

11-1-1991

# Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters

Kay Koppedrayer

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus>

---

### Recommended Citation

Koppedrayer, Kay (1991) "Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters," *Consensus*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 2 , Article 17.  
Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol17/iss2/17>

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Consensus by an authorized editor of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact [scholarscommons@wlu.ca](mailto:scholarscommons@wlu.ca).

the history of religions" (309). What he finds problematic is Pannenberg's lack of a clearer distinction between "general" revelation and "special" revelation. He also questions whether Pannenberg views Christianity as superior in relation to "the soteriological *efficacy*" of other religions.

In "A Response To My American Friends", one encounters a little of Pannenberg's angst as well as his proficiency. He does not believe—in response to Braaten—that the truth claims of all religions are equal. On the other hand, he believes that the doctrines of Christian churches are provisional and do not guarantee truth. Only the final consummation of God's reign shall reveal the truth in all of its fullness. Until then, the truth is openly disputed and encountered in fresh ways. Pannenberg critiques the God of process theology as well as their anthropology. In response to Cobb, he denies having a closed-mindedness towards third world and feminist theologians; yet he finds liberation theologians' uncritical adoption of Marxist analysis problematic. His eschatological ethics always presuppose the traditional Lutheran anthropological position that sin and ambiguity are ever-present and shaping human life. For Pannenberg, the ecumenical movement shows its greatest promise in bilateral dialogues. He sees the World Council of Churches' role as the facilitator of this process.

This volume is quite esoteric and therefore most appealing to Pannenberg scholars. The cost may be prohibitive for some. The editors are to be critiqued for not using inclusive language and failing to include feminist as well as other particular/contextual theologians.

Garth Wehrfritz-Hanson  
St. John's Lutheran Church, New Sarepta, Alberta

## **Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters**

Harold Coward, editor  
Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989  
xix + 281 pp.

Edited by Harold Coward, Director of the Humanities Institute of the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, this volume draws together scholarly research, anecdotal material, and the personal reflections of eighteen scholars and religious thinkers. The result of their work not only reviews historical and current interactions between representatives of the Hindu and Christian communities, but also considers future exchanges. Part I opens with an examination of the earliest contacts Hindus had with the St. Thomas Christians. Other essays in this section trace Hindu-Christian dialogue in missionary activity, the Hindu Renaissance, Indian nationalism, and Hindu-Christian encounters in Europe. In exploring current interaction, the essays in Part II are wider-ranging. They examine examples

of dialogue in India and Canada, the ISKON-Christian encounter, Hindu views of Christ, Christian views of Hindu devotion, and Hindu and Christian influences on each others' spiritual practices. Part III concludes with reflections on dialogue and the academic study of religion, the place of scripture, and two perspectives on the future of Hindu-Christian dialogue.

Nearly all the essays take up the meaning of dialogue and its place in religious enterprise and cross-cultural encounters. Not all the understandings of dialogue agree, but many echo the sentiment expressed by Raimundo Panikkar (xv) that dialogue can contribute positively to new self-understanding. Others suggest dialogue is an end in itself (Eric J. Sharpe:111), while still others speak of dialogue as a search for community (S. Wesley Ariarajah:253). For these reflections alone, the volume is worth consulting. But the work offers much more than a series of definitions of dialogue; its essays provide us with a much-needed review of Hindu-Christian encounters. Recommended for anyone interested in interreligious and cross-cultural communication.

K.I. Koppedrayar  
Wilfrid Laurier University

## Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Toward an Assessment

Arthur F. McGovern  
Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989  
xxii + 281 pp.

Arthur McGovern has done it again. As in his earlier work, *Marxism: An American Christian Perspective*, the United States Jesuit scholar has brought to bear his fine descriptive and analytical skills to his most recent study. This time he offers a balanced and convincing defense of Latin American liberation theology. True to his title, he allows significant space for descriptions of the positions taken by liberation theology's more celebrated and vociferous critics, from John Paul II to Catholicism's more recent, somewhat notorious convert, Richard Neuhaus. Although the author shares some of these assessments and although he stands on the main street of catholic orthodoxy, his position is not that of an uncommitted moderate. McGovern is clearly an open supporter of the liberation theologians, and even his own critiques are designed to enhance the liberationists' claims and influence.

The author guides his reader in a careful step-by-step approach, designed to appeal to someone who is both thoughtful and open. After an overview of the book, he supplies a brief history of Latin America followed by a definitional treatment of liberation theology. The critics of this new