BOOK REVIEW

Francis Thonippara, CMI, *St. Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-87),* Bangalore: Centre for Eastern and Indian Christian Studies (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram), 1999, pp. xxxv+286; Rs. 150/-

The Apostolic Church of the St. Thomas Christians in India has had a chequered history. Its life in two worlds - while remaining unquestionably Indian in culture it was at the same time dependent on the East Syrian Church for its bishops and form of worship - came to an end with the arrival of the Portuguese, with their claim to Padroado jurisdiction over these Christians. If the Synod of Udayamperur was an unabashed attempt by the Padroado authorities to Latinise the Church, the Oath of Coonan Cross was the St. Thomas Christians' way of showing that they would not tolerate the doing away with of their hallowed traditions both in their forms or worship and in the administration of their Church. The resultant division in the Church would be serious enough to alarm the Holy See, which through the Propaganda Fide sent the Carmelites (OCD) to the Malabar Mission with the clear brief of bringing the schismatic back into communion with the Church. Though the Carmelites would initially succeed in bringing a sizeable number of the schismatic back to the Roman fold, these missionaries and the Propaganda Fide would, with the passage of time, fall out of favour with the St. Thomas Christians. The present work takes up the narration of the events more than hundred years after the Coonan Cross Oath, when there was the desire for reunion among both the Catholic and non-Catholic St.Thomas Christians and a general feeling among these Christians that their interests would be best served only with one of their own prelates presiding over the destinies of their Church.

The work which is the published version of the author's doctoral dissertation at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, is divided into seven Chapters and has some well selected appendices which add to the value of the book.

At a time when Indian church historians are well into the task of narrating the history of the Indian Church, this well researched work on an as yet insufficiently studied area of the Indian Church, is indeed a welcome addition to the growing literature in this area. A special mention should be made of the fact that the work is based on primery sources culled from the various historical archives of Europe.

The author succeeds to a great extend in projecting the struggle of the St. Thomas Christians for self-rule and unity, emphasising adequately the role played by the Padroado, the Propaganda and the St. Thomas Christians - all three intent on safeguarding their own respective interests which in the prevailing circumstances were mutually exclusive. An interesting and revealing aspect of the works is that the St. Thomas Christians appear to have shifted their loyalty from the Propaganda to the Padroado - something imponderable when one considers the Synod of Udayamperur (1599) and the Oath of Coonan Cross (1653), the two events which had alienated the St. Thomas Christians from the Padroado in a seemingly irreconcilable manner.

The responsibility for effecting this amazing turnaround appears to rest squarely on the shoulders of the Propaganda missionaries who alienated the Christians through their haughty demeanour, lack of understanding of the traditions and practices of the Apostolic Church and a mistrust of the abilities and intentions of the native Christians. The narrative also succeeds in showing how the dislike of individual missionaries and particular mistakes slowly help build up a "nationalist fervour" when the St. Thomas Christians claim that their interests would be guaranteed only when governed by their own prelates! *The Angamaly Padiola* would be the best indication of this attitude.

However, this remarkable effort, which makes absorbing reading, is marred by stylistic inadequacies and linguistic errors. The 6th chapter, dealing with ecclesiastical life of the St. Thomas Christians during the period under discussion, could either have been incorporated into the first chapter as part of the background setting or left out completely without prejudice to the main theme under discussion. As presented in the work it appears more to distract the reader than help him/her to follow the fast unfolding sequence of events.

Thomas Anchukandathil SDB

Seitz R. Christopher, *World Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness,* Michigan, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, pp. XII+355, $28.00

This is a stimulating and provocative work in biblical theology by one of the well-known authors of our times. This book of Christopher R. Seitz, professor of Old Testament at Yale Divinity School, deserves our

wholehearted appreciation and admiration. The twenty-two essays contained in this work exhibit the author's wide erudition and deep insight into the mystery of Word of God. He writes as a committed and practical Christian, and strives to make the Bible appealing and relevant for the contemporary readers. With wonderful ease and grace Seitz moves from theory to exegesis and then to practice. He addresses both the academic audience and Christian community. His methodological and hermeneutical reflections make the Old Testament relevant for the present world.

