

ORTHODOX IDENTITY IN INDIA

**Essays in honour of
V. C. Samuel**

**Edited by
M. K. Kuriakose**

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ORTHODOX IDENTITY IN INDIA

Essays in honour of

V. C. Samuel

Edited by

M. K. KURIAKOSE

Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel 75th Birthday Celebration
Committee, Bangalore;

1988

ORTHODOX IDENTITY IN INDIA :
ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF V. C. SAMUEL

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United Theological College
Bangalore-560 046

Published by :

REV. DR. V. C. SAMUEL 75th BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION COMMITTEE
Bangalore.

First published: 1988

No. of copies 1000

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Ramohally P. O. Bangalore-560 060
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Printed at :

IMPRINT,
71, Kammanahally Circle
Bangalore-560 084
India.



Preface

The Orthodox Christian community in Bangalore is, in a special way, indebted to Dr. Fr. V.C. Samuel for all what he has been and for all what he has done. Having got settled in Bangalore, Fr. Samuel was in close fellowship with the growing community of the Orthodox Christians in the City. The community owes him a lot for the pastoral and intellectual guidance he bestowed. In every important conference of the Youth and Student movements, retreats, Holy Week services, Women's League meetings and many other activities of the various parishes in Bangalore, Fr. Samuel has been an efficient leader. His ability as a teacher has been lauded everywhere; his counsel has been guiding the people; his depth of comprehension of faith and practices of the Orthodox Church has been imparting knowledge to the people; his revolutionary, relevant and thought-provoking theological insights in terms of Christian theology in general and Christology in particular have been inspiring them and his uninhibited, straight-forward and open-hearted inter-religious and inter-denominational outlook has been a model to them.

His contribution to the Orthodox Church in general and specially to the Indian Orthodox Church is unique. It is not only through his excellent writings but also through his participation in international conferences where he represented Orthodoxy that he proved his calibre. His untiring urge for imparting knowledge to the people is energetically continuing. His teaching services extended to the Orthodox Theological Seminary even at the age of 75 is not only an explicit mark of his yearning to serve his Church but also a vivid indication as to how much

the Episcopal Synod of the Indian Orthodox Church recognizes the authenticity of his thinking, teaching and writings.

The Orthodox parishes in Bangalore, in gratitude to the exemplary service of Fr. Samuel, decided to celebrate the 75th Birthday in a befitting manner. Therefore the committee decided to bring out this volume in honour of Fr. Samuel, in a public meeting on 26th January 1988. The invitation given to the contributors to this volume was happily accepted by most of them. We feel proud of having incorporated the writings of these world-renowned scholars. The committee deems it a sign of their unreserved appreciation of and affection to Fr. Samuel. The committee is immensely grateful to all the contributors. The committee also takes this opportunity to thank all the members of the Bangalore Orthodox parishes, St. Gregorios, St. Mary's, St. George, St. Thomas and St. Peter and St. Paul, and all others far and wide who sponsored the celebration, especially the publication of this book.

On behalf of the committee, I take this opportunity to thank The Editorial Committee Members, Mr. Sunny Kulathakkal, Mr. P. M. Kurian and Mr. Eapen Panickar, The Celebration Committee: its Chairman V. Rev. A. C. Koshy Cor-episcopa, Convener, Fr. C. M. Philipose, Treasurer-cum-secretary Mr. Chacko Tharakan and other priests and laymen who extended their boundless co-operation.

26th January, 1988.

Editor.

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Contributors to this Volume

Chandran, J.R. Dr.

A minister of the Church of South India and a theologian of high reputation, Dr. Chandran was professor and principal of the United Theological College, Bangalore, from 1950-1983. He has served as a member of the Central Committee and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches for many years and made his mark in the field of ecumenism. Currently he is a professor at the Pacific Theological College, in Fiji.

Gregorios, Mar Paulos, Dr.

The principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, and the metropolitan of the Delhi diocese of the Indian Orthodox Church, Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios is a widely recognized ecumenical stalwart. Currently one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, he is a leader of world fame and a scholar of outstanding accomplishments.

Kulathakkal, Sunny

Sunny Kulathakkal is an able organizer and talented writer. He is a publicist, author and free-lance journalist. Served as the development Director of the United Theological College,

Mr. Kulathakkal has been an active member and organizer of Y.M.C.A., instrumental in the formation of many of its units. The son of an Orthodox priest, he himself is a lay-leader.

Kuriakose, Fr. M.K.

A priest of the Indian Orthodox Church, Fr. Kuriakose is the chief librarian of the United Theological College, Bangalore. interested in study of history of Christianity, he has compiled an important source book on History of Christianity in India. He is also serving as convener of various committees and projects connected with library and documentation services.

Kurian, Jacob, Dr.

A professor of the Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam, Father Jacob Kurian is a priest of the Indian Orthodox Church. He is a penetrating scholar in the area of study of religions and a careful thinker. He is an expert in Indian Christian and Hindu theological thinking and an advocate of renewal of Christian Theological thinking in the Indian Context.

Meyendorff, John, Dr.

A recognized scholar, author and leader of Orthodoxy, Father Meyendorff is a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. He is a professor at the St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary' New York. As a member and

president of the Faith and Order Commission for a number of years, he took a keen interest in the ecumenical movement, and participated in the unity dialogues.

Mundadan, A.M., Dr.

A distinguished historian of Christianity, Father Mundadan is a well known author and recognized scholar. He is a member of the Carmelite Society of Mary the Immaculate (CMI) and a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, who is a senior professor at the Dharmaram College, Bangalore.

Ritschl, Dietrich, Dr.

A grandson of the famous German theologian of the last century, Albrecht Ritschl, Dr. Ritschl is an outstanding theological professor of the Heidelberg University, Germany, in the memorable tradition of his illustrious grand father.

Samuel, V. C., Dr.

Apart from the biography, two papers of Dr. V. C. Samuel reflecting his thinking on two important issues are also included in this volume.

Tharakan, K. M., Dr.

A highly appreciated university professor, Dr. K M. Tharakan is a literary man endowed with the gift of theological discernment and clear expression. Currently he is working

as the editor of the Malayala Manorama Weekly, trying in a remarkable way to conserve religious values in everyday life. There are many works to his credit.

Thomas, Dr. M.M.

An Indian Christian theologian of remarkable eminence, Dr. M.M. Thomas has shown great ability in bringing to bear the message of the Bible on contemporary social, political and religious reality, with a profound prophetic sense. His contribution to the ecumenical movement, both as a clear thinker and as a voluminous writer, as much in English as in Malayalam, deserves every praise.

Vischer Lukas, Dr.

One of the most creative and dedicated directors of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Vischer has contributed much to the success of ecumenism. He is a minister of the Swiss Reformed Church, and even after his retirement from the Faith and Order Commission he is carrying on with his teaching and service of the Church.

A Select List of Publications of V. C. Samuel

A. Books, papers and articles bearing on 'The Person of Christ' :

a) BOOKS

Yesu Christu Aru? (Who Jesus Christ is), Malayalam,
C.L.S., Tiruvella, 1967

The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined, Indian
Theological Library, No.8, C.I.S., Madras, 1977

b) PAPERS AND ARTICLES

“Monophysite (one nature) Faith”, Malayalam,
Church Weekly, Kottayam, 1— 29 November 1953

11- 6 December 1953

"The Council of Chalcedon" (Malayalam), *Church Weekly*,

1 - 11 November 1954

11 - 18 " "

III - 25 " "

A Brief Historical Survey of the Council of Chalcedon'',
Indian Journal of Theology and Church Weekly,
March 1962

“Were they Monophysites? *Indian Journal of Theology and Church Weekly* April 1962

“Christ and Creation”, *Religion and Society*, CISRS, Bangalore, 1957

“One Incarnate Nature of God the Word”, a paper presented to the Aarhus meeting of theologians and published by the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Winter, 164-65

The same included also in *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?* ed. Paulos Gregorios. William H. Lazareth and Nikos A Nissiotis, WCC, 1981

“Proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon”, *The Ecumenical Review*, October 1970

The same also in *Abba Salama*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1970

“Humanity of Christ in the Syrian Tradition”, a paper presented to the Bristol meeting of theologians and published by the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 1967

“Eutyches and his Condemnation”, *Bangalore Theological Forum*, United Theological College, 1967

“A Brief History of Efforts to Reunite the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Sides”, a paper presented to the Addis Ababa meeting of theologians and published by the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 1971

“The Understanding of the Christological Definition of both Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic Traditions in

the Light of the Post-Chalcedonian Theology : An Analysis of Terminologies in a Conceptual Framework'', *Wort und Wahrheit*, Pro Oriente Vienna, 1973.

''The Christology of Severus of Antioch'', *Abba Salama*, 1973

''Further Studies in the Christology of Severus of Antioch'', published in *Papers referring to the Theological Dialogue between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches*, ed. by Metropolitan Methodios of Aksum, Athens, 1976

Yesu Christu - ''Apostolic Proclamation'', article in *Vedapusthakabhashyam* (Malayalam One Volume Commentary on the Bible) by *Daivasastra sahitya samithi*, 1979

''Vienna Consultations'', *Star of the East*, Kottayam, 1979

''The Christological basis of some Syrian Orthodox Traditions'', *Star of the East*, July 1980

''Christology and Terminology'', a paper presented to the International Syriac Conference, Kottayam, 1987, SEERI, Kottayam

''Christu Vijnaniyam'', a series of articles designed to be published as a book after completion, Malayalam, *Purohithan*, Kottayam

B. Books, papers and articles dealing with 'Christian Theology'

a) BOOKS

An Orthodox Catechism on the Faith and Life of the Church, MGOCSM, Kottayam, 1983

b) PAPERS AND ARTICLES

"Faith of Christianity", a chapter in a volume on *Christianity*, published by the Punjabi University, 1969.

"The Faith of the Church", a chapter in a volume on *The Church of Ethiopia : A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life*, Addis Ababa, 1970

"The Faith once delivered to the Saints", Malayalam, *Church Weekly*, I, 8 October 1950

II, 15

"The Christian Goal in life", Malayalam, *Church Weekly*, I, 21 January 1951

II, 28

"*Homoousios*", *Church Weekly*, Malayalam, April 1955

"*Daivathinte Saramsam*" (The Being of God), Malayalam, *Church Weekly*, 12 June, 1955

"The Witness of Orthodoxy", a paper published in the *St. Thomas' 19th centenary Souvenir*, Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, 1972

“Pithavil ninnu purappetunna Parisuddhalmavu”, (The Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father), Malayalam, *Church Weekly*,

I, January 1956

.. II,

“*Adisthana Viswasangal*” (Basic Beliefs), Malayalam, in *Irupatham nuttandile Malankara Sabha* (The Church of Malabar in the Twentieth Century), ed. T.G. Zachariah and K.V. Mammen, Kottayam, 1977

The same published serially in *Malankara Sabha*, Kottayam
 “Towards a Doctrine of the Church”, *Church Weekly*,
 20 April 1955

“Doctrine of Creation”, *Religion and Society*, CISRS, Bangalore, June 1962

“Christianity and Indigenization”, *Abba Salama*, Addis Ababa, 1976

“An Oriental Orthodox Assessment of the First Vatican Council’s Infallibility Doctrine”, *Pro Oriente*, Vienna, 1978

‘The Trinitarian Understanding of the Christian God in Relation to Monotheism and Polytheism’, WCC, Lima, 1982

“The Nicene Creed: Compared to the Apostles’ Creed, the Quincunque Vult and the New Testament”, *The Roots of our Faith*, ed. Hans-Georg Links, WCC, 1983

“The Mission Implications of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry”, *International Review of Mission*, Geneva, 1983

"God whom we worship: the teaching of Gregory Nazianzen", *Prayer and Contemplation*, Asirvanam Benedictine Monastery, Bangalore, 1980

"Grace in the Cappadocian Fathers", *Divine Grace and Human Response*, Asirvanam Monastery, 1981

A Paper on the Syrian Orthodox Eucharistic Worship in *Ways of Worship* ed. H.R. Macphail, Madras, 1950

"The Nicene Creed, its authorship and the Faith it conserves", *Star of the East*, Oct.—Dec., 1981

"The Goal of Life implied in Religious Faith", Malayalam, *Church Weekly*, 6 February 1983.

C. Books, papers and articles related to 'Church History and allied subjects'

a) BOOKS

Malankara Sabhayude Anthiochian Bandham (The Antiochene connection of the Church of Malabar), Malayalam, Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, 1982.

Sabha Valarunnu (The Church Grows), Malayalam, Divya-bodhanam Series No : 2, OTS, Kottayam, 1984

Truth Triumphs: Life and Achievements of Metropolitan Mr Dionysius VI, Malankara Orthodox Church Publications, Kottayam, 1986

Adhunika Bharatha Sabha (Modern Indian Church),
Malayalam Divyabodhanam Series No : 19,
OTS, Kottayam, 1987

b) PAPERS AND ARTICLES

"Efforts to bring about Peace in the Church", Malayalam
Church Weekly, 21 May 1950

"Peace in the Church and the Authority of the Patriarch",
Malayalam, *Church Weekly*, I, 4 June 1950
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"Consequences of Excommunication"

" " " " I, 18 June 1950

" " " " II, 25 June 1950

An Ancient Church : A Glance into the Past and a Peep
into the Future" in *New Life in an Old Church :
A Symposium on the Syrian Church of India*; ed,
M.V. George, Calcutta, 1963

Cosmas on the Church of Malabar", *Church Weekly*,
18 Dec. 1955

"Malankara Sabhayude Anthiochian Bandham", (The conne-
ction of the Church of Malabar with Antioch) –
Malayalam, a chapter in *Irupatham Nuttandile Malan-
kara Sabha* ed. T. G. Zachariah and K.V. Mammen,
Kottayam, 1977

"Paurasthya Sabhakalile Paraspara Bandhangal" (Mutual
relations among the Churches of the East), Malayalam,
Catholicate Sapthathi Souvenir, Kottayam, 1982

"Severus of Antioch", Malayalam,	<i>Church Weekly,</i>	10	Dec.	1972
"Four Important Works of Severus",	..	17
Severus' Refutation of Julian,	I, ..	24
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"The Name 'Jacobite' : Its Origin"	..	25
"Jacob Burda'na"	..	1	April	..
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"The See of Antioch and some of its Jurisdictional claims"	I, ..	9	May	1976
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Syrian Church".

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"Mutual Relations of
Kerala Churches

I,	..	7	July	1985
..	II,	14
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"Arabic Canons",

Malayalam,

Divyabodhanam Souvenir,

1986

D. Books and Papers on 'Hinduism and issues of Contemporary Significance'

a) BOOKS

*Ramakrishna Movement : The World Mission of
Hinduism,,* CISRS, Bangalore, 1959

Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo? (Is this an Indian Church?),
Malayalam, CLS, Tiruvella, 1975

b) PAPERS

“The Religious Affirmations of the Ramakrishna Movement”, *Religion and Society*, CISRS, February 1959

“The Evolution of my Thinking”,					
Malayalam,	<i>Church Weekly</i> ,	I,	28	Nov.	1954
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..	V,	..	9	Jan.	1955

“Our Canon Laws”, Malayalam, *Church Weekly*, I, 3 Aug, 1958

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..	XI, 12

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'Marriage and Celibacy'', *Abba Salama*, Addis Ababa,
1972

The same in <i>Church Weekly</i>	I,	28 April	1974
„	II,	5 May	„
„	III,	12 „	„
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„	V,	26 „	„
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„	IX,	23 „	„

'Tradition, Community and Hermeneutics'', *Indian Journal of Theology*, July–December 1982

'Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches : A Movement Towards Church Unity'', *Star of the East*, Kottayam, July–September 1982

'The Syriac Bible'', *Church Weekly*, 27 May 1983

'Our Church in History'', *Star of the East* December 1983

'A Foreword'' to *The Life of Bishop Herbert Pakenham Walsh*, ed. K.V.Mammen, Kottayam

“Was this the Programme of Action now called for?”
 Malayalam. A reaction to Dr. Babu Paul’s articles in
Church Weekly, discussing the union efforts between
 the Syrian Jacobite Church and the Roman Catholic
 Church, ignoring the question of a rapprochement
 between the two sections of the Malankara Syrian
 Church.

Church Weekly, I, 11 November 1984

„ II, 18 „ „

“A Foreword” to the *Life of Sri N. M. Abraham*,
 K.V. Mammen, Kottayam

“*Daivasasthra Darsanam*” (The Theological Vision)
 of M.M. Thomas, a chapter in *Viswasavum Prathya-*
yasasthravum (Faith and Ideology), Sapthathi Volume
 in honour of, ed. Varghese George, Tiruvella, C.L.S.

“Who is Seated under the Shelter of the Most High?”
 An article in Malayalam, published in the *Elia Cathedral*
Souvenir, Kottayam, correcting the wording of a
 prayer that is widely used in the Church.

Some Thoughts on the Nineveh, or the Three-day,” Fast
 published in *Deepthi*, the Orthodox Seminary Magazine,
 1986.

Introduction

This volume of essays is intended to cover a spectrum of themes in theology, history and ecumenism. The title of the book has been chosen to be broad enough to hold within it various areas of concern for the Christian Church in India, particularly the Indian Orthodox¹ communion. One of the emphases which V.C. Samuel has expressed in a number of his writings² is that the Indian Church should have an Indian identity, but not that of any other Church whether Eastern or Western. The word 'identity' refers to one's own individuality, which differentiates one from any other person. As regards the Church, it points to the totality of the marks of its selfhood in its administrative, liturgical, sociological and cultural as well as inter-denominational functions. In all these the Indian Church should have an Indian character.

V. C. Samuel has raised fundamental questions regarding the identity of the Indian Church as a whole and particularly the Orthodox community. As seen in his works, he has worked out his ideas systematically and formulated them both explicitly and implicitly. Though they may sound radical if viewed from a conservative angle, the fact is that he has kept the balance

-
1. The name 'Indian Orthodox Church' has not yet come into common use, but it is employed here deliberately. In the 19th century, names like 'the Malankara Syrian Church', 'the Jacobite Church', etc., had been current. The 'Syrian Orthodox' or the 'Orthodox Syrian Church' are not older than the present century. The question as to how these names came to be in use cannot be taken up here. The only name which can conserve the Church's Indian identity is the 'Indian Orthodox Church', See V.C. Samuel, *Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo?* (Malayalam), CLS., Thiruvella, pp. 129-132.
 2. For a list of publications of V.C. Samuel, see below the list of his works.

in subtly elucidating them within the framework of the total Christian tradition. Having imbibed an authentic Christian standpoint in shaping his ideas, he has presented them with a high degree of authority for the thinking and appropriate action by others.

The identity whereby the Indian Orthodox Church is known at present is that of the Antiochene Syrian Church of the West Asian world. In doctrine and liturgy, administration and life, it is through this identity that the Church has its affinity with other Orthodox Churches outside India. This fact adversely affects the indigeneous growth of this Church within an Indian setting. At this point the Orthodox Church is an exception in India to the Orthodox Church almost anywhere else in the world. India is admittedly a country with its own rich heritage in religion and culture, history and life. One may say that its self-imposed alienation from the Indian society helped the small Christian community to shun some of the latter's evils. Christianity has a faith and a life consonant with it, so that in any given situation it adopts ways of living that agrees with its own genuine character. In the face of this reality two positions are possible to be taken with reference to the nature of the Indian Orthodox Church. There are scholars who hold that of all Christian denominations in India, the Orthodox Church is the most indigenous community. By this they mean only that in terms of self-support, self-government and self-propagation,³ it is mostly on its own. But there are other more decisive aspects of identity which deserve our attention. We shall note them briefly under three heads-Indigeneity, Autonomy and Ecumenicity.

Indigeneity

J.G. Davies gives a brief definition of the word, when he

3. Immanuel David, *The Development of the Concept of Indigenization among Protestant Christians in India from the time of Henry Venn*. M. Th , Thesis, 1975, UTC Archives, pp. 13-24.

says that "something indigenous is to affirm that it has been produced naturally in a country or that it is native to a particular land".⁴

The state of indigeneity is that of growing in a land absorbing the natural resources of its *sitz-im-leben*. The early Church is a conspicuous example of indigeneity that fits in well with this understanding.⁵ Christianity emerged as a new way of a life, with a new interpretation on life in the Graeco-Roman world of ancient times. It had to advance within the cultural, social, religious, intellectual and political setting that was then prevailing. Breathing the air of those surroundings, it naturally accepted the various elements found to be congenial for interpreting and formulating the faith, and set out to propagate the gospel. Within that milieu the Church evolved its festivals and ideologies, doctrinal terminology and administrative patterns, and filled them with meaning in the framework of the life that they had in the Church. In this way the early Church baptized many of the pagan practices, but filling them with Christian meaning.

In the Indian situation also a similar development had taken place during earlier times. The St. Thomas Christians had, as a matter of fact, 'formed integral part of the pattern of the socio-cultural life of Kerala'.⁶ Though they kept to the East Syrian ecclesiastical traditions in life and faith, a number of local observances connected with baptism, marriage, burial, and so on,⁷ were also maintained. Many such customs in ceremonies

4. *A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. SCM Press 1984 p. 268

5. C.N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*. Oxford University Press, New York 1944. The author deals with the way the early Church encountered the classical culture.

6. A.M. Mundadan, *Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*. Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore-1984. pp. 22ff.

7. *Ibid.* p. 23

and architecture were truly Indian. However, in the process of Latinization and Syrianization later, the church lost its Indianness and closed the door against the possibility of further acquiring a matured indigeneity.

Three views have been held on this issue. One group of people maintain that whatever is already acquired by the St. Thomas Christians is sufficient for their witness in India. A second opinion is expressed by some others. According to them, it is because of the process of Syrianization that the Indian Orthodox Church could have an Orthodox identity at all, so that it should not be abandoned. A third group would insist that indigenization should not obstruct the present situation with which people have already become acquainted.

There may be very few members of the Orthodox community who would opt for indigenization in a conscious manner. It should be granted that as in the early church, the Indian church should hold to its Christian identity in faith, but should see that it is expressed in a way that is suitable to the Indian milieu. The task here can be ecclesial, liturgical, theological, socio-politico-economic etc.⁸ In any case, the fact is that the present identity is indeed foreign. We can learn the clue here from St. John and St. Paul, who used the terminology like *logos*, *soter*, *mysterion*, etc. borrowed from the Greeks. In fact, in the Asian context, words like *samsara*, *nirvana*, *dharma*, *karma*, and so on are there, which Christians can adapt and use.⁹ As Visser't Hooft remarks, 'the task is a serious understanding and not riskfree'.¹⁰

8. V.C. Samuel, *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*. CLS, Madras, 1977, pp. 302f.

9. Koyama, 'Indigenization' *A New Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. by Alan Richardson SCM. press New York 1983, p. 292

10. *Ibid.*

To give a list of the various aspects of indigenization is not our intention here. Our purpose is only to clarify what indigenization really means. It is not something that can be peripherally coated, but is a thorough and in-depth capturing of the Indian mind and identity whereby to make Christianity natural to India.¹¹ The attempts made in this line by the Indian Roman Catholic Church constitute a silver line of hope.¹²

Orthodox identity in India should not be a copy of the same anywhere else in the world, but it should be genuinely Indian. A true identity is not static, it is continually renewed and reborn each moment in a different spot.¹³ Indigenization is not an overnight work. It is a process which will call for centuries to materialize. But a beginning has to be made with care and devotion. History witnesses to the fact that in India the Syrian and Latin identities have affirmed themselves through centuries of acclimatization. The primary task to be undertaken is to encourage adaptability wherever possible and necessary, without compromising principle, but casting away the fear of losing the foreign identity and the feeling that anything Indian is 'pagan'.

Autonomy

In Indian Christianity autonomy has become a watchword

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11. Wearing khadi or safron coloured dress and speaking an Indian language does not by itself make a church indigenous. When the church seeks to comprehend the totality of the Indian reality and thereby and strives to make Christianity agreeable to the Indian milieu, this can be a sign of indigenization.
 12. The work of Robert de Nobili of an earlier period and the effort by institutes like the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, may be noted here.
 13. See article on 'Identity' in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1914.

in Roman Catholic,¹⁴ or Protestant,¹⁵ Orthodox,¹⁶ or Chaldean.¹⁷ In Protestant circles, though Protestantism began only in the 18th century in India, even during the 19th century, autonomy, devolution, independence, self-support, self-government, self-propagation, etc., became slogans. The Roman Catholic situation, though different due to its centralization, in papacy, the urge for autonomy is seen in the Padroado-propaganda conflicts.¹⁸ The Syrian groups, namely the Jacobite-Orthodox, the Mar Thomite, the Chaldean and the Thozhiyur Churches also made their efforts to gain autonomy. Among these, the Mar Thoma Church deserves singular praise. Whether it is doctrinally orthodox or protestant, it succeeded in shaking off the shackles of all foreign rule over it. This Church had to build up from the scratch, but the courage and dedication exemplified by its leadership should be considered remarkable, so much so that at present the Mar Thoma Church can be rated as one of the most dynamic Churches in the World.

The case of the Jacobite-Orthodox (referred to as Orthodox hereafter) Church is different. It was administratively an independent Church till the last quarter of the 19th century, but it was bound by the strings of the liturgical tradition borrowed from the Antiochene Syrian Church. For this reason no fruitful attempt could be made towards the gaining of autonomy. In the 20th century, when autonomy was snatched, that was at the cost of the Church's unity.

Mundadan has raised some important questions at this point¹⁹, with reference to the claim that the Maphrianate or the Catholicate of Kottayam was transferred from Tagrit.

14. Mundadan, *op. cit.* pp. 29-84.

15. *Ibid.* pp. 160-174.

16. *Ibid.* pp. 109-128.

17. *Ibid.* pp. 96ff.

18. *Ibid.* pp. 131 ff.

19. Mundadan, *op. cit.* pp. 128-130.

V. C. Samuel also has shown the untenability of this interpretation²⁰. Why is it that the Indian Orthodox Church, with its long history and particularly with its claim of apostolic origin, this Church cannot have a Catholicate or Patriarchate raised by it? As Mundadan puts it rightly, 'it should be the action of the community itself'.²¹

In connection with autonomy two more important aspects need attention. One is the doctrinal and theological allegiance of the Indian Orthodox Church to the other Orthodox Churches. The Indian Orthodox Church does cherish its Orthodox identity with that of other Orthodox Churches. But the feeling among other denominations that 'Orthodox' is synonymous with unchangeability is not befitting. Therefore one would expect the Indian Orthodox Church to be responsive to the modern challenges. This may include review of the Church's position on the liturgical set up, status of the bishops and priests, celibacy, democracy in administration²², place of women in the Church etc. For innovations on these issues the Indian Orthodox Church need not look up to other Orthodox Churches²³. It should prove its autonomy by taking decisions on its own. The other aspect is the continuing court cases with the Orthodox group that claims allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch. There is the fear that any innovation in terms of making the Church relevant to the situations, may affect the court cases adversely and would result in loss of property. As the Church should believe in the guiding power of the Holy Spirit, even if property and

20. V.C. Samuel, *Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo?*, pp. 132-137.

21. Mundadan *op. cit.* p. 129.

22. The author does not contradict the set up explained in this regard by Mar Gregorios ('Ecclesiastical Authority: Options and Patterns in the Indian Orthodox Church' in *Star of the East*, vol. 9, No. 1, pp.4-5) but is apprehensive about the supreme authority given to the Episcopal Synod which is comprised of bishops only.

23. People in general are unwilling to undergo change. But this problem can be solved if an earnest attempt is made by all concerned.

temporal gains are at stake, the Church should be able to assert its autonomy.

Autonomy can be, therefore, an important aspect of the Orthodox Church's Indian identity. It will be an opening door to indigeneity as well. If the Orthodox community feels that its inability to be properly indigenised is due to a lack of autonomy, it can be the first step. Again, the task is not risk-free, but it is a very serious aspect that needs to be considered.

Ecumenicity

The word ecumenism is derived from the Greek word 'oikoumene', which means the entire inhabited world or the dwelling place. It is a modern word used for the Church union movement. It may be meant that the church union movement penetrates through the whole inhabited world. For this reason, ecumenicity is an intrinsic part of any Church's identity. Though the Churches were divided due to historical reasons, since 'unity' is a mark of the Church, all Churches have the responsibility to work towards union. Therefore, Indian Orthodox Church also has to take it seriously.

The inception of the ecumenical movement was geared by Protestant Churches, and as early as 1938 Orthodox Churches and in 1960s' Roman Catholic Church also became either participants or sympathizers. With the formation of World Council of Churches in 1948, more momentum was gathered. Having gone for forty years WCC could not create an atmosphere of closer union. One Orthodox observer says from his experience about WCC that it is 'not so much a means of manifesting the Church's unity (but) as a forum of friendly co-operation with Protestant Churches'.²⁴ From the Orthodox side

24. Paulos Mar Gregorios, "The Dialectic of the Cross : The Way forward in Three Directions for the Ecumenical Movement", *Star of the East*, Vol 9. No. 2, p. 3.

willingness to co-operate with WCC at all levels was made clear. However, total agreement on a closer union has not been achieved. The Orthodox Churches considered Eucharistic communion as the final result and not the means, as seen by the Protestant unions such as Church of South India, Church of North India etc. Another Orthodox leader observes that the ecumenical 'relation has crystallized into a pattern of formal friendliness at the central level with very little possibility for dramatic development....' ²⁵

The Indian Orthodox Church is very much pessimistic about its ecumenical relations. There are two main reasons for this: 1) the bitter experience of the encounter with the Roman Catholic, Syrian and Anglican Churches from 16th century onwards which resulted not in enrichment but in proselytism, division and prolonged court cases. 2) as K.M. George rightly puts it, 'Protestantism at present lacks the catholicity necessary to comprehend the Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions.'²⁶ The fear is to some extent legitimate. But there is yet another important factor that is underlying. That is the borrowed identity with other Orthodox Churches. Since the Indian Orthodox Church has the theological standpoints of other Churches and belong to that family, it cannot take any steps of its own, beyond what will be permitted by other Orthodox Churches. For the same reason one can see the closer affinity of the Indian Orthodox Church to those Churches and the resultant ecumenical meetings of the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

25. K.M. George, "Editorial" *Star of the East*, vol. 9 no. 2.

26. *Ibid.* This has been vividly seen specially in the unofficial Orthodox-Mar Thoma Dialogues which was a hopeful movement for a closer fellowship of these Churches. See for details M.K. Kuriakose, "The Relation between Orthodox Syrian Church and Mar Thoma Syrian Church, 1975 M. Th. Thesis, pp. 67-88, UTC Archives.

An Indian Christian, however, while appreciating the orthodoxy held by the Indian Orthodox Church would like to ask a question, what is the aim of ecumenism? If it is for understanding and fellowship and ultimately for union with other Churches, its necessity is more in this land than in other lands where we have people of different cultural, political and religious backgrounds. Ecumenism will not go to grass-root level with the 'foreign-ecumenical-mind'. Mar Dionysius VI, a prominent figure of the Indian Orthodox Church in the 20th century has stressed the need of closer relation with Mar Thoma and Anglican Churches.²⁷ In this land of non-Christians, disunity of Christians has become a scandal. Therefore we need ecumenism here and now to witness to the Gospel.

It is true that the Orthodox Church of India opened ways of closer relation with Mar Thoma, Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches from 1960s onwards. They brought out agreed statements of these consultations. These meetings were enriching experiences to know where they stand. In most cases the differences were on interpretation of some doctrines. That the Church has accepted membership in the National Council of Churches and Kerala Council of Churches, deserves to be noted here. These bodies are also similar in their functioning as the WCC requiring not officially binding status for its decisions on the Churches.

