



CHRISTIAN
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A TROJAN HORSE?

The Unchristian Role of the Latin Church

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No 12

**Denha Services
Vidyanagar, Manganam
Kottayam 686018, India**

1986

Christian Musicological Society of India

www.TheCMSIndia.org



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A Publication of:

Denha Services
Vidyanagar, Manganam
Kottayam 686018

Printed at the Ashram Press, Manganam

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Price Rs. 10.00

Christian Musicological Society of India

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PREFACE

The readers are advised to go through my earlier *African Payal. Towards a Mental Breakthrough in the Latin Connection of Indian Catholicism* (1984) and *Countdown to 1999. 400 years of Agony and Action since 1599* (1985) before reading this book.

This book is about domination of a church by a sister-church, that is frightening! When things seem too ugly for words and give us sick feelings, people pretend that if they do not talk and write about them, they will perhaps disappear—slowly. That may be good—in the past. And understandable too. But it is harmful and unchristian. I feel that the only way to heal the historic wound caused by latin and western oppression over the Orientals in India is to talk about it.

Latin church's oppression is perhaps understandable but never excusable. Latins know that to oppress a sister-church is wrong and they can decide not to do it, if they are followers of Jesus Christ.

The problem of the Latin oppression in India cannot be solved locally. It has an ecclesial dimension. It is being created, and was created by the unchristian latinised bureaucracy of the Latin Roman Church

No Christian can be indifferent to this problem. Christianity is a beautiful religion. A few unchristian elements in the Latin Roman Church cannot be allowed to destroy it. I believe that the time has come to call a spade a spade.

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The Church of the Thomas Christians in India has come alive in the modern times. Gloriously, as only a Church with an apostolic heritage and a tradition of 2000 years behind it can. Exuberantly, as only a Church just a few decades old can. But let us all remember that by a single megaevent of 1599, it was silenced. That is why for some centuries, Indian Catholicism has been overwhelmed by persistent controversy. It is necessary to discuss the unsavoury controversies that have marred the Christian life in India. In "The Second Coming", we have the description of W. B. Yeats :

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere,
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity¹

Yeats's words are an uncanny portrayal of the mess in Indian Catholicism : Vatican II doctrines in a shambles; Papal pronouncements discarded; clumsiness in Rome, darkness in Calcutta, sadness in Kerala !

How the world Catholicism responded to the tragedy of the Indian Catholicism ? 20 years have passed by since Vatican II. Are the Orientals being successfully rehabilitated ? Will the universal Church permit such willed amnesia ?

1 Cf. M. Roberts (ed), *The Faber book of Modern Verse* (London: 1973), p. 58; also S. Kalacherry, "Emptying Man", in T. Vellilamthadam (ed) *Despair, Hope and Bliss* (Kottayam: 1980), p. 10.



History has often been criticized as being the story of the conquerors alone. "History is natural selection. Mutant versions of the past struggle for dominance; new species of fact arise, and old, saurian truths go to the wall, blindfolded and smoking last cigarettes. Only the mutations of the strong survive. The weak, the anonymous, the defeated leave few marks: field-patterns, axe-heads, folk-tales, broken-pitchers, burial mounds, the fading memory of their youthful beauty. History loves only those who dominate her: it is a relationship of mutual enslavement".² From this point of view, the Indian catholicism too has been preoccupied with the power and games of the Latin rulers, while the heritage of the Thomas Christians of apostolic origin has remained largely unappreciated and mainly discarded. It is by now widely acknowledged that too much of the known history was about the 'exploits' of the Latins and their system of domination. We have very little knowledge about the heritage and contributions of the Eastern catholic Churches.

The Latins, the Latinised Orientals and the Latin addicts ask: of what use is all study about the Thomas Christians when one has decided to opt for Latin rules and institutions which are regarded as 'superior' and 'efficient' and to be incorporated within the global latinised Roman power which denies all non-Latin identities. It is widely known that Latin dominance brought a total rupture in the development of identity of the Thomas Christians, deliberately destroying their lifestyle, theology, organic growth and values, and establishing such alien rules and institutions whose function was to eliminate all Oriental initiative and activity, and in its place introduce a hierarchical structure which functioned from the apex downwards, and kept the community of the Thomas Christians in India more or less at frozen level. Kahlil Gibran's "Song of Man" describes this pathetic situation:

I roamed the infinite sky, and
Soared in the ideal world, and
Floated through the firmament. But
Here I am, prisoner of measurement

² S. Rushdie, *Shame* (New Delhi : 1983), p.124.



