatment of women. The book's most controversial and intriguing claim is that conversion often led to what from a modern Western feminist perspective would be considered the *restriction* of women's spheres of activity and influence.

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**Mallampalli, Chandra. *Christians and Public Life in Colonial South India, 1863–1937*. New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Focusing on Protestants and Catholics in the Madras Presidency, Mallampalli emphasizes how disparate Indian Christian communities came to be understood as a unity. Among the most interesting arguments of the book is that British law de-recognized syncretic Indian Christian practices and forced Indian Christians, in law, to conform to culturally European patterns of faith.

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**Robinson, Rowena. *Christians of India*. New Delhi: SAGE, 2003.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An excellent study by one of the leading Indian scholars of Christianity. Includes a particularly helpful chapter that provides a taxonomy of styles of conversion at various points in Indian Christian history.

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## **Interaction of Christianity and Indian Cultures/Religions, Ethnographic**

Beginning in the 1990s, a number of important ethnographic studies began to appear, applying the insights of anthropology to the study of Indian Christianity. Led in India by Susan Visvanathan, in the United States by scholars based or trained at the University of Chicago (e.g., Eliza Kent, Selva Raj) and Syracuse (e.g., Corinne Dempsey, Joanne Punzo Waghorne), and in Europe by Bengt Karlsson and others, these studies not only breathed new methodological life into the study of Indian Christianity, but also produced particularly sophisticated accounts of the quite subtle and unexpected ways that the cultures, practices, and worldviews of India's Christians interacted with those of other Indians. In this category, four works stand out for their quality. [Visvanathan 1993](#), which explores Christianity in Kerala, was the earliest. [Karlsson 2000](#) focuses on the Rabhas of Bengal, a substantial number of whom are now Christian. Whereas Karlsson's work focuses on the Rabhas more generally, and on Rabha Christianity only in part, [Dempsey 2001](#) focuses nearly exclusively on St. Thomas Christians in Kerala. In doing so, however, the author emphasizes the many ways in which Indian Catholic practice overlaps with and is informed by other Indian religious traditions. [Raj and Dempsey 2002](#) is an edited volume containing short but significant chapters contributed by many pioneers of this particular approach. All of the works in this section emphasize the complicated nature of Indian Christian *identity* and, because of this, have much in common with texts included in [Interaction of Christianity and Indian Cultures/Religions, Historical](#).

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**Dempsey, Corinne. *Kerala Christian Sainthood: Collisions of Culture and Worldview in South India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An ethnographic exploration of the cults of Sr. Alphonsa of Bharananganam (1910–1946), a local South Indian saint, and the imported dragon-slayer, St. George, with particular emphasis on the way that devotees negotiate their “hybrid” religious identities through the adoption, alteration, and adaptation of “foreign” religious practices.

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**Karlsson, Bengt. *Contested Belonging: An Indigenous People's Struggle for Forest and Identity in Sub-Himalayan Bengal*. Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2000.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Arguing for an understanding of identity as a discursive and social process, Karlsson explores the process of Rabha conversion to Christianity, which he calls a “cultural strategy” (p. 152). Karlsson highlights Rabha understandings of conversion, which many associated with a more sober, productive, and prosperous lifestyle.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Raj, Selva, and Corinne Dempsey, eds. *Popular Christianity in India: Riting between the Lines*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A collection of essays emphasizing the boundary-blurring nature of popular Christianity in contemporary India, focusing especially on Catholic and South Indian Christian communities, with especially important contributions from the editors, and from Eliza Kent, Joanne Punzo Waghorne, and Mathew Schmalz.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Visvanathan, Susan. *The Christians of Kerala: History, Belief, and Ritual among the Yakoba*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An interesting anthropological study of a Jacobite Syrian Orthodox community located in a village of Kottayam, Kerala. The work focuses on the people’s historical consciousness, rituals, festivals, and rites of passage, as these are articulated in the context of a Hindu society and worldview.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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## **The Colonial Period, Interactionist Models**

As other sections in the bibliography make clear, Christianity was established in India for centuries before Europeans arrived. But the rise of the British Raj and the lifting of the ban on missionary activity in British territories in 1813 vastly magnified the scale of Hindu-Christian interaction, particularly between British Protestants and Hindus of the various castes and classes targeted by missionaries. Contact between Hindus and European Christians during the colonial period was formative for all later relations between these two groups and for historical as well as theological scholarship on the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity. This period of intense, mutual discovery in the centers of British power in India produced a voluminous extant primary literature for understanding the nature of this interreligious contact and its relationship to colonial state formation

and colonial ideologies. The secondary literature on this era is also enormous, especially due to the cultures of record-keeping and publication that permeated both the Raj and British missionary societies. One genre of this secondary scholarly literature, the genre highlighted in this section, analyzes Hindu-Christian encounter in terms of interactions between discrete groups and assesses the impact of this encounter on its various parties. This literature can foreground conflict, cooperation, or dialogue, but it tends to approach Hindu-Christian studies as an exercise in determining avenues of influence and points of tension or resistance. [Potts 1967](#) represents the classic model of a well-documented mission history that narrativizes colonial contact in terms of Christian individuals and institutions in their Indian setting. [Copley 1997](#) examines specific persons and groups in terms of the clash between Christian/British and Hindu/Indian ideas, while [Mallampalli 2004](#) traces the shifting political place occupied by Christians as the modern Indian state developed out of its earlier colonial forms. [Hiltebeitel 1992](#) demonstrates the evolving frameworks the British devised for interacting with Hindu ritual they found problematic. In demonstrating that myriad specific groups, Hindu and Christian, experienced colonial interaction differently, Geoffrey A. Oddie ([Oddie 1991](#); [Oddie 1995](#)) represents the interactionist model for understanding Hindu-Christian encounter at its most developed form. [Kawashima 1998](#) focuses on a single regional kingdom to analyze the distinct interests that motivated missionaries, Hindu ruling classes, and British administrators. [Sinha 1993](#) is one important example of studies that examine how the colonial milieu impacted Hindu thinkers and institutions; [Fisch 1985](#) is an example of the rarer but increasingly attested converse dynamic: British figures in India who were powerfully influenced by Hindu ideas.

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**Copley, Antony. *Religions in Conflict: Ideology, Cultural Contact, and Conversion in Late-Colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Study of the work of Protestant missions, the ideology of missions, and conversion to Christianity between 1830 and 1880 through six case studies from around British India. Frames cultural contact and conversion largely in terms of conflict between exclusivist religious identities and the strategies employed for prevailing in that conflict.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Fisch, Jorg. "A Solitary Vindicator of the Hindus: The Life and Writings of General Charles Stuart, 1757/8–1828." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1985): 35–57.**

DOI: [10.1017/S0035869X00154930](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0035869X00154930) [Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Brief sketch of the life and career of the British army officer and antiquities collector known as "Hindoo" Stuart for his adoption of some Hindu practices and his defense of Hindu morality and Hindu women from the attack of Christian missionaries.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Hiltebeitel, Alf. "Colonialist Lenses on the South Indian Draupadī Cult." In *Ritual, State and History in South Asia: Festschrift for Jan C. Heesterman*. Edited by A. W. van den Hoek, D. H. A. Kolff, and L. M. S. Oort, 507–531. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1992.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Examines three successive colonial constructions of the firewalking festival dedicated to the goddess and epic heroine Draupadī: appreciative Orientalist representations; the Company Raj's depiction of the festival in terms of its dangers and potential regulation; and late colonial, census-inspired associations of the festival with specific castes and communities.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Kawashima, Kōji. *Missionaries and a Hindu State: Travancore 1858–1936*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Study of the nature of the Hindu state in British India and the shifting triangular relationship among Christian missionaries, the princely state of Travancore, and British authorities during this period. Shows how each party had distinct, sometimes parallel, and sometimes competing interests. Brief comparative section on Cochin.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Mallampalli, Chandra. *Christians and Public Life in Colonial South India, 1863–1977: Contending with Marginality*. London: Curzon, 2004.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that Christians in the Madras Presidency were pushed to the margins of social and political life by the imperial ordering of the emergent Indian state as it gradually assumed a pronounced Hindu character. Examines bureaucratic and legal structure for classifying difference and both Christian and Dalit responses.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Oddie, Geoffrey A. *Hindu and Christian in South-East India*. London: Curzon, 1991.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Adopts a regional focus to examine religious developments and interactions between Hindus and Christians in the Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts of the Madras Presidency. Foregrounds the changing role of British rulers in temple administration and conflict adjudication with the rise of evangelicalism and conversion.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Oddie, Geoffrey A.. *Popular Religion, Elites, and Reform: Hook-Swinging and Its Prohibition in Colonial India, 1800–1894*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1995.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Analysis of European and Indian attitudes toward the popular practice of individuals swinging from ropes by metal hooks inserted in their backs for merit in Bengal, Bombay, and Madras. Features important discussion of interaction between various classes of Hindus and British administrators and missionaries.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Potts, E. Daniel. *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793–1837: The History of Serampore and Its Missions*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1967.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Definitive history of the work of the "Serampore Trio," William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward, who founded the most influential Protestant center in British India and whose work in evangelism, scholarship, printing, translation, education, and social reform helped transform the character of British colonialism and modern foreign missions.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Sinha, Samita. *Pandits in a Changing Environment: Centres of Sanskrit Learning in Nineteenth Century Bengal*. Calcutta: Sarat Book House, 1993.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Studies the work of pandits at Nadia, Bhatpara, Dacca Vikrampur, College of Ft. William, and Sanskrit College as both scholars in their own rights and assistants to British officials and Orientalists. Some important analysis of pandits' attitudes toward British and British treatment of pandits.

