



**Kerala, the Cradle of Christianity in South Asia:
The Cultural Interface of Music and Religion**
Film (English / 34 minutes)

Script & narration: Joseph J. Palackal, Ph. D. (Music)
Screenplay, cinematography & direction: Jain Joseph ftii

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Short abstract

The six million Christians in Kerala, on the southwest coast of India, follow a variety of liturgical and musical traditions some of which date back to the early Christian era. This film explores the historical embeddedness of these traditions that came about as a result of the region's interactions with the Churches in the Middle East and Europe. The narrative follows the events that led to the introduction of the Chaldean, Antiochene, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and other liturgies along with the musical styles associated with them. The film documents excerpts from the current practice of chants in East Syriac, West Syriac, Latin, Sanskrit, English, and Malayalam. The film also showcases a unique performance context in which Hindu instrumental ensembles share space in a church festival, indicating the extent of religious harmony that exists in the region; the festival includes several ritual elements that the Portuguese missionaries introduced in the sixteenth century. Drawing attention to the religious, musical, and linguistic complexity of the region, the film presents Kerala also as a potential field for inquiries in an emerging area of scholarship on Christian music in India.

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