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Hinduism, Yoga and the Christian

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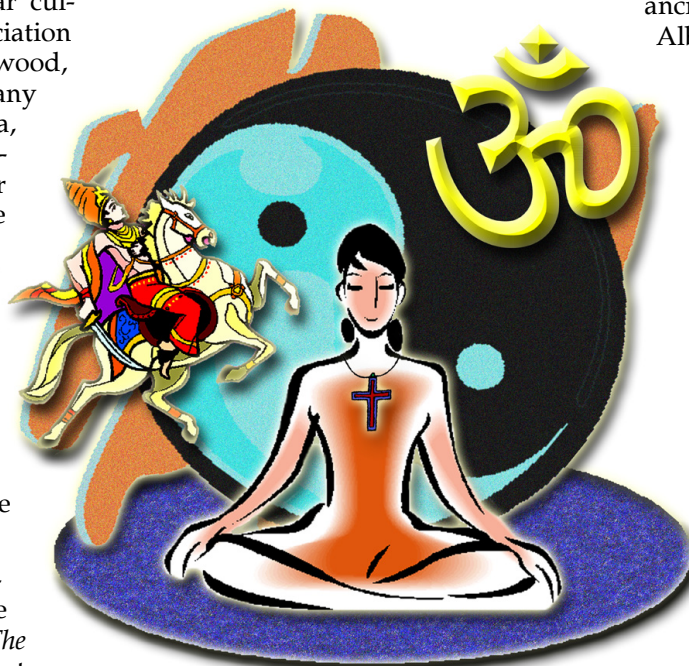
Hinduism, the primary religion of the subcontinent of India, has gained a firm foothold and wide acceptance in the United States since first attracting significant attention in the 19th century. Images of Hindu "holy men" are familiar in modern popular culture, due to their frequent association with those among the Hollywood, music, and literary set. And many Americans have taken up yoga, which is inextricably intertwined with Hinduism, for physical exercise. Some churches even offer yoga classes, going so far as to call it "Christian yoga."

But before taking a yoga class, the discerning Christian needs to consider the implications of yoga and whether it can be integrated into one's daily walk with the Lord Jesus.

No examination of yoga's influence and impact can exclude Hinduism. In his 1989 book, *The New Age Cult*, Walter Martin wrote:

"The great English apologist and writer C. S. Lewis saw the battle lines clearly drawn. He noted that in the final conflict between religions, Hinduism and Christianity would offer the only viable options because Hinduism

absorbs all religious systems, and Christianity excludes all others, maintaining the supremacy of the claims of Jesus Christ."¹



Hinduism has no identifiable founder and it does not require a belief in any god. It tends to absorb — or try to absorb — elements from other religions. The conventional wisdom is that Hinduism is the most ancient world religion. But Mark Albrecht writes:

"Modern scholarship has established that the earliest vestiges of the Hindu religion are to be found in the scripture known as the *Rig Veda*, which was probably compiled about 1500 B.C. at the earliest. This makes Hinduism the world's second oldest religion after Judaism, which was established by God's covenant with Abraham, somewhere between 2000 to 1800 B.C."²

Another states:

"Hinduism is not really one religion, but many religions that interact and

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