[+] **Find this resource:**

## The Colonial Period, Synthetic Models

While it includes only passing reference to colonial India, the influence of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) began to be felt in Hindu-Christian studies by the early 1980s. One of the major shortcomings of the interactionist model to appear in sharp relief as a result of the flood of commentary and critique that followed Said's book was its reliance on the testimony of historical actors, such as missionaries and British officials, for understanding their motives and methods. Said pioneered methods for studying the West's early scholarship on Asia in terms of its implicit justification of and support for Western colonialism regardless of any scholar's individual intentions. The growing influence of Michel Foucault during the 1990s combined with this post-Said critique to produce a body of literature on colonial India that conducted a meta-analysis of Hindu-Christian interaction. This meta-analysis refused to portray colonialism as a current of power and influence that flowed in one direction but rather viewed colony and metropole synthetically in a single field of analysis to disclose the (often unconscious) workings of colonial power and knowledge. The net result has been a clearer understanding of the impact of colonialism on not only Indian but also British life and thought. While [Kopf 1969](#) has explicitly rejected scholarship that does not take the stated motivations and methods of British colonial actors at face value, his work is an early indication that a synthetic approach to colonialism was possible. [Waghorne 1994](#) studies the interaction of Hindu and Christian theological ideas on one another as the theoretical framework for British rule took shape in South India. [Trautmann 1997](#) identifies two competing rubrics for comprehending Orientalist scholarship about early India and their connections to colonial power and the colonial state. [Viswanathan 1998](#) demonstrates that conversion was a common response in both Britain and India to the colonial configuration of the relationship between religion and state; [Van der Veer 2001](#) similarly identifies specific ways in which the religious elements of their shared colonial history produced the modern nation-states of India and Britain. [Balagangadhara 1994](#) suggests that the term "religion" emerges from scholarship in a context influenced in significant ways by Western Christianity, and is therefore biased by Christian assumptions about what religion is and should be. Similarly, [King 1999](#) argues that the modern study of religion is a product of colonial power arrangements that shaped both Indian and British subjects. [Pennington 2005](#) studies discrete bodies of religious and scholarly literature that emerged out of the colonial Hindu-Christian encounter to show that both modern Hinduism and Christianity are products of their encounter with one another.

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**Balagangadhara, S. N. 'The Heathen in His Blindness . . .': *Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1994.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

In this influential if somewhat prolix overview of Western intellectual history as it pertains to the study of India, Balagangadhara suggests that the scholarly use of the term "religion" is burdened by peculiarly Western and Christian ways of thinking and is not necessarily relevant to the study of traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

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**King, Richard. *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and "The Mystic East."* London: Routledge, 1999.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A Said- and Foucault-inspired analysis of the British-Indian encounter that generated the categories by which Hinduism has been studied. Argues for the "mutual imbrication" of religion, culture, and power in colonial discourse and practice and for the transformation of the study of Indian religion on the basis of that awareness.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Kopf, David. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773–1835.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Focusing on institutions (e.g., Serampore College, College of Ft. William, Asiatick Society of Bengal) and powerful individuals (especially governors-general, missionaries, and Bengali elite), examines the rise and fall of the Orientalist ideal for the training of British civil servants and the British and Indian products of such an education.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Pennington, Brian K. *Was Hinduism Invented?: Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Region.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Analyses of popular and scholarly literature produced by the Church Missionary Society, the Serampore Mission, the Asiatick Society of Bengal, and the popular Bengali press as evidence that "Hinduism" was not solely a British invention but a product of interreligious polemic and dialogue in which Hindus played important roles.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Trautmann, Thomas R. *Aryans and British India.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Study of British "Indomania" and "Indophobia" as contrasting responses to early Orientalist scholarship, especially that which focused on Aryans and the Indo-European heritage that Britain and India shared. Particularly important for Trautmann's analysis of Orientalism's "mosaic ethnology" and the Judeo-Christian worldviews that shaped the British reception of Hinduism.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Van der Veer, Peter. *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Combines historical anthropology and comparative religion to demonstrate that the modern nation-states of India and Britain were forged in relationship to their shared colonial history. Spans the 19th century to show that such ideas as the moral state, masculine religion, spiritualism, political radicalism, and the Aryan myth shaped national culture in both lands.



[+] Find this resource:

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**Viswanathan, Gauri. *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Examines religious conversion in colonial era Britain and India to argue that conversion is an act of resistance to modern secular society that implicitly challenges its limits and the secular state's marginalization of religious belief that effectively cleaves national from religious identity.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Waghorne, Joanne Punzo. *The Raja's Magic Clothes: Re-visioning Kingship and Divinity in England's India*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An "ethno-theology" that examines the clash and interplay between British and Hindu ideas about divine kingship and the status of visible/material divine. Centered on royal culture in Pudukkottai but takes in 19th-century British theology and study of religion on idolatry to critique application of Protestant-influenced models to Hinduism.

[+] Find this resource:

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## The Colonial Period, Reform Movements and Reformers

The role of Christian ideals and practices in the growth of reformist social and religious movements in India during the 19th century continues to generate considerable scholarly conversation and debate. One point of view, which shares presumptions and methods with the interactionist approach described here (see [The Colonial Period, Interactionist Models](#)), regards social change and religious reform in the colonial era largely as the result of the adoption by Indian actors of ideas, institutional principles, and strategies from Christian and British sources. A second school of interpretation looks for indigenous categories and structures in place before the arrival of the British that might have been the natural counterparts to those elements of Christian theology or practice often cited as the impetus for reform. This line of interpretation, therefore, sees reforming impulses as indigenous but activated in a particular way as a result of contact with Christianity. The works listed all represent this second approach, one of whose main concerns is to recognize and preserve the agency of Hindu activists rather than regard them as merely responsive to the influence of their British rulers. [Ahmed 1965](#) shows that this approach was not a product of postcolonial or subaltern studies but that much earlier in the 20th century some scholars recognized the indigenous character of 19th-century Hindu reformist movements. [Jones 1989](#) also recognizes an early reforming impulse but the author extends his analysis to show how reforming Hindu voices adjusted as the character and rhetoric of the Raj became more hostile to Hindu traditions. [Mukherjee 1993](#) is a collection of essays that examine the culture and religion of the *bhadralok*, the elite Bengali class in the colonial capital city of Calcutta who benefited from colonial rule. [Hatcher 1996](#) and [Lipner 1999](#) are studies of two specific individuals wrestling with how to negotiate parallel and competing Hindu and Christian influences. Hatcher's study of social reformer Isvarcandra Vidyasagar focuses on Vidyasagar's concept of "improvement" as a harmonization of Hindu and Christian—as well as bourgeois and Brahmanical—ideas with the aim of integrating them into modern vernacular Bengali. Lipner's chronological examination of the life of spirited nationalist Upadhyay focuses on his complex and hybrid religious identity and its relationship to his work and thought. [Kopf 1979](#) examines the controversially syncretic Brahmo Samaj. [Bauman 2008](#) analyzes an indigenous reform movement in rural central India that interacted in intriguing ways with the colonial and missionary figures that arrived after its establishment.