There are silver lines of hope in some leaders who would consider ecumenism as the work of the Holy Spirit, but not only in the Church but also in the world at large.²⁸ They would say that for a unity of the whole Indian Church, we should collaborate with other churches in India.²⁹ V. C. Samuel thinks that by

27. V.C. Samuel, *Truth Triumphs : Life and Achievement of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI* pp. 77-78

28. Paulos Mar Gregorios explains this in the last but the first paragraph of his essay in this book.

29. V.C. Samuel, *Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo?*, p. 170

this closeness and co-operation an ecclesiastical identity can be attained for the Indian Church.³⁰ It is not an easy task to open new horizons in the ecumenical line. Bold steps are necessary.³¹ The Church should be able to take practical steps along an ecumenical line. Union talks, establishment of union institutions, and collaboration with union organizations and projects are already going on but need energization. Such an approach in ecumenical witness in India should not contradict the wider vision of world ecumenism because 'oikoumene' penetrates through the whole inhabited world. Only when the local ecumenism becomes realistic the world ecumenism becomes relevant.³² Hence ecumenicity is a cardinal issue regarding the definition of an Indian Orthodox identity.

Having discussed the three significant aspects of identity, many of the negative and positive points are raised regarding the Indian Orthodox Church. The Indian Orthodox Church needs to be contemporary, relevant and dynamic. For that it needs indigenous thinking, self-respect and self-confidence. The Orthodox Church of India spent a good portion of its resources on court cases. The thorough attention of the Church was diverted from the focal point to litigation for nearly three fourth of a century. If the Indian Orthodox Church believes in the supreme guiding power of the Holy Spirit, it can confidently

30. *ibid.*

31. Meyendorff discusses this boldness in terms of putting into practice, the theoretical agreement reached between the Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian, theologians. See the last paragraph of the section "Ecclesiological perceptions" of his essay in this book.

32. The author had opportunity to listen to the critics of the Indian Orthodox Church's ecumenical attitude that it is only 'overseas ecumenism' and not regional or national. This criticism was rampant because of the Church's shyness to join the Kerala Council of Churches and National Council of Churches.

acquire an identity that is relevant to its witness and existence in this country. It should be completely free from all external forces, either administrative, doctrinal, or traditional and be psychologically free to exercise its witness absorbing the tint, taste and smell of the Indian soil. The pioneering work that is done by V.C. Samuel in revolutionizing the thinking for a meaningful Orthodox Church in India should inspire us.

M. K. Kuriakose

A Short Biography of Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel

Sunny Kulathakkal

Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel was born into a middle class Syrian Christian family, Edayil at Omalloor, Pathenamthitta in Central Travancore, which now forms part of the state of Kerala. He was born on 6th April 1912 as the fifth of six sons and three daughters of Late E. I. Cherian and late Annamma Cherian, both of them were persons of sterling character and deep Christian dedication. Samuel did not start his life at a high level. During the early years of his life he was sickly, but gradually he regained his health. His growth to religious scholarship and prominence was due to his inner compulsions and efforts on one hand and the atmosphere of religious devotion and Christian commitment in the family and the motivation of his parents.

Late E. I. Cherian was by profession a school teacher and a recognized leader in the community. Conversant as he was with both the Sanskrit and Tamil languages, besides Malayalam, he had a collection of books in those languages, which he used to read regularly as much as his Bible and other Christian writings. While he was a young man, Cherian came to appreciate the interest which the government of Travancore was expressing for the spread of education in the country. That was a time - towards the end of 19th and the early part of the 20th century - when children in and around his native village had very little facilities for schooling. Representing

their cause, he got in touch with the top officials of the department of education and obtained the necessary sanction to establish schools for them. In implimenting the plan, he organised popular support in a number of centres and started schools, about fifteen of them, which he managed well so long as his health permitted him to carry on the work. Then some of the schools were given over to the government and some to competent non- governmental agencies.

Both the noble souls left, this life, the father in 1952 at the age of 82 and the mother six years later when she was 83 years old. May God grant them the share in life with all the saints in the world to come.

Education

The young Samuel had his primary education in a school founded by his father in his own village. Despite his ill-health Samuel completed his high school studies with distinction. On receiving the English School Leaving Certificate (E.S.L C.) in 1931, Samuel started learning Syriac language. That was the time when Patriarch Mar Ignatius Elias III of Antioch visited India. Samuel had a sincere longing for the success of the patriarchal mission, and he was deeply moved when the spiritual head of the Syrian Church passed away at the St. Ignatius' Church, Manjanikkara, in the neighbourhood of his home in 1932. However, the place where the Patriarch breathed his last soon grew into a centre of religious activities, including the teaching of Syriac and the imparting of Antiochene Syrian ecclesiastical learning. The presence there of the Syrian metropolitan Elias Mar Julius, the deligate of the patriarch, and the Syrian remban Jacob Abdul Ahad (who later became patriarch Mar Ignatius Jacob III) attracted Samuel to the Manjanikkara Dayara, to pursue his Syriac studies. By the way, he had no plan to be ordained to the Church's ministry during the early days, but he was guided to that thought out of a desire

to continue with his theological education effectively. Samuel did his academic work so well that in a few years he completed it successfully and began to share in the teaching as a colleague of the Syrian Remban.

While learning and teaching, Samuel made it a point to keep up his private study of both the language and other subjects. Besides, he served as the secretary of the Metropolitan, who knew only Arabic and Syriac. This called for his working with the Syriac, Malayalam and English. As regards English, he kept up his reading of books in it dealing with Church history, theology, and biblical and devotional subjects. Thus he learned Syriac well and gained a grounding in other subjects. As he moved on in this direction, he realized that he should equip himself further and more systematically in secular education, and that he stood in need of more advanced theological learning.

In pursuance of this, though which gripped him deeply, he joined the Union Christian College, Alwaye, in 1944 as a priest, thirteen years after he had completed his high school studies, to follow a regular university programme of academic discipline. He carried on the B.A. degree studies of the then Travancore University, with Philosophy and Psychology as his major field. In 1948 he passed the examinations, securing the first rank in the major field and qualifying himself for the gold medal due for the same. This, however, was for Father Samuel only the beginning of a plan he had set in his mind for his academic pursuit. He had in fact entertained the idea of proceeding further in his education, both secular and theological. Accordingly he joined the Madras Christian College to continue his studies there. He completed the same in 1950 and received the M.A. Degree of the Madras University.

With this background in secular education, Father Samuel moved on to the programme of theological studies provided by the Senate of Serampore College, at the United Theological

College, Bangalore. On passing the B.D. degree creditably in 1953, he sought admission for post-B.D. studies in the Theological field in the United States of America, which he readily obtained, to begin with at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, and then at the Divinity School of the Yale University, New Haven, U.S.A. From the former he secured the S.T.M (Master of Sacred Theology) degree in 1954, and from the Yale University the Ph. D. (Doctor of Philosophy) degree in 1957, both with great distinction. The field of his study was the History of Christian Thought, which he chose for his specialization at both these centres of learning the classical doctrine of the person of Christ worked out in the 5th century, which led to the first division in the Church that continues to our times. Father Samuel's knowledge of Syriac and ability to work with texts in Greek made it possible for him to carry on this study effectively.

In choosing this area Father Samuel had a definite purpose in mind. The 5th century division in the Church has been interpreted by Church traditions, each in its own way to make out that its acceptance or rejection of the councils in question was the result of a concern to conserve the Christian truth exclusively and that the others were really at fault. Father Samuel's sense of objectivity and impartiality led him to feel that this reading must be as much one-sided as it was superficial, and that he should himself study the issues involved in the controversy. Thus his purpose was, in the first place, to find out for himself why the division arose, insofar as that was possible. Secondly, perhaps more importantly, to clarify to all concerned why the Churches exist in a divided state. In other words, his work was intended to be of service to the Churches and the cause of Christian unity. From this point of view, Father Samuel had a special concern for the Churches of the East, particularly those of the Oriental Orthodox family, which have continued in history without formally acknowledging the Council of Chalcedon on 451 A.D. These Church traditions have been referred to as

“monophysite” heretical communities by the Byzantine or the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and all major Protestant Churches. In the face of this uncomplimentary labelling, Father Samuel felt interested in bringing out the real point of the division following the Council of 451 and the teaching of the fathers who opposed it. This was indeed a piece of work which had been overdue for a long time, so that Father Samuel was taking upon himself the task of rediscovering Oriental Orthodoxy from centuries of oblivion and misrepresentation. The doctoral thesis, later published. ‘The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined’ is the major breakthrough in this line. This book represents the true Oriental Orthodox¹ Perspective.

Obviously, Dr.V.C. Samuel was a pioneer in this undertaking. This is not all, that he did. With special reference to the Indian (Syrian) Orthodox Church his vision in two other areas deserve, reckoning. He was keen, in the first place, to promote the principle that the Church in India should be really Indian. Out of this concern he had a deep interest in comparing at the roots the historic faith with the religious heritage of Hinduism. Secondly, he realized that the claim of apostolic origins by the Indian Syrian Christianity does not tally with its present standing either as part of the Roman Catholic Church or as that of the Antiochene Syrian Church. Though from this point of view both these sections of the Indian Syrian Christianity should see visions of their future, Father Samuel’s interest lay primarily in the Orthodox body. Over the years he paid some serious attention to its history, foreign connections

1. The term “Oriental Orthodox” as distinct from the “Eastern Orthodox” began to be used in fairly recent times in Kerala it was aimed at differentiating the Churches of the East that reject the council of Chalcedon from those that accept it, acknowledging at the same time that both traditions are theologically sound. However, the classification has overtones which cannot all be admitted, with reference to the Indian Church from a historical point of view.

and present state of things, and he had sufficient opportunities to compare them with the reality of other Churches, particularly of the East.

Father Samuel's concentration on the subtle nuances of the classical doctrine of the person of Christ during his post-B.D. studies did not leave him free to follow up his studies in Hinduism. But on completing his Ph.D. work at the Yale university an opportunity opened itself for him and he snatched it. Dr. P. D. Devanandan of revered memory was launching the plan of establishing the 'Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society' in Bangalore. Now feeling that an association with the Institute would possibly enable him to combine the two plans, he joined the same in 1957 itself under an appointment sponsored by the University of Chicago for a period of three years. This arrangement was of course experimental, as Dr. Samuel was keen to pursue his theological work. However, it gave him an opportunity to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the philosophy and the working of the Ramakrishna Mission as well as of several others in contemporary Hinduism. On completion of the three year-period, Father Samuel chose the teaching profession.

Teaching Work

From June 1960 Dr. Samuel took up teaching assignment in theological colleges and seminaries both in and outside India.

These are as follows :-

June 1960 to April 1963

the Serampore College,
Serampore, India.

Sept. 1963 to June 1966

the Theological College
of the Holy Trinity, the
Haile Sellassie I Univer-
sity, Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia.

July 1966 to April 1968	the United Theological College, Bangalore, India.
Sept. 1968 to June 1976	the Theological College of the Holy Trinity, HSIU, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
July 1978 to April 1980	the United Theological College, Bangalore, India.
January 1981	the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, India.

While serving these institutions, Dr. Samuel was involved in various extra-curricular activities. Thus during his Serampore days he worked for two years as the editor of the Indian Journal of Theology and looked after the spiritual ministrations of the Orthodox Christian people at the Barrackpore military station, across the river Hooghly. In December 1961 he participated in the New Delhi assembly of the World Council of Churches as one of the accredited delegates of the Orthodox Church of India.

Dr. Samuel had no plan to go back to Ethiopia where he had functioned earlier a second time. He did it, however, as a submission to persuasion of love from both the Church of Ethiopia and the HSI University. The Church appreciated his role as a theologian of Oriental Orthodoxy and the University had regard for his academic achievements. The latter expressed its recognition of and confidence in him by appointing him as the Dean (Principal) of the College of Theology in 1969, a position which he held till he left Ethiopia in July 1976. By that time Ethiopia had a new government, which had no

interest in the Theological College and closed it.

Two services rendered by Father Samuel during his life in Ethiopia should be noted here. One, his spiritual ministry. In Addis Ababa and towns in its neighbourhood there were members of the Malankara Orthodox Church employed as teachers by the Ministry of Education of the Ethiopian Government. Their spiritual needs were fulfilled by Father Samuel and his priest-colleagues on both during his tenure. Two, he was a member of the local committee responsible for the preparatory work of the Addis Ababa Conference of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches, which was held in January 1965. At the end of the Conference a Standing Committee was appointed to continue the work initiated by it, with two members from each of the constituent Churches. Father Samuel was one of the two members representing the Malankara Orthodox Church. He fulfilled his duties in this regard so long as the committee functioned.

On his return from Ethiopia in July 1976, Father Samuel had planned to retire completely from active service and settle down to a programme of writing on his own. But he could not stick to the plan, as he had a call from the United Theological College, Bangalore. Realizing the urgency, he accepted it for one year and continued for one more year. A few months later there came the call from the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, which he could not turn down. Thus from January 1981 Dr. Samuel has been rendering his services at the Orthodox Seminary.

Association with the Ecumenical Movement

Dr. V.C. Samuel was a delegate of the Malankara Orthodox Church at three of the general assemblies of the World Council of Churches, those of Evanston, U.S.A., in 1954, New Delhi, India in 1961, and Uppsala, Sweden, 1968. The New Delhi (India) world assembly voted him as a member of the Council's Faith and order Commission in 1961 and he held

the post till 1984. Meanwhile the Uppsala assembly of 1968 had him elected as a member of the Commission's Working Committee. This position he occupied till 1975. During the 23 years of his participation in the faith and order Commission of the WCC, Dr. Samuel has taken active part in a number of study projects of the Commission, contributing papers and taking a keen interest in discussing the issues raised from an Oriental Orthodox perspective. Most of such papers have been published under the auspices of the WCC.

The period of Dr. Samuel's association with the Faith and Order Commission synchronized with two events of significance in which he made a distinctive contribution. Those were unofficial theological consultations. The first of them which started in 1964 at Aarhus, Denmark, about a week before the meeting of the Commission that was held at the same venue, was continued till 1971 in connection with subsequent Commission meetings. These were called "Unofficial Consultation of Theologians of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches". Four consultations were held in this way. Dr. Samuel presented papers in them and helped the participants in arriving at the conclusion that the difference in Christological doctrine between the two families of Churches was only verbal and not substantial. These papers also have been published by different journals.

The second was a series of four consultations organized by the *Pro Oriente* foundation of Vienna, Austria from 1972. These were called "Unofficial Consultations of Theologians of the Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches". Dr. Samuel participated in them as a theologian from the latter, presenting in them papers, which were all published under the auspices of the Foundation. The first three of these consultations discussed the doctrine of the person of Christ, on which there was agreement among participants that the difference between the two Church traditions was not substantial. The

last consultation concentrated on "The Petrine Office", which did not end in an agreement between the two sides.

Neither series of the unofficial consultations brought about the unity of the Churches. Here the problem is not the same with reference to the Byzantine Orthodox Churches on the one hand and the Roman Catholic Church on the other. Whereas for the former the acceptance of the seven "Ecumenical Councils" is indispensable for the establishment of unity, for the latter the papal doctrine is a central point to be conserved.

Dr. Samuel has a genuine interest in promoting the cause of ecumenism, particularly in the Indian context. He has given expression to his views in this direction in some of his writings. What he apparently wanted to do was to minimize the areas of conflict and save the Church from splitting. He gave up his efforts to bring the two sides of the Orthodox Church in India together when he found that he would be compromising his position and principle by not taking a firm stand. It was not as though he had no firm opinion about the relative positions of the two groups in the Orthodox Church. He has strong convictions and expressed them in unambiguous terms.

He admits that the Indian Churches have all of them inherited their respective traditions in worship, doctrine and life from abroad, namely from the East and the West Syrian Churches of the West Asian World, the Roman Catholic Church, and the various Western Protestant traditions. Although these have been evolved in social and cultural settings alien to Indian conditions, people have been born and brought up in them. Granting that some of them can be reckoned to have permanent value, it is to be admitted that the foreignness surrounding them should be transcended, and that new forms that are genuinely Christian and Indian should be produced. In seeking to achieve this goal, Samuel feels, Churches can learn from each other and even co-operate, irrespective of their present standing.

Publications

A list of most titles with publisher and date of publication is given at the end of this book. What is noted here is only a classification. Through what has thus been brought out Dr. Samuel has tried to promote his vision. Viewed in this way, his writings can be listed under three heads.

- i) Articles, papers, book reviews etc., in newspapers like the Malayala Manorama, Deepika, Weeklies, Church papers and religious journals. Some of them deal with the issues in a learned way and some in a more popular manner.
- ii) Lengthy papers dealing with theological ecclesiological ideas.
- iii) Books : From 1959 to 1987 Samuel wrote and published nine books. He is currently preparing the Kerala section in volume IV of the *History of Christianity in India* for the Church History Association of India, and has plans to work on other books as well.

Some Personal Data

Dr. V.C. Samuel who has done so much for the Malankara Orthodox Church and represented it in a number of international and other forums is a married priest, but his wife Kunjannamma died in an accident in August 1968, after about fifteen years of an ideal wedded life. She has left behind her their only child, Zachariah, who is now married. With his wife Ramola and their two children, Anna Deepthi and Vinoo, Zachariah lives currently in Madras, being employed as a senior officer of the Hindustan Thompson Advertising Firm.

In deciding to marry at the age of forty-one, after being a priest for about 16 years and all along leading unblamable life, he was led primarily to raise the issue to the conscience of the

Orthodox Church. Yet he took up the step only with the formal permission of his bishop and His Holiness the Catholicos himself. As he has himself written on the principle which he sees behind the action in *Church Weekly* and elsewhere, both in Malayalam and English, the points made there need not be repeated here. Only two points may be noted here in passing. One, *theological*: the fact that a vast majority of priests in the service of the Orthodox Churches are married, living with their wives, is sufficient theological basis for insisting that the time as to when a person should marry, before or after ordination to priesthood, makes no difference to his standing in the church as a priest.. Two: *historical*: this principle had been followed in the Church of Malabar in the past, and this is all that need to be followed in the future. As regards the Malankara Orthodox Church, it had all through the centuries to our own times priests marrying, or remarrying if any of them was widowed and wished to marry again. But prejudice against married priesthood was brought to Kerala by the Roman Catholics from the 16th century and against priests marrying after ordination by the Antiochian Syrian fathers, possibly from the 18th century. Yet we have record that Patriarch Peter III and several other bishops, both Syrian and Indian, sanctioned individual cases of priests marrying and even remarrying. A regularization of the practice was a need and Father Samuel felt that he should take up the challenge.

In conclusion, a word may be said about the domestic arrangement of Dr. Samuel. In 1961, while he and his wife were at the Serampore College, they decided to adopt someone as a member of the family. On enquiry through trusted friends they obtained K.P. Varghese, who came from a respectable Syrian Christian family in Kerala. With the approval of his people, Varghese joined the Samuels and has continued to remain with them ever since. In 1975 Varghese married Gracey, a grand daughter of Dr. Samuel's father's sister. They have a

daughter, Anu, who is studying in an English medium school in standard three.

As early as 1966, while Dr. Samuel was serving on the faculty of the United Theological College, Bangalore, he purchased an area of farm land at Ramohally on the suburbs of the city. It was developed over the years with the help of Mr. K.C. Chacko of Bangalore and later under the personal attention of Mr. Varghese himself. Now it is a well established estate with a residential house and other facilities needed for the fairly comfortable living of a family, away from the rush and noise of the city. Though Dr. Samuel is out of station most of the time and the property is being looked after by the Vargheses the quietness of the place attracts him to it.

There are many things in his life for which Dr. V.C.Samuel is thankful to God and indebted to his friends far and near.

Opening Indian Orthodoxy for Dialogue about its Future

M. M. Thomas

I am grateful to Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, the editor, for inviting me to participate in the festschrift for Dr. V.C. Samuel.

Fr. Samuel and I were class-mates in St. Thomas English High School, Kozhencherry in 1930-31. After many years I met him as a teacher of Syriac. We were together again in New York as students of Union Theological Seminary in 1953-54. After his doctorate at Yale we were for a short period colleagues on the staff of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society where he was doing research on Ramakrishna Mission. We met off and on while he was teaching theology in Bangalore, Addis Ababa and Kottayam and participating in the Faith and Order Commission of the W.C.C. I remember Lukas Vischer telling me once how much he appreciated the combination in Fr. Samuel of high Scholarship, deep humility and quiet spiritual strength. I have always appreciated this character in him and esteemed him high and greatly valued the occasions of conversation on Church and theology and personal matters. For me he has always been Samuelachen¹ a personal friend. Recently we were together at Alwaye Fellowship House for a clergy conference organised by the Union Christian College which gave us opportunity for long conversations on ecumenical concerns.

1. Achen is a Malayalam term for Priest.

In the sight of these many years of contact I see Samuel-achen and his theology as the primary focal point of opening of Indian Orthodoxy for ecumenical dialogue, that is as locus for self-critical reflection on its Orthodox tradition, and of dialogue with other Eastern and Western Church traditions without forgetting the primary context of Indian Orthodoxy in India.

About this multipronged dialogue in which Fr. Samuel is involved as representative of Indian Orthodoxy, somebody should write in a volume being produced to honour him around the theme, the future of Indian Orthodoxy. I do not have the scholarship to do justice to any aspect of the subject at depth. But since I cannot refuse the invitation to write for this Festschrift, let me make some remarks as a lay ecumenical theologian from my position, some what marginal to the Orthodox tradition that is, as a member of the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala.

Let me begin with Samuel-achen's contribution to Indian Orthodoxy's dialogue with the major Church traditions at the World level. The World Council of Churches has defined its goal of Church Unity in various ways. The substantial centre of it is that the One Church of the future shall be a conciliar fellowship of Churches recognising each other and each other's membership and ministries as belonging to the Universal Church confessing one faith, receiving one baptism and sharing in the one eucharist and reaching to the World in mission and service. In contrast to this vision, the Church today stands divided not only into Churches of the Catholic, the Orthodox and the Protestant traditions but also within each of these traditions. In the Orthodox tradition the 'Eastern' and 'Oriental' Churches have been in schism from the time of the Chalcedonian Council keeping each other outside one's eucharistic fellowship, because of the historically rooted perception that their different Christological formulations expressed essential difference in faith. It has been Samuel-achen's life-vocation to make his

contribution to heal the schism in Orthodoxy and to promote dialogue, dialogue of Orthodoxy with other traditions in view of the larger ecumenical unity.

Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? edited by Paulos Mar Gregorios, William Lazareth and Nikos Nissiotis and published by the WCC 1981 has the subtitle : "Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology"- It is the account of "four unofficial conversations" between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox theologians held at Aarhus, Denmark 1964, Bristol, England 1967, Geneva, Switzerland 1970 and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1971. The word 'Unofficial' in the subtitle expresses the sensitivity between the two ecclesiastical traditions. They were 'unofficial' with more or less official ecclesiastical approval. The Agreed Statements show that the two Orthodox tradition's have come a long way to indicate that their different Christological formulations express the same Christian faith.

Ever since the 5th century we used different formulas to confess one common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man. Some of us affirm two natures, wills and energies hypostatically united in the One Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us affirm one united divine-human nature, will and energy in the same Christ. But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition. Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the Godhead and Manhood with all their natural properties and faculties in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of 'two' do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of 'one' do not thereby commingle or confuse. The 'without division' 'without separation' of those who say 'two' and 'without change' 'without confusion' of those who say 'one' need to be specially underlined, in order that we may understand each other.²

2. Mar Gregorios and others, *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?* WCC 1981 pp.5-6.

This agreed statement has opened the possibility of the two Orthodox families to take formal steps to lift the anathemas pronounced on each other and restore communion, and awaiting this to recognise each other as belonging to one Orthodox Church in informal relations.

The contribution Fr. Samuel made to this mutual understanding is unique. It starts with his deep scholarship in the writings of the Syriac fathers which led him to his doctorate research on the Alexandrian-Antiochean christological controversy and to the discovery that it was not real difference regarding the essential faith, but misunderstanding of language exploited by politics which produced the schism. He had difficulty getting his doctorate thesis published in the West, so it was eventually published in India. However, Fr. Samuel's scholarship made him the foremost single authority on the Eastern-Oriental division. His papers, at the unofficial meetings of Orthodox theologians, "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" (1964) and "The Manhood of Jesus Christ in the Tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church" (1968)³, and discussions on them were decisive for Pan-Orthodox Christological convergence.

Fr. Samuel is, however, not simply a theologian of Pan-Orthodoxy. The basis of his participation in the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC for so many years has been as an advocate not of Orthodoxy alone, but of the larger unity of the Church which now lie divided into Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches. He has given effective expression to his conviction (which perhaps he first learned from his study of division within Orthodoxy) that the advance of these three traditions towards unity requires in the first place an awareness in all that, while faith is one, the different traditions embodying it, has no absolute character and should be open to change.

3. *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Winter 1964-65 and Fall 1968.

In a paper, Samuel Achen presented at the Faith & Order meeting at Accra 1974 on the subject, "How can the Unity of the Church be Achieved?"⁴, he points to the influence of "different intellectual and cultural backgrounds" in the evolution of the different church traditions, awareness of which should help relativise these traditions. He says:

The Christological controversy of the fourth and subsequent centuries in ancient times; for example, which caused the disruption of the Church's unity to our own times was primarily the result of a lack of understanding between the schools of Alexandria and Antioch, as also between either of them and some, consequent upon the different intellectual and cultural background which each of them had. This, however, led to a division of the Christian Community and to the formation of the three mutually excluding Church bodies, because each of them sought to absolutise its own interpretation and in its light to denounce the others as heretical. Again the Reformation of the 16th century and even of later times was based on fresh ways of understanding the Christian Faith, in consequence of the historical forces which emerged in Europe from about the end of the Middle Ages.⁵

The recognition of this fact should help every church to see that there is no justification for it to claim "That it constitutes exclusively the Church". Of course every church feels that it had been guided by the Holy Spirit in the formation of its past tradition. But it is not necessary for that reason to "maintain that at some time in the past the Holy Spirit had enabled the Christian Community to be built up as the perfect embodiment of God's Church for all times and for all climes". Ecclesiastical authority under the Holy Spirit must be seen

4 Published in *Uniting in Hope*; Accra 1974, Faith and Order Paper No.72.

5. *Ibid.* p. 103

as "enabling the Church everywhere and in every generation", to discharge the divine commission of "carrying on service aimed at the well-being of man" by conveying "the prophetic dynamism of being the servant community". The Church's mission of salvation both in its eschatological dimension and in its historical realisations, therefore, he says, "can be understood in the light of a liberation theology, in the various forms of Asian and African theologies, and in many other ways depending on man's situation and needs". Thus he would define the Church "not as something already completed but as a dynamic movement within the historical realm through which God is unceasingly at work for the transformation of the world in every generation and every place. Its fullness is ever awaited in the eschaton". No historical church can claim infallibility or inerrancy; but it is present in the "Work of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and as continued through the various means of Grace which the Holy Spirit realises in the lives of individuals and communities" and in "the assurance of salvation which the Church conveys".⁶

Here is an ecclesiology rooted in the Orthodox tradition, but calls Orthodox as well as other churches to open themselves for dialogue with one another in the name of the Church of Christ defined as one dynamic movement of God's mission anticipating and journeying towards the eschaton. Its radicalness lies in his including not only the hoary classical theologies but also the newly emerging ones which express the Church's meeting new situations and needs. In fact Samuel Achen goes further in calling the churches to new theological and ecclesial creativity in contemporary settings. The principle is derived from his study of the Church Fathers. Everyone of "the great gallery of Church Fathers, both Eastern and Western", he says, "received and interpreted the Faith in relation to the historical

6. *Ibid* p.p.100-103.

conditions of his existence''; and he adds, ''In fact, we ourselves understand the faith only within our several cultural and intellectual settings''. And for any Church today it means new reception and interpretation of the faith in their own contemporary cultural and intellectual context. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church means that the Church looks ''more to the Present and future than to the past'', to seek and find ''new ways'' of applying the Christian message to concrete situations it faces.

I have summarised one piece of Fr. Samuel's writings here at such length because it shows clearly his idea of every church continually being open to other churches and contemporary situations. It clarifies his vision for the future of Indian Orthodoxy in relation to other churches and to Indian context in a telling way.

How has Fr. Samuel expressed this vision of the future of Indian Orthodoxy concretely in the setting of India in general and of Kerala in particular?

One could point to several lines in which his ecclesial principle of dialogic openness and indigenous interpretation enunciated above was applied nearer home. One of his early publications in Malayalam is entitled: *Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo?* (Is this an Indian Church?) 1975, and one of his early works in English has been a study of the Ramakrishna Mission, published by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960. And more recently he has written the history of Church in Kerala in two volumes.⁷ Coming nearer still, his

7. This was written as a part of the series of teachings of the Orthodox Church. The first volume is *Sabha Valarunnu*, (The Church is Growing), 1984 Divyabodhanam Publications, Kottayam. The second volume is *Adhunika Bharata Sabha* (Modern Indian Church) 1987. Divyabodhanam Publications, Kottayam.

interpretive biography of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI⁸ who led the movement towards the establishment of the Catholicate as the basis of an Orthodox Church in India, Independent of the administrative authority of the Patriarch of Antioch, goes to the intra-Church debate within Indian Orthodoxy. All these indicate certain trends in Fr. Samuel's thinking about the future of Indian Orthodoxy. A few comments on some of these trends may be appropriate here, though inadequate.

1) Fr. Samuel's theology in the first place is a basis of self-criticism of his own Church tradition making for its renewal and reform in the light of the essence of Orthodox tradition itself.

He is quite prepared at this point to be highly polemic and to challenge well established traditions. For example he says:

Polemically speaking, the insistence on episcopal celibacy, as it is in vogue in some of the historic churches, is indeed enigmatic. Does it, for instance, imply that though bishop's living with their wives cannot have this access, those of them who live out-of-wedlock can have it? If marriage creates such a barrier for the life and service of a bishop what can we say about women in general, and especially about those women who adopt a married status? ⁹

This has relation to his own decision to set aside his church tradition of no-marriage for priests after ordination. But the challenge all through is beyond any personal issue, namely the necessity to rethink historically operating traditions perpetrating sexism in the light of the wholeness of the Church and its witness to the sacredness of all life.

8. *Truth Triumphs : Life and Achievements of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI*. MOC Publications, Kottayam, 1986.

9. *Uniting in Hope*. p.106.

And the principle of self-criticism for reform derived from the essence of Orthodoxy led him to change his loyalty from the Patriarchal side to the more autonomous Catholicose-led Church, but continue to press the latter to make its autonomy real by taking its Indian roots and context seriously.

2) In Fr. Samuel's recent involvement in the writing of the history of the Church in Kerala and the biography of some Orthodox leaders, one discerns not mere chronicles of events but a theologian struggling to apply the principle of the transcendence of the one Church over the relativities of historical traditions so as to help build up an understanding of historical events and their interpretation which would be more or less acceptable to Catholic, Protestant and Mar Thoma historians having the same theological transcendence over their particular traditions. Whether he has succeeded or not, only time will tell. But certainly it is the path for Orthodox ecclesiology to relate itself dialogically to the movement of Christianity in India; and it is a necessary step towards building an Indian ecumenical ecclesiology.

And if in recent times Indian Orthodox Church has given up its policy of isolation from other church traditions in India to a certain extent and joined the Kerala Christian Council and the National Council of Churches, the quiet influence of Fr. Samuel's theology of ecumenical Orthodoxy and local ecumenism must have played no small part behind the scene.

