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Shiju's "Indian Christian women pioneers & leaders revealed: An exploration of overlooked women voices in socio-cultural & religious framework" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Shiju, C.M. (2017). *Indian Christian women pioneers & leaders revealed: An exploration of overlooked women voices in socio-cultural & religious framework*. Bali Nagar, New Delhi: Christian World Imprints. 181 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 9789351482314

Indian Christian Women Pioneers & Leaders Revealed is a clearly written history of the role of women leaders of Christian faith in India with specific analysis of the Assembly of God church. While Clara Mathew Shiju focuses the book on Indian Christian leaders, her analysis of the androcentric interpretation of history is important and well written for a modern study on the role of women historically. Shiju's analysis of history of Christianity in India showcases men and women working side by side, leading, innovating and pioneering an often dangerous path yet she claims the male historians have overlooked the significant contributions of women. In chapter two, Shiju highlights specific women and their contributions to the church as fundamental and active yet she argues their role is underrepresented in the historical records of the time. Shiju outlines reasons why women's experiences and roles are documented less, while sharing in many of the same roles and events with men. The book showcases the importance of hearing women's voices when reading the historical documentation in an effort to understand that both men and women were active participants in the spread of Christianity throughout India.

Women have been powerful, pioneering leaders throughout history and Shiju states that the importance of a leadership development program within the Christian church in India will better enable female leaders to rise. In the final chapter of her book, Shiju shares a study she conducted at Serampore College on the views towards women's leadership in the church. From the results, she shares her analysis and insight on how to improve female engagement. Shiju states "Since women and men are the partners in the building of the Kingdom of God on this earth, each one is to safeguard the dignity and honour of each other" (p. 153).

This book is an important addition to libraries at Christian institutions as it is well-researched and delivers an analysis on Indian history that may lead to additional analysis on the topic throughout the world. The first three chapters give background on historical significance of women's roles while the last chapter gives advice to the churches to better engage female leaders.

Reviewer

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