

Bloomsbury Advances in Religious Studies is a groundbreaking series offering original reflections on theory and method in the study of religions, and demonstrating new approaches to the way religious traditions are studied and presented.

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'Written with the sensitivity of an insider-priest, and the enquiring insight of an ethnographer, this book is a welcome addition to studies on the social and religious lives of Dalit Christians. It captures some of the unexpected ways in which Christianity is lived through relationships in a south Indian Dalit village.'

DAVID MOSSE, PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL & AFRICAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, UK, AND AUTHOR OF *THE SAINT IN THE BANYAN TREE: CHRISTIANITY AND CASTE SOCIETY IN INDIA*

This volume presents a detailed ethnographic study of rural Paraiyar communities in South India, focusing on their religious and cultural identity. Formerly known as Dalits, or Untouchables, these are a largely socially marginalized group living within a dynamic and complex social matrix dominated by the caste system and its social and religious implications in India. Through examining Paraiyar Christian communities, Anderson H. M. Jeremiah provides a comprehensive understanding of the Paraiyar religious worldview within the dominant Hindu religious worldview. In contrast to existing research, this volume places Paraiyars within their wider social context, ascribed and achieved identity, religious symbolism, ritual and negotiation of social boundaries. In arguing that Paraiyars express their beliefs through lived religion, the author moves the concept of 'religion' from the reified forms it so often holds in academia. Instead, Jeremiah demonstrates that it is within local and specific contexts, as opposed to essentialized notions, that 'religion' either makes sense or that theories concerning it can be tested.

**Anderson H. M. Jeremiah** is Lecturer in World Christianity in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, UK.