3) The uniqueness of his ecclesiology is that it seeks to express the Christian faith and the life and mission of the Church, taking seriously the spiritual, cultural and intellectual setting in which Indian Church finds itself. He is a scholar both in Orthodox Christology and in Indian metaphysics and is concerned with the ethical issues raised by secular ideologies. This makes Christian-Hindu-Secular dialogue an intra-reality of his ecclesiological search. Of course it is difficult for an Orthodox

heologian so tied with the Pan-Orthodox debates in the categories of human and divine substances and of their unity in Incarnation to get out of those categories to deal in radically other metaphysical and ideological patterns of thinking about Christ. I am not sure how much he has gone in this direction, nor am I able to judge whether Fr. Samuel's attempts in this direction has succeeded or not. But here again he has shown the path. He has shared his vision that the future of Indian Orthodoxy requires taking seriously the traditional Indian metaphysics and contemporary ideological philosophies of existence.

Thus to sum up: Fr. Samuel represents in his thought and in his life the dialogic openness as well as the directions of dialogue necessary for an Indian Orthodoxy visualising its future as or within the Church of India.

Reverend Doctor V. C. Samuel :

Some of his Chief Concerns

K. M. Tharakan

A search for his roots has been one of the primary concerns of Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel. Even as he ventured upon this intellectual, enterprise he discovered his identity. The context in which he found himself demanded of him an able defence of his position as a Christian and as a human being, and he called to his aid the best of his talents and erudition to establish the authenticity of his faith.

Dr. V. C. Samuel was born and brought up in the Indian Orthodox Church. He found that his church was affiliated to the Syrian Orthodox Church, a situation that struck him as paradoxical. How could a Church be of India and of Syria at the same time? Also its liturgy was Syriac. He studied Syriac and found it immensely rich, nevertheless he wondered why the Malankara Church over the years had failed to evolve a liturgy in Malayalam, the language spoken in Kerala where the majority of the members of Orthodox Church live. Wasn't it another paradox? Even as he prosecuted his secular studies he decided to take orders, and with the firm determination to dive deep into the heritage of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, he applied himself to the study of Syriac. As "obstinate questionings" relating to the authenticity of his Church persisted Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel set himself to the study of Church History. Also he would make an inquiry into the legitimate status of his own Church in the comity of the Churches of the world.

From where did the Indian Orthodox Church spring forth, and when exactly did it happen at the march of time? Apart from a strong tradition and a legend, what can historians adduce to establish that St. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus came to Kerala in 52 A. D. and founded the Malabar Church? There are historical records to prove that Thomas of Cana came with 360 Syrian families in 345 A.D. and settled down here. Could it be that chronicles mistook this Thomas for St. Thomas? Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel affirms that St. Thomas came to South India and founded in Kerala (Malabar) seven churches. With infinite patience and utmost attention, Dr. V.C. Samuel examines every other traditions related to the missionary journeys of St. Thomas. He admits that in early days even up to the 12th Century A.D., there was considerable confusion about the territories which India or India Magna encompassed. Not a few historians referred to regions close to the Dead Sea and Persia as India. Gelasius recorded in his book of history that Bishop John of India attended the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., must have meant by India, Persia which was part of India Magna at that time. Also King Gondophorus mentioned in the *Acts of Judas Thomas* must have been a King of Persia. Edessa being one of its major cities, St. Thomas must have preached Christ to the people there. Bar Hebraeus in his *History of the Church* has stated that St. Thomas preached in Punjab. Solomon, Nestorian Bishop of Basra, in his *Book of Bee* also emphasised the fact that St. Thomas preached the word of the Lord not only in Partha and Media but even in India. Fr. V. C. Samuel admits that no such records are there to prove that St. Thomas came to South India. But in Kerala one can find at least four of the seven churches founded by St. Thomas and the tradition relating to each supports the view that St. Thomas came to India. And if this tradition does not carry conviction, Fr. Samuel would urge the sceptical to pursue the enlightening essays of J.N. Farquhar "The Apostle Thomas in South India and the Apostle Thomas in North India" which would remove all doubts about the arrival of St. Thomas in Kerala.

The Church of St. Thomas of Malabar in the early centuries, was in touch with the Persian Church which had its headquarters at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Though this Church was independent it came to have great respect for Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople. In 486 A.D. at a special council the Persian Church absolved Patriarch Nestorius from the strictures passed on him by the Council of Ephesus. Though some of the historians have a tendency to argue that the Church of Malabar remained affiliated to the Church of Seleucia for many centuries, Dr. V. C. Samuel would not endorse this view. He points out that the Syrians held as captives in Persia increased in number in course of time and formed a church of their own at Tigrith as they could not approve of the absolution of Nestorius effected by the Council of Bishops at Seleucia in 486 A.D. The Patriarch of Antioch not only gave his blessings to the Syrian Church at Tigrith but installed an autonomous Catholicate there. The head of the Church at Tigrith was known as *Mapriana* a title synonymous with that of the Catholicose. According to Dr. V. C. Samuel, in the early centuries the Malabar Church was affiliated to this Catholicate at Tigrith which was absolutely independent; neither the Pope of Rome nor the Patriarch of Constantinople, nor the Patriarch of Antioch had any suzerainty over this Church. Dr. V. C. Samuel would not agree with the view that the Church at Tigrith was autocephalous; in fact no church, not even the Roman Catholic Church can claim that it is autocephalous. The distinction between the two epithets, subtle as it is, takes us into the heart of Dr. V. C. Samuel's understanding of the supremacy of the episcopa within the Church.

An exhaustive study of the nature of the Early Church has convinced Dr. V. C. Samuel that a church is fully an authentic body of believers with an episcopa as its head. Though every baptised Christian is a king and a priest by virtue of the grace of God, only an episcopa enjoyed the rights of succession to Apostolic authority and had the privilege of celebrating a sacrament. Only the Bishop had the right to represent Christ who is the

true head of the Church. The priests had powers delegated to them by the bishop. The bishop was not just one person, he embodied the entire body of the faithful in his 'see' or diocese. The bishop symbolises the Church. He enjoys autonomy in his domain which is a Church in a province, region or metropolis. However, any bishop in the Christian world is only one among many and as such can hardly claim to be autocephalous. Just as in a church ultimate authority rests with the bishop and the congregation in their totality, in the Christian world ultimate power rests with the college of bishops rather than with any one of the bishops. Hence the importance of the Synod. One of the bishops may be elected president of the Synod, but by that election alone he does not become the supreme master of the Christian realm. Dr. V. C. Samuel underscores the primacy of the collegiality of bishops in the Christian world, and as such even as he acknowledges the autonomy of the head of each provincial church he will not agree to the concept that any bishop is an absolute monarch in the Christian world or that any church is autocephalous. Any genuine church in the authentic tradition is to be episcopal in character, at the same time in spirit it is bound to be congregational. He fully appreciates the legitimate rights enjoyed by the laity in the protestant churches, however, he will point out that the church can never be a secular democratic body. It is a sacramental community made so by the special blessings of Apostolic succession. Such are the Orthodox Churches of the world and Dr. V. C. Samuel is proud of being a member of an Orthodox Church.

The Church of Tigrith was autonomous under its *Mapriana*, and the Malankara Church flourished under its paternal protection and guidance for many a century until at last in the Sixteenth century it was conquered by the Roman Catholic Church. For a few years the whole of Indian Church followed the Latin rite. In all probability the Portuguese destroyed many relevant historical documents. Also attempts were made to establish that the St. Thomas Christians had all the while been under the

Pope of Rome. Dr. V.C. Samuel rejects this theory put forward by the Roman Catholics as totally untenable. In the year 1653 a large majority of St. Thomas Christian priests assembled at Mattancherry and defied the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church. They took a solemn vow that they would never remain in the Roman Catholic Church under the Pope. (The Syrian Catholics have their own interpretation of this historic incident). The St. Thomas Christians who became once again independent sought to get their status regularised and to regain the sanctity of Apostolic succession. It was as a result of this eager desire that they submitted themselves to the Patriarch of Antioch. A state of dependence on the Church of Antioch persisted for a period. However once again it attained full freedom when the Maronite or Catholicate at Tigrith was re-installed at Kottayam in 1912 A. D. by Patriarch Abdul Messiah of Antioch. Dr. V. C. Samuel arrived at this conclusion after years of sedulous research, and this view of the history of the Malankara Syrian Church is fast gaining ground.

It is true that ancient churches all over the world have followed certain uniform patterns of worship. Though the languages of the liturgy differ in different regions, its content has remained the same. Also adherence to the message of the Bible has helped them remain true to the teachings and life of Jesus Christ. Yet it is significant to observe that most of the ancient Churches had borrowed liberally from the culture in which they grew and developed. The essence of the content was inviolable, but its form could vary. Dr. V.C. Samuel in his appraisal of his mother-Church notes that over the years it assimilated little or nothing from the Indian culture. This according to him was unfortunate. The fathers of the Malankara Syrian Church sought to remain Syrian rather than Indian. The Church of Rome adopted the best that was in Roman Culture and Latin thought. The Greek Church adopted Greek as its liturgical language, in the course of its growth it drew liberally from Greek thought and Greek culture. Viewed against this

background it is difficult to commend the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church for its strict adherence to the Syrian tradition and its immobility. It could evolve neither a theology for itself nor a liturgy. It could not even build a history of its own. The teachings of Jesus no doubt have a universal appeal, and they are not confined specially to a language, a country or a period. But St. Paul expounds their cultural context in his epistles. Also he undergirds them with the most profound of Jewish thoughts contained in the old testament as well as the quintessence of Greek thought. It is said of St. Thomas Aquinas that he baptised Aristotle; but St. Paul had brought the best of Western philosophy and mediterranean thought to bear on Christian revelation much earlier than that Dr. V. C. Samuel wonders why no attempt was made by the fathers of his own church to inculturise in the Indian context and to replenish its thought with Indian philosophy. Neither the Vedas nor the Upanishads had been utilised by the fathers to evolve an indigenous theology. None of them seemed to have had any acquaintance with any of the six systems of Indian philosophy. The Christian Church flourished in Ankamaly, but it knew little or nothing about the tremendous impact the thought of Sree Sankaracharya of Kalady, had on Indian thought. As it happened, scholars in Syriac never cared for Sanskrit, and scholars in Sanskrit ignored Syriac totally. This is not to deny that there were many St. Thomas Christians who attempted to study Sanskrit. But the Syrian Christian contribution to Indian art, architecture, music and literature was next to nothing till the end of the nineteenth century. No seminal theologian rose from among the Christian thinkers or fathers. Bearing all this in mind Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel raised one of the most vital questions relating to the church of Malankara, in one of his books *Is this an Indian Church?*. Is it now too late to indigenize the Indian Orthodox Church? Not at all. It is always better to be late than never. Dr. Samuel is full of appreciation of the attempt of some of the Indian Christians to work out an approach in theology within the Indian context. They have sought 'to proclaim Jesus Christ as the manifestaton in history

of the one and only Supreme Being or as the one in whom man as he ought to be has been revealed. They have done this by suggesting that Jesus Christ is the *chit* (Intelligence identified as the Logos) of advaidins' '*saccitananda* or that he is the *Antaryamin* (the immanent God) of the *Bhakti* religion operating uniquely in Jesus of Nazareth or that he is the *Isvara* (the divine reality that connects *Brahman* with the world corresponding to Logos of *Advaitam*)''. Dr. V. C. Samuel wishes that the attempt of the Indian theologians to evolve an Indian Christology to begin with, succeeds. Even then the question remains whether the Indian Orthodox Church would undertake a similar venture, though there is more in common between the Capadocian fathers and Sankara than between St. Thomas Aquinas or Martin Luther and the Indian Vedantists. Would the Indian Orthodox Church produce its own images of Christ in paintings, or render the content of the Syriac liturgy into Malayalam words set to Karnatic tunes? Would the Church construct churches in the Indian architectural patterns? The crux of the problem is how much the Indian Orthodox Church can indigenize itself. It is the firm conviction of Dr. V. C. Samuel that the autonomous Orthodox Church shall be Indian even as it remains in the true Apostolic tradition preserving its pristine faith and grows in spirituality and wisdom. Incidentally it may be mentioned that it is this faith that took this scholar from the fold of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch to the Indian Orthodox Church.

A devoted student of Church History as Dr. V. C. Samuel is, it did not take him long to realize that the Oriental Orthodox Churches differed from all the Churches of the world in their christology. Too often had the Western Churches had accused the Oriental Orthodox Churches of being 'monophysite'. Therefore Fr. V.C. Samuel undertook it as his chief mission in life to re-examine the Council of Chalcedon which declared the Alexandrian apprehension of Christology as monophysite. He came out with a splendid assessment of the Council of Chalcedon in the book '*The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*'

published in 1977 by Christian Literature Society for the Senate of Serampore College. Any student of theology knows only too well that the Fathers of ancient Church raised many a fundamental question about the nature, personhood and essence of Jesus Christ. The Indian mind can see Jesus either as a *Guru* like Siddhartha or an *avatar* like Sree Rama. The Moslem world has estimated Jesus as one of the prophets of God. We must remember that the concept of a prophet is alien to Indian thought. Sonship is an idea readily acceptable to Indian mind, but it finds it difficult to grasp the idea of 'the only begotten son' who is 'equal to the father' in essence. The concept of Trinity is one of the invaluable contributions of Indian Hindu thought to religious ideas. They are three in one and one in three, and it is in the modality that one may be distinguished from the other, also each has his unique function to perform. Seemingly there is much in common between the Trinity and the Triune God. Yet the two ideas are basically different from each other. The Triune God is a mystery. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not just three modalities, nor just three stages of the self same God. Jesus Christ is the incarnation of Logos, the second person in the Triune God, equal to God the Father in essence though begotten from him. Needless to list here the varieties of Christology that surfaced themselves till the Council of Chalcedon. It was thought that the creed approved in Nicene Council in 325 A.D. would settle once for all, all disputes regarding the essence of Jesus Christ. But that was not to be. Time and again Fathers raised subtle questions about both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. By the fifth century there emerged with the Church two different schools of thought relating to the being of Jesus Christ. The Alexandrian School with Bishop Cyril at its head contended that there was union of two natures—the nature of man, and the nature of God—in Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ was 'one incarnate nature of God the word'. Bishop Cyril stoutly opposed the view that the two natures—that of man and that of God remained without communion in Jesus Christ. As against

the Alexandrian school the Antiochene school maintained that the union of two natures in Christ was only prosopic, a hypostatic union of the two natures was impossible. As such even after the union of the two natures which was prosopic, Christ remained in two natures.

Matters came to a head when Nestorius the Patriarch of Constantinople challenged the Alexandrian position. According to Patriarch Nestorius Logos took only human flesh from Virgin Mary who was a human being and never a divinity. Mary was the mother of Jesus the man, and not the mother of Jesus the God. So in his view it was wrong to describe Virgin Mary as *Theotokos* or the Mother who gave birth to God. Bishop Cyril of Alexandria argued that even after Logos assumed flesh it retained its divine nature. As the two natures cannot be separated from each other Jesus who lay in the womb of Mary was God and man at the same time. Hence Mary was *Theotokos*. Pope Leo took the view that there was no union of the two natures in Jesus. But on this score the Pope did not deny the Virgin her status as the bearer of God. At last in 451 A.D. when the Council of Chalcedon was held it endorsed the Tome of Leo, and took the Antiochene school of 'Two natures' as the official doctrine of the Universal Church. At this those who upheld the Alexandrian School of thought seceded from the other churches and formed themselves into the Oriental Orthodox Church.

Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel is of the view that the christological differences between the Alexandrian School and Chalcedonian School rose more out of confusion of terminology than out of any fundamental difference in faith. At the same time he points out that there still remains a major difference in the approaches of Oriental Churches and of other Churches to God. In the Alexandrian approach God is accessible to man in spite of the fact that God is the uncreated essence and that man is a created form of existence. Athanasius emphasized the dictum

that God became man so that man could become God. In Christ a union between God and man became possible. The fathers of the western Church would agree that in Christ man would be redeemed and restored to his original image which is of God; but this redemption would not raise man to the level of God. The gap between the Creator and the created being would persist even after the entire creation had been redeemed. If so how can human nature ever enter into union with the divine nature. The article of faith that two natures remained separately in Jesus is the natural outcome of this basic understanding of the nature of God. What the west has not seen so far is that the Oriental Churches do not in any way obliterate the difference between the creator and his creation. Man can grow from glory to glory only in spirit and in Christ by the Grace of God. God out of His mercy sent His only begotten son to unite Himself with the world through His son, in spirit and enable it to be divinised, to become branches of the one which is the one Triune God. Dr. V.C. Samuel believes that it often happened in ancient days that what one school expressed in one terminology another school failed to understand fully. If the Chalcedonian side and the non Chalcedonian side "are willing to go beyond the terminologies, it will not be impossible for them to accept an agreed formula and on its basis to work for the restoration of their best unity".¹ Summarising the arguments adduced in "*The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*" Dr. Samuel writes :

The Chalcedonian side affirms, both in its Byzantine eastern and in its Thomistic Western traditions, that Jesus Christ is the saviour of the world, because he is God, the Son, who has united human nature to himself by becoming its person. God, the Son, one of the Holy Trinity, gave

1. Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel, *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*. p. 295.

himself as the activating agent of the human nature in Jesus Christ. Thus the reality that underlies all men and women who constitute the whole human race has been united to himself by God, the Son - an emphasis which is found in all the three traditions. This is incarnation, and the person of the saviour is the eternal person of God the Son. The Antiochene side does not go all the way with this emphasis. It maintains that God the Son, one of the Holy Trinity, raised the human nature through one member of the race to a union with himself, though without undergoing a descent on his part and thus he is the saviour of the world. The non-Chalcedonian position affirms that God the Son one of the blessed Trinity, united manhood to himself. In the union the manhood is not impersonal though not a person parallel to the person of God, the Son. He is a compound person God, the person intergrating in himself the personal reality of the manhood. Jesus Christ is therefore God the Son in his incarnate state, and as such the saviour of the world. Each of these positions is bound to raise questions and none of them can be considered thoroughly without flaw from a strictly intellectual, perspective. This itself is an indication that the issue needs re-appraisal''², Herein Dr. Samuel finds the hope for a reunification of the Oriental Orthodox Churches with at least the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Christology as a subject of study has astonishingly developed in the present century. Yet the fundamental questions remain, and on the basis of the differences in approaches divisions persist in the Christian world. True, every Christian has his allegiance to one denomination or other, he is by birth a Roman Catholic, an Orthodox or a Protestant. And they shall all unite in Christ. Dr. Samuel's vision is ecumenical. His latest work *Truth Triumphs* is a laudable attempt to set the Church to which he belongs in the correct historical perspective. In it he gives an estimate of the personality of Mar Dionysius VI

2. Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel, *op. cit*, pp. 301-302.

the architect of the modern Indian Orthodox Church. In his own Church he finds his own true identity. This is true of everyone; but remaining firmly rooted in one's own cultural and religious milieu one shall strive for communion with one's sister Churches. Dr. Samuel entertains no prejudice against any of the other Christian denominations. He would urge the leaders of every group to broaden its vision and deepen its understanding and to come together to participate in our Lord's Banquet. Dr. Samuel's Christian faith envelops the salvation of the entire universe. However for that matter he would not advocate an easy religious syncretism. Christ is the Lord of the Universe and He alone can bring about the redemption and glorification of creation in its entirety.

Christ is God and man, united in one nature. The universe is yearning for such a union, a union of earth and heaven of matter and spirit, of mind and soul. The universe in Christ is in the throes of the birth of the symphony of the human and the divine; the symphony of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. And then he too stands along with his brethren in Christ commemorating the sacrifice made by the son of man on mount calvary for the divinization of the universe, singing the hymn of the universe. In Christ the alienation between the creator and the created has been overcome once for all. And yet humanity has not yet come to a full realization of this truth; As a Malpan (teacher) it is his solemn duty to awaken his fellow beings into this heaven of freedom.

Selfhood of the Indian Christians

A.M. Mundadan, CMI

The different Christian communities of India have attained an awareness that in independent India they are come of age. This awareness is growing and stimulates the search for a clear understanding of the respective identity and selfhood of these communities. Hence questions as the following are being asked: What were the factors which contributed to their selfhood in the past and how far do these factors stand with respect to their emerging selfhood today? How is this selfhood to be understood in relation to the various developments that are taking place in the country, and in the wider world at present? How is the selfhood to be understood in the growing ecumenical context in the growing encounter with the cultures, religions and ideologies of the world?

In this search for the meaning of selfhood, in this effort at self-understanding the different Christian communities of India, whether of ancient or recent origin, have been, each in its own way, in the process of developing an identity and selfhood. But the process is an ongoing one and has attained new dimensions in independent India. One major pre-occupation today of Indian Christian - Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox - is how to convert the Church in India into a real Indian Church of the Indian people, sensitive to the country's cultural and spiritual past and the needs of the emerging modern secular India. This quest for an Indian Church incorporates into itself the ethos of both the

earlier and more recent attempts to build up a Christian identity and selfhood.

Various Christian Communities in India

Looking back to the history of Christianity in India certain happenings are particularly important in getting at a clear meaning of the selfhood of the Indian Christians, in grasping the specific factors that constituted to their selfhood in the past. The ancient community of the St. Thomas Christians that was one and undivided, for various reasons split into seven or more groups in the course of history, when it was one, it has its characteristics of selfhood which got blurred during the confrontation with the Christians from the West and each of the groups that emerged started acquiring other characteristics through contact with the Churches of both West and East. These groups were in the process of establishing their specific identities and selfhood with past as well as newly acquired characteristics as distinctive marks.

Those Christians who continued in communion with Rome since mid-17th century struggled for more than two hundred years to get their selfhood established and recognized, preserving some of their Indian and Oriental (East-Syrian) characteristics and assuming new ones which resulted from their Western connection and acquiring a new name, 'Syro-Malabar Church'. The Malankara Christians who broke off communion with Rome in the middle of the 17th century found their new selfhood preserving some of the Indian characteristics and progressively substituting East-Syrian characteristics with West-Syrian ones. One group among them which became an independent Church by 1889, and assumed the name Mar Thoma Church developed their selfhood acquiring new traits from their contacts with the Anglican Church. Another group which established communion with Rome by 1930 has a selfhood, which is more or less identical with that of the 'Malankara'

Christians, but at the same time receiving influences from Western Catholicism. The Church of the East, which came into separate existence by the close of the 19th century discovered its selfhood by a complete adoption of the 'Nestorian' (East-Syrian) tradition.

The Latin Rite Christianity which had its debut in India in the 16th century and registered a rapid growth since then developed a selfhood in close association with the Latin West. Early attempts to give it an indigenous shift did not succeed considerably. A serious effort has been underway for some time now to bring about a genuine integration with Indian culture and society. Tribal Christians retained their indigenous character from the beginning.

Protestant Christianity which started establishing itself in India towards the close of the 17th century, like Latin Catholicism, grew in close association with Western Colonialism. Hence its selfhood developed along Western lines. However translation of the Bible into vernaculars and the success the Protestants had with intellectuals from the 19th century onwards, helped Protestantism to assume, at least partly, an Indian Character quite early not only among the tribals but also among other sections.

After having delineated the selfhood in general of the different Indian Christian communities, the major groups of the St. Thomas Christians may be given further elaboration.

Selfhood of the Indian Christians before the 16th Century

One important aspect of the selfhood of the St. Thomas Christians has been and continues to be their consciousness of apostolic origin - a consciousness which is fully reflected in

their age-old tradition that they received the Christian faith from the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle in India. It is significant that though the community is often, referred to as 'Syrian Christians', their more ancient and well established designation is St. Thomas Christians. 'Syrian' is the name the community assumed because of the relations it established with the East-Syrian Church of Persia in the 4th century or later and with the West-Syrian Church of Antioch after the middle of the 17th century. However, many consider the designation 'Syrian' as derogative of selfhood of the Indian Church of St. Thomas and would prefer to drop it.

The relation the Indian Christians of St. Thomas established with the Syrian Churches has affected, many feel, the original selfhood of the Indian Church. Had the Church, which took its origin from the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle continued to flourish without any overbearing influence from outside, it would have developed a selfhood of its own with a theology, a worship form, Church laws, institutions and structures appropriate to the Indian cultural and religious context. But unfortunately, as tradition shows, not long after the Indian Church had started striking roots in this land, she found herself gripped by a grave crisis which appears to have threatened even its survival. The crisis was tided over by the timely arrival of a few East-Syrian (Persian) Christians with Thomas of Cana as the leader. Tradition points to this event as the beginning of the long-standing relation of the Indian Church with the East-Syrian Church.¹

This East-Syrian connection came as a blessing in the beginning. But when we look back to the later developments

1. It is significant that the West-Syrian connection of the St. Thomas Christians was ushered in the wake of the crisis that developed in the middle of the 17th century. About this we will see more later.

this very relation appears to have adversely affected the spontaneous growth of the original community into a genuine Indian Church. It led to tighter grips, in course of time, of the East-Syrian Church over the Indian Christians. Not only did it become almost a dogma that only the Persian bishops should govern the Indian Church, but the Indian Christians were forced to borrow Persian theology, worship forms, laws, customs and practices. It meant that the Indian Christians had to lead a life not in one world but in two worlds at the same time; the geographical, political and socio-cultural environment of India and the ecclesiastical world of East-Syrian Church. This was a somewhat artificial and unnatural kind of life. The core elements of Christian life remained foreign, adopted only peripherally, that too in a country which possessed a rich culture, a rich philosophy and a deep religious spirit comparable to or even surpassing the Greek culture, philosophy and religious thought. What perhaps could one have legitimately expected from the encounter of these two Churches was a synthesis helping the Indian Church to grow organically in its own environment with autonomy and freedom. This does not seem to have happened. It is this fact which leads many to decry the result as most unsatisfactory.

In spite of these handicaps to their development into a fully Indian Christian Church, the St. Thomas Christians continued to enjoy a measure of autonomy both civil under the local rulers and ecclesiastical under the East-Syrian bishops. The titles of the Indian metropolitan, such as 'the Gate of All India', 'Head of India' are indicative of the quasi-autonomy of the Church. So too the titles and powers of the 'Archdeacon of all India'. Since the metropolitan was foreigner and quite a stranger to the local affairs, it was the archdeacon, the national leader of the community (the *jathikku Karthavian*) who was practically in charge of Government of the community both in its civil and ecclesiastical aspects. The Archdeacon discharged his duties

with the help of a characteristically indigenous institution, the *yogam* or the assembly of priests and lay people both at the local level and at the level of the whole community.

Thus at the arrival of the Portuguese in India towards the close of the 16th century the Christians of St. Thomas were leading a life full of reminiscences of their past, and enjoying a privileged position in society and an amount of social and ecclesiastical autonomy. Deeply rooted in the memories of St. Thomas, and in the ties with the East-Syrian Church, and fully integrated into the socio-cultural milieu of Kerala, the St. Thomas Christians had developed an identity of their own. With the coming of the Portuguese they were prepared for and initiated into a life in three worlds. The third world was that of the Latin or Western Christendom. This new world would in course of time exert so deep an influence on them (whether they wanted it or not), that it would become hard to shed its traces. But the particular vision of life of the Indian Christians and their mode of life were bound to conflict with the particular Christian vision and way of life of the Portuguese. The struggle began very early in the 16th century and gathered strength towards the end of it. The crisis of the mid-17th century, and all the troubles of the 18th and 19th centuries are expressions of this conflict. The 'Coonen Cross Oath' marked the final outbreak of the storm that had been gathering on the horizon for over a century. It was a revolt against the imposition of Latin rule over the community; it was painful outward manifestation of the deep trauma the community had been experiencing at the distortion of their identity and loss of autonomy. The trauma was felt even more keenly when the community became fully conscious of the sad fact that their Church was no longer one. The revolt of 1653 split the community vertically into two groups, one in communion with Rome and the other establishing a new allegiance, namely, the West-Syrian Church of Antioch.

St. Thomas Christians Who Continued in Roman Communion since Mid-17th Century

St Thomas Christians who continued in communion with Rome retained many of its East-Syrian traits. They could no more think of a selfhood without this double relation, i.e., to the Church of Rome and to the East-Syrian Church from which it was arbitrarily severed by the synod of Diamper at the close of the 16th century. However some of the developments since mid-17th century show that they were not quite unprepared for an 'autonomy' directly under Rome without any juridical relation with Mesopotamia: the regime of Chandy Parampil (17c.), the first and second Angamali conventions (18c.), the feelings of the community when Cariattil was made archbishop, their bitter disappointment at this untimely death, their efforts to get Paremmakkal made archbishop—all these are strong indications that they would have been more happy if someone from among themselves was chosen as their head. In the fourth quarter of the 19th century, after the unsuccessful intervention of Rokkos and Mellus and after Rome had taken a firm stand against Chaldean intervention in the affairs, Indian the Christians made a clear demand for separate, indigenous and ritual prelates.

The separation of the St. Thomas Christians from the jurisdiction of Verapoly in 1887 and the establishment of two separate vicariates for them was the first gesture of Rome in the recognition of their new autonomy. This was followed in 1896 by another important action: reorganization of the two vicariates into three and the appointment of three St. Thomas Christian prelates as heads of these vicariates. The constitution of the 'Syro-Malabar' hierarchy in 1923 was almost the final act. This event can be seen either as an action of Rome *conferring* autonomy to this Church or as an action re-recognizing the autonomous status the Indian Church of St. Thomas had been enjoying for centuries from its early beginnings.

Whatever be the case, two problems remained still unsolved and continue to vex the Church. One is the problem of identity and the other that of full autonomy of an Oriental Church. The first concerns itself with these questions: how far should the Indian Christians of St. Thomas should shed or retain some of the characteristics it acquired through their contact with the Western Latin Christianity? In order to maintain the Oriental identity how far they should restore the East-Syrian characteristics which had been abandoned or diluted during the period of their contact with the Western Christianity (since the 16th century)? How far their Church is really Indian? What effort is called for in order it can become fully an Indian Church of the Indian people? On these questions there are different views in the Church and these views have given rise to a tension. The ultimate question is whether this tension is a healthy sign of a movement towards a favourable solution of the problem of identity or not.

With regard to the problem of the autonomy of an Oriental Church, there is almost complete agreement that what has been achieved is incomplete and inadequate. The recognition by all concerned of this Church as an all-India Church with patriarchal quasi-patriarchal status alone can solve this problem of autonomy. Some steps have recently been taken by Rome along these lines which need to be followed up by further and more radical steps.

St. Thomas Christians who Established Relations with the West-Syrian Church since Mid-17th Century

It was to tide over the crisis which followed the 'Coonen Cross Oath' that one group of St. Thomas Christians started contacts with the West-Syrian Church of Antioch, which was not in communion with Rome. This group since then was designated by different names: *Puthenkuttukar* (the 'New Party'), 'Jacobites', 'Malankara Syrians', 'Syrian Orthodox',

etc. Fr. V.C. Samuel is of the view that 'Jacobite' was a name given to the West-Syrians of Antioch by their opponents and has been ridiculed by Gregory Bar Hebreus, the reputed West-Syrian scholar of the 13th century. Fr. Samuel thinks that 'Indian Orthodox' (neither 'Orthodox Syrian' or 'Syrian Orthodox') is a more apt appellation.

