

Editorial

This issue of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* looks at the daunting task of engaging Hindus. Very few Seventh-day Adventists have seriously struggled with all the various issues and challenges a Christian witness faces when setting out to communicate the gospel to Hindus and this fact was highlighted as we put out the word over a year ago to various people who had worked for Hindus asking them to write for this issue. Unfortunately we received very few manuscripts. However, we were blessed with two outstanding articles by long-time students of the Indian cultures and peoples.

H. L. Richard writes an excellent article on various concepts and beliefs that should provide some very basic information for those engaging Hindus. However, as he rightly points out, the category of "Hinduism as a religion is dubious and impractical; any real grasp of Hindu traditions will involve the embrace of diversity and complexity." So, welcome to the almost impossible task of defining Hinduism.

Anyone interested in working among Hindus would be well advised to read and study carefully Herbert Hoefer's excellent article on "Relating Meaningfully to the Hindu Worldview." Notice especially his warning to understand that there is an alternative Indian worldview that is found among the Dalits—the very group that makes up most of the membership of all the Christian churches in India. Because Dalits dominate church membership in India, and because they often have antagonistic views towards those in the castes above them, Dalit Christians are often the least able to effectively communicate the gospel to the eighty percent of the Indian peoples who are in the other castes.

I again appeal for papers and articles dealing with case studies, mission topics, and attempts at contextualization in Hindu contexts written by people who are actively involved in engaging Hindus. Much more needs to be done, so share your ideas and writings by sending them to bbauer@andrews.edu

Bruce Bauer, editor