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**Ahmed, A. F. Salahuddin. *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal, 1818–1835*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1965.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Foregrounds the emergent press and public opinion as arenas of Hindu-Christian interaction in the Bengal presidency, especially as vehicles for inaugurating social change that partook of both religious cultures and that sparked debate between conservative and reformist Hindus.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Bauman, Chad. *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion in Hindu India, 1868–1947*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Historical ethnography of sociocultural interactions between members of the Satnami sect and Christian missionaries in the region of Chhattisgarh out of which a distinctive regional Dalit Christianity emerged. Important analysis of religion and religious conversion as response to and generative of social change.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Hatcher, Brian A. *Idioms of Improvement: Vidyāsāgar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1996.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Primarily a study of the education reformer Isvarcandra Vidyasagar and the hybrid concept of “improvement” that his work promoted, this study of vernacular sources and vernacularization of foreign concepts also contains substantial analysis of the colonial encounter between Hindus and Christians and offers a typology of paradigmatic British/Indian responses to the encounter.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Jones, Kenneth W. *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*. New Cambridge History of India 3.1. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Divides Hindu and Muslim reform movements across India into those that were transitional to British supremacy and those later movements that acculturated to established British supremacy, including widespread rhetoric of Christian superiority and presence of missionaries. Chapters on individual regions in India and the 20th century.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Kopf, David. *The Brahma Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A well-documented history of the most important reformist Hindu organization of the 19th century that situates the Brahma Samaj in its colonial setting and discusses its relationship to British rule and Christian missionary teaching without attributing its innovations and ideals to colonial influences.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Lipner, Julius.** *Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Biography of the ardent nationalist (b. 1861–d. 1907) and Roman Catholic convert who identified himself as both Christian and Hindu. Traces Upadhyay's shifting relationship to Hindu and Christian traditions, assesses his theological writings as Thomism in Sanskrit disguise, and examines his firm opposition to British rule.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Mukherjee, S. N.** *Calcutta: Essays in Urban History.* Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1993.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Collected essays that focus on the Bengali elite in the center of British military and economic power, their interactions with British society, and their cultural responses to British rule. Details Hindu social and caste groups as they developed and transformed in the rapidly changing context of an emerging imperial capital.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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## Theological Interactions, Early (to 1857)

Not unnaturally, since the establishment of their religion in South Asia, Christians have been reflecting both formally and informally, through words, rituals, and behavior, on the life and thought of other religious traditions around them. Tragically, almost all the textual evidence for such reflections in the Syrian Christian community up to the 16th century was destroyed by order of the Roman Catholic Archbishop Menezes in the Synod of Diamper of 1599. Moreover, the synod also banned a number of religious and secular customs of the Syrian or St. Thomas Christians that had developed over centuries of interaction with Hindu and Muslim neighbors. While significant numbers of Thomas Christians broke from the Roman Catholic Church in the next century, irreparable harm had been inflicted on this community's religious self-understanding. Thus, Christian theological interactions with Hinduism and Islam had to be started on a new footing beginning in the 17th century. The reflections of most missionaries on Hinduism and other Indian religions until the 20th century tended toward strong negative polemics, and were based on extremely rudimentary and prejudicial understandings of the religious traditions. There were, however, a few exceptions. In the first half of the 17th century, the work of the Italian Jesuit priest Roberto de Nobili, featured in [de Nobili 1971](#) and [de Nobili 2000](#), is exemplary in its attempt to come to grips with Hinduism. Although his proposal that Christianity become amenable to high-caste Hindu standards continues to be debated, it is still true that this missionary studied and adapted to Hinduism in a thoughtful and serious way. [Županov 1999](#) provides a contemporary critical study of the debates caused by de Nobili's work. Beginning in the 18th century, a few Protestant missionaries responded to what they perceived as Hinduism and Islam in ways that were not completely dismissive, even if they were critical. [Powell 1993](#) provides examples of such interactions with these religious traditions. [Amaladass and Young 1995](#) demonstrates another way in which missionaries attempted to use the riches of the sacred language of Sanskrit, by using it to propound Christianity. On the Indian side, certain Hindu and Muslim intellectuals responded to Protestant missionary attacks on their religions with great insight and intellectual force. [Roy 1834](#) is a justly famous Hindu reading of Christianity, while other voices are given a hearing in the works [Young 1981](#), [Young and Jebanesan 1995](#), and [Powell 1993](#).

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**Amaladass, Anand, and Richard Fox Young. *The Indian Christiad: A Concise Anthology of Didactic and Devotional Literature in Early Church Sanskrit*. Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1995.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A fascinating collection of translations of missionary writings in Sanskrit from the beginning of the 18th century to the mid-19th century, whereby Christianity was Sanskritized and Sanskrit was Christianized. The anthology is preceded by a helpful and substantial "Historical Overview."

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**de Nobili, Roberto. *Adaptation*. Edited by Savarimuthu Rajamanickam Translated by J. Puj. Palayamkottai, India: De Nobili Research Institute, 1971.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

This treatise of 1619, also called the *Narration*, is the author's brilliant defense against accusations from other missionaries that his toleration of certain Hindu customs such as wearing the sacred thread, keeping the tuft of hair, and using sandal paste among Christian converts from the Brahmin caste was theologically untenable.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**de Nobili, Roberto. *Preaching Wisdom to the Wise*. Translated and introduced by Anand Amaladass, and Francis X. Clooney, S.J. Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A translation with an extended introduction of three treatises, namely *The Report on Certain Customs of the Indian Nation*, *The Dialogue on Eternal Life*, and *The Inquiry into the Meaning of "God,"* this work clearly presents the author's approach to his Indian context and to his missionary work.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Powell, Avril A. *Muslims & Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*. Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1993.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

This excellent study uses a famous debate held in Agra in 1854 between the Muslim scholar Rahmat Allah and the Christian missionary Carl Pfander to explore Muslim-Christian interactions in North India in the first half of the 19th century, and Muslim-Christian debates more generally over a dozen centuries.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Roy, Rammohun. *The Precepts of Jesus: The Guide to Peace and Happiness, Extracted from the Books of the New Testament Ascribed to the Four Evangelists. To Which Are Added the First and Second Appeal to the Christian Public in Reply to the Observations of Dr. Marshman of Serampore*. 2d ed. London: John Mardon, 1834.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Roy, founder of the Brahmo Samaj, argues that the only useful part of the Christian religion is the moral teaching of Jesus. To defend Hinduism in response to a Christian missionary (Marshman), who denounces Roy's denial of the divinity of Christ, Roy appeals to the transcendent nature of divinity. Originally published in 1820.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Young, Richard Fox. *Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1981.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Examines the controversy spurred by the 1839 publication of the Scottish civil servant John Muir's Sanskrit Christian tract *Matapariksa*, particularly three Hindu rejoinders to Muir that Fox characterizes as apologetic. Studies the specialized Sanskrit terminology developed by Christian missionaries for propagating Christianity among Hindu elites and the resistance those elites increasingly offered.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Young, Richard Fox, and S. Jebanesan. *The Bible Trembled: The Hindu-Christian Controversies of Nineteenth-Century Ceylon*. Vienna: Sammlung De Nobili, 1995.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Traces the development of a Hindu—predominately Shaivite and Tamil—religious revival from the 1820s to the 1860s in the Jaffna Peninsula, brought on by Hindu-Christian controversy that followed in the wake of Protestant missionary activity under British colonial rule.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Županov, Ines G. *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Explores the public dispute between Italian Jesuit missionary Roberto de Nobili (b. 1577–d. 1656) and Portuguese Jesuit missionary Gonçalo Fernandes (b. 1541–d. 1619) over de Nobili's highly controversial experiments in adapting Christianity to Hindu religious and lifestyle conventions in the city of Madurai.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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## **Theological Interactions, Colonial (1858–1946)**

The period of the Hindu Renaissance, which began under British rule in India and led up to the nation's independence, generated a great deal of reflection on Christianity by Hindus. Vivekananda's speech to the 1893 Chicago World Parliament of Religions was one highlight: He argued before a large and receptive audience that Hinduism possessed spiritual riches lacking in the modern West. [Thomas 1970](#) serves as a guide to Hindu Renaissance reactions to Christianity for although the engagements he surveys have been widely excerpted, many are not all currently available in full. (The interpretation in [Yogananda 2007](#) of Christ as a yogi is one exception.) On the Christian side, comparative studies such as [Hogg 1909](#) and [Otto 1962](#) show a growing appreciation of Hindu thought in this period, as do early attempts at inculturation, such as [Jones 1925](#), which envisions an Indian Christianity that incorporates Hindu features. These Christian works tend to share a theology of religious pluralism, articulated in [Farquhar 1913](#), that views Christianity as the fulfillment of nascent truths in other religious traditions. [Coward 1993](#) reflects on the legacy of these mutual examinations.