When Mar Thomas I assumed the role of the head of the Malankara Church after the 'Coonen Cross Oath', and when Mar Gregorios arrived in Kerala and brought Thomas and his community of Indian Christians into communion with the patriarch of Antioch, it was the beginning of a radical change in identity, a change from the Chaldean/East Syrian into an Antiochene/West-Syrian identity. Mar Gregorios was confronted with a twofold task. On the one hand he was convinced that he had to wipe out the ecclesial vision and practices that had grown up in the community while under the influence of Western Catholicism. On the other hand he also felt the need to replace the East-Syrian traditions with those of the West-Syrian Church.

The adoption of the Antiochene customs and practices helped the community to retain its Oriental features in this historical evolution, an evolution quite distinct from that of the Catholic St. Thomas Christian community under the Latin jurisdiction. While the latter developed a partially (perhaps even of a peripheral nature at least from the liturgical point of view) latinized identity, the former developed a more radically Antiochianized identity. But this did not come about all on a sudden; it took a sufficiently long period to substitute the East-Syrian Rite with the Antiochene or West-Syrian.

The full transition to pure Antiochene liturgy was made only during the interregnum (1846-48) of the Antiochene bishop, Cyril Joachim. The discipline of the Malankara Church was declared formally and *de jure* Antiochene when it adopted the

Nomo-Canon of Bar Hebreus in the Mulanthuruthy synod of 1876. These attempts at stabilization of the Antiochene Rite were mainly the result of the opposition to Anglican missionaries and the 'reform' party of Abraham Malpan and Mar Athanasius who strongly and consistently discouraged Antiochene influence. However, the Church government continued to be regulated, for the most part, by the traditions and customs drawn from sources also other than Antiochene.

As Fr. V.C. Samuel says, the relation with the West-Syrian Church till the second half of the 19th century was not one which recognized a legal supremacy of the Antiochene Patriarch over the Indian Christians. It was the crisis that developed in the middle of the 19th century and the split of the Church into three separate groups which helped to consolidate the Patriarch's claim of supremacy. Those who opted for reform (Mar Thomites) were finally de-recognized by the Patriarch and he established his supremacy over the other group. But this state of affairs did not last for more than 22 years. On the question of patriarchal authority, the Church split again (1912): while one group (the 'Bishop's Party') questioned his authority, the other (the 'Patriarch's Party') recognized it. The former got their metropolitan established as 'Catholicos'. The claim of the Patriarch and its recognition by the other group (the 'Patriarch's Party') cannot be legitimized in the light of Eastern Church polity. Whatever be the historical circumstances in which the Indian Catholicate was established, there is no reason to argue that the title 'Catholicos' indicates subjection to a Patriarch. To call it 'Catholicate of the East' is quite improper. The Catholicate is the symbol of the national autonomy of the Indian Christians, and should be called 'Catholicate of India'.

The Church should make use of this autonomy conscientiously to establish its own traditions in theology, ecclesiastical practice, especially in liturgy. The Catholicate must show the courage to bring about the necessary reform

in those customs and prayers which had developed before the 14th century and against the background of the culture and thought pattern of those times and those countries.

So far the Indian Church had been living in traditions which grew up either in Persia, or in Europe or in Antioch. The need of the time is to liberate the Indian Church from foreign bonds and go all out to develop an Indian character and identity. That will enable all the Christian Churches in India to collaborate among themselves more closely, thus paving the way for a unity in diversity. It is primarily the duty of the St. Thomas Christians to give a dynamic leadership in this effort, by recovering their own original Indian identity and selfhood that were lost or compromised for centuries. That would enable them to proclaim St. Thomas as the Apostle not only of theirs but of the whole of India.

References: 1) V. C. Samuel, *Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo?* ('Is This an Indian Church', Malayalam), Thiruvalla : Christian Literature Society, 1975.

2) A.M. Mundadan, CMI., *Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, Bangalore : Dharmaram Publications, 1984.

Indigenization of the Church in India : Some Reflections

M. Jacob Kurian

Foreword

In 1975, Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel published a book in Malayalam with a provoking title, *Is this an Indian Church?*. This Book continues to raise vital issues in the self-understanding and witness of the Church in India (of course, with special reference to the Indian Orthodox Church). In the introduction of the book, the author says (in 1975) that the contents were the ideas that he had been nourishing in his mind for more than thirty years. Not only in his writings but also in every touch of his great personality, one cannot but be impressed and inspired by the prophetic and sincere cravings of an Indian Christian mind for actualising the 'identity of a Christian Community in India' that is adequately 'Indian' and meaningfully 'Christ-centred'

Introduction

'The Indian Christian' identity proves itself in responding meaningfully to the Indian situation. Such a Christ-centred response to the Indian situation with continuing links with the universal Christian tradition, is what is meant by 'indigenization' of Christianity in India. Hence, 'indigenization' is not 'Hinduization'. (By the way, even the so called 'Hinduism' is not sufficiently indigenized sine it has also failed to respond meaningfully to the Indian situation). But what is the Indian situation?

Indian Situation

It is impossible or rather very difficult to define 'Indian Situation'. We can at the most point out what it cannot be confined to (according to the *apophatic* or *neti neti* categories!). How many cultures of non-Aryan, Aryan and Aryan-non-Aryan mixture, it comprises! How many religions! How many philosophies! How many languages! How many spiritual traditions! How many realities of life! The Indian situation cannot be limited to any one of these although it comprises and transcends all these.

However, it is possible to identify two main dimensions of the Indian situation viz. *India's ancient heritage* and *the contemporary realities of Indian Life*.

(a) India's Ancient Heritage

In the ancient heritage of India one could identify certain general aspects:

- i. The generally accepted pattern of a religious life that is set up in the family background with its spiritual goal on the individual perfection.
- ii. Although the goal of religious life was the individual perfection, all its disciplines were integrally related to the family and social responsibilities.
- iii. Art, literature, sciences, philosophy etc., were the outer manifestations of the religious quest.
- iv. Religious observances including the scriptural recitation were expected to evince a sort of experience and solace by themselves.
- v. Simple life-style based on the principle of common-satisfaction.

- vi. Tolerance, hospitality and the reverence to an accepted social order were part of the common life-style.

(b) Contemporary Realities of Indian Life.

The contemporary realities of India also project certain common aspects :

- i. A secular culture that seeks to establish itself by isolating from the religious life.
- ii. A socio-economic structure that reflects lack of planning or superficial planning.
- iii. A national-life being increasingly threatened by the narrow considerations of religion, caste, tribe, state, language etc.
- iv. Unbridled and corrupt influence of the Western culture.
- v. An administrative structure acclimatized to corruption and injustice.
- vi. An emerging value-system based on money and sensuality in place of an old value system based on 'quality' and 'discipline'.
- vii. Decaying witness of official religion due to the unholy alliance with the exploiting socio-political and economic structures.

Although it is possible to enlist many other aspects in both the dimensions, our main concern here is to identify the two dimensions and to underline the fact that a meaningful Christian response to both the dimensions is the key to indigenization. Obviously, there would be the challenge of unity in multiplicity in the way of such a response. As Christians in India, where do we stand in this response?

Indian Christianity

It is almost established that the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala were very much indigenized till the 16th cent. They were integrated to the culture, religious-life, social, political and economic realities around them. The available evidences say that the non-Christian communities had never thought that the Christians were a 'foreign' community. Their social and religious observances had provided ample opportunities for healthy inter-action. Christians' contribution in the fields of agriculture, commerce and defence was highly appreciated. They had identified with the life of the state to such an extent that it was virtually impossible for others to run the show without them. But it does not mean that the St. Thomas Christians, witness was exemplary. They were rather very slow to fight the prevailing social evils. Although the St. Thomas Christians seem to have soft-pedalled the issue of casteism, the low caste people always liked the protection under the St. Thomas Christians since they enjoyed a certain relief and sympathetic treatment under the *Nazaranis**

The interference of the Portuguese in the secular and the religious life of the St. Thomas Christians marked the beginning of an unfortunate era in the history of indigenization in India. Portuguese took control over the commercial and military situation in Kerala which meant in other words an uprooting of the St. Thomas Christians in their secular status. Having lost their secular status, the Christians in Kerala were literally paralysed in their potentials for response. Situation was worsened by the council of Diamper (1599) which branded the indigenized character of the Indian Church as 'pagan' and substituted it with the 'paganism' (in the eyes of the St. Thomas Christians) of the Latin Christian tradition.

The rest of the history of Christianity in India is the continuation of the history of foreign domination and the further disintegration of the indigenized Church. Interference of Syrian

* An appellation used for St. Thomas Christians in India which means 'follower of Jesus the Nazarene'.

bishops and British missionaries in the Church-life of the St. Thomas Christians eventually led to the 'Syrianization' of the majority and 'Anglicanization' of a faction respectively.

In all other parts of India wherever the missionaries worked, the converted 'Christians' were to follow the life-style, theology and spiritual tradition of the mother-Church in the West. Despite the 'indigenized missionary methods' as that of Robert de Nobili, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and the Serampore missionaries, the missionaries in general failed to emphasize the 'indigenized character' of the emerging Church.

The importance of the indigenized character of the Indian Church was almost uniformly felt in the 20th century, among many Christians, both of the earlier St. Thomas and the later missionary traditions. As far as the later tradition is concerned, the Tambaram Missionary Conference, 1938, was a turning-point.

Main Approaches in the Contemporary Attempts for Indigenization

There are mainly five approaches in the contemporary attempts :

a) Philosophical and Mystical Approach

Being inspired either by the *Vedantic* realisation-philosophy or by the Indian *bhakti*-tradition, there are innumerable attempts at evolving a corresponding Indian Christian religio-philosophical tradition. The attempts, of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya in line with the '*Sacchitananda*-ideal', of Bishop Appasamy in line with the '*bhakti-marga*' in Vaisnavism, of Bede Griffiths in line with the idea of 'return to the centre', of Swami Abhishiktananda in line with the idea of the 'Cave of the Heart' and Raymond Panikkar in line with the 'Vedic Experience', are to some extent examples here.

(b) Liberation - Approach

This approach emphasizes the need of Christian response to the contemporary realities of life in India. Those who are involved in these attempts see Jesus Christ as the liberator of the Creation from its bondages and commit themselves in the struggles of liberation. According to them, real indigenization is in participating in the liberation-struggles.

(c) 'Humanisation' - Approach

There are many others who start from the reality of 'man' and see the goal and the example in the only perfect man Jesus Christ. 'Humanisation', 'the quality of life' etc., are the key words in this approach. The characteristic feature of this approach seems to be a certain 'detachment' from the traditional theologies and the established structures by claiming an integration of the ancient heritage and the modern realities of life.

(d) Eastern Christian Approach

Here is the basic assumption that the Eastern Christian thinking and spirituality are similar, to a large extent, to the ancient Indian heritage. Hence, the revival of the Eastern Christian heritage in lively encounter with the contemporary realities is the main emphasis in this approach.

(e) The 'Technical' Approach

This approach concentrates on the 'technical' aspect of indigenization. Translation of many of the Christian terms, concepts and categories into Indian religio-philosophical terms, concepts and categories; the experiments to evolve a Christ-centred Yoga-meditation; giving an Indian

colouring to the tunes, tones, rhythms of music and chanting; introducing Indian symbols, dress, art and ritual forms etc., in worship are just examples for this approach.

Limitations and Dangers in some of these Approaches

- i. Often, indigenization is confined to the modes of vedantic-tradition, which is only a minority-position within Hinduism itself.
- ii. Many of the experiments turn out to be fashionable novelties of the Christian elite, alienated from the main stream of the life of the common-folk.
- iii. Many of the 'technically, adapted Indian Christian forms are confined to the externals. The newly introduced 'old' forms prove themselves equally 'foreign' and 'irrelevant' like the already imported Western Christian forms.
- v. Some of the indigenizing explorations bring out only a spiritual programme for the *individual*. A community-spirituality with its social witness seems to be ignored.
- v. Too much emphasis on the local situation ignores or disregards the necessary link with the universal Christian tradition.

Concluding Suggestions to Proceed Further

- (a) It is very essential to dispel the misunderstanding that indigenization is *Hinduization*. Such a misunderstanding leads to many pre-conceived attitudes that are real hurdles in the way of indigenization.
- (b) Many, especially among the official circles of the Churches, are accustomed to the imported church-life and spirituality. They also enjoy a certain satisfaction in it. They have a

genuine fear that the call for indigenization is a call for abandoning the inherited patterns of Church-life. Hence, it has to be reassured that 'the accustomed and satisfactory' experience need not suffer any loss in indigenization, rather they may seek to find only perfection due to the application of the principle of unity in multiplicity.

- (c) The principle of unity in multiplicity needs to get practical application in Church-structure, theology and spirituality. A spirituality centred on Christ can have many manifestations. To experience Jesus Christ and to interpret the divine manifestation through Him, there need not be only one way. Hence, theological and spiritual 'orthodoxy' needs to get broader meaning. And this should direct the ecumenical relation between Churches in India.
- (d) The terms, phrases and concepts applied in the searches for indigenization seem to pose theological vagueness. Hence many of such searches face an 'impasse' in due course. But a certain vagueness is inevitable in all initial levels of research. Therefore, independent searches should be encouraged in the field of evolving an Indian Christian theological vocabulary.
- (e) Certain forms of indigenizing attempts have already initiated a debate regarding the emphasis on 'history' and 'beyond-history'. An integration of both the emphases is the key to the ideal search for indigenization.
- (f) The key-criterion to all the forms of indigenisation should be the potentiality for the response to the contemporary realities of life. Hence an alertness towards what is happening around could be considered as the common-credible-mark of all indigenizing approaches.

Orthodox Churches and the World Council of Churches

J. Russell Chandran

I am very pleased indeed to have been asked to write a chapter in this book produced in honour of Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel, one of the distinguished theologians of the Indian Orthodox Church, whom I also hold in great respect because of my associations with him first as a student and later as one of my colleagues in theological education. The suggestion was that I should give an evaluation of the contribution of the Orthodox Churches to the World Council of Churches. But what I have done is only to give some of my personal observations on the participation of the Orthodox Churches in the World Council of Churches.

I had the privilege of participating in the meetings of the World Council of Churches from 1948 onwards and my knowledge of the contribution of the Orthodox Churches has been dependent mainly on what I had learnt from some of the eminent representatives of the different Orthodox Churches at the various meetings of the World Council of Churches.

Even before the formal constitution of the World Council of Churches in 1948 there was good Orthodox participation in the meetings of both the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements. Dr. Nicolas Zernov in his chapter on *The Eastern Churches and the Ecumenical Movement in 20th Century* has

given a brief survey of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement prior to 1948. He has pointed out that both at the Life and Work conference at Stockholm, 1925, and at the Faith and Order conference at Lausanne, 1927, Orthodox Churches were well represented. At Lausanne Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira spoke in moving words on the urgent need of Christian Unity¹. At the Life and Work conference at Oxford, 1937, and at the Faith and Order conference at Edinburgh, 1937, there were several eminent Orthodox participants including Archbishop Germanos, Prof. S. Bulgakov, Father Dr. Georges Florovsky and Prof. Alivisatos². Concluding the survey, Dr. Zernov has observed, "Orthodox cooperation with the ecumenical movement, in spite of its tentative character has left a distinctive mark on the constitution of the WCC and had also important repercussions within the communities of Eastern Churches"³.

At the beginning only a few of the Orthodox Churches took membership in the World Council. At the Amsterdam Assembly even though 89 seats had been assigned for Orthodox Churches only 13 were present. In the early stages the Orthodox participation was also marked by hesitancy and serious reservations. This was largely because of the traditional assumption that only the Orthodox Churches had held on to the true faith and that all other Churches were heterodox. It was quite common for the Orthodox Churches to refer to the other Churches in their statements and pronouncements as heterodox. At the Lausanne meeting in 1927, Metropolitan Germanos, even while making a plea about the urgent need for Christian Unity stressed that unity in faith constituted a primary condition for

1. Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill (Ed) - *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*. London, S.P.C.K. 1967. p. 654.

2. *Ibid* p. 655

3. *Ibid* p. 669

the reunion of Churches. A statement issued at the end of that meeting explaining why the Orthodox members abstained from voting said, "The mind of the Orthodox Church is that reunion can take place only on the basis of the common faith and confession of the ancient undivided Church of the seven ecumenical councils and of the first eight centuries. . . . Where the totality of the faith is absent there can be no *communio in sacris*"⁴ It became quite a common practice in the early years of the World Council of Churches for the Orthodox members to issue separate statements explaining their theological position. However, in spite of their hesitations and reservations there was no doubt about their commitment to the ecumenical movement based on their vision of unity. Orthodox participation in the World Council steadily increased. The Russian Orthodox Church which had earlier expressed difficulties in joining the World Council sent two observers to the Rhodes meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC and became a member of the World Council at the New Delhi meeting of the Assembly of the WCC in 1961. Along with the Russian Orthodox Church the Orthodox Churches of Romania, Bulgaria and Poland also became members of the WCC in 1961. By 1964 practically all the Churches of the Eastern Orthodox tradition were actively participating in the WCC⁵. At present all the major Orthodox Churches, both those called the Eastern Orthodox (Chalcedonian) and those called the Oriental Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) are members of the World Council of Churches. At the fourth Assembly of the WCC held at Uppsala out of 800 seats 160 were assigned to Orthodox Churches⁶.

Regarding the coming of the Orthodox Churches into the

4. *Ibid* p. 655

5. W.A. Visser't Hooft in Harold E. Fey (Ed.) , *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of the Ecumenical Movement Vol. II 1948-1968*, London, S.P.C.K. 1970, p. 15

6. Vasil T. Istavridis in Fey, *op. cit.* p. 306

World Council, Dr. W. A. Visser't Hooft, the founding General Secretary of the WCC wrote, "In this way a tremendous opportunity is offered to us, the opportunity to ensure that a real spiritual dialogue shall take place between the Eastern Churches and the Churches which have their origin in the West. If we accept this opportunity our ecumenical task will not become easier, but we shall surely be greatly enriched" ⁷.

Through my participation in the Central and Executive Committees of the WCC and the Faith and Order Commission I had the privilege of getting closely acquainted with a number of Orthodox theologians and Church leaders and I am greatly indebted to them for the enrichment I have received theologically and spiritually. To name just a few I would like to mention Fr. Georges Florovsky, Metropolitan Nikodim, Metropolitan Emilianos, Archbishop Iakovos, Proto-Presbyter Vittlay Borovoy, Dr. A. S. Buevsky, Dr. Nikos Nissiotis, Dr. Todor Sabev, Bishop K. Sarkisian, Bishop Samuel of the Coptic Church in Egypt, Dr. Alexander Schmemman Fr. John Meyendorff and Patriarch Chrysostomos of Constantinople. Through these and many others the Orthodox Churches have enriched the lives of many in the non-Orthodox Churches and also contributed much to deepen the ecumenical fellowship.

One of the ways by which the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Churches has demonstrated their commitment to the WCC and concern for fostering meaningful and effective mutual interaction between the Orthodox Churches and the WCC was to establish a Liaison Office in Geneva at the Head Quarters of the WCC. The first Director of this office was Bishop of Melita who later became Archbishop Iakovos of America. In 1959 Metropolitan Emilianos of Calabria succeeded as the

7. *Ecumenical Review* Vol. XIV. January, 1962. p. 222. quoted by H. Kruger in Fey, *op. cit.* pp. 41-42

Director of the Liaison Office and he continued for many years. Following the example of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church established a Liaison Office at the WCC Head Quarters in 1962 with Proto-Presbyter Vittaly Borovoy as the first Director.⁸

It was recognised quite early that for more effective contribution from the Orthodox Churches to the life of the World Council it was important that competent Orthodox members should be appointed on the staff of the WCC. But it took some time before suitable appointments could be made. Over the years quite a number of able persons from different Orthodox Churches have served on the staff of the WCC. I can mention only a few of them. Fr. Vittaly Borovoy served in the Department of Faith and Order. Others from the Eastern Orthodox Churches were Fr. Bria from Yugoslavia, Fr. George Tsetsis from Greece and Dr. Todor Sabev from Bulgaria. Dr. Sabev is one of the Dupty General Secretaries at present. From the Orthodox Church in india Mr. C. I. Itty served for many years, first in the Department of Laity and later as Director of the C.C.P.D. Rev. Dr. K. C. Joseph served as one of Secretaries in the Scholarships Department. Fr. Paul Varghese (who later became Metropolitan Paulose Mar Gregorios) was for some years one of the Deputy General Secretaries and Directors of the Division of Inter-Church Aid.

In the development of ecumenical relations between the Orthodox Churches and the other Churches one of the sources of irritation was the practice of proselytism by Roman Catholic and Protestant missions in the regions of the Orthodox Churches. Dr. N. Zernov refers to this in his chapter on The Eastern Churches and the Ecumenical Movement. He points out that both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches maintained proselytising missions in the East, at times supported by

8. Vasil T. Istavridis in Fey, *op. cit.* p. 307

political pressure and that this made the whole Christian West appear like a determined enemy⁹. He also refers to a letter addressed as early as January, 1920, to all Churches of Christ by the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne and eleven Metropolitans asking them to renounce proselytism. The main concern of this letter was, however, Christian unity and co-operation among Churches. The letter called for the formation of a league of Churches for mutual assistance, affirming that doctrinal differences ought not to stand in the way of joint action¹⁰.

Because of the misunderstandings arising out of the reactions to proselytism and also because of differences in the interpretation and practice of mission the Orthodox Churches were opposed to the integration of the International Missionary Council with the WCC. Dr. Norman Goodall in his book *Ecumenical Progress-A Decade of Change* has recorded that the very mention of "mission" raised the temperature of discussion with the Orthodox. He has also admitted that the grounds of misunderstanding and opposition arose out of the history of proselytism, a large number of converts in the Middle East having "belonged" to Orthodox Churches¹¹. The situation certainly demanded mutual understanding between the Orthodox and the other Churches. As pointed out by Dr. J.D. Zizioulas in an article in the *Ecumenical Review* the Orthodox were the first to insist on a study of the question of proselytism¹². Actually the Study Commission appointed by the WCC had a wider scope. It was on Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty. Dr. Goodall has reported that this study

9. Ruth Rouse and Neill *op. cit.* p. 647

10. *Ibid* p. 654

11. Norman Goodall : *Ecumenical Progress - A Decade of Change in the Ecumenical Movement* 1961-1971. London, O.U.P. 1972. pp. 23-24

12. *Ecumenical Review* Vol. XXIII No. 1, January, 1971 p. 30.

helped to ease the tension between the Orthodox and other Churches¹³. The improvement of mutual understanding and confidence between the Orthodox and Protestant Churches made the integration of the IMC and the WCC to take place at the New Delhi Assembly of the WCC, the Assembly at which a number of new important Orthodox Churches were admitted as members. This was possible because the same assembly received the report of the study commission which opposed proselytism. It is interesting that the action formally accepting the integration of the IMC with the WCC was taken by the Assembly session presided over by Archbishop Iakovos¹⁴.

The integration of the IMC and WCC did not mean that all the issues raised about proselytism and the meaning and practice of mission had been settled. On the contrary the ecumenical dialogue on the issues of mission and proselytism continued. There has been a process of mutual learning and enrichment in the way the Churches looked at the meaning of salvation and mission. On the whole the Orthodox Churches linked mission to the total witness of the Church. In an article in the *Ecumenical Review* in 1969 on *Salvation According to Orthodox Tradition* Prof. Savas Agourides wrote, "The ancient Fathers would reject any theory of salvation according to which the main purpose of Christ's mission among men was to reconcile humanity with God by reconciling God's love for men with God's justice hurt by man's disobedience. Such a theory has never been supported by Orthodox theologians"¹⁵. He affirmed that any legalistic approach to the subject of salvation is rejected by the Eastern Doctors. In conclusion he said that the whole life of Christ is the medium of our salvation, not just the Cross.

13. Norman Goodall *op. cit.* p. 65.

14. Vasil T. Istavridis in Fey *op. cit.* p. 306

15. *Ecumenical Review* Vol. XXI No. 3. July 1969 pp. 193-191

Incarnation, Life of Christ, Cross, Resurrection, Pentecost, these cannot be separated from each other¹⁶.

In 1971 one whole issue of *Ecumenical Review* was devoted to the subject of Proselytism, which was evidence for the continuing misunderstandings and concern among member Churches of the WCC resulting from proselytising effects of mission. One of the articles in this number is by Ivan Panchovski and Todor Sabev of the Orthodox Theological Academy of Sofia. They have said, "The greatest threat to common Christian witness is obviously proselytism in the pejorative sense. In an ecumenical era it ought not to be tolerated in any form, open or disguised, since instead of leading to urgently needed Christian co-operation and unity it will only harden and deepen separation, nature destructive mistrust and paralysing suspicion, destroy the basis of ecumenism and hamper or postpone the dialogue now being prepared and even in some places already begun between Christian Churches and confessions".¹⁷ Their plea is for "Common Christian witness in word and deed to the pre-eminent truth of the Gospel"¹⁸

The participation of the Orthodox Churches in the World Council has been marked by an insistence on unity of faith. Their perception that other Churches lacked unity of faith made them to regard the non-Orthodox Churches as heterodox and to make deliberate attempts to adopt a common line on dogmatic and ecclesiological matters. Only on social questions they were willing to accept differences of approach. By unity of faith the Orthodox Churches do not mean simply assent to a propositional formulation of doctrine, as is the case with Lutheran Churches. For the Orthodox the unity of faith is to be discerned in a holi-

16. *Ibid* p. 202

17. *Ecumenical Review* Vol. XXIII No. 1 January 1971 p 27.

18. *Ibid.* p. 28.

stic way which holds together different dimensions of the Orthodox tradition which include along with the doctrines of the Church their liturgical celebrations and the forms of spirituality. Vasil T. Istavridis in his chapter on *The Orthodox Churches In the Ecumenical Movement* has pointed out that the Orthodox Churches hold that their Church is the *Una Sancta* of the symbol of Faith and it is while holding on to such an ecclesiological conviction that they decided to participate in the World Council ¹⁹. Equally important is his observation that participation in the ecumenical movement has also presented challenges to the Orthodox Churches. He speaks of the process of give and take existing among the Churches participating in the ecumenical movement and admits that "The Orthodox are prepared to learn from others simplicity in personal life, schemes of piety and Christian life, methods of work, progress in the art of preaching and in the whole field of the expression of Christianity to the world.... The Orthodox know well to what extent others have helped them in the practical level through the many-sided assistance rendered by inter-Church aid, in which Christian love is so abundantly operating". His concluding words about the contribution of the Orthodox churches is also very true. "The presence of Orthodoxy in the ecumenical movement is a witness of Orthodox faith and worship made available for others. She presents to the western world the dimensions and experiences of a Christianity which goes back through an historic continuity and a living tradition to the beginnings of the faith." ²⁰

The concern of the Orthodox Churches for unity of faith has had several positive impacts on the World Council. One important consequence of their impact was the revision of the first article of the Basis of the Constitution of the WCC. There

19. Fey *op. cit.* pp. 302-303

20. Fey *op. cit* p. 309

was a great deal of dissatisfaction in many churches about the earlier wording which described the World Council as a "fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus as God and Saviour". The theological implications of such a formulation and its scriptural foundations had been seriously questioned by many. The theologians of the Orthodox Churches made a valuable contribution to the discussion and to the insistence on the necessity of reference to the Trinitarian faith and to scriptural authority. It was as a result of the consensus arrived at which was acceptable to the Orthodox theologians that at the New Delhi Assembly the first article of the Basis was changed to read: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit"²¹.

A second important contribution from the Orthodox Churches is the sphere of worship and spirituality. Coming from a Congregational background it was not easy for me to understand and appreciate the Orthodox worship tradition. Part of my ecumenical education was learning to appreciate the Orthodox liturgy and tradition of spirituality, being enriched by it and gaining through that experience a more profound vision of the meaning of Christian worship. Even though I had experiences of Orthodox worship earlier, my first meaningful confrontation with the Orthodox theology of worship happened at the Third World Conference of Faith and Order held at Lund in 1952, where I was one of Secretaries of the section on Ways of Worship. I was quite impressed with the interpretation given by some Orthodox theologians that one of the objectives of the liturgy is to enable the community of worshippers on earth to join with the heavenly hosts continually offering worship to God. Certainly I had reservations about accepting this interpretation fully for the interpretation of the origin and the structure of liturgies. But the concept of worshipping communities on earth

21. Fey *op. cit.* p. 306

participating in the worship of the whole of creation transcending time and space impressed me as very meaningful. Over the years I have had opportunities of being present at the liturgies of different Orthodox Churches, Russian, Greek, Bulgarian, Georgian, Coptic, Ethiopian and Syrian. Even though I could not receive communion for obvious reasons, I felt grateful for the richness of the spiritually elevating experience every time. The Orthodox liturgies are strongly Christological and Trinitarian in content and make it possible for the people to worship with an awareness of the rich heritage of the Fathers and the ecumenical councils.

In an article in the *Ecumenical Review* on the Orthodox Conception of Spirituality of the Church in relation to Daily Life, Konstantin Bonis has explained that the Spirituality of the Orthodox Churches is based on the Fathers, the Ecumenical councils and the Liturgy of the Church. He further affirms, "This Spirituality is not anthropologically nor indeed anthropocentrically or psychologically determined: it is ecclesiological and Christologically determined"²². The participation of the Orthodox laity in the liturgical life, their practice of fasting and prayer and the role of iconography in their devotional life are all evidences of their deep spirituality.

One important aspect of Orthodox devotional life and spirituality is their tradition of devotion to Virgin Mary. Mariology is a very controversial issue for the Protestant Churches. Whatever be the reservations Protestants may have about Mariology, we cannot ignore what the Orthodox Churches can contribute for a proper understanding of Mariology and the role of Mary in the history of our salvation. In preparing for the Faith and Order meeting of Edinburgh, 1937, Prof. Bulgakov had insisted on including Mariology as a doctrinal problem of vital

22. *Ecumenical Review* Vol. XV No. 3. April 1963 p. 310

importance for the ecumenical movement. He described Mary as the unspotted *Theotokos*. Dr. Zernov has noted that as a result of Prof. Bulgakov's insistence the volume on Ways of Worship produced in preparation for the Lund Conference of 1952 had a special section on Mariology.²³ The ecumenical interaction among the Churches has led several Protestant theologians to take Mariology seriously. John Macquarrie, for example, has a section on Blessed Virgin Mary in his book *Principles of Christian Theology*. He makes a strong plea for a theological understanding of the role of Mary in the Gospel story. He quotes from the book of Max Thurian, the Protestant theologian, *Mary, Mother of the Lord, Figure of the Church* in which he had written, "Instead of being a cause of division amongst us, Christian reflection on the role of Virgin Mary should be a cause of rejoicing and a source of prayer.... It is both theologically essential and spiritually profitable to consider the vocation of Mary with some freedom."²⁴ Dr. Macquarrie draws attention to the image of Mary as symbolising the Church, Mary appearing as the prototype of the life of the Church the blessedness of the Virgin adumbrating the blessedness of the Church.²⁵ The October, 1987, number of the *One World* has an article on *The Place of Mary in Ecumenical Discussion* by Marlin Yan Elderen, which is very helpful for understanding Mariology in the ecumenical perspective. An Orthodox theologian George Bebis is quoted as saying that the Orthodox attitude to Mary is always a part of Christology. "The *Theotokos* cannot exist and cannot be venerated out of context from the Doctrine of the incarnation". It is also pointed out clearly that the Orthodox do not accept the highly objectionable Roman Catholic dogmas of immaculate

23. In Ruth Rouse and Neill, *op. cit* pp.656-657

24. John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*. London, S.C.M. Press, 1977. p. 393

25. *Ibid* pp. 396-397

conception promulgated by Pope Pius IX in 1854 and the bodily assumption of Virgin Mary by Pope Pius XII, 1950.²⁶

Thirdly, Orthodox ecclesiology has made a valuable contribution to the ecumenical dialogue. According to Orthodox theology the Church began with the creation of the world. Therefore, at the Faith and Order meeting at Lausanne, 1927, Prof. Bulgakov strongly objected to the term "created" to be applied to the Church. One of the most meaningful concepts used by the Orthodox in expounding the doctrine of the Church is "Sobornost". It implies a corporate spiritual organism as symbolised by the body of Christ. The concept of Sobornost helps to grasp the distinctive emphasis in Orthodox ecclesiology. Bulgakov pointed out that the relation between the Bishop or the ministerial order and the laity cannot be expressed in juridical terms like representative or constitutional. On the contrary it is one of spiritual reciprocity, a union in love, oneness in thought and an organic rather than an organised principle.²⁷ The doctrine of Apostolic succession is also interpreted as the succession of the Sobornost, the unbroken unity and continuity of the totality of life in the believing community rather than the continuity of the hierarchical succession.²⁸ In an article on the Meaning of Catholicity, Fr. Vittaly Borovoy also brings out the significance of the concept of Sobornost. According to him the Church is called Soborny because she is not confined to any place, time or all nation, or all true believers in the world.²⁹ He further explains that Sobornost does not mean a Church governed by bishops or councils of bishops, but a unity which is above

26. *One World*, Geneva, WCC. October, 1987 pp. 12-16

27. Kuncheria Pathil, *Models in Ecumenical Dialogue*, Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, 1981, p. 208

28. *Ibid* p. 31

29. *Ecumenical Review* Vol. XVI No. 1, October 1963 p. 28

and independent of all fragmentation. He also cautions that this unity implied in Sobornost does not mean uniformity, but unity in multiplicity.³⁰

According to the concept of Sobornost the wholeness of the Church is present not only at the global and universal level but at all levels including the level of the local congregation. At one of the Faith and Order meetings Fr. Georges Florovsky brought this out beautifully saying that at every local congregation the universal Church is present in capsulised form. Interestingly enough this is one of the fundamental elements of Congregationalist ecclesiology.