The book is divided into three parts: Biblical Theology, Exegesis, and Practice. The nine essays of Part I discuss the place of the Old Testament in Christian theological reflection. The book opens with an essay, which makes clear the place of Old, Testament studies within a divinity school curriculum. Seitz convincingly shows that the relevance of Old Testament as abiding theological witness. Then reconnects Old and New Testaments in a manner appropriate to their own inter-textual relatedness. The third chapter deals with the legacy of Gerhard von Rad and points out that Christ-element is an indispensable element for a correct understanding of the Old Testament. Next, the author indicates that God's Word to Israel is the first in the order inheritance for those adopted in Christ. Chapter 5 discusses the meaning of phrase "in accordance with the Scriptures" found in the Nicene Creed. To say that Jesus rose again in accordance with the Scriptures is a statement about God and about Jesus. It means that God raised Jesus from the dead, and our rising in him is to fellowship with the living God. Chapter 6 deals with relevance of the term 'Old Testament'. In the next chapter the author makes a survey of the recent studies of Old Testament. There he makes clear that he stands for a theological handling of the Old Testament. Chapter 8 studies biblical authority in the late twentieth century. The first part of the last essay is dedicated to the discussion of the biblical theology of B.S. Childs

The Exegesis part with its seven essays focuses from various perspectives on the book of Isiah. The Practical part tries to link the Old Testament with modern concerns like inclusive language, sexuality, the divine name, the city, the true concept lectionaries and the Christian communities and Law of God. Several of the essays were originally delivered as public lectures

Seitz's work is an important contribution in the field of OT theology. He courageously has opened up new vistas in interpreting the OT as the Scripture of the believing community of Christ.

Paul Kalluveettil CMI

George Michell and Mark Zebrowsky, *The New Cambridge History of India 1:7: Architecture and Art of the Deccan Sultanates,* Cabridge: University Press, 1999.

The Cambridge History of India was published between 1922-1937. Much research has gone into understanding various aspects of the Indian History since then. The *New Cambridge History of India* seeks to review History of India in the light of the changes in understanding of the way in which history is to be viewed and the new data that emerged through research based on new methodologies. Various aspects of the History of India are planned to be classified under four part framework, namely, "The Mughals and their Contemporaries", "Indian States and the Transition to the Colonialism", "The Indian Empire and the Beginnings of Modern Society", "The Evolution of Contemporary South Asia". Seven to nine books have been planned for publication under each of the four parts. Out of the total of the 31 titles planned, 19 have already been completed. The book under view is one of the first part titled "The Mughals and their Contemporaries."

The value of the book may be gauged from rich illustration, maps, and dynastic lists of Deccan rulers, bibliographic essay, bibliography and index. The bibliographic essay is short and concise and is meant to enable the non-specialists to graduate from simple outline of the main theses to more elaborate delineation of theses with illustration in the body of the book. There are a total of 216 illustrations of which 16 are prints of colour plates and the rest figures.

The book under view seeks to show evidence for two major theses:

1. That there was multiplicity of artistic/architectural expressions between the 14th to the 18th centuries. The distinctive styles that existed during this period understandably coincided with the change of rulers who patronised arts and architecture. This first thesis does not seem very significant if viewed separated from the second thesis. It is perhaps well known that architectural

and artistic trends often followed the dynastic changes. Illustration supporting the thesis however, makes this part very engaging for specialists and those interested in old Deccan art and architecture.

2. The second thesis seems significant. The authors' attempt to show that the Deccan art and architecture was in contact with North Indian Mughal and Middle Eastern trends, from where it borrowed much and then indigenised it constantly over the four centuries.

Interestingly, two points may be noted that require further study. One, the Deccan art and architecture looked to the Middle East primarily for artistic vision and not to the North Indian Mughal trends. Two, .when the Marathas began to establish their power in parts of the Deccan, they looked to the local Mughal trends in art and architecture and used them to their advantage while the Deccan nobility had looked to the Middle East to fire their imaginations in this regard. It is therefore, rightly noted by the authors that " Mughal architecture in the Deccan had a greater impact on temples than on mosques and tombs" [p. 272].