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**Coward, Harold, ed. *Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

This edited volume offers historical overviews of dialogues involving St. Thomas Christians, Hindu Renaissance figures, Kerala Christians, Francis Xavier, and M. K. Gandhi. The text surveys the state of global Hindu-Christian dialogues at the time of publication (though without mention of the Christian ashram movement) and projects trends of future conversations.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Farquhar, John Nicol.** *The Crown of Hinduism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1913.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The result of liberal theological trends becoming more important among missionaries at the end of the 19th century, this study argues that Christ is the fulfillment of all that is best in Hinduism (and all the world's other religions as well). The argument assumes an evolutionary relationship between Hinduism and Christianity.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Hogg, Alfred George.** *Karma and Redemption: An Essay toward the Interpretation of Hinduism and the Restatement of Christianity*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1909.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The author, a teacher and principal at Madras Christian College from 1903 to 1938, engages the doctrine of karma as he understood it from a Christian philosophical and moral perspective. While he criticizes the doctrine, he does so after trying to understand its inner coherence and appeal.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Jones, E. Stanley.** *The Christ of the Indian Road*. New York: Abingdon, 1925.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

More hortatory than academic, this influential work urges Christians to expect Christ and Christianity to be made manifest in India in ways that look more "Hindu" than traditionally (Western) Christian. The author anticipates by several decades Protestant and Roman Catholic calls for inculturation of the Christian faith.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Otto, Rudolf.** *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*. Translated by Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne. New York: Collier, 1962.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Despite occasional essentialization of East and West, this careful comparison of Meister Eckhart and Shankara is a fine early example of comparative theological method. Identifies two "types" of mysticism that span East and West: an inward union and an outward vision of totality. Favors Eckhart's more dynamic and ethical vision. Originally published in 1932.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Thomas, M. M.** *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*. Bangalore, India: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1970.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Provides an overview of responses to Christianity by Rammohan Ray, Lal Behari Day, Nehemiah

Goreh, Keshub Chunder Sen, P. C. Mozoomdar, Brahmobandhav Upadhyaya, Vivekananda, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and M. K. Gandhi. Also surveys theological responses of Indian Christians to the nationalist movement.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Yogananda, Paramahansa. *The Yoga of Jesus: Understanding the Hidden Teachings of the Gospels*. Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship, 2007.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

This compilation from Yogananda's (b. 1893–d. 1952) two-volume *The Second Coming of Christ: The Resurrection of the Christ within You* interprets Christ as an Asian figure, avatar ("descent," "incarnation"), and yogi, whose teachings encourage the development of divine consciousness through love.

[+] **Find this resource:**

## Theological Interactions, Postcolonial (1947–Present)

The endeavor to develop a culturally Indian character for Indian Christianity, known as inculturation, spawned a number of important theological studies in the period after independence. Under the leadership of P. D. Devanandan, the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) in Bangalore established the journal *Religion and Society*, which publishes theological articles on Indian Christianity. The CISRS also initiated the Confessing the Faith in India series of short book-length studies (too numerous to list here) on individual Indian Christian theologians. One of the most significant large-scale attempts at inculturation through meditation has been the Christian Ashram movement (see [Cornille 1991](#)). Several of the gurus of these ashrams have written important book-length studies (e.g., [Abhishiktananda 1974](#); [Griffiths 1982](#)), though [Raj 2000](#) describes them as contrived and elitist. Raimundo Panikkar's works ([Panikkar 1981](#); [Panikkar 1973](#)), deeply rooted in both the Hindu and the Christian theological contexts, represent perhaps the most creative constructive work of this period. [Ariarajah 1991](#) provides a survey of Protestant theological interactions with Hinduism emanating from ecumenical bodies and meetings. [Hedlund 2000](#) does the same for efforts at inculturation, but with a distinctly Indian Christian focus.

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**Abhishiktananda. *Saccidananda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*. Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1974.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Abhishiktananda, the founder of the Shantivanam Ashram in Tamil Nadu, meditates on the Upanisads and incorporates the Vedantic experience of non-duality into his identity as a Christian *jnani* (sage) The work espouses a fulfillment theology in which Christianity grows to fullness through encounter with other traditions.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Ariarajah, Wesley. *Hindus and Christians: A Century of Protestant Ecumenical Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A historical survey of Protestant thought about Hinduism in meetings of ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches from 1910 to 1979. A critical discussion of contemporary theologies of religious pluralism and Christologies concludes with a list of elements essential for a new

“theology in relationship.”

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Cornille, Catherine. *The Guru in Indian Catholicism: Ambiguity or Opportunity of Inculturation?* Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 1991.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

This comparison of the role of the spiritual master in the two traditions presents the challenges of the guru ideal for Catholic Christology and institutional hierarchy. It asks to what extent the inculturation project has failed, insofar as Christian ashrams appeal more to Westerners than to Hindus or Indian Christians.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Griffiths, Bede. *The Marriage of East and West*. Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1982.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Griffiths, Abhishiktananda's successor as the guru at Shantivanam, characterizes the Hindu East as the intuitive and feminine counterpart to Western masculinity, rationality, and technological proficiency. From Vedic, Judaic, and Christian scriptures, he crafts a perennialist philosophy that would unite the “two halves” of the human soul.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Hedlund, Roger E., ed. *Christianity Is Indian: The Emergence of an Indigenous Christianity*. Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A collection of twenty-seven essays, edited by a missionary scholar but authored almost exclusively by South Asians, that presents studies of both historical and contemporary Christian movements and persons that have provided “an authentic Indian incarnation of Christian faith.” The focus on emerging movements is particularly interesting.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Panikkar, Raimundo. *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man: Icon-Person-Mystery*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Develops a theology of religious pluralism in which all authentic relations to God meet in the Trinity. The three *mārgas* of Hinduism correlate loosely to the three persons: the Father (the Absolute) to the non-dual *jñānamārga*, and the Son (personal God) to the *bhaktimārga*. Coins numerous new theological terms.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Panikkar, Raimundo. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany*. Rev. ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Imagines a contemporary role for Shankara's Vedanta akin to that of Aristotle for Christian scholasticism. Reflections on method and on Brahma Sutra I.1.2 conclude that the role of Ishvara as the connection between God and world is functionally analogous to the cosmic role of Christ in Christianity. Originally published in 1964 (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd).



[+] Find this resource:

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Raj, Selva. "Adapting Hindu Imagery: A Critical Look at Ritual Experiments in an Indian Catholic Ashram." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 37.3–4 (Summer–Fall 2000): 333–353.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Provides a brief history of the Catholic Ashram movement and its goal of "inculturating" Christianity by articulating it with use of Hindu concepts and symbolism, and then raises questions, from both a Christian and scholarly perspective, about, among other things, the "morality of Christian borrowing."

[+] Find this resource:

## Contemporary Theological Comparison, Thematic

Contemporary theological interactions between Hindu and Christian traditions tend to follow one of two general approaches: those driven by a comparative theme (included here), and those driven by close comparative readings of particular texts or figures (included in [Contemporary Theological Comparison, Textual](#)). [Bäumer and Dupuche 2005](#) (on void and fullness), [Carman 1994](#) (on immanence and transcendence), [Parrinder 1997](#) and [Sheth 2002](#) (both on incarnation), and [Clooney 2001](#) (on divinity) are thematic studies that draw from Christianity, Hinduism, and (in some cases) other religious traditions to illuminate a particular theological category. [Clooney 2003](#) is a broader exploration of Hindu mythology in search of wisdom relevant to Christians and Christianity. The Christian doctrine of the incarnation has kindled particular interest in divine embodiment, a recurring theme in these studies as well as in those listed in [Contemporary Theological Comparison, Textual](#).

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**Bäumer, Bettina, and John R. Dupuche, eds.** *Void and Fullness in the Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian Traditions: Sunya-Purna-Pleroma*. Papers presented at a seminar held in Varanasi, India, 11–16 December 1999. New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2005.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The outcome of a 1999 seminar with participants from all three traditions. While most of the contributions outline the concepts of fullness (*pūrṇata*, *pleroma*) or emptiness (*śūnyata*) within a single tradition, essays by Bettina Bäumer, Raimon Panikkar, and Antony Kalliath offer comparative overviews of the notions.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Carman, John Braisted.** *Majesty and Meekness: A Comparative Study of Contrast and Harmony in the Concept of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Investigates theological strategies to claim paradoxical attributes (polarities) for God. Surveys a range of Christian and Hindu theologians, with particular focus on Ramanuja's contribution to Sri Vaisnavism. A tension between divine transcendence and relation to the world runs through several case studies, including a comparison of avatars and the incarnation.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Clooney, Francis Xavier, S.J.. *Hindu God, Christian God: How Reason Helps Break Down the Boundaries between Religions*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

This study of religious reasoning compares how Christian and Hindu theologians assert truths regarding divine existence, attributes, embodiment, and revelation. The volume concludes with a response from a Hindu theologian, Parimal G. Patil.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Clooney, Francis Xavier, S.J.. *Hindu Wisdom for All God's Children*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Written for a popular or classroom audience, this volume draws insights for Christians from Hindu creation myths; Advaita Vedanta; the life of the Buddha; the mythology of Krishna, Shiva, and the Goddess; and 20th-century figures such as M. K. Gandhi and Mahasweta Devi.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Parrinder, Geoffrey. *Avatar and Incarnation: The Divine in Human Form in the World's Religions*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1997.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Surveys doctrines of divine embodiment in the world's religions, with special attention to the avatars of Vishnu. Parrinder sees these doctrines as preparatory for the gospel of the incarnation. He views Christ as the source of their truth but faults them insofar as avatars deny suffering and lack historicity. Originally published in 1970.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Sheth, Noel. "Hindu Avatāra and Christian Incarnation: A Comparison." *Philosophy East and West* 52.1 (January 2002): 98–125.**

DOI: [10.1353/pew.2002.0005](https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2002.0005) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