Fourthly, even holding strong views on the Orthodox Churches being the *Una Sancta* holding the unity of faith and the Apostolic tradition, the Orthodox took their membership in the World Council seriously, and their record of participation in the World Council is one of genuine efforts to overcome the barriers keeping the Churches separate and divided. During the last three decades the Orthodox Churches have been engaged in bi-lateral theological dialogues with several Churches, namely, the Anglicans, the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans and the Reformed Churches. These conversations have been both at the global and regional levels. In India there have been dialogues between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Churches. They have recognised that the disunity between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Orthodox Churches going back to the 5th century also needs to be overcome. The fellowship of both groups of Churches within the World Council has inspired and encouraged them to come together for mutual understanding, critical exploration of the historical background of disunity and for seeking ways of restoring unity. Many Pan-Orthodox and inter-Orthodox conferences have been held during the last thirty years.

30. *Ibid* p. 31

It was with the encouragement and support of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC that the first few 'unofficial' conversations between the two groups of Orthodox Churches were held. The main theological issue for discussion at these meetings was obviously the Christology of the Chalcedonian formula. It should be mentioned here that Dr. V.C. Samuel has made a very valuable contribution towards better theological and historical understanding between the Churches. He was specially qualified for this because of the profound theological exploration he had made in connection with his doctoral programme at Yale Divinity School. The subject of his doctoral dissertation was : *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined—A Historical and Theological Survey*³¹. His sharing of the results of his study and research at the Conversations was an important contribution to the removal of prejudices and misunderstandings. A book reporting and reflecting on the first four unofficial conversations has been published under the title *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?* and this volume includes an essay by Dr. Samuel on One Incarnate Nature of God the Word.³² These unofficial conversations helped the participants to see that both the so-called Chalcedonian and the non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches had the same Christological faith. Not being in communion with each other is really not justified on any theological grounds. But the problem still remains as to how the communion relationship may be restored. A decision by an ecumenical council is necessary to bring about the unity. The Orthodox Churches are now in the process of seeking ways by which an ecumenical council may be convened.

31. Published by C.L.S. Madras 1977

32. Paulos Gregorios, William Lazareth and Nikos Nissiotis (Eds.), *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? – Towards convergence in Orthodox Christology*. Geneva, WCC 1981

After holding a number of Pan-Orthodox and inter-Orthodox conversations the Orthodox Churches have now launched a series of Pan-Orthodox Conferences which they call Pre-Council Pan-Orthodox Conference, obviously giving the impression that they are now definitely looking forward to the convening of an Ecumenical Council in which they can take the decisions which their present theological insights challenge them to take.

Some of the decisions of the Third Pre-Council Pan-Orthodox Conference indicate both the continuing reservations in the matter of Orthodox relations with other Churches and also willingness to Change. Let me just refer to a few of the decisions I have come across in some reports. One paragraph reads : "The document on the relation of the Orthodox Church to the rest of the Christian world, expressed her readiness to carry on a dialogue with adherents of other Christian confessions. The Orthodox Church being One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, is fully aware of her responsibility for the unity of the Christian world. She recognises the reality of all Christian Churches and confessions, but bases her relations with them on bringing out the community of the doctrine on the Church, in particular of the teaching on apostolic succession, the sacraments, priesthood and grace". The very next paragraph reads : "In theological dialogues with representatives of the Anglican, Old Catholic, Ancient Oriental (Non-Chalcedonian), Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Churches, Orthodox theologians are confronted with serious, primary ecclesiological, problems. Success in such dialogues is impeded by such phenomena as the union, proselytism, the ordination of women, etc. It has been decided to hold an Inter-Orthodox theological symposium to discuss the ordination of women in the light of Orthodox tradition".³³ The willingness to discuss the ordination of women is evidence of remarkable openness to

33. *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, Moscow. February 1987 p.49

what the ecumenical fellowship in the WCC requires. In another paragraph the document reaffirms the Orthodox Church's loyalty to her ecclesiology and states that while participating in the WCC it "absolutely rejects the idea of the equality of confessions and refuses to conceive of Church Unity as an inter-confessional re-adjustment". The document then goes on to reaffirm the ecclesiological premises of the 1950 Toronto Declaration on "The Church, the churches and the World Council of Churches"³⁴. Because of their ecclesiological commitment the Orthodox Churches have consistently resisted any move to consider the ecclesiological significance of either the World Council or other Councils of Churches. However, it is very encouraging that the Third Pre-Council Pan-Orthodox Conference also stated, "The Orthodox Church is conscious of the fact that the ecumenical movement is assuming new forms to meet the new conditions and face the new challenges of the modern world. As this path is pursued, it is indispensable that the Orthodox Church should make her creative contribution and bear witness on the basis of the Apostolic tradition and her faith. We pray for all the Christian Churches to work in common so as to bring nearer the day when the Lord will allow the aspiration of all Churches to come true: and there shall be one fold and shepherd"³⁵.

In conclusion I would like to say that in spite of all the claims made by the Orthodox Churches about their being the *Una Sancta* they have shown sufficient evidence of willingness to understand and interpret themselves as a Church in via needing the fellowship of other Churches. The ecumenical dialogue should continue with a view to bringing better understanding on issues which still keep the Orthodox Churches separate from the other Churches. We need to have dialogue

34. *Ibid* July, 1987 p. 53

35. *Ibid* p. 54

on the meaning of unity of faith. Is it possible to have unity of faith apart from ways of discerning the reality of the presence of Christ? The early Fathers were concerned with holding faith and works together. Theology and Ethics belong together for authentic response to the Gospel, for doing the truth. Closely related to this is the Orthodox tradition of calling the other Churches heterodox. The assumption underlying this cannot be accepted without critical exploration and common understanding.

The Indian Church and Autonomy

V.C. Samuel

Introduction

Tradition has it that Christianity reached India during the Apostolic times themselves. It is believed that St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of our Lord, brought the faith to India. A. Mingana, a recognized authority in the field, testifies that the Church of Persia constantly and consistently preserves the tradition connecting the founding of the Indian Church with Apostle Thomas¹. Other historians also have taken the line in favour of this view². The latest position on this question is stated by A.M. Mundadan. After examining the different views expressed on the subject, both positive and negative, he writes:

"... the central content stands out in clear relief, namely that St. Thomas the Apostle preached, died and was buried in South India".³

Though we do not have sufficient documents to construct

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1. A. Mingana, *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, in *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1926, pp. 15-16.
 2. Among the several such historians, A.E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas, an Enquiry*, deserves mention.
 3. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in Indian*, Vol. I, Church History Association of India, Bangalore, 1984, p. 64.

connected history of the Indian Church from its early beginnings to modern times, we have enough basis to maintain that it was there in South India almost all through the centuries. The Indian Church can thus legitimately claim to be as ancient as any historic Christian community in the world. Yet the Church in India has not yet come to the recognition which Churches founded much later have obtained. This anomalous state of the Indian Church should be got over primarily by a consistent effort of the Indian Church itself.

It may be admitted at the very outset that the above statement implies a generalization which is not applicable to all Church traditions in India in a uniform sense. There are, in fact, Christian traditions in India which have begun to move along an autonomous line of development, both administratively and ecclesiastically. In an essay like this it is not possible to attempt a broad discussion of all of them. Therefore, our concern here should be limited, limited to the Syrian Christianity, though it can be of value to other Church traditions as well in varying degrees of relevance. Even with reference to Syrian Christianity, we address ourselves primarily to that section of it which has resisted all efforts to convert it to Roman Catholic adherence from the 16th century and sought to keep to an exclusively Eastern identity. In other words, what we say here is directly applicable to the Church tradition which officially adopted the name "Jacobite-Orthodox" from the second half of the 19th century.

This body now exists in two camps, one keeping to the name "Jacobite" as indispensable and the other to the "Orthodox" in an exclusive way. Yet both hold to the same tradition in worship and Church life without any real difference. The only divergence between them has reference to how they respond to the jurisdictional claims of the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch over the Indian Church. Whereas the "Jacobite" section acknowledges the Patriarch as its supreme head, the Orthodox

community recognizes the Catholicos of Kottayam as its primate. Both are Indian Christian communities. It should therefore be one of their important concerns that each of them relates itself to other Church traditions in India. What is meant here is not that they should co-operate with other Churches by accepting membership in union organizations like the National Council of Churches of India (N.C.C.I.) or the Kerala Council of Churches (K.C.C.) and collaborate with the work of union institutions like the Senate of Serampore College. What is called for [primarily is the evolution of an autonomous status for the Church within the Indian context.

This paper, then, is written out of a concern that the Church in India should be really Indian. Without compromising the truth as conserved in the Gospel and without causing a break with the fundamentals of the Christian reality, the Church in India should allow itself to be guided by the Holy Spirit to find its place and role as part of the Indian scene in a healthy partnership with other Christian traditions in the country.

There is a question here as to whether or how this view can find support in the history of the Church. In facing the issue here we compare the way the Church evolved its life and character during the early centuries in the Roman Empire of ancient times, with the development of the Church within the Indian context. In the light of the findings thus obtained we shall draw our conclusions with reference to the autonomy which the Indian Church should seek to bring about in its life.

The Church in History

Christianity made rapid progress during the first four centuries of the Christian era in the Roman Empire, which then comprised almost the entire Mediterranean world. It advanced there so much that from 324 A.D. the Church could move

forward in the hope of gaining recognition in the Empire as its official religion, which in fact it was declared in 380 by an imperial edict. Since then it was possible for the Christian Church to look upon itself as the favoured community within the Roman imperial state. This situation continued for a few centuries thereafter, with the result that the Church of the Roman Empire functioned as though it were the exclusive manifestation of the "one Church" confessed in the Creed.

Broadly speaking, the Church of the Empire consisted of two forms, an Eastern. and a Western. Between them there was a fundamental difference. Whereas the latter could more or less be united, with Rome as its centre, the former allowed regional autonomy to a great measure. Yet all these various communities were recognized as belonging to the one official Church till about the middle of the 5th century. Then, as we have noted elsewhere⁴, there arose splits, following the two councils which met in 431 and 451 respectively. The Church traditions which accepted one or both of the councils saw in their opponents heresies. In fact, whether they were heretical or not, heresy had to be invented as justification for the standpoint adopted against each of them by the others. Thus there arose three traditions in the East with reference to the issue which the two councils sought to settle. Of these three, the one that officially endorsed both councils alone could enjoy state support all along⁵.

With very brief periods of indecision the Church of Constantinople in the East and uniformly all along the Church of

4. See the author's essay on *The Christological Controversy and the Division of the Church*, in this volume.

5. The opponents of the Council of Chalcedon had a measure of freedom in the Roman Empire from 475 and the favour of the state from 491 to 518 during the reign of Anastasius.

Rome in the West defended the 5th century councils. Whenever the two Churches adopted an agreed stand in this way, they were in communion with each other as two sections of the one official Church. The two communities were not on this account united in every detail of theological interpretation and Church life⁶. They had divergent traditions in liturgy and ecclesiastical discipline. Each of them did in fact develop itself within its own intellectual, social and cultural without reference to the other. The Church allowed that freedom to its constituencies.

Equally noteworthy was the state of Eastern Christianity in itself. The various Church traditions comprising it maintained differences among them. Though the West Syrian or the Antiochene Syrian Church and the Coptic Church of Egypt adopted a united stand in favour of the Council of Ephesus in 431 and against the Council of Chalcedon in 451, they were two Churches, administratively independent, each with its own liturgy as well as subtle nuances of theological exposition and other traditions. In Armenia and Ethiopia the Church was officially founded only in the 4th century. The Church of Armenia was in the beginning indebted to both the Antiochene Syrian Church and the Church of Constantinople. But gradually it weaned itself away from both and developed its own ecclesiastical identity. Following the council of Chalcedon, the Armenian Church renounced that council and put in its weight with the Syrian Church of Antioch. Yet in the 6th century it adopted the teaching of Julian of Halicarnassus⁷

6. In interpreting the doctrine of the Trinity and that of the Incarnation, the West and the East did not follow the same pattern of thinking.

7 For the person and teaching of Julian, see V.C. Samuel, *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*, C.L.S., Madras, 1977, pp. 126f., 209f. Julian taught that the body of Christ, being united with God, was from the beginning incorruptible. Severus refuted this teaching and insisted that it was corruptible till the resurrection

against Severus of Antioch⁸, whom the Antiochene Church followed unreservedly. This discrepancy in theological standpoint between the two Churches was formally settled only in the 8th century⁹.

The Church of Ethiopia had from its beginning a special connection with the Coptic Church of Egypt. In fact, till the third decade of the present century it received bishops from Egypt¹⁰ and with the Church of Egypt it endorsed the Council of Ephesus in 431 and renounced that of Chalcedon in 451. However, this African Church developed its own ecclesiastical selfhood in liturgical and other areas of life. Like the Church of Armenia, it had the Bible translated into its own language as well as a whole body of patristic literature. The Ethiopian Church is thus an autonomous Christian community, with its own character and individuality.

A similar growth took place in the Church of Persia. It also has the claim that Apostle Thomas was its founder. On his way to North India, it is made out that the Apostle halted in Edessa and Tigrith and started the work of evangelizing the areas. Then, after entrusting the responsibility to his disciples, he is said to have proceeded to India. The Church of Persia, like the Northern regions of Syria, had also Syriac as its ecclesiastical language. Whereas Syria followed the West Syriac of Edessa, Persia adopted the East Syriac. This linguistic affinity led Syrian Antioch in the 5th century to strive to bring the Church of Persia into conformity with itself. The

8. For Severus, see *Ibid.* A large part of the book deals with Severus and his teaching.

9. This incident is noted in *Ibid.*, p. 128

10. The Ethiopian Church was keen for its freedom, but the Coptic Church was all along unwilling to consecrate an Ethiopian national as a bishop.

latter spurned these efforts, and made it clear that it would not tolerate any interference into its life from outside. In this way the Church of Persia, like other historic Churches in the world, continued its independent ecclesiastical existence in history.

The foregoing brief survey will show that wherever Christianity spread in the world, it sought to acquire for itself a character within its cultural, social and intellectual setting. Nowhere did the Church seek to be a simple copy of the Church elsewhere.

The Indian Church

The Indian Church had a character different from that of any other Church. Christianity is believed to have been brought to India by St. Thomas the Apostle. Regarding his evangelistic work, there is a North Indian tradition based probably on the 2nd century apocryphal *Acta Thoma*, and a South Indian or Malabar tradition. Though there were historians who argued that the two traditions were not possible to be combined, J.N. Farquhar has shown the possibility that the Apostle preached in North India and subsequently proceeded to the South¹¹. We can agree with Mingana, however, that the Church thus founded may not have been a large community. "Thomas may have gone to India and made some converts there"¹², who would not have survived unless they were intergrated with a strong Christian centre.

This integration of the Indian Church, maintains Mingana took place with the Church of Persia from about the 3rd century

11. See *The Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library*, Vol. 10, No. 1, January 1926, "The Apostle Thomas in North India" and *Ibid* Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1927, "The Apostle Thomas in South India"

12. A Mingana, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

A.D. and it continued to the time when Western missionaries landed on the Indian soil. It was indeed a similar connection which the Church of Armenia had in the beginning with the Antiochene Church or the Church of Ethiopia with the Coptic Church. But unlike the other two Christian communities, the Indian Church continued under the direct control of the more advanced Christianity of Mesopotamia and Persia. In bringing out the difference between the Indian Church and the other Churches, which affect the autonomy of the former, the following observations may be made.

One : The Early Connections

The Church existed and functioned in South India. In the 16th century, when the Portuguese came to the Malabar coast, they found there a Church of Eastern Christians¹³ and sought to deal with them. Not only in the 16th century, but from the late 13th, Western travellers like Marco Polo and a number of European missionaries who passed through the country bear witness to the existence of a Christian community in this part of the world. In his *Christianity in Travancore*, G.T. Mackenzie refers to Le Quien as testifying to the fact that in 1129 the Nestorian Patriarch of the times sent to Malabar a bishop by name John¹⁴. Mingana mentions a lectionary prepared at Cranganore in 1301 during the time of Patriarch Mar Yabalaha V and Metropolitan Mar Jacob of the Indian Church who occupied the "See of St. Thomas the Apostle".¹⁵

The history of the Indian Church can be traced further back. During the time of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (780-823),

13. The reference here is to cardinal Eugene Tisserant's book, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Bombay, 1957.

14. G.T. Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1901, p. 7.

15. Mingana notes that the lectionary is preserved in the Vatican Library as Syriac codex xxii. See Mingana, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

there came to South India two Persian bishops Prodh and Sabhor or Sabrisho. They landed at Quilon and led the Church for a considerable period of time. As they were looked upon as saintly men by people in general, Churches were erected in their names and dedicated.¹⁶

One of the Patriarchs in the succession of Timothy I during the 9th century was Theodosius (852-858). A ruling which he adopted with reference to the Indian Church in particular deserves our attention. By that time the Persian Church had grown so much that steps had to be taken to keep its unity intact. Accordingly, it had been following the practice of requiring of every metropolitan who had charge of a province whether in Persia or abroad to contact the Patriarch at least once in a year. The Church had branches in India, China and Samarkand. Considering the long distance between any of them and Persia, Patriarch Theodosius enjoined that the metropolitans from these countries need report to the Patriarch only once in six years.¹⁷ The Indian Church had at that time a metropolitan assisted by several suffragan bishops.¹⁸

The expansion of the Church both in Persia and in India was the result of the labours of many earnest leaders. There were however occasions of conflict. One such instance is noted in the famous letter of Patriarch Ishoyab III (650-660), scolding metropolitan Simon of Riwardashir for neglecting

16. Churches in Kerala like Kayamkulam, Quilon and so on, that go by the name of "Saints" (*Kadisha*) had been dedicated originally to Prodh and Sabhor. But the Synod of Udayamperur of 1599 changed name to *Kadisha* on the ground that they were Nestorians.

17. Mingana, *op. cit.*, p. 34

18. *Ibid.*, p. 64

his episcopal obligations to the Indian Church.¹⁹

Going further back in time, there are incidents belonging to earlier centuries traceable even to the 2nd. But the geographical location of the name India as noted in them is not clear. Even as late as the 13th century most writers of the Western world including those of the Antiochene Syrian Church referred by India to the lands on either side of southern Red Sea with South Arabia, Somalia, Ethiopia and so on. Therefore, a mere occurrence of the word India in a document is no evidence that South India is meant. However, among the several instances recorded of those earlier periods at least two stand out as undoubtedly referring to South India. They are the testimony of Cosmas Indicopleustes and the immigration of Knai Thoma

Cosmas was a Greek speaking Nestorian Christian who travelled extensively in the countries beyond the Red Sea between 520 and 525. In his *Universal Christian Topography* composed around 535 he notes the existence of Christian communities which had links with the Church of Persia in Sri Lanka, Malabar, the island of Socotra and elsewhere.²⁰ He does not use the word India in these references, so that his description cannot be dismissed as being unclear as to geographical location. The migration of Persian Christians to the Malabar coast under the leadership of Knai Thoma is believed to have happened in c. 345 A.D. The persecution let loose against Christians by the Persian monarch Sapor II from 339 may have led these people to flee the country for safety. In adopting this step they may well have been attracted to Kerala by a knowledge of the existence of fellow Christians there.

The Indian Church did obviously form part of the Church of

19. *Ibid.* p. 32

20. *Ibid.* p. 29

Persia which delegated from time to time bishops to furnish for its episcopal ministrations. In keeping with this tradition, we have record that in 1490 a three-man delegation went from Kerala to the Patriarch of Babylon asking for bishops²¹. Thus when the Portuguese came to Malabar, the Indian Church was being looked after by bishops of the Church of Persia.

Two: The Life of the Church

Mingana is emphatic that Indian Christianity never had an independent existence of its own. What is meant here should be noted. From the point of view of Mingana the Church was so dependent on the Church of Persia that bishops from the latter alone had been offering it episcopal ministrations. Equally noteworthy is the fact that liturgy and all other aspects of ecclesiastical life had come from Persia.

There is no evidence that the Indian Church sought to have, or had, bishops from its own Indian membership. Even when this Christian community had a metropolitan with suffragans assisting him, it had no Indian bishop. The case of the three-man delegation approaching the Babylonian Patriarch for bishops in 1490 is relevant here. One of the men died on the way and the survivors reached the head of the Nestorian Church, who made them priests. As for bishops, he chose monks from his Persian monastery only to be elevated to the episcopal rank. In all probability the Indian Church had not yet thought of the possibility of Indians becoming bishops.

The first Indian bishop on record was Mar Thoma I, raised

21. *Ibid.* pp. 36ff.

to the dignity by twelve priests in 1653. Hypothetically speaking, had not the holocaust in connection with the Oath of the Coonen Cross erupted at about that time, the Indian Church would not have been led to adopt that step. Yet Mar Thoma I had a hard time to hold on to his position till the coming of Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem in 1665. The Roman Catholic side, following European missionaries, denounced him as a fake *metran* (bishop) and this criticism carried weight with most of the Church. Mar Alexander Parambil, Parambil Chandy kathanar, who supported Mar Thoma in the beginning but who later deserted him to join Roman Catholic adherence, was made a bishop in 1663 for the Syrian Catholics by the Italian bishop Sebastiani by himself in the face of a dire need. Bishop Alexander was, in fact, fighting a battle for Rome against the Indian Church. Yet since his death in 1687 the Church he led had to wait for over two hundred years to obtain a native bishop.

It is the party that favoured Mar Thoma that led the way towards the gaining of autonomy for the Church. But it had grave hurdles to cross. For one thing, it had no satisfactory concept of autonomy, except that the hereditary rights of the Archdeacon should be conserved. The Church had enjoyed them even before the coming of the Portuguese in the 16th century. The Archdeacon or the *Jathikukarthavian* was a leader of the community as a whole and his title had included of all India. Bishops came from Persia and performed only episcopal functions, leaving all administrative responsibilities to the Archdeacon. The fact that the Church of Persia provided for such an arrangement speaks well of it, through the incapability of seeing to the need of raising native bishops should also be noted as a defect in its system.

The real issue between the Portuguese Archbishops and the

Archdeacons during the first half of the 17th century was that the former were unwilling to allow the latter to exercise their prerogatives. In other words, the Portuguese were not prepared to acknowledge even the little administrative autonomy which the Indian Church had till then been enjoying. It was this conflict that led to the Oath of the Coonen Cross of 1653. In the division of the community that took place thereafter, the body which followed Mar Thoma I, saw in their metropolitan an ecclesiastical dignitary who combined in him the two ranks of the Archdeacon and the bishop. This combination continued in the non-Roman Catholic Syrian body all along and came to be culminated in the office of the Catholicos in association with the members of the episcopal synod.

This development was not, however, a straight one. After his elevation to the episcopal rank, Mar Thoma I sought assistance from the Antiochene Syrian Patriarch, not because he was keen to substitute Rome's jurisdictional claims over the Church by that of Syrian Antioch, but only to have his episcopal title regularized. The Antiochene connection however meant a break with that which prevailed till the 16th century, and the Church was in need of theological and ecclesiastical learning. In the face of the new situation the Church turned again to Antioch seeking help during the 18th century. When the Patriarch responded, he had his conditions, one of which was that the Indian Church should submit to his jurisdiction. This indeed was a position already established by Rome over a section of the Christian community in India.

The Patriarch's efforts in this direction were not as successful in the 18th century as he had hoped. Though he could create an atmosphere favourable to him in the Church through his representatives who had come in 1751, this

situation could not be followed up. In fact, the Patriarch's jurisdiction over the Church was formally established only in 1876. The 19th century was a period of internal struggle in the Church between the party that promoted the reform and the party that opposed it. The latter saw in the Patriarch a trustworthy ally and in its antagonism against the former, befriended him granting his claims. The court cases went against the reform party, which organized itself as the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, conserving the principle of autonomy in administration and an evangelically oriented interpretation of the Church's faith and life. The other body did not continue united for a long period of time. The division that took place in it led one section in it to establish the Catholicate, asserting the principle of autonomy in its administrative set up.

Autonomy in Church Life

The word 'autonomy' means more than freedom in internal administration. In order to see this truth we shall look once again into the evolution of Church life during the early centuries of Christian history. It was under autonomous conditions that the Church developed in the various regions where it spread. Though from the 4th century efforts were made in the Roman Empire to unify the communities, the Churches in different regions still continued to function as autonomous units. Thus within the Empire there were Christian communities which were practically independent in Egypt, Syria, the main land of Greece, Rome, West Africa and so on. The Church in each of them held councils to guide its life²². In addition a collection of rulings ascribed to the Apostles was also produced. These were aimed at fixing the tone of Church life. Yet these rulings

22. Such were the councils of Neo-Caesarea,, Gangara, Antioch, Ancyra, Laodicea, and so on, and "the Apostolic Canons".

were not implemented everywhere in the same manner²³. This fact shows that the principle of regional autonomy in terms of keeping to different liturgical traditions and life in general was followed in the Church. It is this development which the Indian Church never underwent either in olden times or in modern. It was, on the other hand, copying traditions evolved elsewhere in the face of problems and needs that were germane to the people and traditions there.

The state of our Indian Church can be high-lighted by comparing it with one incident in the history of the Persian Church. In the early part of the 5th century, before the two councils caused the division, the Church in the Syrian provinces of the Empire had emerged as a strong community. The Church of Persia, on the other hand, had just recouped from the travail of persecution let loose against it by Sapor II. A time of peace had dawned on the Church during the early decades

23. There is clear evidence that in the 4th century there was a consistent effort by the Church of the Roman Empire to elevate the celibate life over the married state and control the right of marriage particularly of the clergy to the minimum. Thus the East sought to restrict the marriage of clergymen before their ordination as deacons and forbid them from a second marriage altogether if they happened to be widowed. The monastic movement that gained ground, strengthened this trend in the East. It was in this milieu that episcopal celibacy began to attract the attention of Church people. Yet none of these rulings had become universally practised even at the end of the 7th century (See the Canons of the Trullan Council of 691). In the Antiochene Syrian Church, as Patriarch Michael the Syrian reports, there were cases of widower priests who had married and officiated in the normal way, with permission from one of the rival Patriarchs. The issue is, can priesthood and marriage go together? The answer of the East is, 'Yes', because it is while living with their wives that married clergymen serve in the Church's ministry. Therefore, any effort to restrict the time of the marriage of clergy except on consideration of expediency, or a blanket denial of the right of remarriage for widower priests who are forced by circumstances to enter into it, is a denial of the freedom guaranteed by the Gospel.

of the 5th century. It was then that Marutha of Miapherketh from Syria was sent to Persia on an imperial embassy by Constantinople and he succeeded in obtaining the sanction of the Persian monarch to acknowledge a working arrangement between the government and the Church. Following this incident, an attempt was made from the side of the Antiochene Syrian Church to make the Church of Persia conform to the ways of life prescribed in the "Apostolic Canons" and the disciplinary regulations enunciated by the 4th century provincial councils. The Persian Church did not comply, but zealously pursued its traditions in discipline, faith and liturgy²⁴.

It is these traditions of the Persian Church that the Indian Church had been following. The Portuguese denunciation of the former as heretical coupled with the upsetting movement of history during the 16th and 17th centuries led the Church to give up Persia in favour of Syrian Antioch from 1665. Whether or not the Indian Church had any autonomy in liturgical and other ecclesiastical traditions, it is a fact that from the time of the split in 1653 it had none but that it gradually absorbed the Antiochene Syrian ways.

The three factors that have a bearing on autonomy should be borne in mind here. One : *Administrative Freedom*. This the Indian Church strove hard to preserve against all Antiochene inroads till about the third quarter of the 19th century, but then had to yield on account of internal feuds. Two: *Liturgical Forms and other Issues connected with Worship*. This area is as delicate as the one that follows. Though Mar

24. We have evidence that Patriarch Timothy I (780-823) insisted on episcopal celibacy, but that it was not the universal practice of the Persian Church before his time. It was in 691 that the Trullan Council of Byzantine Orthodoxy enjoined on universal episcopal celibacy. Unlike this council's decree with reference to other clergy, the Persian Church continued its tradition without a change.

Gregorios of Jerusalem who came in 1665 did not by himself succeed in effecting a change here, Mar Ivanios who arrived with Mar Baselios Yaldo in 1685 and lived in India for nine years, and the prelates who came in 1751 one of whom continued his residence in India for about forty-three years could bring it about. Thus by the 19th century the Indian Church had taken over most of the liturgical forms current in the Antiochene Syrian Church. Though in Church practices, all Antiochene traditions could not be implemented, a prejudice in favour of them was produced in the Church.

As regards liturgy, neither of the two relevant questions attracted the attention of the Church then. In the first place, there was the issue concerning language. The language of the liturgical forms brought by the Syrian fathers was West Syriac. Though some of the clergy as also a few of the layfolk had a sort of working knowledge of the Syriac language, the people in general did not know it. Secondly, these forms had all been composed by Syrian monks during the middle ages. These authors had an awareness of the spiritual needs of people of their times in their social and cultural milieux. Obviously, what they produced needed adaptation for use in the Indian context. This was not done, neither then nor later. Thus the question of autonomy in liturgical tradition remained without any response. Some of the issues raised by young people in our times regarding worship can be tackled effectively only by facing the problem squarely. This means that autonomy in liturgy and Church life is one of the most indispensable needs of the Indian Church.

