Growth and Challenges for Christianity in India

Chad Bauman  
*Butler University*

James Ponniah  
*Jnana Deepa Vidypeeth University*

In a groundbreaking study based on extensive new field research, Chad Bauman and James Ponniah provide an up-to-date account of the status and role of Christianity in the world’s largest democracy, Hindu-majority India. While only about four percent of the population, the Christian community has made contributions to Indian civil society that have been substantial and disproportionate, especially in education, healthcare, poverty amelioration, and human rights activism. However, Bauman and Ponniah show that Christianity’s appeal to low-caste and tribal peoples has provoked fear among the guardians of traditional Indian society, resulting in attempts—sometimes violent—to limit the freedom of Christians. And yet the Christian community’s growing experience of harassment and violence has not led it to withdraw from civil society. On the contrary, Bauman and Ponniah conclude that Christians have increased their investment in the people of India. They are forming partnerships not only with other minority communities experiencing oppression, including Muslims, but also with secular-minded Hindus and human rights activists.