In this straightforward comparison of the two concepts, the author argues that the practice of comparison is beneficial both in terms of helping Hindus and Christians understand each other and in terms of helping them understand their own beliefs in a more sophisticated fashion.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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## Contemporary Theological Comparison, Textual

Critics of the thematic approach to comparison argue that studies oriented around a theme can predetermine what one will find in the two traditions. A bias toward similarity, on the one hand, and a privileging of Christian categories, on the other hand, can be obstacles to a Christian understanding of Hindu traditions. A second approach, therefore, begins with the prolonged process of reading back and forth between particular texts and thinkers in the two traditions. Francis X. Clooney, S.J., has championed this method of comparative theology (Clooney 1993; Clooney 1996). In his earlier work, Clooney defers definitive conclusions in favor of an ever-deepening cycle of reading for understanding. More recently, though acutely aware of the dangers of Christian hegemony in studies carried out in the Western academy, he and other comparatists have ventured into more constructive theological work (see Thatamanil 2006 and Voss Roberts 2010). A new Christian Commentaries on Non-Christian Sacred Texts series has also fostered constructive

**Clooney, Francis X., S.J. *Theology after Vedanta: An Experiment in Comparative Theology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Approaches Advaita Vedanta not as a systematization of knowledge but as a set of ritual, meditative, and literary practices. Clooney takes Badarayana's *Uttara-Mimamsa-Sutras* as his exemplar but considers the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas in a similar vein in the last chapter.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Clooney, Francis X., S.J. *Seeing through Texts: Doing Theology among the Śrīvaisnavas of South India*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Emphasizes the practices of reading and writing commentaries as theological activities. The study delves into Srivaisnava commentaries on the Tamil songs of Satakopan and turns briefly to a comparable series of Christian theological engagements with scripture.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Clooney, Francis X., S.J. *The Truth, The Way, The Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Hindus*. Christian Commentaries on Non-Christian Sacred Texts. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Intersperses Christian theological commentary within a detailed exegesis of traditional commentaries (especially Vedanta Desika's) on three Sri Vaisnava mantras. Analogous passages from Christian scripture enrich the reader's meditation on both texts. Notes that the mantras' truths are largely accessible for Christians, although the specific naming of the deities presents difficulties.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Cornille, Catherine, ed. *Song Divine: Christian Commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita*. Christian Commentaries on Non-Christian Texts. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

The introduction outlines previous major Christian engagements with the Bhagavad Gita. Ten Christian scholars then comment on the Gita's major themes, including detachment, divine embodiment, and devotion. Among several comparative essays, two frame a comparison between the Gita and Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Sheridan, Daniel P. *Loving God: Kṛṣṇa and Christ: a Christian Commentary on the Nārada Sūtras*. Christian Commentaries on Non-Christian Texts. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Treats the love of God in Catholicism and Vaisnavism as homologous. Although these loves are not identical activities and are not directed to identical divine persons, the author follows his exposition of each of the Narada Sutras with a "Catholic Reflection" to help Christians intensify their own love for God.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Thatamanil, John J. *The Immanent Divine: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Against the polarity of Western transcendence and Eastern immanence, Thatamanil finds distinct concepts of immanence in Paul Tillich's concept of ecstasy and Shankara's nondualism. The work offers a nondualistic Christian theology that unites Advaita's optimism about human union with divinity with a realistic view of their estrangement.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Voss Roberts, Michelle. *Dualities: A Theology of Difference*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Through a comparative reading of Mechthild of Magdeburg and Lalleswari of Kashmir, argues that the classic theological dualisms of God–world, God–self, soul–body, self–other, and West–East are better conceived as fluid relations. Proposes metaphor as a basis of comparison and women's texts as theological sources.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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## Contemporary Theological Comparison, by Tradition

Additional comparative works by Christian theologians can be grouped by the Hindu tradition they engage. Grant 2002 complements the work on Vedanta in Clooney 1993 and Thatamanil 2006 (cited under Contemporary Theological Comparison, Textual). Irigaray 2002 puts Western thought in conversation with yoga, Thangaraj 1994 with Saiva Siddhanta, and Clooney 2005 with Hindu Goddess traditions. Works that treat Vaisnava traditions (in addition to Clooney 1996 and Clooney 2009, both cited under Contemporary Theological Comparison, Textual) include Clooney 2008, Overzee 2007, and Tsoukalas 2006. Embodiment is an important theme in many of these studies, but comparisons with Vaisnavism hold special enduring fascination for Christians because of the centrality of a divine descent in both traditions. An important distinction between the two traditions lies in whether the divine embodiment is "real" or a graced illusion (*māyā*). Beyond this issue, Tsoukalas 2006 delves into questions of difference raised but not fully addressed in Parrinder 1997 and Carman 1994 (both cited under Contemporary Theological Comparison, Thematic), such as whether Krishna and Christ really share human nature, whether the deity is diminished in these descents, how divinity can have a body, and what manner of liberation and/or the afterlife the two saviors make possible.

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**Clooney, Francis Xavier, S.J.. *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother: Hindu Goddesses and the Virgin Mary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Clooney reads three hymns to Hindu goddesses and their commentaries alongside hymns honoring the Virgin Mary. He explores the theological role of powerful, ideal women (divine and non-divine) in conversation with some of the feminist literature on the subject.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Clooney, Francis Xavier, S.J.. *Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A close reading of two texts—Vedanta Desika's *Essence of the Auspicious Three Mysteries* and Francis de Sales's *Treatise on the Love of God*—that explores the theme of giving oneself over to the deity in love (*prapatti*, loving surrender).

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Grant, Sara. *Toward an Alternative Theology: Confessions of a Non-Dualist Christian*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Grant, the *ācārya* of the Christa Prema Seva Ashram in Pune, applies her intellectual and existential experience of the unity of reality to Christology. Her reading of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta illuminates the Son's relation to the Father, the Christ as cosmic person, and the origin of creation in God.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Irigaray, Luce. *Between East and West: From Singularity to Community*. Translated by Stephen Pluháček. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Irigaray affirms yoga's view of the body as a site of "incarnation" but criticizes its lack of awareness (and practical treatment) of sexual difference. She argues that the act of breathing—first shared with the mother, then independently—can teach Westerners how to live in relation with self and other.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Overzee, Ann Hunt. *The Body Divine: The Symbol of the Body in the Works of Teilhard de Chardin and Rāmānuja*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues on the basis of the metaphorical nature of theological language for deep functional similarities between Teilhard's notion of the body of Christ and Ramanuja's notion of the body of Brahman. In both, the body connotes a personal deity and a view of the material world as pervaded with divinity.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Thangaraj, M. Thomas. *The Crucified Guru: An Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Develops a Christology in light of the Saiva Siddhanta concept of the guru. While a crucified guru counteracts authoritarian tendencies in the Hindu guru traditions, the multiplicity of gurus in Hinduism challenges the uniqueness of Christ. Rooted in history, the guru model avoids the docetic aspects of avatar Christologies.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Tsoukalas, Steven.** *Kṛṣṇa and Christ: Body-Divine Relation in the Thought of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Classical Christian Orthodoxy.* Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Compares views of the Krishna avatar in Vedanta thinkers Shankara and Ramanuja with the “classic orthodox” Christian interpretation of the incarnation, represented by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Chalcedonian creeds. Despite the commonalities highlighted in other studies, the author argues that the three interpretations assume fundamentally disparate conceptual systems.

[+] **Find this resource:**

## Indian Christian Theologies, General Introductions

The emergence and development of self-consciously Indian Christian theologies can be attributed to many factors. For example, the mere fact of being Indian *and* Christian led some Indian Christians to inquire whether (and, if so, how) Indian Christianity should be different from other forms of Christianity. One of the most pressing questions for Indian Christian theologians in the last two centuries has been the extent to which non-Christian philosophical and religious traditions might be used in the formulation of Christian theology. That question has more recently been given special urgency by the claim, leveled at Christians by some Hindu nationalists, that Christianity is a wholly foreign import. The issue has been further complicated by some Dalit Christians, who want to reject Hinduism altogether because they perceive it to be an oppressive system from which they want to escape. The texts in this section are introductory texts. [Baagø 1969](#), [Boyd 1969](#), and [Mookenthottam 1978](#) provide historical overviews. [Amaladoss, et al. 1981](#) and [Boyd 1977](#) are more constructive in nature.

