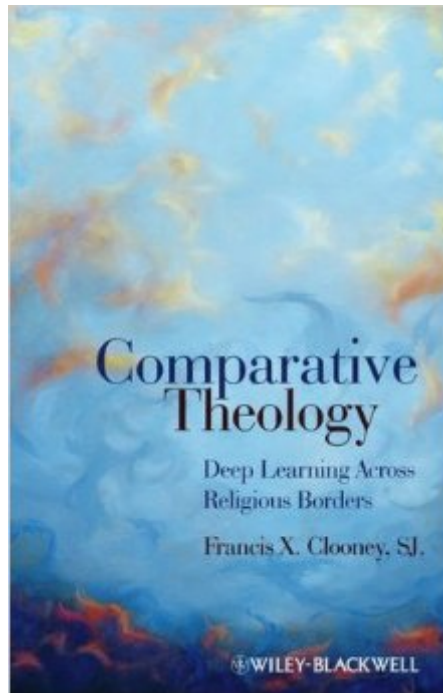# Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders

## Synopsis

Drawing upon the authorâ ™s three decades of work in comparative theology, this is a pertinent and comprehensive introduction to the field, which offers a clear guide to the reader, enabling them to engage in comparative study.  The author has three decades of experience of work in the field of comparative theology and is ideally placed to write this book Todayâ ™s increasing religious diversity makes this a pertinent and timely publication Unique in the depth of its introduction and explanation of the discipline of â ˆcomparative theologyâ ™ Provides examples of how comparative theology works in the new global context of human religiosity Draws on examples specific to Hindu-Christian studies to show how it is possible to understand more deeply the wider diversity around us. Clearly guides the reader, enabling them to engage in comparative study

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Comparative theology is the cutting edge of spiritual understanding in the 21st century, and Clooney is its founder and most prolific contributor.Every religion must now take into account the insights of other traditions. As this remarkable little book makes clear, comparative theology is not just a matter of interreligious relations; it is an opportunity to know God better and to relate to God more intimately, as we listen to the divine voice in the arresting tones and images of another tradition.To draw insight from more than one religion, Clooney recommends, not grand syntheses (which could easily be simplistic and superficial), but small, particular engagements. His own approach is through the side-by-side reading of texts, not only "great books" such as the Bible and the Upanishads, but

also guides to meditation and devotional literature such as tributes to Mary Mother of God and the Hindu goddess Devi and spiritual guides from multiple traditions. He gives a number of such readings, primarily though not exclusively from his own work in the Christian and Hindu traditions.Although Clooney brings careful scholarship to the reading of these texts, he responds to them spiritually, soulfully, leaning forward to hear the divine voice, to understand the divine presence. A Jesuit himself, Clooney shows how listening to the divine voice in another tradition enriches as well as challenges how we understand our own tradition.It may seem strange to seek God in a Hindu text but, Clooney argues, part of divine condescension is that God is willing to meet us wherever we find ourselves, to come to us through whatever images are available to us.

This is a relatively short (171 pp, references excluded) introduction to the field of comparative theology. It is a book Clooney ---in his own admission--- has long refused to write, thinking that comparative theology is a practice rather than a theory. Consequently, it is a book that generalises the methodology and ideas about comparative theology which he developed in his other comparative works, such as Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God. Thus, a reader who has read Clooney's work and is expecting some extraordinary new statements might be disappointed. The book is rather a concise summary, establishing (in decreasing order of importance, judging from the space dedicated to them by Clooney):a) that comparative theology is not a comparative study of religions, since it is grounded in faith. It is a faith seeking understanding through the boundaries of different religions, but which remains faithful to its first commitment. (This is by far the most frequently repeated point throughout the book, which in many senses could be described as an apology of comparative theology).b) that one has to make one's presuppositions explicit. Clooney is extremely honest in explaining his background and his first encounter with Hinduism. Nonetheless, the point seemed to the present reader even clearer when, in the Preface of Beyond Compare, Clooney wrote that his personal connection to the topic of the book was a legitimate part of the Introduction, and not of the Preface, since it was part of his scientific enterprise and not accessory to it.

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