

# The Human Icon

## *A Comparative Study of Hindu and Orthodox Christian Beliefs*

by Christine Mangala Frost

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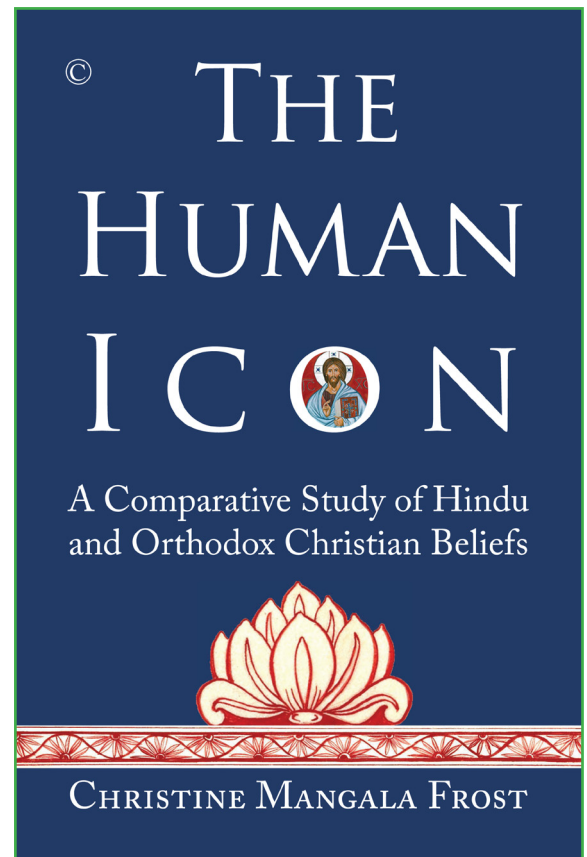
**James Clarke & Co** Despite the history that divides them, Hinduism and Orthodox Christianity have much in common. In *The Human Icon*, Christine Mangala Frost explores how both religions seek to realise the divine potential of every human being, and the differences in their approach. Frost, who has experienced both the extraordinary riches and the all-too-human failings of Hinduism and Orthodox Christianity from the inside, is perfectly placed to examine the convergences and divergences between the two faiths. Inspired by a desire to clear up the misunderstandings that exist between the two, *The Human Icon* is a study in how two faiths, superficially dissimilar, can nevertheless find meeting points everywhere. The powerful intellectual and spiritual patristic traditions of Orthodox Christianity offer a rare tool for revitalising too-often stalled dialogue with Hinduism and present the chance for a broader and more diverse understanding of the oldest religion in the world. Tracing the long history of Orthodox Christianity in India, from the Thomas Christians of ancient times to the distinctive theology of Paulos Mar Gregorios and the Kottayam School, Frost explores the impact of Hindu thought on Indian Christianity and considers the potential for confluence. With a breadth of interest that spans Hindu bhakti, Orthodox devotional theology, Vedānta and theosis, as well as meditational Yoga and hesychastic prayer, Frost offers a fresh perspective on how the devotees of both faiths approach the ideal of divinisation, and presents a thoughtful, modern methodology for a dialogue of life.

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Christine Mangala Frost is a Guest Lecturer and Research Associate at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, where she edits and presents their outreach programme, *The Way*. Born in India and raised Hindu, she converted first to Anglicanism and then, in 1997, to Orthodox Christianity. She is the author of several journal articles on interfaith issues, as well as three novels, including *The Firewalkers* (1991), which was shortlisted for both the Deo Gloria Award and the Commonwealth First Book Prize.

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