Three : *The Church and its Canon Law*. After the split following the Oath of the Coonen Cross, the community that accepted the leadership of the Mar Thomas had not formally accepted any written lawbook. But things changed in the second half of the 19th century. In the lawsuit between the party that favoured the reform and their opponents, the

court required of the parties to produce the lawbook in force in the Church. Both parties responded. The position of the reform party was weak, and the court ignored the book it produced. But the other party submitted its book of Canon laws, which was substantially a copy of a 13th century composition, with several additions and alterations made up in Kerala for legal requirements. This is the famous *Hudaya* of Gregory bar Ebraya of the Antiochene Syrian Church. The Syrian Church fathers who had come to Kerala during the 17th and 18th centuries had brought with them copies of the same, so that the book was available to Indian Church.

With legal provisions drawn on the "Apostolic Canons", the regulations of the 4th century provincial councils and several other sources upto the 13th century, this book is a sort of useful compendium reflecting the juridical positions on a number of important issues adopted by the Antiochene Syrian Church in former times. As we have noted above, a number of its contents like the "Apostolic Canons" and the rulings of the 4th century provincial councils had been rejected by the Persian Church in the 5th century, so that the *Hudaya* may not have come to the knowledge of the Indian Church before the 17th century. But the litigations of the 19th and 20th centuries led the Church to attach undue importance to it. The fact that should be stressed here is that an autonomous Indian Church cannot be unduly bound by the *Hudaya*; the Church should have its own law book with provisions that are relevant to life in the contemporary contexts.

If a Church is to be considered autonomous, it should have its administrative freedom, its own liturgical and canonical traditions. Looked at from this point of view, the Orthodox Church has come only to the threshold of autonomy. It should grow from its present dependent status to a position of being really Indian and independent.

Some Concluding Remarks

The claim of the Indian Church that it was originally founded by St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of our Lord, is not borne out by its dependent status in history. Mingana makes mention of four reasons for this state of the Church, more as a historian than as a theological expert. Adapting them, we shall make the following points in accounting for the Indian Church's anomalous situation.

1. In India the Church consisted from the beginning of small communities scattered in different kingdoms of the Malabar coast. There may have been small communities in other parts of India as well. They did not have the strength to evolve into an autonomous religious tradition. Mere survival as a body of Christians was its goal in religion.

2. Surrounded by non-Christian people, as it was, it sought to be integrated with the Church of Persia from very early in its history. The result was that the Indian Christians became more interested in a Syrian identity than in evolving for them a Christian identity within the Indian context. It is this trend, with its good and bad sides, that has prevailed among the Syrian or the St. Thomas Christians of all traditions down the countries, even to our own times.

3. The Indian Church had no ecclesiastical language of its own. It did not have the capacity to evolve one by itself. Till the Portuguese period, it had the East Syriac for ecclesiastical use. In the 16th century the Portuguese tried in the beginning to have it replaced by the Latin, with little success. In the end they compromised on this issue, so that the Synod of Udayamperur of 1599 allowed the Syriac to continue side by side with Latin. After the Oath of the Coonen Cross, the division of the community, the body that stood with the Mar Thomas was swayed gradually from its East Syrian adherence to that of the West Syrian. By the 19th century this change was complete. Now forgetting its own history, this body

sought to identify itself completely with the West Syrian traditions in liturgy, Church practices and even canonical regulations to a large extent.

4. The largeness of the Indian geographical scene made it impossible for the small Christian communities to effect any real union among them and bring into being an autonomous Indian Church.

These and other limitations of the Indian Church refer to its past history, though some of them still linger in different degrees. Our purpose in this paper is not to dwell on them, but to help the Church realize its role as a Christian community along side of other communities within the social and cultural realities of the Indian scene. In fulfilling its duties, the Church must be really Indian and autonomous.

The Last Steps to Unity

John Meyendorff

Our Century has witnessed significant steps towards better understanding and doctrinal unity between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Eastern Christians. Of course, the basic identity of christological understanding between the Churches has been affirmed earlier; for instance, by the very well-informed Russian Bishop Porphyry Uspensky, who, during his long travels throughout the Middle East, has been in close contact, particularly with the Coptic Church, and has written about his impressions subsequently. In this century, the many encounters and dialogues, involving responsible bishops and theologians from both sides, have all reached the same conclusion: the christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria is our common christology and the schism involves only a different understanding of formulas and expressions, which have been accepted as standard and doctrinally binding by one side or the other. In these encounters and dialogues, professor V. C. Samuel has been a prominent participant, and it is therefore highly appropriate, in a volume dedicated to him, to raise the issue of the "last steps": why is it that the Churches, whose responsible spokesmen seemed to have agreed with enthusiasm in saying that no real doctrinal problem remains between them, have not yet entered eucharistic communion in a formal way?

There are reasons of human, political, or institutional nature, which cannot be all listed and analyzed in this paper. But there are also problems of ecclesiological perception and

institutional procedure which might explain why the "human" obstacles are not being overcome sooner, why concrete steps are not considered urgent, why things remain the same for decades, or even centuries, without people being really disturbed by the situation. It is my conviction that unless we examine—in a sincere and open way—these respective ecclesiological perceptions and accept the judgment of God upon their limitations, there is no way in which, even if appropriate procedures are defined, the "last step" towards unity can be taken.

Ecclesiological Perceptions

Both Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians share the belief in the essential *oneness* of the Church. Christ founded the Church—the Church which we all confess in the Creed as being "one, holy catholic and apostolic". Of course there are a variety of ways in which this "oneness" is conceived. The prevailing view among Protestants is that all Christian confessions, as they exist today, constitute somehow together the "one Church", in spite of all the variety of theological convictions, ecclesial expressions and disciplinary incompatibility. This inner, formally inexpressible oneness can manifest itself in a joint participation in the Eucharist, or "*inter-communion*", i. e., a "communion" between still-divided Christians. Although Protestant confessions, or individuals may differ in their evaluation of the importance of the persisting divisions, their acceptance of *inter-communion* presupposes that the differences are secondary when compared to essential oneness.

The Roman Catholics and the Orthodox disagree, in principle, with this Protestant approach. The real heart of the disagreement lies in the concept of *Tradition*. The unity of the Church is not only a unity "in space", between the Christian communities existing today, so that the one Church is consti-

tuted by all those who confess Christ in 1987, but it is also a unity "in time": the oneness of the true Church includes the apostles, the fathers and mothers, the saints of the past, and the angels in heaven. The true faith is shared by them all, as well as by us, in virtue of our baptism, and all of them, with us, are sharing in the eucharistic mystery. This last spiritual reality is well expressed in the liturgical rite of the *proskomide* in the Byzantine tradition. It requires *continuity* and *consistency* in faith with the apostles and all the generations, which cannot be exchanged for a formal unity "in space" today. Such is, indeed, the meaning of Tradition. It is not, of course, a *verbal* continuity, and does not consist in a simple repetition of Scripture texts, of conciliar statements, or of patristic opinions. It does not exclude new issues, new theological approaches, and the acceptance, within the catholic tradition, of different mentalities and philosophical conceptions, as the missionary expansion of the Church reaches new civilizations and covers new historical periods, but all this diversity is to be judged—in its inner substance and real content—by the Truth, revealed to the saints, once and for all, in the apostolic *kerygma*.

The consultations and studies of our times seem to have established quite clearly two crucial points:

- 1) That the christological terminology which expresses itself by affirming that Christ, the God-man, is "one hypostasis and one nature or physis", and which is generally designated as "monophysitism", was the terminology used by St. Cyril of Alexandria, and remained that of Dioscorus and Severus of Antioch; that it does not imply agreement with Eutyches, who had denied the "double consubstantiability" of Christ (i.e. that he was not only consubstantial with the Father, in His Divinity, but also consubstantial with us in His humanity), and who was condemned for that by the above-mentioned leaders of the non-Chalcedonians, as well as by the council of Chalcedon,

although Dioscorus made the regrettable mistake of admitting Eutyches to communion for a time in 449.

2) That the christological position which expresses itself by affirming that Christ, the God-man, is "one hypostasis in two natures", and which is generally designated as "di-physitism", is not a Nestorian position. The council of Chalcedon (451), by affirming it, did not depart in any way from the Christology of St. Cyril, but intended to exclude Eutychianism: this was a real problem at the time, since Dioscoros (perhaps by temporary misunderstanding) had accepted Eutyches in communion in Ephesus in 449. However, the formula of Chalcedon *by itself* does not solve all problems. No formula—not even a Scriptural one, not even the Nicean creed—solves *all* problems. All such formulae can be, and often were, interpreted in a heretical sense. Thus, Chalcedon was interpreted in a Nestorianizing sense (e. g. , rejection of "theopaschism", and other Cyrillian formulations) by some Chalcedonians, including Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa. Such non-Cyrillian interpretations were formally condemned by the Chalcedonian Orthodox Church at the Fifth ecumenical council in Constantinople (553).

Agreement on these two points seems to imply clearly that there is unity on the substance of the christological doctrine; that, since the Chalcedonians are not saying that Cyrillian "monophysitism" implies Eutychianism, and since the non-Chalcedonians are not implying that Chalcedon was a Nestorian council, there is no obstacle to eucharistic communion and full unity.

But—as I mentioned earlier—full eucharistic communion has not yet been achieved. This might find partial explanation in ignorance (beyond the circle of informed theologians), or in institutional passivity, to which all Eastern Churches have been accustomed by centuries of isolation. However, there also

remain psychological and institutional factors which necessarily influence ecclesiological perceptions. I wish to mention some of them here.

The Orthodox understanding of the Church—upon which, I believe, we all agree—implies the reality of *local fullness* and of *universal unity*. Local fullness, which is particularly emphasized in what is called today "eucharistic ecclesiology", affirms, with St. Ignatius of Antioch; that "where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (Smyrn. 8:2). The eucharist of a local community, presided by a bishop, manifests, not a part, or a fraction of the Body of Christ, but its very fullness. What this perspective (which is unquestionably true) strongly affirms is that sacramental reality does not depend on geographic universality that it is a gift of God, even to the "two, or three" who gather in the name of Jesus Christ. But true "Catholicity" also implies that every local community remains in communion with all the other communities which share in the same faith, "Eucharistic" ecclesiology is not Protestant congregationalism. The bishops, in particular, are responsible for unity between the local Churches. A local Church is not a "part" or a "fraction" of Church—it is the "whole" Catholic Church—but it can possess this wholeness only if it *shares* it with other communities, if its bishop has received the laying-on-of-hands from other bishops, if he belongs to the one and united episcopate of the Church universal: *episcopatus unus est*, as we read in St. Cyprian of Carthage.

In order to secure this universal unity, the Roman Catholic Church has developed a rigid system based on the power of one bishop, the bishop of Rome. Unity, then, implies submission to that universal center. Although we the Orthodox recognize the legitimacy of the concern of universal unity, which, in part, contributed to Western ecclesiological developments, we do not accept the form which these developments took. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Chalcedonian Church has

always consistently thought of itself as being *one Church*. Although, especially at the present time, it represents a decentralized association of autocephalous Churches, it shares a single canonical system; the autocephalous Churches are related to one another in a certain "order"; the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is acknowledged by all as "first among equals"; there is a long common history during which individual autocephalous Churches appeared, then disappeared again, while the Church itself remained. Furthermore, long after the christological schisms of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, missionary expansion took place, which led to the establishment of new Churches: the Slavonic and the Romanian, and more recently new missionary Churches in Japan, in America and elsewhere. Perhaps such newly-established Churches are less able than their ancient "mothers" to understand the reasons for the lingering division between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, where no rationally definable doctrinal difference seems to exist. Be it as it may, the multi-national and missionary history and reality of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy contributes to an ecclesiological perception which must be acknowledged when one approaches the issue of unity.

It is clear that fundamental ecclesiology is the same within the non-Chalcedonian Churches. But their history is different. In the Middle East, the overwhelming concern for survival within Muslim society prevented both external contacts and missionary activity. There were, of course, strong acknowledgements of Christian and ecclesial multi-ethnicity: there was the memory of the theological debates between non-Chalcedonian Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch in the seventh century on the issue of "Tritheism"; there were the continuing canonical ties linking the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches. But the Armenians and the Indians had a more separate history. The Armenian Church dedicated all its efforts almost exclusively to the survival of the Armenian nation, whereas

the "Church of St. Thomas" in India received no help from anywhere, as it was despoiled by Western proselytism. Perhaps more than other non—Chalcedonians, the Church in India, living in a relatively free society, is more open to missionary tasks and could assume a leading role in recognizing the inseparability between mission and unity. The psychological result of these different histories has been that the universal dimension of ecclesiology, the ontological need for unity with world Orthodoxy was somewhat overshadowed by local—and often tragically immediate—concerns. Orthodox ecclesiology remained both in the liturgical tradition and in the consciousness of the people, but temptations arose to formulate it in two opposite ways: as a sectarian isolationism (a temptation present particularly among the less learned and monastic clergy), or along the lines of the Anglican branch theory, where the "true" and "one" church is seen as divided between several "branches" with different degrees of legitimacy.

I must say that the same temptations exist also within Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, but the more "Catholic" view of the Church is fortunately prevailing quite generally.

I would like to suggest here that, wherever they occur these temptations are serious obstacles to the task of achieving true unity, in the true Orthodox faith, within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, as the councils and the fathers have defined it. Sectarian isolation and a relativistic "branch theory" attitude have in common that they preclude the *urgency* of unity and justify the perpetuation of the *status quo*. Meanwhile, if anything is really needed in the relationship between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians today, it is readiness to break with age-long frozenness: bold steps are needed to put into practice the theoretical agreements reached by theologians.

Institutional procedures: last steps to unity

The first step to unity is necessarily doctrinal agreement. As we mentioned earlier, this first—and spiritually the most important—step is probably, in our case, the easiest. A draft of a doctrinal agreement was even produced already at the Consultation in Bristol. What is needed now is for this draft, or a similar form of agreement in the faith, to be formally approved by the Churches. Psychologically and ecclesiologically, it is important that this agreement be positive in form and in content: both sides must acknowledge the positive value of each other's tradition. The Chalcedonians could easily and explicitly recognize that the fears of Nestorianism among many Cyrillians, following 451, were legitimate or at least well-intentioned. (Actually, the condemnation of the "Three Chapters" in 553 is already precisely a recognition of this sort.) The non-Chalcedonians should recognize also that the council of Chalcedon had the legitimate intention to condemn Eutychianism that the weight carried at the council by the text of the *Tome of Leo* and by the papal legates reflected a legitimate concern for unity between East and West. There was no "capitulation" before the West, since Leo's faith was declared Orthodox only after it was examined on its merits and compared with the acknowledged criterion of Orthodoxy of St. Cyril.

Aside from such a formal agreement in doctrine, and on the basis of the mutual respect and common belonging to the spiritual traditions of the early Christian East, there should be an understanding on the veneration of those whom each side considers as its fathers in the faith. The difficulty here of course is that the schism has led to opposing views and anathemas concerning persons like Leo of Rome and Flavian of Constantinople, on the one side, and Dioscorus of Alexandria, Philoxenos of Mabbugh and Severus of Antioch on the other. In some ways, since our Churches are Churches holding

strongly to tradition and continuity, this problem might be seen as more agonizing and difficult than the doctrinal agreement itself. But on the other hand, one should remember that the Church never believed in the infallibility of any human being, not even the saints. St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Epiphanius of Cyprus were fiercely opposed to St. John Chrysostom, considering him to be a heretic and an impostor: nevertheless, these fathers are now venerated together with the great Chrysostom as saints. Furthermore, the Chalcedonian Church of Georgia continues to venerate Peter the Iberian, a well-known Georgian bishop of Gaza in Palestine, who in the late fifth century fought against the council of Chalcedon. The Coptic Church keeps among its saints the names of Chalcedonian Patriarchs like John the Merciful. And St. Isaac of Syria was a Nestorian bishop of Nineveh.

It seems, therefore, that regional veneration of ancient saints is possible in spite of past conflicts, for this veneration acknowledges their merits, not their faults, which are left to the judgment of God.

If the issue of the saints can still create problems, so can questions related to Church order and inter-Church relations. Of course, a re-union between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians does not involve any "submission" of one Church to another. Our Orthodox ecclesiology is based on the identity of all local Churches in the faith, and a fully legitimate diversity of liturgical and linguistic expressions of that credal unity. However, it also presupposes regional and local unity. There cannot be two bishops in one place. This is a rule from which today the Chalcedonian Orthodox Church itself occasionally departs, but such departures are considered unfortunate and temporary, and the present conciliar process aims at eliminating them altogether. Unity in the faith presupposes unity in sacraments and in Church life, in each phase. In case of a restored unity between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedo-

nians, pastoral adjustments and temporary arrangements will certainly be required to meet the psychological difficulty of forgetting, all at once, centuries of separate life. Nevertheless, it is clear that it would be inconceivable, when unity comes, to admit the existence of two Patriarchs of Alexandria, or two Patriarchs of Antioch. Restored unity will therefore be a test of humility for some and of charity for all.

Furthermore, there are problems of priority and leadership, such as the honorary primacy of the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Of course, this primacy does not appear to be a questionable issue in itself, since both traditions are committed, even now, to the decision of the second ecumenical council of 381, which defined Constantinople's "privileges" (*presveia*), as equal to that of "Old Rome". However, the implications of the controversial "28th Canon" of Chalcedon are more precise and less clear. The text stipulates that the archbishop of the then imperial capital ordains bishops among the "barbarians" of the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace. It is hardly justifiable to invoke this text in a generalized sense, as referring to all countries where there is no established Church (as it is done by some), but historically the text did concern Armenia, originally dependent upon Caesarea in Cappadocia, in the diocese of Pontus, and its adoption at Chalcedon played a role in the rejection of the council by the Armenians. An insignificant detail, perhaps, but a sudden resurgence of unnecessary formalism is known to have been an obstacle to Church unity. Let us not have this point also stand in the way.

The "last step" in achieving unity will consist in a solemn joint celebration of the Eucharist, fulfilling the doctrinal agreement and also an understanding (perhaps only implicit) of such issues as the veneration of saints and the future common life of our Churches, with full sacramental and canonical relations restored.

How to accomplish this last step?

The ideal solution would, of course, be the tenure of a joint Great Council, at which unity would be proclaimed and sealed in a joint Divine Liturgy. Such a council would have to be carefully prepared by solving most difficult issues in advance: this preparation should be on the forefront of the agenda of the Dialogue, which has now been officially setup. However, the difficult circumstances of the late twentieth century, the political divisions and internal conflicts existing within the Churches, the organizational weakness and inexperience which unfortunately characterizes many of us, may still delay the tenure of a general council. The history of the Church has also known precedents for initiatives taken regionally. Indeed, some regional circumstances may, in fact, favour unions which cannot be initiated elsewhere. For instance, the "Catholicos of the East" in India and his Holy Church may theologically and psychologically be more ready to take decisive steps than other Churches. There were also recent talks about union within the framework of the ancient Antiochian realm, between the Chalcedonian and "Jacobite" Patriarchates. Furthermore, the charismatic figure of pope Shenuda of Egypt evokes real hopes for the Christian world as a whole.

Be it as it may, the danger of a "regional" union is that it could occur in such a way that it would become an obstacle to further steps leading to a general union. Such dangers—to be avoided at all costs—should be met through responsible and truly "ecclesial" approach to the steps to be taken. No issues concerning doctrine, ecclesiology and discipline should be overlooked. Substitute "ideologies", such as regional nationalism, or anti-Western animosity, or political considerations involving the influence of foreign interests, should be seen as poison. A union, solemnly proclaimed on a regional basis, would be communicated officially to all the Churches,

on the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian sides, and their approval would be formally asked. A positive reaction should logically lead to further union steps. A negative reply would place before the Church involved a clear option: it would have to decide which "communion" it considers to be the communion of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

None of these procedures, the general, conciliar one—much to be preferred—or the regional solutions, which involve risks, and which would also require a responsible ecclesial and theological approach, will succeed unless they are based on an inner, spiritual commitment and enthusiasm for the true faith, for the saving power of the Spirit, for the divine gift, bestowed upon the whole of humanity when "the Word became flesh."

Bibliographical note

This article represents a practical conclusion of several publications by the author related to the Christological issue and the issues of unity between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. These previous studies are fully documented with references to sources and secondary literature.. In order to save space, the author thought that much references could be skipped here. The studies in question include *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, 2nd ed. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975; *Christ as Savior* in B. McGinn and J. Meyendorff, eds., *Christian Spirituality; Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Crossroads, New York, 1985, pp.231-251; J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions- The Church from 450 to 680 AD*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1988. For issues related to Church order, see J. Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1983. However, the most

The Last Steps to Unity

John Meyendorff

Our Century has witnessed significant steps towards better understanding and doctrinal unity between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Eastern Christians. Of course, the basic identity of christological understanding between the Churches has been affirmed earlier; for instance, by the very well-informed Russian Bishop Porphyry Uspensky, who, during his long travels throughout the Middle East, has been in close contact, particularly with the Coptic Church, and has written about his impressions subsequently. In this century, the many encounters and dialogues, involving responsible bishops and theologians from both sides, have all reached the same conclusion: the christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria is our common christology and the schism involves only a different understanding of formulas and expressions, which have been accepted as standard and doctrinally binding by one side or the other. In these encounters and dialogues, professor V. C. Samuel has been a prominent participant, and it is therefore highly appropriate, in a volume dedicated to him, to raise the issue of the "last steps": why is it that the Churches, whose responsible spokesmen seemed to have agreed with enthusiasm in saying that no real doctrinal problem remains between them, have not yet entered eucharistic communion in a formal way?

There are reasons of human, political, or institutional nature, which cannot be all listed and analyzed in this paper. But there are also problems of ecclesiological perception and

institutional procedure which might explain why the "human" obstacles are not being overcome sooner, why concrete steps are not considered urgent, why things remain the same for decades, or even centuries, without people being really disturbed by the situation. It is my conviction that unless we examine—in a sincere and open way—these respective ecclesiological perceptions and accept the judgment of God upon their limitations, there is no way in which, even if appropriate procedures are defined, the "last step" towards unity can be taken.

Ecclesiological Perceptions

Both Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians share the belief in the essential *oneness* of the Church. Christ founded the Church—the Church which we all confess in the Creed as being "one, holy catholic and apostolic". Of course there are a variety of ways in which this "oneness" is conceived. The prevailing view among Protestants is that all Christian confessions, as they exist today, constitute somehow together the "one Church", in spite of all the variety of theological convictions, ecclesial expressions and disciplinary incompatibility. This inner, formally inexpressible oneness can manifest itself in a joint participation in the Eucharist, or "*inter-communion*", i. e., a "communion" between still-divided Christians. Although Protestant confessions, or individuals may differ in their evaluation of the importance of the persisting divisions, their acceptance of *inter-communion* presupposes that the differences are secondary when compared to essential oneness.

The Roman Catholics and the Orthodox disagree, in principle, with this Protestant approach. The real heart of the disagreement lies in the concept of *Tradition*. The unity of the Church is not only a unity "in space", between the Christian communities existing today, so that the one Church is consti-

three dimensions in the same stroke can we have a truly Christian Christology. Christ's work in the three dimensions are different, but related to each other-in the Church, in humanity, and in the cosmos. All three dimensions have to be related not merely to the Incarnation or the saving economy of Christ's earthly ministry, but also to the other two aspects-Christ as Creator and Christ as Final Reconciler. Only a Christology that holds together the three aspects-creation, redemption and eschatological fulfilment can be an adequate Christology.

It is in this context of three-dimensional, three-aspect Christology that we can find the ultimate meaning of the hypostatic union of the divine and the human in Christ. For whatever we say about Christ as redeemer or final fulfiller applies not simply to God, as Barthianism implied. It is Christ the divine human person who is the Redeemer and Saviour of the Church, of humanity and of the cosmos. And any understanding of what it means to be a Christian should make plain the significance of Christ being a divine human person, and our full consubstantiality and participation in him.

This means that no "secular" Christology, which deals only with the world open to our senses, and no "other-worldly" Christology that sees Christ as only Saviour of souls, would do. but the integrated treatment of the three dimensions and the three aspects (for Christ the Incarnate divine-human person is also Creator) should make clear the distinctions as well as the relations among Christ's work in Church, humanity and cosmos. This would mean interpretation of Christ's relation to all Church activity, human activity and cosmic (including nature, environment, but also much more) activity. Such a Christology (should do justice to science/technology, political economy and culture/environment. But it must do more. It must also penetrate beyond the veil to that invisible realm where Christ the divine-human person is now seated on the throne of authority "at the right hand of the Father". Most

current Christologies fail at this point—either due to an obsession with the political economy or to an undue reverence to the critical canons of a European Enlightenment rationality which cannot penetrate beyond the evil.

One more point should be mentioned, but not developed here. There is no authentic Christology that is not integrally related to the Triune God and particularly to the operations of the Holy Spirit. An adequate pneumatology also should deal with the three dimensions and the three aspects of Christ's work, parallel to and inseparable from it. The Spirit is Creator, Redeemer, and Fulfiller. The Holy Spirit works in the Church, in humanity and in the cosmos. Only a proper understanding of the larger work of the Holy Spirit in giving form and significance to everything, in creating life and sustaining it, in leading all things to perfection, in pouring out love, power and wisdom can make Christology authentic and alive.

The Spirit is at Work in a special way in the Church, the community of faith, the Body of Christ. But the Spirit is also at work in the human environment, in agriculture, in Industry, in services, in communications, in science and technology, in the political economy, in art and culture, in creating meaning and significance, in identity and community. The Spirit also operates in a divine-human way, and Her work in the Church should not be separated from Her work in humanity and the Cosmaos.

Fr. Samuel's brilliant work lays the foundation for this. Much work, however, still needs to be done to make Christology and Pneumatology truly life-giving and unity-creating.

important basis for the conclusions reached in this study are to be found in the Minutes of Consultations between "Eastern" and "Oriental" Orthodox theologians published in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Brookline, MA, 10, 2. (Winter, 1964-65) and 13, 1 (1968).

Who Do You Say that I am?

Elements for an Ecumenical Christology Today

Paulos Mar Gregorios

The Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel has played a unique and pioneering role in making Oriental Orthodox Christology intelligible as well as acceptable to others. Most of us who came later into the debate about the nature of Christ owe our basic insights to his outstanding work at Yale University in the fifties of our century*.

This became very clear as we began the first "Unofficial Consulation Between Theologians of Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches" held at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, from August 11-15, 1964. In August 1989, we should celebrate the silver jubilee of this historic event in the life of the ecumenical movement.

Father Samuel's paper on "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" affirmed that phrase from Cyril of Alexandria (+ 444 A.D.) as "a most crucial linguistic tool to conserve the Church's faith in the Person of Jesus Christ". It made clear to leading Byzantine theologians present like Karmiris, Meyendorff, Florovsky, Romanides, Nissiotis, Konidaris,

*The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined : *A Historical and Theological Survey*, CLS, Madras 1977

and Borovoy that the Oriental Orthodox agreed with the Byzantine Orthodox in condemning the teachings of both Eutyches and Nestorius. It was Fr. Samuel's paper which convinced them. There were other dignitaries present like the present Syrian Patriarch of Antioch and the present Armenian Catholicos of Antelias; it is no exaggeration to say, however that there was no one on the Oriental Orthodox side who could convince the Byzantine theologians on the basis of historical scholarship that there was no essential disagreement between the Byzantines and the Orientals on the substance of Christological teaching. I had the great privilege of organizing, along with the late Nikos Nissiotis, that first unofficial theological conversation (Aarhus, 1964) as well as the three subsequent ones (Bristol 1967, Geneva, 1970 and Addis Ababa, 1971). I can say without any hesitation that the presence and contributions of Fr. V. C. Samuel were the crucial elements in determining the final outcome of these conversations.

Recently (September 1987), the first *official* joint sub-commission met and produced an official statement that is in basic continuity with the four unofficial conversations.

We can summarise the present consensus in the following way :

1. Jesus Christ is fully a human being, of the same nature as fallen humanity, though not sinful like them.
2. Jesus Christ the Second Person of the Trinity, remains fully God, of the same nature (*homo-ousios*, consubstantial) as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word of God, personalizes humanity in his own hypostasis or person, without ceasing to be God. There is only one hypostasis, the hypostasis of God the Word. There is no separate Man Jesus with a separate human hypostasis.

4. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God unites in his hypostasis the nature of God and the nature of humanity in one single hypothesis and one united divine-human nature, though the Byzantine prefer to say two natures inseparably united.
5. The Word of God Incarnate is thus one single hypostasis with an inseparably and unconfusedly united divine-human nature. It was the same one who was begotten of the Father before the ages and who was born of the Virgin Mary in the fullness of time.

These fundamental agreements however point to two questions, The first one is, of both sides, have always held the doctrines that they now affirm, how come they were divided into two irreconcilable groups, calling each other heretics? The second question is : given this Christological consensus what ecclesiological imperatives ensure from it for Christian life today?

Both questions have immediate significance for our situation today, and we need to expend a little thought on the response to these questions.

Why Church disunity despite doctrinal unity?

It is an interesting question for deep research. The Byzantine emperors made herculean efforts to resolve the Christological controversy that ensued before and after the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.). The schism between the Byzantine Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox came into effect only with the work of Jacob Baradeus at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries. And the Churches have remained dis-united for the past thirteen to fourteen centuries.

The sources make it clear that the conflict between the Byzantines (Hellenistic Greeks then in present day Turkey and Greece) and the Orientals (Syria, Palestine and Egypt) was less theological and more political-economic and socio-cultural.

Byzantine imperial policy was neither consistent nor reliable. In 449 at the Second Council of Ephesus, it was the conciliatory and pluralistic policy of Emperor Theodosius II 401-450, that allowed Dioscorus of Alexandria to triumph over Hellenistic machinations. His successor Marcian (396-457) was the leader of the Hellenistic movement in the Empire, and when he ascended the throne in 450, after having organized the death of Theodosius by a fall from his horse while hunting, actively persecuted the Syrians and Egyptians and sought to impose Hellenism on them. He used military force to get his proposals accepted at Chalcedon and after Chalcedon. In his desire to repress and destroy the Asian African civilisations of Egypt, Syria and Palestine, he got into an alliance with Pope Leo I (440-461).

It was not the Christological controversy that led to the post-Chalcedonian schism, as much as the revolt of Asia-Africa against a domineering Graeco-Roman civilisation. This was the reason why the most reconciling formulas like the *Henotikon* offered by Emperor Zeno in 482 did not bring peace. The issue was socio-cultural rather than theological. For 200 years Byzantine emperors followed a unifying policy in theology (*henotike*), which did not succeed simply because the socio-cultural aspect was not adequately taken into account. Even the so-called Fifth Ecumenical Council which tried to correct some of the errors of Hellenistic theology by leaning to the ante-Chalcedonian side failed to pacify the Asian and Africans.

As one of the less perceptive pro-Chalcedonian scholars

from Greece but it at the first unofficial conversation "The enforcement of the dogmatic decisions (*horoi*) of Chalcedon, as this was attempted in the year 451-457, resulted in a sharpening of the peril to the unity and integrity of the Empire since a considerable majority of the native population had gone over to the Monophysites"(p. 58.) There was of course no "going over to the Monophysites", because the category "Monophysite" was one artificially created by the Byzantines. The Asians and African's knew their Christology, and advanced no doctrine of *mone phusis* which means *only* (one) *nature*, but taught *mia-phusis*, which means one single (united) nature. And this teachings of the Asians and the Africans has not varied from then to this day.

What was at stake was a cultural imposition of hellenism on the Africans and Asians. They saw the Council of Chalcedon as such an imposition, and could not see any sense in the Byzantine insistence on "two natures after the union", except that of cultural domination.