I was on Sinai when Jehovah approached Moses;
I saw the Nazarene's Miracles at the Jordan;
I was in Medina when Mohammed visited.
Yet here I am, prisoner of bewilderment.

Then I visited the might of Babylon;
I learned the glory of Egypt;
I viewed the warring greatness of Rome.
Yet my earlier teachings showed the
Weakness and sorrow of those achievements. . . .

I suffered at the hands of despotic rulers;
I suffered slavery under insane invaders;
I suffered hunger imposed by tyranny;
Yet, I still possess some inner power
With which I struggle to greet each day³

That which is good for the Latins is good for the Church! What is good for the Church is good for the Latin Church and what is good for the Western hemisphere and for the performance principle is good for both! That is why the Latin Church sees the world purely in terms of the interests of the North, the Being. Good things and theologies are those that are pro-Latin and pro-Western. Anything else is seen as anti-ecclesial, unspiritual and therefore denigrated, or simply ignored by the bureaucrats the latinised universal Church. Latin expansionism, its subjugation of the Oriental Churches, its support for the Aristotelian and Thomistic concepts are well known. They have become part of the shameful acts in modern society. "Unfelt feelings. . . . I mean emotions that should have been felt, but were not—such as regret for a harsh word, guilt for a crime, embarrassment, propriety, shame? Imagine shame as a liquid, let's say a sweet fizzy tooth-rotting drink, stored in a vending machine. Push the right button and a cup pops down under a pissing stream of the fluid. How to push the button? Nothing to it. Tell a lie, sleep with a white boy, get born the wrong sex. Out flows the bubbling emotion and you drink your fill. . . .but how many human beings refuse to follow

3 K.Gibran, *Tears and Laughter*(New York: 1975), p.63-4



Oriental's lives. These could not be suppressed by the Latins, but flowed forth with such power that they made lasting contributions to the Indian Catholicism. Submission to tradition often is in the way of advancement, but it must also be said that there are surviving values that are good. Not by repudiating the heritage of the Orientals but by using the strength both of the past and the present, can the Orientals continue to grow. Orientals are ready to welcome the role of an Elder Brother, not that of a Big Brother. Never.

The Church cannot be held blameless in these matters. Too often the Orientals were asked to give up much that was good and wholesome in order to become 'catholic' and the Christian faith is the poorer because of it. Nothing can return to its source, yet all things must have a source. So it is with life as we know it today. We have what we call the Church which is a communion of Churches—the sum total of the contributions of varied churches, traditions, and heritages. Many ways lead to the main road and many roads lead to the capital. The Church will grow stronger and healthy, not by closing off some of the contributing roads but rather by accepting them to the main road of the universal Church. The universal Church stands as the debtor to the Oriental Church which may be poorer in possessions but rich in spirit and joy. It is a debt payable only through spirit of gratitude and acceptance extended to the Orientals who have so greatly enriched Christian life as we know it today and who continue, in their own way and to the full extent of their ability, to give to the Church of the twenty-first century.

“In the course of its bimillennial history, the Catholic Church has startled the world on innumerable occasions”⁹ Yes, the latest occasion is the melting pot policy of the universal Church which is dominated by the Latin elements of Christianity, using all the unchristian means to destroy the venerable and apostolic heritage. Is Catholic Church a melting pot? Latin theology and training thought it is and stubbornly refused to assume Eastern overtones. The ‘we’ and ‘they’ syndrome became noticeable after the Council of Trent and the Synod of Diamper came as a thunder in the

9 F. X. Murphy, *The Pilgrim Pope* (South Hackensack, NJ: 1979).



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To forget the sadness of the present, let us all sing :

We shall overcome,
We shall overcome,
We shall overcome some day.
Deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

We'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand, some day.
Deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

We shall live in peace
We shall live in peace,
We shall live in peace, some day.
Deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome some day

The whole wide world around,
The whole wide world around,
The whole wide world around, some day.
Deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome some day⁴⁶ . .

⁴⁶ This is an old Negro spiritual (writer unknown) that came to be regarded as the theme song of the civil rights movement in the U. S. A. On Aug. 28, 1963 Martin Luther King (1929-68) led the largest-ever civil right demonstration in the USA. Dr. King, winner of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1969, was much influenced by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and his non - violent freedom movement.



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