

## Christianity in India

Referenced information below in blue is from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism\\_and\\_other\\_religions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_and_other_religions), Reference for informational purposes only.

Apart from the Goa Inquisition, there is no history of forced conversion of Hindus to Christianity. The declaration Nostra Aetate officially established inter-religious dialogue between Catholics and Hindus. It has promoted common values between religions. There are over 17.3 million Catholics in India, which represents less than 2% of the total population and is the largest Christian Church within India. (See also: Dalit theology).

Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity differ on fundamental beliefs on heaven, hell and reincarnation, to name a few. From the Hindu perspective, heaven (Sanskrit svarga) and hell (naraka) are temporary places, where every soul has to live, either for the good deeds done or for their sins committed. After a soul suffers its due punishment in hell, or after a soul has enjoyed enough in the heaven, it again enters the life-death cycle. There is no concept of 'permanent' hell. "Karma" cycle takes over. Permanent heaven or bliss is "Moksha".

However, there also exist significant similarities in Christian and Hindu theology, most notably in that both religions present a trinitarian view of **God**. The **Holy Trinity** of Christianity, consisting of the Father, Son, and **Holy Ghost**, is sometimes seen as roughly analogous to the Trimurti of Hinduism, whose members--**Brahma**, **Vishnu**, and **Shiva**—are seen as the three principal manifestations of Brahman, or **Godhead**. Others may consider **Brahma** to be more similar to the demiurge of Christian gnosticism, in that he (at least initially) wrongly thought himself as the "Creator" and also as the highest or even the only **god**. In this case, the Hindu version of the Trinity could more accurately be seen as **Vishnu** (Father), **Sankarshan** or **Shiva** (Holy Spirit), and **Bhahma** (Son; analogous to **Christ**). However there is a Parabrahma i.e. ultimate creator who has created this thrimurthi also.

This view is further supported by the perceived intimate connection, or even identity (at least for a time in early and Eastern Christianity) between the feminine Sophia (wisdom) and the gender-neutral **Holy Spirit** (or, the Virgin Mary in Western Christianity). Sophia is also sometimes seen to represent the Image of **God** present in the human soul, which is saved from its fallen state by **Christ** the Logos—in which case there would be a strong similarity between Sophia and Sita in the Ramayana, who is saved by Hanuman (an

incarnation of **Shiva**) from the demon king Ravana to be reunited with her husband **Rama**, representing **God**. In either case, Hindu or Christian, a trinity is generally not seen as polytheistic, but rather as representing three mysteriously distinct aspects of one personal **God**, or Ishvara.

In Hinduism (also in Jainism and Sikhism), the concept of moksha is akin to that of Buddhism's nirvana, as well as Christianity's doctrine of salvation. Most other religions of the world do not have such conceptions, except for that of fana' al-fana, or the experience of Wahdat-ul-Wujood in the Sufi aspect of Islam, and possibly some other examples.

Christian-Hindu relations are a mixed affair. On one hand, Hinduism's natural tendency has been to recognize the divine basis of various other religions, and to revere their founders and saintly practitioners. On the other hand, aggressive proselytism on the part of some Christian groups have led to incidents of anti-Christian rhetoric, often fueled by Hindu nationalist political parties. In Western countries, Vedanta has influenced some Christian thinkers, while others in the anti-cult movement have reacted against the activities of immigrant gurus and their followers. (See also: Pierre Johanns, Abhishiktananda, Bede Griffiths, Dalit theology.)

Hinduism and Christianity have evolved similar doctrines also, one of which is understanding **god** (which is **god** is to be loved only and not understood), the old testament's wrathful **god** has been replaced by **god** the father in the new testament, similarly the wrathful **gods** of Vedas have be replace by **Vishnu (God)** in the Suritis who takes avatars on earth to save mankind from evil .