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**Amaladoss, M., T. K. John, and G. Gispert-Sauch, eds.** *Theologizing in India: Selection of Papers Presented at the Seminar Held in Poona on October 26–30, 1978.* Bangalore, India: Theological Publishers in India, 1981.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An anthology of papers by Catholic theologians addressing four major methodological issues in Indian Christian theology: the “what” of theology, the “where” of theology, the “when” of theology, and the “whence” of theology.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Baagø, Kaj.** *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity.* Madras: Christian Literature Society/CISRS, 1969.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Surveys the development of indigenous Christian thinking in India with case studies drawn from Krishna Mohan Banerjea, Parani Andi, A. J. Appasamy, and others. Contains selections from the writings of Banerjea and Appasamy, as well as from Brahmabandhad Upadhyay, Sadhu Sundar Singh, T. E. Slater, J. N. Farquhar, W. Miller, B. Lucas, and Kandaswamy Chetti.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Boyd, R. H. S.** *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology.* Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1969.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Still one of the best introductions to Indian Christian theology, this work provides an excellent summary of the thought of Indian theological pioneers from the Bengal Renaissance to the late 20th century.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Boyd, R. H. S. *Khristadvaita: A Theology for India*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1977.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Meant to be a textbook for students of theology, this work is the first serious project in systematic theology undertaken from an Indian perspective.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Mookenthottam, Antony. *Indian Theological Tendencies: Approaches and Problems for Further Research as Seen in the Works of Some Leading Indian Theologians*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 1978.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Provides brief sketches of the life and thought of a number of Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians who have incorporated the Indian philosophical and social context into their thinking. The earliest theologian to be considered is Roberto de Nobili (b. 1577–d. 1656); the most recent is Stanley Samartha (b. 1920–d. 2001).

[+] **Find this resource:**

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## Indian Christian Theologies, Prominent Early Figures

The Hindus with whom missionaries came into contact were rarely merely passive recipients of the missionary message, and even those who did convert to Christianity sometimes pushed the boundaries of their new faith by bringing it into conversation with Indian culture and religion. In doing so, they made an immense contribution to Indian theological thought (and to Christian theology more generally). The resources annotated in this section highlight the work of Christians (or, as some of them would have it, Hindu-Christians) who never lost sight of Hinduism as they articulated their Christian faith, and figures like Keshub Chunder Sen, who promoted an eclectic spiritual mixture of Hinduism, Christianity, and other religions. [Aleaz 1999](#), [Lipner 1999](#), [Lipner and Gispert-Sauch 1991](#), [Lipner and Gispert-Sauch 2002](#), and [Scott 1979](#) focus on Bengali thinkers. [Jacob 1979](#), [Paradkar 1969](#), and [Adhav 1979](#) consider figures from Maharashtra. [Boyd 1974](#) covers two important Gujarati theologians. (On Rammohun Roy, a figure who could arguably be included in this section, see [Theological Interactions, Early \[to 1857\]](#))

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**Adhav, S. M., ed. *Pandita Ramabai*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1979.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A succinct introduction to the life and writings of one of the most publicly renowned Indian Christian women, Pandita Ramabai. The work contains selections from Ramabai's thoughts on women's liberation, her understanding of Christ, and Christian creeds and doctrines.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Aleaz, K. P., ed. *From Exclusivism to Inclusivism: The Theological Writings of Krishna Mohun***

**Banerjea (1813–1885).** New Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1999.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A critical introduction to the life and thought of Banerjea, the text follows his theological movement from a position of soteriological exclusivism (salvation only through Christ) to his later, more inclusive position. The second part of the text includes writings in which Banerjea articulates his notion of Christ as *Prajapati*.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Boyd, R. H. S., ed. *Manilal C. Parekh 1885–1967, Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai 1895–1967: A Selection.*** Library of Indian Christian Theology 2. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1974.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A selection of writings from these two important Gujarati theologians, with an excellent introduction to their life and work. Prominent themes include baptism, Christ, the church, and Hindu-Christian encounter.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Jacob, Plamthodathil S., ed. *The Experiential Response of N. V. Tilak.*** Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1979.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A select anthology of poems by Tilak, emphasizing those in which he expresses his devotion to Christ, often by using Hindu symbols, imagery, and concepts (e.g., *anubhava*).

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Lipner, Julius. *Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary.*** Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A biography of Upadhyay, a Roman Catholic ascetic who attempted to interpret Christianity within the Hindu Vedantic tradition. The work traces the influences on and the shifts in Upadhyay's theology.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Lipner, Julius, and George Gispert-Sauch, eds. *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay. Vol. 1.*** Bangalore, India: United Theological College, 1991.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Volume 1 contains an introduction to the life and thought of this important figure who attempted to articulate his Christianity as much as possible through Hindu thought and ritual. Includes a selection of his writings grouped thematically.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Lipner, Julius, and George Gispert-Sauch, eds. *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay. Vol. 2.*** Bangalore, India: United Theological College, 2002.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Volume 2 also contains thematically organized writings of this early proponent of "inculturation," but supplements these with some of Upadhyay's personal correspondence and autobiographical



writings.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Paradkar, Balwant. A. M., ed. *The Theology of Nehemiah Goreh*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1969.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A collection of some of the apologetic writings of Goreh on questions of the existence of God, the finality of Christ, and Christianity's relationship to other faiths.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Scott, David C., ed. *Keshub Chunder Sen*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1979.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A collection of Sen's lectures, and excerpts from his works that reflect his spiritual experiments, particularly with Christianity.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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## Indian Christian Theologies, Madras Rethinking Group

The Madras Rethinking Group, which got its name from the title of its main publication, *Rethinking Christianity in India* (Devasahayam and Sudarisanam 1938), represents one of the most significant early-20th-century theological movements in India. A loose-knit group of radical theologians, the Group, which was most active in the 1930s, was influential in shaping subsequent Indian theological inquiry, both in terms of content and method. Group theologians viewed Hinduism as a "spiritual eye" capable of recognizing Jesus and as a "spiritual mother" who teaches her children spiritual discernment, and argued that Indian theology needed to get out of "translation" mode, and take up instead the creative construction of theology. Those associated with the Group also suggested that Indian Christian theologians needed to reconsider the canon of authoritative sources for Christian theology. Similarly, Group members emphasized the need to reclaim the religious heritage of Christian converts and offer a distinctively *Indian* Christology. The two most important figures in this movement were Pandipeddi Chenchiah (b. 1886–d. 1959; see [Thangasamy 1966](#)) and Vengal Chakkarai (b. 1880–d. 1958; see [Chakkarai 1926](#), [Chakkarai 1932](#)), although others such as S. Jesudasan (see [Jesudasan 1937](#)) made important contributions to the project.

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**Chakkarai, V. *Jesus the Avatar*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1926.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

An original contribution to the formulation of a distinctly Indian Christology. Chakkarai engages in conversation with the Indian concept of avatar in this pioneering comparative work.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Devasahayam, D. M., and A. N. Sudarisanam, eds. *Rethinking Christianity in India*. Madras: A. N. Sudarisanam, 1938.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Several contributors discuss pressing issues facing Christianity in India in the first third of the 20th century, including Christianity's relationship to other faiths, the nature of the church, the figure of

Jesus in various Indian religious traditions, movements of Indian church union, and Christianity and the nationalist movement.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Chakkarai, V. *The Cross and Indian Thought*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1932.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

In this seminal work Chakkarai interprets the cross of Christ with reference to the Hindu concepts of *yajña* and *niṣkāma karma*, by focusing in particular on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Jesudasan, Savarirayan. *Ashrams, Ancient and Modern: Their Aims and Ideals*. Vellore, India: Sri Ramachandra Press, 1937.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A historical overview of the function of ashrams in religious as well as secular dimensions of Indian society, with a call for the Christian community to expand on the ashram ideal for its life in India.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Thangasamy, D. A. *The Theology of Chenchiah with Selections from His Writings*. Bangalore, India: CISRS, 1966.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Contains both biographical material and a section of Chenchiah's works, particularly those in which he articulates his understanding of Christ, revelation, the church, Christian mission, and the relationship of Christianity and Hinduism.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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## Indian Christian Theologies, Dialogue

While the earliest Indian Christian theologians tended to engage with Hinduism in order to make sense of their hyphenated identity as Indian Christians and make the Christian gospel appealing to Hindus, many later theologians concerned themselves with developing theologies of religion and of interfaith dialogue more generally. The theologians included in this section opted for various positions along the continuum from theological inclusivism to pluralism, but each of them made immense contributions to the field, and are recognized for doing so not only in India, but internationally. [Panikkar 1981](#) represents one of the earliest works in the field, S. J. Samartha ([Samartha 1981](#), [Samartha 1991](#)) gained a wide audience at the end of the 20th century, and [Aleaz 1996](#) continues the innovative work of the earlier two figures.