Today the situation is similar when the Western Church, both Protestant and Catholic, seek to impose a terminology and framework born in the internal conflicts of Europe on the Oriental Churches. We are grateful that the Byzantine Orthodox have woken up to the nature of this cultural imposition by the Latins and West Europeans on the Eastern Churches, but they are as yet insensitive to the fact that the domineering spirit of Hellenism still plays a very negative role in keeping the Orthodox together. Most of Christian Asia and Africa fell to Islam, in reaction against this European domination. We in Oriental Orthodox Churches have survived in a decimated form, but we have also a natural resistance to Western categories of thought and action being imposed on us. This constitutes a major ecumenical problem today, even for the unity of the Asian or African Churches, Culture has so much to do with

autonomy and identity, that it becomes a factor much more powerful in dividing or uniting Churches.

The Ecumenical Movement as a whole is now so dominated by Western culture that non-Westerners who have not been initiated and trained in Western culture feel ill at ease in the movement. The question of the disunity of the Churches cannot be adequately studied without taking into account the domineering role played by Western culture in the present ecumenical movement. Culture can help unite or divide in a big way.

The more important single question, then as today, is the one Christ himself asked: "who do you say that I am?" (Lk. 9:20). If we answer in the words of Peter in St. Luke's Gospel, i.e. The "Messiah of God", we still need to answer the questions "who is God? What does His Messiah do?".

On those two questions there are dozens of answers preferred in the Churches. But these answers, though divergent in each Church, do not directly lead to schism today. Why is it that a minor difference in Christology led to a schism in the fifth and sixth centuries, while much more substantial divergences today can be contained in the same Church? Could it be that we do not take Christology as seriously as the ancients did?

For the Oriental Orthodox, the two questions are integral to each other. It is because God is He who is revealed to be by the Messiah that the Messiah does what he does. "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me"; as the Johannine Christ says John (7:16). "I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me" (John 5:30).

The difficulty of some modern Christologies is that they

start with a prior conception of what the Messiah should be doing, and then read that Messianic conception back to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. If yesterday salvation from eternal damnation was what we wanted, we made out the Messiah to be a "Personal Saviour". If political-economic liberation is what we want today, then we make Messiah a political-economic liberator. We even develop theories about all previous theologies and biblical exegeses having been expressions of the dominant class, and thereby absolve ourselves from the need to know the Tradition. We become free to liberate theology from its bondage to class interests, and free to create a new liberation theology according to our own pre-conceptions of what God should be doing.

The real task of Christology today is a formidable one. The avenue that scholars have been exploring—in search of the historical Jesus—has turned out to be a blind avenue. Even the historical method cannot yield for us a completely accurate Moses or Jesus, Alexander or Napoleon. All personalities have their historical existence only in terms of *what other people understood about them*.

The classical Christian position has been that Christians accept Jesus Christ as the Apostles understood them; that seems to be the meaning of the adjective 'apostolic' qualifying the Church. But is that not too narrow an interpretation? The Apostles knew Jesus Christ at first hand, in a way in which subsequent generations could not know him. They also received the direct revelation of the Spirit after Pentecost. But the doctrine that the Revelation of the Holy Spirit ceased with the death of the last Apostle seems to have little theological warrant.

The Spirit of God leading us into all Truth was not a process that ceased in the first century, but one goes on till the last day and perhaps beyond.

Even going by the Apostolic testimony recorded in the New Testament, there are three dimensions of Christology which we have to keep in some balance today.

In the first place there is the oikonomic–ecclesiological relation of Christ to the members of his Body the Church—a relation initiated by faith, Baptism and Chrismation, and sustained by the great mysteries of the Church, principally the Eucharist. This is, at least in theory, an intimate, personal, communitarian, material-spiritual or “Sacramentally” sealed relationship which is unique to the members of the Body, the Church. To extend this relationship to “nominal Christians”, “latent Christians” and so on is quite unnecessary and pointless.

But the second relationship of Christ is to all humanity. It was not Christian humanity that the Son of God assumed. As a human person Jesus Christ is consubstantial with all human beings - whether they be Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Marxist or Buddhist. It is the whole of humanity that has been sanctified by the Incarnate Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the saviour of humanity - not just of Christians. He is Saviour of the world- (*ho Soter tou kosmou, vere Salvator mundi* (1 Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:42). He is the saviour of all human beings (*Soter panton anthropon*—1 Tim. 4:10), though especially of believers. He is also the “Saviour of the Body” (Eph. 5:23), our Saviour (Jude 25, 2 Pet. 1:1,11; 3:18, Titus 1:3,4; 2:10,13; 3:4,6 etc, etc.)

We will have to use our imagination to see how Christ can be the Saviour of all human beings. I suspect, however, that the best we can imagine in this matter, would still be wrong. But let us leave wide open that possibility that Christ is the Saviour of all human beings, with whom He is consubstantial and whose body he has assumed.

There is a third relationship which we should not overlook,

which is already implied in the expression: "Saviour of the world", The relation of Christ to the universe as a whole is often overlooked or underplayed in many Christological treatises. And yet the Apostolic testimony is clear.

"In him the universe was made
Nothing made was made without him" (Jn. 1:3)

"The mystery of His will... to bring all things
In heaven or earth together under one head even Christ"
(Eph, 1:10)

"In him were all things created
Those in the heavenlies and on earth
Things visible and invisible....
all things were created through him and for him
He is before all things; in him all things hold together....
For it was God's good pleasure that in him should dwell
all plenitude
And through him to reconcile all things to himself".
(Col. 1:16-20)

"The Creation itself shall be set free
From its present bondage to corruptibility
And made to share in the glorious freedom of the Children
of God" (Romans 8:21)

It is thus the central teaching of the Apostolic tradition that Christ is a three-fold saviour—Saviour of the Church, Saviour of all humanity, and Saviour of the whole universe in all its dimensions—those open to our senses and those that are not.

Liberation theologies can write this off as ruling class ideology if they wish. But for those committed to the Apostolic tradition, there is no escape from the truth. Only when we can develop a Christology which does justice to all

three dimensions in the same stroke can we have a truly Christian Christology. Christ's work in the three dimensions are different, but related to each other-in the Church, in humanity, and in the cosmos. All three dimensions have to be related not merely to the Incarnation or the saving economy of Christ's earthly ministry, but also to the other two aspects-Christ as Creator and Christ as Final Reconciler. Only a Christology that holds together the three aspects-creation, redemption and eschatological fulfilment can be an adequate Christology.

It is in this context of three-dimensional, three-aspect Christology that we can find the ultimate meaning of the hypostatic union of the divine and the human in Christ. For whatever we say about Christ as redeemer or final fulfiller applies not simply to God, as Barthianism implied. It is Christ the divine human person who is the Redeemer and Saviour of the Church, of humanity and of the cosmos. And any understanding of what it means to be a Christian should make plain the significance of Christ being a divine human person, and our full consubstantiality and participation in him.

This means that no "secular" Christology, which deals only with the world open to our senses, and no "other-worldly" Christology that sees Christ as only Saviour of souls, would do. but the integrated treatment of the three dimensions and the three aspects (for Christ the Incarnate divine-human person is also Creator) should make clear the distinctions as well as the relations among Christ's work in Church, humanity and cosmos. This would mean interpretation of Christ's relation to all Church activity, human activity and cosmic (including nature, environment, but also much more) activity. Such a Christology (should do justice to science/technology, political economy and culture/environment. But it must do more. It must also penetrate beyond the veil to that invisible realm where Christ the divine-human person is now seated on the throne of authority "at the right hand of the Father". Most

current Christologies fail at this point—either due to an obsession with the political economy or to an undue reverence to the critical canons of a European Enlightenment rationality which cannot penetrate beyond the evil.

One more point should be mentioned, but not developed here. There is no authentic Christology that is not integrally related to the Triune God and particularly to the operations of the Holy Spirit. An adequate pneumatology also should deal with the three dimensions and the three aspects of Christ's work, parallel to and inseparable from it. The Spirit is Creator, Redeemer, and Fulfiller. The Holy Spirit works in the Church, in humanity and in the cosmos. Only a proper understanding of the larger work of the Holy Spirit in giving form and significance to everything, in creating life and sustaining it, in leading all things to perfection, in pouring out love, power and wisdom can make Christology authentic and alive.

The Spirit is at Work in a special way in the Church, the community of faith, the Body of Christ. But the Spirit is also at work in the human environment, in agriculture, in Industry, in services, in communications, in science and technology, in the political economy, in art and culture, in creating meaning and significance, in identity and community. The Spirit also operates in a divine-human way, and Her work in the Church should not be separated from Her work in humanity and the Cosmaos.

Fr. Samuel's brilliant work lays the foundation for this. Much work, however, still needs to be done to make Christology and Pneumatology truly life-giving and unity-creating.

The Christological Controversy and the Division of the Church

V. C. Samuel

Introduction

The Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, published in 1972 W.H.C. Frend's book, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*. In it the author deals with the split in the Church that occurred subsequent to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. This council, as the one before it which had met at Ephesus in 431, had caused the Christian communities in the East to be divided. Frend takes up for discussion the council of 451, referring to the Church tradition that rejected it as 'the monophysite movement'. The title of the book, however, is bound to raise the question, was there a 'monophysite movement' in Christian history, either in ancient times or since then? In posing the question in this way, our purpose is not to offer a rejoinder to Frend or any body else,¹ but only to specify the point of departure which we assume in our treatment.

The term 'monophysite' does not have a history that goes

1. To a certain extent this has been done. See V.C. Samuel, *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*, Indian Theological Library 8, C.L.S., Madras, 1977. Note pp. xxi, 36, 38, 68, 97, 99, 112, 116, 117, 121, 129, 131, 132, 149 and 152.

back to the 5th century. It was coined in fairly modern times² in the Western world. A combination of the Greek words *monos* and *physis*, 'monophysite' means 'single-natured'. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, in its 1958 edition, describes 'Monophysitism' as "The doctrine that in the Person of the Incarnate Christ there was but one single, and that a Divine Nature, as against the Orthodox teaching of a double Nature, Divine and Human, after the Incarnation". What is noted in this article is obviously not the teaching of the Church tradition that rejected the Council of Chalcedon. It is the imagination of the writer, which the editorial board of the reputed repository of the best English scholarship in Church History rather callously approved.

The use of the term with reference to the Eastern Churches which renounced the council of 451 implies the insinuation that their rejection of Chalcedon constituted heresy. Behind this view there lies the insistence that the 'one Church' confessed in the Creed consisted of the state Church of ancient Roman Empire. The fallacy in the argument is clear.

There is a delicate point which should be noted here. Western scholars, particularly persons of ecclesiastical learning in the Anglo-Saxon world, are more chary of acknowledging the

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2. We have no reference to the use of this term in the polemical writings against the body that rejected the council of 451 in ancient times. Even John of Damascus does not employ the term in the 8th century. According to ancient writers, the critics of Chalcedon were referred to by the supporters of the council as *diakrinomenoi*; 'distinguishers' or 'non-conformists'. But in a modern translation of a 6th century work by Leontius of Byzantium entitled "Against those who affirm of Our Lord Jesus Christ one Composite Nature", the Latin translator uses the words "Contra Monophysitas" (See PG. LXXXVI, 1069f). The legitimacy of this coining can be questioned from a linguistic point of view as well.

Church tradition that rejects Chalcedon to be Orthodox than the one that renounces the Council of Ephesus in 431. Since Chalcedon had listed Cyril of Alexandria with the Orthodox, they consider him among the fathers of the Church in a sort of an uneasy way, but they are on the whole diffident to assign the same recognition to those who tried to promote Cyril's theology *per se* after Chalcedon. Frend himself and a number of others admit that the teaching of Severus of Antioch who followed Cyril very loyally is indeed sound. Yet for them, Severus is a 'monophysite', and moreover they are not disposed to listen to his criticism of Chalcedon. Here the Anglican partiality for the 'undivided Church' of the first four 'Ecumenical Councils' may really be at work more than historical facts. That they have now abandoned their former prejudice against Nestorius and the men of the school which he represented deserves praise.

Three reasons may be noted for this viewpoint. One, their uncomplimentary view of the person of Cyril, Dioscorus and others. Even those who acknowledge Cyril to be Orthodox in his teaching are very reluctant to defend his character and actions. In their view Cyril was most unfair to Nestorius and he used very devious ways to bring about his adversary's downfall. Cyril's successors followed up what he had initiated in a high-handed manner. In this stricture they are more vehement about Dioscorus than about Cyril. It is amazing that the scholars of the Western Churches are almost impervious to evaluate the standpoint of the anti-Chalcedonian side objectively.

Two, Cyril got a real setback at Chalcedon. For one thing, his successor, Dioscorus, was most ignobly treated at the council. Neither Cyril's theology nor the Council of Ephesus over which he presided in 431 was approved by the council of 451 in their entirety. The latter approved officially only one letter of Cyril to Nestorius and a statement of agreement between Cyril and the leader of the Antiochene side in

433³. Chalcedon acknowledged the council of 431 merely in a casual way, possibly not to offend the Eastern participants who held it in high honour.⁴ To add to all these facts, was the treatment meted out by Chalcedon to Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa, three bulwarks of the Nestorian teaching, without the least demur. All these facts are noted by the critics of Chalcedon as the council's defects, but they are looked upon by the supporters of the council as evidence that Chalcedon softened the decisions of 431 in a remarkable way.

Three, modern Western theologians in general do not go by the formulations of the doctrines of ancient theology. Christ's historicity and human reality are more important for them than his divinity. On this ground they are critical as much of Chalcedon as of Ephesus.

Historically, Chalcedon offered Rome a real victory over Alexandria in theology and Constantinople a priority over all the East in administrative arrangement. Yet the fact is that the division which it caused, as well as the split following the Council of Ephesus in 431, still continue, so that they are of contemporary relevance and ecumenical significance. Therefore, the question as to how the division arose and what the theological issues that separated the communities are, should

3. Cyril had written three letters to Nestorius, of which the third had twelve anathemas, or statements requiring condemnation. Besides, he had written volumes on doctrinal issues. The third letter was rejected by the Antiochenes flatly. Chalcedon accepted only the second letter and the Formulary of Reunion of 433. See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 57f.

4. See *Ibid.* pp. 81-86, 139-141. Byzantine authors are clearly wrong in their assessment of Chalcedon. Though all the three setbacks of Cyril are clear from the minutes of Chalcedon as we have them in print, they try to soften them in an unconvincing way.

deserve an objective evaluation, without being led away by traditional prejudices. From this point of view, the following questions should be answered by any one who takes to a study of the subject.

How should the division of the Christian communities in cosequence of the 5th century councils be explained?

Was it the result of a conflict between Orthodoxy and heresy?

If that indeed was the case, what was Orthodoxy before the councils met?

What precisely were the heresies the councils saw in the men whom they condemned, namely Nestorius and Dioscorus?

Were the heresies established against them on the strength of acceptable evidence, in a dispassionate manner?

If heresy was not the issue, how can the divisions be explained?

Do we have any evidence to say that the Church traditions which took up the cause of the condemned men held any position excluded by the councils concerned?

Did they refuse to conserve in principle any aspect of the Christian truth which the councils sought to conserve?

In this paper an attempt is made to answer these questions on the strength of relevant evidence. It is a fact that, when the 5th century began, the Church had a norm of Orthodoxy and a fairly common basis for life in the Roman Empire, though there were local variations as regards the latter. Of these two aspects, this paper seeks to bring out the norm of

Orthodoxy to begin with. It is then followed by a brief treatment of Nestorianism and the two positions for and against Chalcedon. The conclusions possible to be drawn are left to the readers.

A Superficial Glance into the 4th and 5th centuries

The 4th and 5th centuries have a significance in the history of ancient Christianity which should be specially noted here. These centuries do in fact constitute the period in which the Church in the Roman Empire of ancient times acquired for itself a character in life and doctrine.

Yet there are some fundamental differences between the centuries. For one thing, at the beginning of the 4th century though the Church believed that it held to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude : 003) and kept to a tradition in worship and sacraments, particularly Baptism and Eucharist, and a life of discipline, it existed in a sort of fluid state. The faith referring to the threefold name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to the person of Jesus Christ, had not been clarified. A few attempts to explain them could not find favour with the Church as a whole. When the 5th century began, the situation was different. The faith concerning the threefold name had been defined. As to the person of Jesus Christ, it was generally accepted that he was the incarnation of God the Son, but the question concerning the incarnation, as to how it was to be affirmed had not yet been defined. It was the 5th century that took up that task.

The Clarification of the Threefold Name

Following several efforts to explain the mystery of God,

Arianism⁵ came on the scene from the second decade of the 4th century. The Arians believed that their teaching conserved Orthodoxy and hoped that it would fill a long felt vacuum. But they were too quick in their expectation, as there were Church members who represented a more Orthodox line of Christian thinking. These people sought to nip Arianism in the bud through the Council of Nicea which emperor Constantine convened in 325. They were not immediately successful in their aim. Supported by some of the emperors and large majority of eastern Churchmen, who suspected the faith of Nicea to be a worse heresy than Arianism⁶, the Arian party made substantial progress for over half a century. But from about 380 it had a reversal which led to its eventual disappearance from the Church.

Two forces brought about the downfall of Arianism. In the first place was the imperial disfavour which it sustained. Though emperor Constantine very definitely favoured Christianity and was the sole ruler of the empire from 324 to his death

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5. Arianism taught that "there was once when the Son was not", implying that the Son who became incarnate in Christ was a creature. There were only very few people in the Church who would accept the Arian teaching.

 6. In the 3rd century there were two definite attempts to explain the faith. In modern times they have come to be referred to as 'Modalism' and 'Dynamism'. Neither of them could find acceptance in the Church. 'Modalism' or Sabellianism did not see any personal distinction between the names, but looked upon them as pointing to the same person in different modes. The Creed adopted by the Council of Nicea affirmed that the Son was 'of the same *ousia*', essence or being, with the Father. It was intended to exclude Arianism summarily, but the Arians were clever in making out that it affirmed only Modalism. By this argument they carried with them a large body of conservative Churchmen in the East.

in 337, he had his limitations⁷. He did not, or possibly could not, acknowledge the Church as the official religion of the empire. Neither did any of his successors, till 379, take up that step. In that year Theodosius, a Spaniard, was taken by the emperors as an associate in the government. An adherent of the Nicene faith, he obtained the cooperation of his imperial colleagues to issue an edict in 380 requiring of all citizens to follow the faith of Nicea. In this way emperor Theodosius took the initiative in declaring Nicene Orthodoxy the Empire's official religion. From that time the emperors of Constantinople came to be recognized as a sort of guardians of the faith. This was the Context in which the Council of Constantinople was held in 381. This council affirmed the faith of Nicea.

Secondly, there was a theological development in the East which defended the faith approved by Nicea under the leadership of the Cappadocian theologians. By that time the eastern Churchmen had grown weary of the superficiality of Arian intellectualism and were willing to listen to the Nicene leaders. Now the Cappadocians were able to clarify to the easterners that their suspicion of Nicea was ill-founded, and that an acceptance of the council's emphasis was the only way to conserve the faith as they themselves confessed.

The contribution of the Cappadocian fathers in this evolution deserves special mention here⁸. One of the reasons

7. Emperor Constantine helped the Church in many ways and was keen for its progress and unity. With this aim in mind, he convened the Council of Nicea, meeting all the expenses for it from the imperial treasury. But then he was gradually swayed to their side by the Arians. While he died in 337, he was in their fellowship.

8. The Cappadocians were three Churchmen, who acquired fame from the 70's of the 4th century. They were Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus.

why the Arian side could advance was the lack of terminology to clarify the relation among the triad of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Nicea had employed the term *ousia* essence or being, and affirmed that the Father and the Son had the same *ousia*. This could be widened to include the Holy Spirit as well. Thus it was possible to offer the clarification that all the three were united in the same being. How, then, were the three to be distinguished? It is precisely here that the Cappadocians made their lasting contribution. They differentiated two terms, *ousia* and *hypostasis*, one from the other, though etymologically and in use so far they had the same meaning. *Ousia*, a feminine participle of the verb *eimi* in Greek, which meant 'to be' or 'I am' stood for 'being per se' and *hypostasis* for 'the reality underlying a thing'. The Cappadocian trio maintained that the former term could be reserved for that which is common and the latter for the particular included in the common. Thus in the case of God *ousia* referred to Godhead and *hypostasis* to each of the three. In this way the Trinitarian formula was proposed by the Cappadocian theologians in consonance with the Nicene affirmation, and the Church accepted it. This formula and the confession that the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate in Jesus Christ, constituted the accepted norm of Orthodoxy at the beginning of the 5th century. The Son was thus affirmed 'to be of the same being' with the Father and the Holy Spirit. All the three were confessed to be "of the same being" with one another. How then was the incarnation to be understood?

A Rejected Interpretation

The question was answered by about the time when the Cappadocians were engaged in their theological activity by Apollinarius of Laodicea who died c. 390. His concern was to confess Christ's unity against all attempts to divide him.

Two tendencies were there in the Church on this issue. One of them insisted on Christ's unbroken continuity with God the Son and the unity of his incarnate person and life. The other saw in him a man uniquely indwelt by God the Son. Apollinarius preferred the first and opposed the second. Christ was one and indivisible, he made out. In order to establish this truth he had recourse to a short-cut. Christ, he maintained, was fully God, God the Son, as the Council of Nicea had taught. But as man, though he was really human, he was not so in the full sense. The human which God the Son assumed was devoid of the rational principle, the *nous*, constituting mind and will, which in every human person controlled his/her life and activities. As God the Son guided the life of Jesus Christ, Apollinarius held, there was no need in him of a human mind and will.

Apollinarianism was condemned by the Church in a number of councils, including the one at Rome 377 and that of Constantinople in 381. However, in ancient times it was Gregory Nazianzen, one of the Cappadocian trio, who criticized it most pointedly. He said that mind being the faculty in man that guided his actions, it needed salvation most, so that if the Saviour lacked human mind, man had not really been saved. "What has not been assumed has not been saved". The rejection of the Apollinarian teaching added one more element in the norm of Orthodoxy, namely that the manhood of Christ was perfect. As man, he was united in the same being as that of any man.

Two Traditions in the East

Apollinarius was in fact reacting to the theological direction adopted in the East by men of the Antiochene School of thinking, and it was the men of that school who came forward eagerly to refute him and his followers. Like the Arians, the Apollinarians also tried to propagate their views and capture

Christian thinking to their side. But adherents of the Antiochene school faced their challenge.

Started possibly in the 2nd century as a programme for imparting instruction to converts to Christianity in the faith and discipline, the school developed into a centre of learning which produced many leaders, among whom were John Chrysostom, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius himself. Of these men, Chrysostom was a renowned preacher and Theodore an eminent biblical exegete and theological expert. Nestorius was a disciple of Theodore, who died in the same year as the former was promoted to the episcopal rank at Constantinople. The school followed a literalist and rational tradition in biblical exegesis, giving very little place for the mystical element in religion.

On the other side of the spectrum was the Alexandrine School, with its allegorical method in biblical exegesis and mystical leaning in theological pursuit. A galaxy of illustrious men like Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocians adorned its ranks. The mystical character of its theological tradition, which would harbour many intellectually imprecise ideas, and the fame of its leaders made the school more popular in the East than the Antiochene. Christ's unbroken continuity with God and his personal unity were the central factors in its theological affirmation.⁹

Men of the two schools continued to carry forward their respective theological work independently, possibly without either of them noticing what the other was doing. But when

9. The Alexandrine position is clearly reflected in the *Incarnation of the Word* by Athanasius, who wrote it as a young man of eighteen years. See the treatise in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, Vol. IV.

they came to know the findings of each other, the atmosphere was viciated by a spirit of conflict and mutual rivalry. Each of them sought to evaluate the position of the other only on its own grounds, showing no preparedness to understand the other objectively. The Alexandrines, for example, judged the Antiochene teaching in the light of the Alexandrine presuppositions and condemned it as heretical. The Antiochenes, on their part, did the same with reference to the Alexandrines declaring their teaching to constitute a violation of the Christian truth, on the ground of the former's intellectual background.

The Clash between the Traditions

1. The Council of Ephesus in 431

The traditions came to an open clash from 428. The immediate issue was the question of the applicability of the term *Theotokos*, one who gave birth to God, to Mary. Nestorius of the Antiochene School, who was the incumbent of the see of Constantinople, had reservations about it, and Cyril, who occupied the see of Alexandria, insisted that the recognition of the term with reference to the Virgin was indispensable for a sound understanding of Christ's person. Cyril, however, made it clear that his concern was not Mariology but Christology. He made out that a questioning of *Theotokos* with reference to Mary would imply that the child in the womb was not really God incarnate, that thus Nestorius contradicted the faith of Nicea, and that therefore his teaching should be condemned. The argument is valid from the point of view of Cyril and those who agreed with him in theological assumptions, but not so in the light of the tradition maintained in the Antiochene School. This basic truth was not raised in ancient times, and Nestorius was cast out from the communion of the state Church of the Roman Empire. The emperor, Theodosius II, who supported him in the beginning, gave him up in the end and he was exiled.

The treatment meted out to Nestorius did not bring the story to an end. Though, like the emperor, his supporters also abandoned him, they continued to forward the cause for which he had fought. Both sides were involved in an ecclesiastical warfare. Though through the intervention of the emperor that was settled for the time being in 433, the tension continued. It was in that context that the issue of Eutyches was raised in Constantinople, and a third tradition, that of the West which had hitherto been unknown in the East, made its appearance creating a fresh confusion. Some linguistic similarity between it and the Antiochene tradition led the Syrian side¹⁰ and Nestorius himself, who at that time was an old man living in exile, to hail the Western tradition¹¹, definitely not with clear understanding of its theological emphasis. Bishop Leo I of Rome, claiming to be the supreme head of the universal Church as the successor of Apostle Peter, required of both parties in the East to accept his *Tome* and on its basis to settle the dispute.

This plan of Pope Leo was not immediately workable, but it exposed the fact that there were three traditions not two, in the Church - the Alexandrine, the Antiochene and the Western. From 431 the Alexandrine tradition was dominating the field, to the annoyance of the Antiochene. Now Leo of Rome, one of the ablest bishops the Western see had in ancient times, entered the scene, determined to see that the tradition which he represented replaced that of Alexandria. The Antiochenes and a section of churchmen in the East, in their antagonism to the Alexandrines both personally and ideologically, were dis-

10. The *Syrian* is used here for the Antiochene side, and not for the Antiochene Syrian with which the Indian Syrian Church came in contact from 1665 A.D.

11. The Western position was stated in a document prepared by Pope Leo of Rome and sent to the East at this time. This was the *Tome* Nestorius expressed satisfaction over it.

posed to welcome the *Tome*, though not Rome's jurisdictional claims. The Alexandrines did not see the movement of events in its proper perspective. Instead, they saw in the *Tome* only a statement of faith which favoured the Antiochenes, which Ephesus had excluded in 431 and which the Antiochenes themselves had endorsed 433. In this reading the Alexandrines were very superficial, for the *Tome*, composed as it had been in the light of the Western tradition, could be interpreted by them as much in their favour as in theirs by the Antiochenes.¹² The Alexandrine view that the Antiochenes had accepted the council of 431 by the Reunion of 433 was not altogether correct. They had admitted only those points about the council which their leaders had positively endorsed.¹³ Therefore, the Alexandrines read more into the Antiochene admission than the latter had in fact granted.

The Alexandrines adopted two steps in this situation, both of which brought down their prestige in the Church. In the first place, counting possibly on the imperial support which they then enjoyed and their wide popularity in the East, they went out of their way to defend Eutyches. An old monk in Constantinople who had no recognition as a competent theologian, Eutyches was for them a partisan who promoted their

12. It is a fact that the *Tome* did not go into the terminological subtleties of the East. Perhaps the author was not conversant with them. Yet the document insisted on the unity of Christ's person, which was the Alexandrine emphasis as well.

13. See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 12, 23, 57, 58. As we have noted (above p. 131f.), Chalcedon did not accept Ephesus beyond what the Antiochene side had admitted in 433.

cause in the capital.¹⁴ Secondly, they used the second council of Ephesus in 449 to expel from the Church a number of important leaders of the Antiochene side.¹⁵ Though in adopting neither of these steps the Alexandrines can be accused of diluting any theological principle, these actions were not conducive either to bring peace in the Church or to enhance their popularity in the Church. On the other hand, they gave Rome a golden opportunity to organize an Eastern front against the Alexandrine see. The death of emperor Theodosius II in 450 and the coming to power of his elder sister Pulcheria with her husband Marcian helped Rome to assert the papal claims,

II The council of Chalcedon 451

Now the imperial couple, who gave up Alexandria in favour of Rome but aimed to elevate Constantinople, ordered the convening of the council of Chalcedon¹⁶ to carry out the plan. This council which met in 451 ratified the division resulting

14. For the story of Eutyches, see V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 16f. The council minutes (*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, II, i, pp. 100f. This will be henceforth referred to as ACO) show a) that the old monk was not a theological expert, and b) that the synod did not really establish a charge of heresy against him. Therefore the view of Rene Draguet followed by J.N.D. Kelly (See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* p. 40) deserves attention. Eutyches was, in fact, made a scapegoat by his opponents to vent their fury on the Alexandrine side which he defended.

15. second council of Ephesus in 449 deposed a number of men, of whom Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa were virtually condemned by the council of 553 the fifth ecumenical council of the Chalcedonian side, and regarding others nothing is known.

16. For a fairly detailed discussion of the proceedings adopted by the council, see V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 44f.

from the council of 431¹⁷ and caused a fresh split. The way the council of 451 transacted its business is noted in its minutes which, as they have been preserved by the pro-Chalcedonian ecclesiastical tradition, are available.¹⁸ On their basis, which no historian of that tradition can legitimately call in question, following facts are possible to be brought out.

i. Condemnation of Eutyches

Though Chalcedon has a reputation for having condemned the 'heretic' Eutyches, the fact is that his case received no attention at all there. He had been exiled by imperial order soon after the death of Theodosius II. But in his absence the party in favour of Rome and the Antiochenes moved on the assumption that he was a confirmed heretic. They asserted this point again and again, in season and out of season. The atmosphere thus created at the council was such that nobody would dare to raise the question of proof for fear of immediate discrimination and ostracism.

This assumption, to be sure, was indispensable for the party in power, because the *Tome of Leo* on which they banked was a refutation of the supposed heresy of Eutyches. As for the Antiochenes, if Eutyches was not a heretic, they had to invent a heresy in him in their effort to ridicule the Alexandrines. At Chalcedon, Dioscorus made the point that there was no proof in minutes of the earlier councils that Eutyches was a heretic, which R.V. Sellers has misunderstood¹⁹. No one answered the Alexandrine Patriarch. The fact therefore is

17. For the division after the council of 431, see below pp. 148f.

18. These minutes have been published in modern times in Europe by more than one Roman Catholic editor. In this paper the edition of Eduard Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1933, is used.

19. See R.V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon*, S.P.C.K., 1953 V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* p. 51, see also n. 35

that Chalcedon did not bother to prove a charge of heresy against the old monk. It assumed that he was a heretic, for if that was not done, the council would have had no rational basis.

Condemnation of Dioscorus

The person whom the council endeavoured to deal with punctiliously was Dioscorus, the immediate successor of Cyril on the great see of Alexandria. The ingenious way in which this was worked out by his opponents under the able guidance of the legates of Pope Leo of Rome is indeed breath-taking. However, after all the incriminating accusations against his person, in which they indulged consistently, they did not succeed in establishing a single point²⁰.