One might wonder why the Deccan nobility looked for inspiration outside the accomplished Mughal environment to the Middle East. It is perhaps not hard to understand why the Marathas adopted the local Mughal trends and motifs. Much of the Deccan temples were razed by the Muslim raids and the Hindu religious institutions had nothing much from the pre-Islamic past to use as inspiration for reconstruction of their institutions. The only milieu they could call indigenous or local was the North Indian Mughal environment, which had had its influence also in the Deccan, particularly during the reign of Aurengzeb. It was therefore to this that they turned. In the case of the Deccan rulers, however, one can conjecture that the reasons for their appeal to the Middle East could partly have been political. It was their way of asserting independence from the North Indian Mughal hegemony. More evidence is however needed to bear upon this point.

David Emmanuel Singh

James Massey, *Minorities in a Democracy: The Indian Experience,* New Delhi: Manohar, 1999.

It was a pleasure to chance upon yet another book by James Massey whom I first met in New Delhi some years ago. He was then with the ISPCK,

Delhi as its General Secretary. He struck me as a person who exuded genuine concern for the religious minorities of India and as someone having a very objective and unbiased attitude towards them and the Hindu majority.

Both Prof. Tahir Mahmood and Dr. C.O. Macmillan in their prefaces to the volume under view have affirmed that James Massey is perhaps the most qualified person to have undertaken a task such as this. This is not because he happens to be a member of the National Commission for Minorities, but because the felt-need and concerns of the minorities, and in particular the poor and oppressed sub-groups with in such religious minorities, have been a part of this scholarly analyses even before he became a member of the commission. He wrote enough to catch the attention of Prof. Mahmood, who says, "I have known him (James Massey) through his writings even before both of us came to the National Commission for Minorities..."

Massey, for instance, championed the cause of the Dalits as a subgroup within the Christian minority in India. While his concern in this book is to do with minorities in India, he has included a chapter on Christian minorities as a particular case [Chapter 4]. He rightly points out that it is a little too simplistic to assume that minorities are monolithic. For instance, Christianity in India, far from being monolithic, has less privileged subgroups within it, who actually form the majority within Christianity as one of India's minorities. The point being that while the Christian community in India might seem wealthy and above need it is far from true. The majority among Christians continue to remain poor and disadvantaged. Thus, unlike many scholars who demonise the so-called 'majority community' or high cast Hindus as oppressors of the Dalits, Massey's analysis helps one realise that Dalits in Christianity are doubly disadvantaged: in relation to the caste Hindus and the powerful elite Christians. One can be sure that in India, all religious minorities contain oppressed or disadvantaged subgroups.

Some comments on the general format of the book are in place. The book is divided into two parts. Part I contains five chapters which from the basic body of the book. In chapter 1 Massey discusses minorities in a democracy; in chapter two he discusses the article 30 of the constitution in its historical perspective where he also outlines its scope and application. Chapter three is very interesting in that it contains an account of Massey's travels throughout the country after he assumed role of a member of the commission for the minorities. The central observation he makes there is that

both the people and the government officials who are supposed to ensure that minorities' rights are protected are grossly ignorant about rights. The fourth chapter zooms on to the Christian minority where Massey makes an important observation about the socio-economic disjunction existing within the Christian minority in India. Chapter five outlines the general constitutional and special rights of the minorities in the context of the history of development of minority rights. He deals also the questions of the relation between human and minority rights and the role of National Commission for the minority rights.

Part II contains eight appendices. The list of the appendices begins with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Declaration on the Right of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistics Minorities, 1992 [pp. 91-122]. The list ends with actual reports of violation of rights like-anti-Christian barbarism in Bihar in 1997 and denial of religious rights to Christians in Ludhiana in 1997. In the appendices between these Massey reproduces the 1992 statements of National Commission for Mnorities, the text of the National Commission for Minorities, 1997 [pp. 123-148]; the protection of human rights act, 1993 and National Human rights Commission procedure [pp. 149-179]; Prime Minister's 15 point programme for minorities 1983 [pp. 180-182]; and finally, NCM guidelines of 1986 on minority status, educational institutions, and government policies on minority educational institutions [pp. 183-188].

David Emmanuel Singh