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**Aleaz, K. P. *Christian Thought through Advaita Vedanta*. Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

An important contribution from this prolific author, the book attempts to construct innovative understandings of God, Jesus, humans, and creation by relating Advaita Vedanta to Christian thought.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Panikkar, Raymond. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany*. Rev. ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A groundbreaking work on Hindu-Christian dialogue in which Panikkar engages in conversation with Hindu thought, analyzing in particular the relationship between God and world as espoused in the Brahmasutras (and Shankara's advaitic interpretation of them) as a potential Hindu-Christian meeting point. Originally published in 1964. (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd)

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Samartha, S. J. *Courage for Dialogue: Ecumenical Issues in Inter-religious Relationships*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1981.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

In this collection of eleven essays, Samartha develops his position on theological pluralism as a viable Christian position and starting point for interfaith dialogue.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Samartha, S. J. *One Christ—Many Religions: Towards a Revised Christology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Broaching similar themes as in [Samartha 1981](#), this work focuses on four major themes: an analysis of the contemporary Indian situation, hermeneutics, Christian mission, and Christology.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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## **Indian Christian Theologies, Liberation Theologies**

In post-independence India, Christian engagement with people movements focusing on the liberation of oppressed communities contributed to the emergence of several versions of liberation theology, e.g., Dalit theology, tribal theology, and feminist theology. These theological articulations address issues of poverty, the denial of human rights, gender discrimination, and caste discrimination, and lay emphasis on the praxis and the pathos of the masses. These theologies commonly identify two primary locations of divine activity in (1) the suffering of the oppressed and (2) the praxis of the liberation movements. They also call into question the dominance of Brahminic/Vedic thought in earlier Indian Christian theologies and look instead to the life and thought worlds of Dalits, tribal peoples, and women as they articulate their theological positions. [Grey 2010](#) and [Kumari 1999](#) focus on women. [Clarke 1998](#), [Devasahayam 1997](#), and [Prabhakar 1988](#) represent important initial articulations of Dalit theology. [Clarke, et al. 2010](#) and [Rajkumar 2010](#) contain more recent work in the field.

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**Clarke, Sathianathan. *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Engages in theological conversation with Dalit religion and culture, and attempts to reconstruct an Indian liberation Christology by retrieving Pariah traditions such as the Drum and goddess worship.

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[+] Find this resource:

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Clarke, Sathianathan, Dennabandhu Manchala, and Philip Vinod Peacock, eds. *Dalit Theology in the Twenty-First Century: Discordant Voices, Discerning Pathways*. Papers presented at the Symposium on Dalit Theology in the Twenty-First Century, January 2008, Bishop's College, Kolkata. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An anthology of articles written by younger Dalit scholars from various disciplines interrogating Dalit hermeneutics, method in Dalit theology, Dalit identity, and a number of common theological issues.

[+] Find this resource:

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Devasahayam, V., ed. *Frontiers of Dalit Theology*. New Delhi and Chennai: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge/Gurukul, 1997.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A massive compilation of papers presented at the Gurukul Summer Institute, this work contains chapters from several Dalit theologians. Common themes of investigation are the nexus between caste, class, and patriarchy; Dalit history and theology; and theological method. The book also includes some Dalit reflection on the Bible.

[+] Find this resource:

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Grey, Mary C. *A Cry for Dignity: Religion, Violence and the Struggle of Dalit Women in India*. London: Equinox, 2010.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Written by a Catholic theologian for many years associated with the Wells for India project, the book focuses on the doubly disadvantaged Dalit women and discusses the various ways in which religion (especially Christianity) can both liberate and oppress them.

[+] Find this resource:

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Kumari, Prasanna, ed. *Feminist Theology: Perspectives and Praxis*. Papers presented at a seminar organized by Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute. Chennai: Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, 1999.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

This work contains various articles from an Indian feminist and womanist perspective, authored by both women and men.

[+] Find this resource:

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Prabhakar, M. E., ed. *Towards a Dalit Theology*. New Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1988.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A pioneering work that directs its critique both outward and inward, that is, at caste prejudice both in Indian society generally and within the Indian Christian community itself. Prabhakar argues that Dalit theologians should focus on restoring Dalit initiative by constructing theologies drawing upon the experiences and praxis of Dalit themselves.

[+] Find this resource:

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**Rajkumar, Peniel. *Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation: Problems, Paradigms and Possibilities*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A critical reconstruction of Dalit theology focusing on healing stories in the Synoptic gospels as a possible resource for the construction of Dalit theology.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

## Hindu-Christian Polemics

The interaction of Hindus and Christians has sometimes involved critical confrontation and polemical exchanges. Hindu pandits engaged in debate with Christians from the arrival of the earliest missionaries. [Grafe 1972](#) describes Hindu apologetics provoked by the work of the early-18th-century Protestant missionary Ziegenbalg, who was at times severely critical of Hinduism. [Young 1981](#) provides a thoughtful analysis of some early-19th-century debates published in Sanskrit. Missionaries in this and the colonial period were as a rule (with some important exceptions) rather dismissive of Hinduism. And while a number of Indian converts like Upadhyay (see [Lipner 1999](#), cited under [Colonial Period, Reform Movements and Reformers](#)) spoke positively of the tradition, a considerable amount of anti-Hindu literature was produced by European missionaries and Indian Christians. The most popular and widely read texts in this polemical genre were published by the Christian Literature Society for India. [Murdock 1896](#) and [Christian Literature Society for India 1902](#) are included here as representative samples of this literature. In the 20th century, and particularly after India's independence (in 1947), Hindus became even more assertive in their resistance to Christianity, and in particular in their criticism of the Christian missionary impulse. [Manshardt 1949](#) includes excerpts from M. K. Gandhi's often quite critical interaction with Christian missionaries. In more recent decades, some of the most important anti-Christian literature has come from the publishing house Voice of India. Voice of India produced the original version of [Swarup 1992](#), as well as [Goel 2010](#). [Shourie 1994](#) has also been included in this section because its author is one of the best known critics of Christian evangelical efforts, and because this particular text is relatively representative of the contemporary anti-missionary discourse more generally.

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**Christian Literature Society for India. *Vedic Hinduism and the Arya Samaj: An Appeal to Educated Hindus*. London and Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1902.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Provides an overview of Vedic literature, gods, and beliefs, declaring in a prefatory note "that while the Vedic hymns contain some noble sentiments, their religious ideas are not suited to the present day." Ends with a critical analysis of the Arya Samaj's Dayananda Saraswati. Available [online](#).

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**Goel, Sita Ram. *History of Hindu-Christian Encounters, AD 304 to 1996*. 2d ed. New Delhi: Voice of India, 2010.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Originally published in 1986, this massive and often satirical work criticizes Christian missions and Christianity in general. The text provides a polemical history of Christianity in India while praising those, like Vivekananda and Rammohun Roy (see [Roy 1834](#), cited under [Theological Interactions, Early \[to 1857\]](#)), who resisted its spread.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Grafe, Hugald. "Hindu Apologetics at the Beginning of the Protestant Mission Era in India." *Indian Church History Review* 6.1 (1972): 43–69.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A study of ninety-nine letters on Christianity written by "Malabarian Hindu priests" at the behest of Ziegenbalg, which both defend Hinduism and occasionally point out the infelicities of Christian doctrine.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Manshardt, Clifford, ed. *The Mahatma and the Missionary: Selected Writings of Mohandas K. Gandhi*. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An excellent and well-organized collection of Gandhi's writings on and reported interactions with Christian missionaries. Gandhi is polite but firm in his criticism of Christian attempts to convert Hindus, which he believes debase even their otherwise laudable medical and educational service.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Murdock, John. *Caste: Its Supposed Origin; Its History; Its Effects; the Duty of Government, Hindus, and Christians with Respect to It; and Its Prospects*. London and Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1896.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Describing caste as "the most intolerant and exacting taskmaster that ever placed a yoke on the neck of man," Murdock provides a critical review of the history of caste and its social effects. The "duties" implied in the title include, unsurprisingly, working for the eradication of caste. Available [online](#).

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Shourie, Arun. *Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas*. New Delhi: ASA, 1994.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An expanded version of a controversial presentation given at a meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India by perhaps the best-known contemporary critic of Christian evangelism in India. One of the book's central claims is that the desire to convert undermines the nobility of the services provided by missionaries.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Swarup, Ram. *Hinduism vis-à-vis Christianity and Islam*. 3d ed. New Delhi: Voice of India, 1992.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Originally published in 1982, this text by Swarup inspired a whole new generation of postcolonial apologetic Hindu writers, like Sita Ram Goel and Arun Shourie, who frequently quote him and agree with and repeat his claim that Christianity is an imperialistic ideology.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Young, Richard Fox. *Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1981.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An erudite and well-sourced examination of Christian writing in Sanskrit and the apologetic Hindu responses it inspired. The text focuses in particular on the work of Scottish civil servant John Muir, and on responses to it published by three Hindus, including future convert Nilakanth/Nehemiah Goreh (on Goreh, see [Thomas 1970](#) cited under [Theological Interactions, Colonial \[1858–1946\]](#) and [Paradkar 1969](#) cited under [Indian Christian Theologies, Prominent Early Figures](#)).

[+] **Find this resource:**

## Conversion and Hindu-Christian Conflict

While there has often been tension between Hindus and Christians in India, both before and after independence in 1947, that tension has increased dramatically since the 1990s, and has led on occasion to violent encounters. The tension, and the violence, are often linked, by Hindu nationalists, to what they perceive as aggressive and disrespectful attempts, by Christians, to convert Hindus (for more on this topic, see [Hindu-Christian Polemics](#)). [Lobo 2002](#), [Raj and Thambusamy 1999](#), [Sarkar 1999](#), and [Zavos 2001](#) appeared after the occurrence of riots targeting Christians in several towns in the Dangs, Gujarat (in 1998), and attempted to analyze those riots with reference to Dangi culture and politics while placing them within a larger historical and political context. [Mustafa and Sharma 2003](#) looks at conflicts between Hindus and Christians more generally, linking them, in part, to ambiguities in sections of the Indian constitution dealing with religious issues. Between 2007 and 2009, another, far more devastating series of riots occurred between Hindus and Christians in and around Kandhamal, Orissa. [Chatterji 2009](#) and [Bauman 2010](#) are representative of the earliest scholarly attempts to make sense of them. In general, the scholarly literature on this topic is in its infancy, and is often rather tentative in nature. No doubt, as more time passes and more information becomes available, resources on Hindu-Christian violence will become more thorough and more sophisticated.

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**Bauman, Chad. "Identity, Conversion, and Violence: Dalits, Adivasis, and the 2007–08 Riots in Orissa." In *Margins of Faith: Dalit and Tribal Christianity in India*. Edited by Rowena Robinson and Joseph Marianus Kujur, 263–290. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2010.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An overview of major events in the Kandhamal, the Orissa riots, with an analysis of the same focusing on factors such as Christian evangelism, intercaste/tribe politics, and the work of Hindu nationalist workers and politicians.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Chatterji, Angana. *Violent Gods: Hindu Nationalism in India's Present; Narratives from Orissa*. Gurgaon, India: Three Essays Collective, 2009.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A comprehensive look at communalism in Orissa, past and present, with some sections dealing explicitly with the recent anti-Christian riots. Informed by the latest theories, the work is at times grandiloquent. Nevertheless, it remains the most thorough work on the topic.

[+] **Find this resource:**

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**Lobo, Lancy. *Globalization, Hindu Nationalism, and Christianity in India*. New Delhi: Rawat, 2002.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An analysis of conflict between Hindu Nationalists and India's Christians. Lobo focuses in particular on anti-Christian riots in the Dangs, Gujarat (1998), and usefully connects more local issues involving Hindu-Christian conflict with the cultural, economic, and political effects of globalization.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Mustafa, Faizan, and Anurag Sharma. *Conversion: Constitutional and Legal Implications*. New Delhi: Kanishka, 2003.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Explores what India's constitution has to say about religious freedom, evangelism, and conversion, and blames ambiguities in the constitution (and in judicial interpretations of it), to some extent, for contemporary conflict between India's religious communities, especially Hindus and Christians.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Raj, Ebe Sunder, and Ezra Samuel Thambusamy. *Divide to Rule: Communal Attacks on Christians in India during 1997–2000: Full Details, Reasons, Allegations and Answers*. Chennai: Bharat Jyoti, 1999.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Focuses on violence against Christians in the Dangs, Gujarat, but includes shorter sections on Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Maharashtra as well. Frames anti-Christian violence as a strategy of upper-caste Hindus to retain their hegemony in the face of increased assertiveness from Dalit and tribal communities (from which most contemporary conversions to Christianity come).

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Sarkar, Sumit. "Conversions and Politics of Hindu Right." *Economic and Political Weekly* 26 (June 1999): 1691–1700.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Written shortly after anti-Christian riots in the Dangs, Gujarat, the article focuses on how politicians attempted to justify the violence as a response to aggressive Christian evangelism. The article also provides a useful history of how religious conversion (especially conversion to Christianity) came to be a political issue.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Zavos, John. "Conversion and the Assertive Margins: An Analysis of Hindu Nationalist Discourse and the Recent Attacks on Indian Christians." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 24.2 (December 2001): 73–89.**

DOI: 10.1080/00856400108723451 [Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that conversion to Christianity has been of primary concern to Hindu nationalists since the late 19th century, when missionaries shifted their focus to (and began having some success among) lower-caste and tribal groups, because of the importance of those groups to the nationalist project of maintaining a unified and numerically dominant Hindu political bloc.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)



## Interaction of Hinduism and Anglo-American Cultures/Religions

Indians have been migrating to Europe and North America in relatively large numbers since the late 1960s, but scholarly explorations of this migration, and of its religious effects, were few and far between until the late 1980s, when [Williams 1988](#) and [Fenton 1988](#) made initial and foundational forays into the field. In the 21st century scholars investigating Hinduism in the “diaspora” have become obsessed with race, Hindu nationalism, and transnational connections between Hindus around the world. But between the late 1980s and the year 2000, scholars focused more on how Hinduism was altered by the migration process itself, and by the interaction of Hindus with Christians and Western social norms and political structures. [Kurien 1998](#) and [Narayanan 1992](#) emerge out of ethnographic work among specific Hindu communities. [Vertovec 2000](#) is a more general analysis of Hinduism in the “diaspora.” [Williams 1992](#) and [Coward, et al. 2000](#) are useful collections of relevant essays. And [Bauman and Saunders 2009](#) is a helpful overview of these and other works on the topic, identifying several prominent themes, theories, and arguments. [Jacobsen and Raj 2008](#) turns the tables somewhat, focusing on the experiences of South Asian Christian migrants in Europe and North America.

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**Bauman, Chad, and Jennifer Saunders. “Out of India: Immigrant Hindus and South Asian Hinduism in the United States.” *Religion Compass* 3.1 (2009): 116–135.**

DOI: [10.1111/j.1749-8171.2008.00121.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2008.00121.x) [Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A state-of-the-field article summarizing scholarly work on Hindus in the United States and, to a less extent, in England and Canada. Describes effects of the interaction of Hindu/Hinduism with Anglo-American cultures and religions under three headings: Ecumenicization, Congregationalization, and Ritual Adaptation.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Coward, Harold G., John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams, eds. *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An ambitious collection of essays covering multiple South Asian religious traditions, including Hinduism. Essays by Kim Knott, Harold Coward, Diana Eck, and Raymond Brady Williams are particularly important. Coward's chapter discusses the increased prominence of gurus in Canadian Hinduism, while Eck's focuses on the uniquely “voluntaristic” nature of Hinduism in the United States.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Fenton, John Y. *Transplanting Religious Traditions: Asian Indians in America*. New York: Praeger, 1988.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that the experience of migration causes Hindus to turn to their religion for support. In that way, Indian immigrants differ from earlier generations of European immigrants who often attempted to Americanize (in every way) as quickly as possible.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Jacobsen, Knut, and Selva Raj, eds. *South Asian Christian Diaspora: Invisible Diaspora in Europe and North America*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Provides essays on the Indian Christian diaspora in North America and Europe by advanced scholars such as Rachel Fell McDermott, Eleanor Nesbitt, and the editors, focusing on cross-cultural adaptation, and the relationship between religion and the acculturation of migrant communities.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Kurien, Prema. "Becoming American by Becoming Hindu: Indian Americans Take Their Place at the Multicultural Table." In *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. Edited by R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, 37–70. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that American multiculturalism actually creates pressure on immigrants to homogenize the diverse traditions of their homeland for cultural consumption, and shows, through ethnographic fieldwork, the process of homogenization at work in a number of American Hindu sites.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Narayanan, Vasudha. "Creating South Indian 'Hindu' Experience in the United States." In *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad*. Edited by Raymond Brady Williams, 147–176. Chambersburg, PA: Anima, 1992.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

Focusing on the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Penn Hills (outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), Narayanan demonstrates the various ways that Hindus have adapted their practices and beliefs to American culture. Narayanan, one of the foremost scholars of Hinduism, also describes the emergence of what she calls a "generic" Hinduism of yuppie Hindus.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Vertovec, Steven. *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A more general text on Hinduism outside of India that highlights the effects of migration on Hindu rituals, beliefs, and gender roles in various non-Indian contexts. The book also helpfully considers terms like "diaspora" from a theoretical standpoint.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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Williams, Raymond Brady. *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

A foundational text in the field, quoted by nearly every text on American Hinduism that succeeded it. The book covers not only Hinduism, but also Jainism, Sikhism, and South Asian Islam, emphasizing the ways that these communities have been assimilated into, and have adapted to, American democracy.

[+] [Find this resource:](#)

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**Williams, Raymond Brady, ed. *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad*. Edited by Raymond Brady Williams. Chambersburg, PA: Anima, 1992.**

[Save Citation »](#) [Export Citation »](#) [E-mail Citation »](#)

An edited volume containing contributions by some of the most important scholars in the field, including Vasudha Narayanan, Fred Clothey, John Fenton, and others. The book's chapters all address, in various ways, the processes by which Hindu traditions are transmitted and adapted as Hindus move around the world.

**[+] Find this resource:**

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