The party in power adopted five steps in order to achieve its goal.

a) As soon as the assembly was called to order and before any item of business was taken up, the Roman legates saw to it that the Alexandrine Patriarch was removed from his seat in the assembly to a place reserved for persons waiting for trial, on the ground that they had orders from the pope to that effect. This had to be done in spite of the remonstrance voiced by the imperial commissioners, men appointed by the emperors to guide the proceedings of the council²¹.

b) This was followed up a bishop who had been deposed by the council of 449 by filing a charge sheet containing accusations against his person. It should be recalled that all

20. V.C.Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 48f.

21. See *ACO*, II, i, p.66:13 as noted by V.C. Samuel, *op. cit* p. 46, n. 10

the charges in the bishop's suit referred to the council of 449²².

c) Now the trial began by the reading of the minutes of previous council. The charge against Dioscorus was thus a charge against a council. This, in fact, was the plan of Rome. Leo was eager to prove that Dioscorus had dominated the council so that its decisions were the personal decisions of the Patriarch, not of the council. The minutes show that Dioscorus answered every point brought against him from the point of view of Alexandrine Orthodoxy, though these answers were not given due consideration by the commissioners. Thus according to our norms, their judgment cannot be fully defended. Yet they issued their verdict at the end of the day establishing the conciliar character of the decisions of 449²³. This indeed was a serious blow to the Roman legates, but they were not going to yield.

d) The Roman legates waited to see whether the *Tome* would be accepted unanimously by the assembly at its next session, two days later. But this did not happen. There were bishops from the East who raised questions referring to three passages in the document, and some wanted more time to come to a decision²⁴.

e) Now the legates resorted to the last step. That was to hold a meeting of those who supported them, without either the commissioners who were present at all the sessions of the council and a large body of delegates then present at

22. This is noted by *ACO*, II, i, p. 66:14f. and V. C. Samuel *op. cit.* p. 46, n. 13

23. The commissioners judged that five men including Dioscorus were responsible for the decisions of 449. See V.C. Samuel *op. cit.* p. 56; *ACO*, II, i, p. 195:1068

24. See *ACO*, II, i, p. 279 and V.C. Samuel *op. cit.*, p. 58, notes 59-62

Chalcedon,²⁵ with a view to dealing with Dioscorus by themselves. As they were sure that the imperial couple would endorse any decision they took with or without the commissioners, they could move with no fear of consequence. Their plan however to hold a mock trial of the man was foiled by Dioscorus who refused to honour the summonses served on him. In the end, this party meeting passed a resolution deposing Dioscorus, not on any charge of heresy but on his refusal to respond favourably to the assembly's call.²⁶ The action taken by the party council had to be accepted by the rest of the delegates, whether willingly or unwillingly.²⁷

Was, then, Dioscorus a monophysite or a heretic of any description? It is true that at Chalcedon his adversaries tried to combine him with Eutyches and thus make him out to be a heretic, but the fact is that Dioscorus forestalled the effort.²⁸ The evidence we have is therefore clear. It is not for heresy that Dioscorus was deposed,²⁹ but because he had been the chief presiding ecclesiastic over the council of 449 which paid no attention to the *Tome of Leo*, in spite of the Petrine claim which the author had advanced in it. To admit this obvious fact, was felt by Rome to be delicate. It was therefore

25. When summoned by the party council. Dioscorus made this point' though it is either misunderstood or intentionally misrepresented by pro—Chalcedonian historians in general. See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 60f.

26. The verdict of the assembly is given in *ACO* II, i, 237f. 99. See reference in V.C. Samuel., *op. cit.* p. 65

27 There were complaints that at Chalcedon force was exerted on unwilling delegates to extract their signatures. See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* p. 89, n. 1. Also p. 70

28. It is this fact that R.V. Sellers missed. See n. 19 above.

29. At Chalcedon this fact was acknowledged by Anatolius of Constantinople, See V.C. Samuel., *op. cit.* p. 69

necessary for Pope Leo and his legates to assert that Dioscorus had imposed on a council his arbitrary decisions. Further, it was in the interests of Rome, with its claim of universal jurisdiction to degrade Alexandria, which at that time was as powerful in the Church as Rome itself, if not more.

III. Some Facts to be Remembered

Dioscorus was condemned almost in the same way as Nestorius had been done away with two decades earlier. Though several of his friends co-operated with the party in power for this turn of events, they did not seem to have worked to reinstate him, so that for Chalcedon he stood condemned. But his friends succeeded in seeing to it that the council's definition of the faith was so drawn up that they could interpret it neatly within the framework of their tradition. This helped Antiochene partisans in general to accept Chalcedon and avoid a split in the Church of Roman Empire. But it did not bring the problem to an end. Strict Antiochenes saw in the definition of Chalcedon a sort of patchwork which did not face the issue squarely. It was this position which came to be adopted by the Church of Persia in the latter half of the 5th century itself.

A similar development happened on the Alexandrine side as well. A considerable section of them saw in the one *persona* of the *Tome of Leo* the one *hypostasis* and one *prosopon* of their tradition. The adoption of these terms in this way did please them. They could take the 'in two natures' of the definition as an affirmation of the dynamic continuance of the natures after the union. Thus they accepted Chalcedon. But there were strict Alexandrines who found it difficult to adopt such a position.

The Antiochene leaders worked out a terminological adjustment in accepting the definition of Chalcedon. The definition

of the council affirmed that Jesus Christ was one *hypostasis* and one *prosopon* made known *in two natures*. Of these three phrases, the first had been rejected by the Antiochenes outright. In fact, that was the point made against them by the Alexandrines. But the second And third phrases represented their position all along. They insisted further that each of the two natures, if it was to be real and functioning, must have its *hypostasis*. On this basis the Antiochenes had made out that Jesus Christ was *two natures and two hypostases united in one prosopon*.

We have seen what *hypostasis* meant³⁰. It was in a word an individuated *ousia*-the abstract and common reality made concrete in a particular. The individuation of the *ousia* is an inward process. Though as concerns God, it is complete in the eternal realm; with reference to creatures it happens all the time, in the case of every particular being. Any *hypostasis*, whether it be divine or created, is differentiated from another in its *prosopon*. To be sure, the *hypostasis* and the *prosopon* go together, so that every particular has its inward reality in its *hypostasis*, and is recognized in its particularity by means of its *prosopon*.³¹

It is interesting to note that the *Tome of Leo* helped the Antiochenes to see the possibility of this terminological adjustment. The doctrinal letter of the Pope had made three emphases. One: that Jesus Christ was one *persona*. This Latin word did not have the subtlety implied in the Greek terms *hypostasis* and *prosopon*. It did not, in fact, mean anything

30. See above p. 137.

31. See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 12, 198f. Theodoret of Cyrus, an Antiochene leader who made his adjustment, wrote to John of Agae, a fellow Antiochene that Chalcedon used *hypostasis* in the sense of *prosopon*. Here also Sellers does not see the issue. See Sellers *op. cit.* p. 213, n. 2

more than the *prosopon* of the Greeks. Thus the one *persona* of the *Tome* could be acceptable to the Antiochenes. Two : as the document insisted on the 'In two natures', that created no problem for them. Three : the two natures of the *Tome* were such that each of them performed what is proper to it in communion with the other. This emphasis satisfied the Antiochenes with reference to their insistence on the two *hypostases*.

Three Positions in the East

Following the council of Chalcedon, then, the East had three traditions, each interpreting the person of Jesus Christ in its own way. They were :

- I The Alexandrine
- II The Antiochene
- and III The Chalcedonian

A brief resume of each of them is given below, with a view to seeing the difference and agreement between them.

I The Alexandrine Position

The Alexandrine side accepts the Cappadocian affirmation regarding God as one *ousia* and three *hypostases*. In his letters to Nestorius, Cyril of Alexandria insists on the authority of the Nicene Creed that God the Son, who is united with the Father in the same *ousia*, or being, came down from heaven and became incarnate and made man. He is Jesus Christ. Conceived in the Virgin's womb and born from her, he is God incarnate, and the mother who brought him forth is *Theotokos*. Jesus Christ has thus an unbroken continuity with God the Son and through him with the blessed Trinity. In becoming man, God was not changed to the human, nor was

the human which he became transferred to the divine; but while remaining what he eternally is, God the Son united to himself the human in reality and fulness. Because of this union, Jesus Christ is a unity. 'Continuity with God' and 'unity of the incarnate life' -these are the two irreducible affirmations of Cyril.

In seeking to conserve these emphases, Cyril employed a number of phrases. a) Jesus Christ is 'from two natures' *ek duo physeon*. The 'from' is not meant to indicate exclusively the before of the union, but to the indivisibility of the natures that came into the union. In other words, Jesus Christ is composed of the two natures of Godhead and manhood which continue in him irreducibly and indivisibly. b) The union of the natures is *hypostatic*, which Cyril himself explained as 'inward and real'. c) In consequence of this union all the words and deeds recorded about Christ in the gospels were expressions that came forth from the state of union. d) Jesus Christ is at once fully God and fully man. The divine and the human were united at the very moment when 'the Holy Spirit came upon' the Virgin and "the power of the Most High" overshadowed her. The Christ in whom God and man are thus united indivisibly was carried in her womb by the Virgin. He was God incarnate to whom Mary gave birth, and she was *Theotokos*-one who bore God. As God, he has the same being as of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and as man, he has the same being as any man, only without sin. e) The one *hypostasis* is the incarnate *hypostasis* of God the son, which is composite. As we shall see, what is made out here is emphasized more fully by Severus of Antioch. f) To explain

this state of Christ's unity Cyril found a convenient phrase, 'one incarnate nature of God the Word' as a legacy from Athanasius the Great. He took it over and made it central in his interpretation of the doctrine³²

II The Antiochene Position

Antiochene theologians also accepted the Cappadocian affirmation concerning God as one *ousia* and three *hypostases*. One of the *hypostases*, God the Son, took upon himself a dispensation for the salvation of the human race. He through whom this saving work was accomplished by God is Jesus Christ.

God the Son is an eternal person, *hypostasis*, in himself complete and beyond all limitations, including those of time and space. On the strength of this emphasis the Antiochenes insisted that the 'came down' of the Nicene Creed was not meant to be taken in a literal sense; it signified on the other hand God's economy. Antiochene theologians were clear that God does not 'become', because by nature God transcends the condition of all 'becoming'. In this connection the Antiochene exposition of the words of John 1:14, 'the Word became flesh' should be noted. These words, they maintained, should be interpreted only with that follows, namely 'and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth'. It is because of his 'dwelling among us, full of grace and truth' that we confess that God 'the Word became flesh' in him. God's dwelling among us is not by a limiting of himself exclusively and localizing within the con-

32. In modern times Western scholars have shown that the phrase, 'one incarnate nature....' had originally been coined by the Apollinarian school in order to build on it their theory of a truncated manhood in Christ. It is a fact however that neither Cyril nor any theologian of the Church tradition that followed him, adopted that emphasis.

fines of a physical frame.³³ The Antiochines would admit, on the other hand, that God's indwelling belonged to his economy, and they affirmed that God raises the human to his glory and fills it with his authority. This has happened in Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ there was a unique and unrepeatable divine economy. God the Son, remaining God unchangeably, established with the human, which was nature with its *hypostasis*, a conjunction—*sunapheia*—at the very moment when 'the Holy Spirit came upon' the Virgin and 'the power of the Most High' overshadowed her.³⁴ It is the infant thus formed, whom the Virgin conceived and whom she carried in her womb and brought forth. The human that was individuated with its very formation grew into fulness and the Virgin mother brought him forth in due course. The infant was indeed Christ and the mother was *Christotokos*—one who gave birth to Christ. Since the infant was God conjoined with man, the mother could be called *Theotokos*—one who gave birth to God—as a sort of concession to the Alexandrines.³⁵ After being born, the human continued to be human in its union with God, undergoing all normal experiences natural to everyman, only without sin. Jesus Christ was indeed fully God and fully man, two natures with

33. Alexandrines also admitted that God cannot be localized. In his *Incarnation of the Word* Athanasius had made this point. Cyril and others also accepted it.

34. That the Antiochenes insisted on a time gap between the formation of the embryo and the union of the natures in support of their two-nature formula was an Alexandrine accusation, which Antiochenes definitely rejected.

35. *Theotokos* is an Alexandrine term, reflecting the mystical strand in their theological thinking. But theologically the Alexandrines did not say anything more than what the Antiochenes affirmed. See V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 196 f.

their respective *hypostases* united or conjoined at the level of the *prosopon*. He was, therefore, one person (*prosopon*) in whom the two natures of Godhead and manhood as individuated realities (*hypostases*) are irreducibly and indivisibly united. He was not two persons morally united, as the Antiochene position has been portrayed by their opponents: he was indivisibly one, not at the level of *hypostasis*, but at that of *prosopon*.

A careful look at the positions of the Alexandrines and the Antiochenes will show that they do not have the same tradition in the use of terminology. But if we go beyond this difference to the ideas conserved by them, we shall realize that they agree in all essential points. There is, however, an important emphasis, where their traditions do not converge. This has reference to the interpretation of the term *hypostasis*. The Antiochenes stay here with the Cappadocian tradition. Cyril of Alexandria probably, and Severus of Antioch very definitely, went beyond the Cappadocians in this regard. The expression 'hypostatic union', as we shall see in a moment, was not explained by Severus merely on the strength of what these fathers had conserved with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity.

III The Chalcedonian Position : Conflict in the East between those who accept and those who reject Chalcedon

In discussing Chalcedon we have looked into the way Dioscorus of Alexandria was deposed by the council. Following this action, the council adopted a definition of the faith.³⁶

36. A fuller discussion of the Alexandrine criticism of the Antiochene teaching is included in V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 276 f. The Chalcedonian definition is given by T.H. Bindley: *The Oecumenical Documents of the Faith*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1950. For a summary and comments, see V.C. Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 183-193

excluding a number of positions on the one hand and conserving affirmations that should be confessed on the other, The fact that in refusing to acknowledge the council and its doctrinal formulations Dioscorus and those who followed his lead were not guilty of sanctioning the positions excluded by Chalcedon is clear enough; it is admitted even by their critics. What, then, was their teaching *vis a vis* the pro-Chalcedonian tradition?

Following the council, its opponents, faced with a hostile political atmosphere, had to lie low for a period of about two decades. Then the political climate changed in their favour, and they came out to challenge the council and particularly the *Tome of Leo*. Theologically, the issue they raised had reference to the one *hypostasis* of the council's definition with its, in two natures'. They argued, in substance, that a nature, taken in an abstract sense, would not exist by itself, unless it subsisted in a concrete particular. Therefore, the 'two natures' of the Chalcedonian definition must be two persons, which Nestorius was believed to have taught and which the council of 431 had condemned.

The first two decades of the 6th century was the period when the two sides clashed. On the Chalcedonian side there was then John the Grammarian,³⁷ who was later made bishop of Caesarea by that body, and on the other side there was Severus who became Patriarch of Antioch in 512. Besides, there were others on both sides. The Chalcedonian body had Leontius of Byzantium who followed up the teaching of the Grammarian. It is the exposition of Leontius that came to be adopted as the official teaching by the Chalcedonian Church tradition.

Severus and the Grammarian Confronted each other. The

37. A Grammarian in those times was a teacher.

debate between them can be brought out on the basis of an important work of the former,³⁸ incorporating a large number of passages from a treatise of the latter. The issue on which they carried on the dispute was very much tied up with the use of terms.

The Grammarian bears witness to the fact that by his time the Chalcedonian side in the East had begun to move away from Chalcedon's anti-Alexandrine orientation to a position in which they sought to expound Chalcedon within an Alexandrine setting. Out of this concern the Grammarian made out that the phrases used by Cyril, namely the 'from two natures' and the 'one incarnate nature of God the Word', which Chalcedon had in fact ignored, were Orthodox and acceptable, but to them should be added the 'in two natures' of Chalcedon. Thus there were then three phrases with the term nature—*physis* in Greek—acceptable to the pro-Chalcedonian tradition in the East, so that how they should be taken was the most legitimate question. The Grammarian defined the term, which, with a significant difference, Severus also accepted. The term *nature—physis*—means either the common as in an *ousia*, or a particular as in a *hypostasis*. In other words, *physis* referred in certain contexts to the common reality behind the particulars of a class, and in certain others it pointed to the particular itself. So far the Grammarian and Severus agreed.

As regards the use of the term in the phrases, they were

38. Originally written in Greek, this book now survives only in an ancient Syriac translation. It has been published in modern times in the Syriac with a rendering into a European language by *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*. See *Liber Contra Impium Grammaticum*, ed. Joseph Lebon, Vol. III, *Scriptores Syri*, Tomus 58, Louvain, 1967. The notes in this paper are from the Syriac version, which is the original that we have now.

not in agreement. The Grammarian maintained that in the 'from two natures' and the 'in two natures' *nature* referred to the common, namely *ousia*, and in the 'one incarnate nature....' it pointed to the one person of God the Son. This means that, for the Grammarian, in Jesus Christ Godhead—the common reality behind the three persons—and manhood—the common reality behind all human beings—came to a union, and that they continued in him. But the 'one incarnate nature....' affirmed that Jesus Christ was God the Son in his incarnate state. The Grammarian's emphasis here is that in the incarnation God the Son united to his *hypostasis* the common reality underlying all human beings, in addition to the divine nature which he has eternally in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The ingenuity evinced here is indeed remarkable.³⁹ The Grammarian conserved the integrity of God the Son in the incarnation, but with reference to the human he maintained only that it was *anupostatos* or without a *hypostasis*. "As we have learned", he writes, "from the holy fathers that we should affirm Christ to be consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us, we confess that he is two natures, namely in two *ousias*".⁴⁰

The Grammarian has obviously received his inspiration from Platonic notion of *eidos* or idea. The idea, of which a particular thing existing in the world is a copy, is there in a world of its own apart from all particular beings. He could therefore draw a sharp differentiation between *ousia* and *hypostasis* and make out with particular reference to the manhood that it exists by itself apart from all human beings, and that God the

39. As we have noted already, Chalcedon affirmed that Jesus Christ was one *hypostasis* and one *prosopon* made known 'in two natures'. The critics, following the Alexandrine tradition taught that Christ was 'from two natures', '*hypostatic union*', one *hypostasis* and one *prosopon*' and 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'.

40. *Contra Gram.* (Syriac) p. 151. The 'consubstantial' means having the same being.

Son united it to himself in the incarnation. He saved himself however, from falling into the same anomaly with reference to Godhead by admitting the formula of 'one incarnate nature of God the Word', taking *nature* in the sense of *hypostasis*. The question, can a human, without a *hypostasis*, come into being and live in reality in the concrete world of time and space as a historical figure, apparently does not bother the Grammarian. It is clear that he does not want to go beyond the terminological tradition of the Cappadocians in discussing the incarnation. As we have seen, it is the mistake which the Antiochene theologians also had committed with reference to the term *hypostasis*,

Severus found the Grammarian's defence of the 'in two natures' thoroughly unconvincing and laughed at it. His own intellectual background was more Aristotelian than Platonic. Severus also sees in the *ousia* the common and admits that it is real, but he does not grant that the *ousia* exists in such wise as to enable the *ousia* of God and the *ousia* of man to come together at the level of the common. *Ousia* of God, insists Severus, includes the Holy Trinity and of man holds within it all human beings, though we can conceive in our minds a logical differentiation between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. To say that the *ousia* of God and the *ousia* of man are united in Christ has therefore no meaning. For this reason, the union of the natures in Christ, though nature can mean either *ousia* or *hypostasis*, must be at the level of the latter. It was, for instance, God the Word who became incarnate by uniting to himself the human, or the flesh endowed with an intelligent and rational soul. In expounding the phrase 'from two natures' *ek duo physeon*- Severus says that "Jesus Christ was formed of the one *hypostasis* of the Word and one flesh endowed with mind and reason that he is the "one incarnate nature and *hypostasis* of the Word."⁴¹

41. *Contra. Gram. op. cit.* p. 180

That his interpretation of the doctrine was criticized by persons belonging to the pro-Chalcedonian tradition is noted by Severus. "What, then, in confessing that Christ is from two natures, are you saying that he is from two *prosopa*?"⁴² Severus answers: "If the human was affirmed to have been formed by itself apart from union with God the Son, that human would be an independent *hypostasis* with its own *prosopon*". The manhood of Christ was not formed independent of the union with God the Son. The human came into being in the womb of Mary, clarifies Severus, only in union with God the Son. Before the union, the flesh did not exist, but at the very moment when he was conceived, it (the flesh) came *to be* in union with God the Word and received the beginning of existence. The union and the coming into being of the flesh happened at once without any time gap between them. The child, for instance, did not receive the beginning of existence by itself in the womb of the Virgin. The Word who is before the ages created the flesh endowed with mind and reason in union with himself, and thus it came into being.⁴³

The significance of this teaching of Severus should be specially noted. We can see here the concern of theologians of the Antiochene School clearly met by Severus, who continues with the Alexandrine tradition. The difference between Severus and an Antiochene theologian like Babai Magna at this point is that the former stands by the *hypostatic* union, but the latter, being stuck with the Cappadocian interpretation of *hypostasis*, admits only the *prosopic* union. If this divergence could be ironed out, the two men could agree more than either of them with the Neo-Chalcedonian tradition in the East, of which John the Grammarian was one of the early exponents.

The *hypostasis*, admits Severus, participates in the *ousia*

42. *Contra. Gram. op. cit.*, p. 181

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 183f.

but on this account the former cannot be identified with the latter, or vice versa. He also acknowledges that, while Christ is affirmed to be one *hypostasis* and it is one flesh endowed with mind and soul that God the Word united to himself, the human race as a whole and all human beings individually have the benefit due to him by grace⁴⁴.

The term nature-*physis*-in the phrase 'from two natures' *ek duo phuseon*-points on the one hand to God the Son, and on the other to the particular flesh endowed with mind and reason which the former united to himself. Though the former is a *hypostasis* and a *prosopon* in his own right and eternally God, the latter became *hypostatic* only in its union with the former. Therefore, the latter is not a *hypostasis*, neither is it a *prosopon*, and Jesus Christ is God the Son in his incarnate state.

Between John the Grammarian and Severus of Antioch the real monophysite was certainly the former, not the latter, because it was he who affirmed of Christ a sort of ethereal humanity, which existed only in the mind of the theologian. That may be the reason why pro-Chalcedonian historians in general have passed him by and the Church of that tradition ignores him in favour of another luminary, Leontius of Byzantium, who came to fame possibly in the thirties of the 6th century. Severus of Antioch had to leave Antioch in 518 on account of political disfavour. Since then till his death in 538, with the exception of about two years when he was in Constantinople, the Patriarch had to live in seclusion in Upper Egypt. Though in none of his writings the name of Leontius appears, the latter has a refutation of Severus. However, the question as to how far Leontius really understood his opponent

44. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

is a moot one. From the point of view of modern historians in general, Leontius propounded a theory, abandoning the *anupostatos* manhood of the times. It is claimed that in place of the *anupostatos* - without a *hypostasis* - Leontius offered an *anupostatos* manhood. The theory is known as *enhypostasia*, which the Byzantine East accepts as its official teaching.

The Grammarian's interpretation stood in need of correction, though he was unwilling to take it from Severus. Leontius is credited to have offered it to the satisfaction of the Byzantine Orthodox tradition and John of Damascus sanctified it. The revised edition of *A History of the Christian Church* by Williston Walker writes about Leontius: "He viewed the human nature neither as having its own *hypostasis* (centre of being) nor as being abstract and impersonal, but as united with the Word (*anupostatos*) as its subject, and never existed as an entity independently of Him". The revisers note, to their credit, that Severus had 'foreshadowed' Leontius.⁴⁵ They could, in fact, have said more, had they read Severus more objectively and without their inherited prejudice in favour of Chalcedon. The truth of the matter is that Chalcedon divided Leontius from Severus, as it has done with the Church down the centuries, even to our times.

We have not answered the crucial question, Who is the one *hypostasis* and *prosopon* of Christ? For Leontius, it is the one *hypostasis* and *prosopon* of God the Son or God the Word. But the manhood of Christ was not abstract and impersonal; it is concrete and personal *in* the person-*hypostasis* and *prosopon*-of God the Son. The personal reality of the human is not independent, but is in and with the person of the Son.

Severus who wrote about two decades before Leontius

45. See the 1958 edition, p. 142

maintained the position, which we have summarized already. He had maintained that the one *hypostasis* of Jesus Christ is composite, namely the eternally complete and uncreated *hypostasis* of God the Son united with the created *hypostasis* of the human. The human however is not independent, but with its concreteness and personal status it is indivisibly united with the person of God the Son. We can see thus that Severus had already worked out the position which Leontius adopted using technical terms in his own way.

There is a question here coming from the Antiochene side. In fact, Babai Magna of the Persian Church raised it later. The *hypostasis* of God the Son is eternally perfect and fixed without admitting additions.⁴⁶ How, then, can God the Son receive into union the human at the level of the *hypostasis*? The question is not as difficult from a theological point of view, as Babai had imagined. All our talk about God implies ideas which our language is not adequate to explain neatly. Creation, for instance, is not a purely rational concept. Christian theology does not mean by it that God who lacks perfection brings the world into being to make up the deficiency in him. We confess, on the other hand, that the eternally perfect God created the world as an expression of love which he is. In the same way, in redemption also the God of Love takes the fallen man into union with himself, in his very *hypostasis*.

What then about the *prosopon* of Christ? All the three traditions confess that Jesus Christ was one *prosopon*. For the Alexandrines, *hypostasis* and *prosopon* go together as two aspects of 'person' the inward and the outward, so that a special treatment is not offered by them.

46. Babai Magna, *Liber Unione*, CSCO, Vol. 79, *Scriptores Syri* 34, 1953 Syriac

There is a final point which deserves our attention. In explaining the *hypostatic union*, Cyril and Severus do not stay exclusively with the Cappadocian interpretation of the term *hypostasis*. For Cyril, as we have seen, it meant that the union was inward and real. *Hypostasis* is an individuated *ousia*, and individuation is an inward process. On this basis Severus could affirm that every thought which Christ entertained, every word which he spoke, and every deed which he performed came forth from the union of the natures. In the incarnation the human attained its highest point, triumphing over all temptations and keeping to the perfection relative to every stage in life. Regarding the words and deeds of Christ, a distinction is possible to be drawn between those that are divine and those that are human, signifying that in reality he is at once God and man. But in him they are expressions of the union.

Conclusion

The 5th century councils caused the one Church to be divided into three bodies. From 430 the conflict between theologians and Church leaders of the Alexandrine and the Antiochene Schools had split the Church in the East into two camps. While each of them was struggling to gain the upper hand in the conflict, two other forces came on the scene, Rome and Constantinople, and after Chalcedon it was these two sees that dominated the Church.

Between the two 5th century councils there was one significant difference. Nestorius whom the council of 431 condemned could be adversely judged as much for his questioning of an unqualified ascription of *Theotokos* to Mary, as for the affirmation of two natures with their respective *hypostases* with reference to our Lord. Whatever be their justification from the Antiochene point of view, these could not carry conviction to many outside the Antiochene circles. In the end, the Antiochene side had to make common cause with the

Chalcedonian side and save themselves from total annihilation in the Roman Empire.

The Alexandrine side, on the other hand, had a vitality to sustain itself in the Empire even against extreme odds, and the political favour which it obtained for over twentyfive years from 482 helped it to strengthen itself. Its theology could be misrepresented on the ground of a combination of the two phrases 'from two natures' and 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'. If the *ek* –from– is taken as referring to the before, and the one to the after, of the union, the criticism' is indeed valid. But that is not what they meant by the phrases, so that the misunderstanding has no basis in reality.

It is indeed satisfying that much work is being done in our times to help the Churches to reach understanding among them. May the Spirit of God guide them to the goal of unity, in agreement with the divine plan.

Some Comments on Chalcedon and Its Orthodox Critics

Dietrich Ritschl

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 presented by no means a final conclusion to the christological problems raised at the end of the 4th century in Apollinaris' attempt at explaining the relation between the *logos* and the man Jesus.¹ The negative propositions promulgated by the council at best determined the territory within which positive statements about the one person of Jesus Christ could be made. The interest of both the Alexandrian and the Antiochian Schools in reaching such positive affirmations was not met by the decisions of 451.² Here a double question arises: (1) Has the formula of 451 made concessions to the Nestorians (based perhaps on implicit permissions in the *Tome of Leo*)? And, (2) has the insight into the hypostatic union—prefigured and supported by Cyril—been obscured by the Council of Chalcedon?

The Orthodox critics of Chalcedon answer both these questions in the affirmative. The non-Chalcedonian tradition of the ancient Orthodox Church (not, of course, including the

1. Cf. E. Muhlenberg, *Apollinaris von Laodicea*, Gottingen (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 1969.

2. Cf. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalcedon*, III, Wurzburg (Echter-Verlag), 1954.

Nestorians) is based upon the trinitarian theology of the councils of 325 and 381, on Cyril's Second and Third Letters to Nestorius (including the 12 anathemas), and it accepts the *Henotikon* of 482 as Orthodox. Severus of Antioch (d. 538) is claimed an important witness. Prof. V.C. Samuel's theological work³ is a major contribution toward clarifying the complex developments during and after the council of Chalcedon. And more than that : His work is not only historical and analytic but theological and constructive. Fr. Samuel bases significant theological propositions and positions on his penetrating analysis into the reasons and logical conditions for the various components of the christological development in the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries. We in the Western Church are profoundly grateful for such interpretative and constructive work.

1. Western Difficulties with Chalcedon

Here we need not dwell on typically Protestant criticisms of Greek patristic thought as they were expressed in the school of liberal-theological historicism in the 19th century. We will, however, not deny our respect for much impressive historical research done by scholars of that period. A.v. Harnack, F. Loofs and many others will always be remembered as pioneers of critical-historical research even though we may not accept their lamentations over the ontology which was part of the early fathers' theological thinking.⁴

3. E.g. his main book *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined, A Historical and Theological Survey*, Madras (The Diocesan Press), 1977; cf. also his "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word", in P. Gregorios/Wm. Lazareth/N.A. Nissiotis (ed.), *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?* Geneva (WCC Publications), 1981, pp. 76-92.

4. I have criticized these approaches in *Memory and Hope, An Inquiry Concerning the Presence of Christ*, New York (Macmillan Co.), 1967, Ch. II "Union with Christ in Greek Patristic Thought" and in *Athanasius*, Zurich (EVZ-Verlag), 1964.

The difficulties Western theologians and Churches today have with Chalcedon are of a different kind. It is a sense of missing important elements in the totality of what can and what ought to be said about Jesus Christ. This deficiency is noted by no means only with regard to Chalcedon. It also concerns other conciliar decisions—decisions with which we agree! - e.g. that of the Council of Constantinople in 381⁵. We feel that the relation between Jesus Christ and e.g. history is not really explained in the ancient statements, or the eschatological dimension, or the inner connection between christology and ethics, and so forth. I need not go into details at this point. The problem for Westerners is this: while we—at least the trained theologians—indeed have well grounded sympathies or critical thoughts concerning this or that classical position (e.g. for Cyril and against Eutyches), we cannot help feeling that *our* problems are not fully taken care of by the advocates of classical positions or councils. We *learn* about their decisions and controversies, we *study* the writings of the fathers (wished we did more of that!) and we indeed *come up* with preferences and judgments which may please our friends in the Orthodox Churches, but we are inclined to treat all of the issues at stake in patristic controversies as issues “in the second rank”, as it were. By saying “we” I mean the Western theologians who are not experts in patristic studies. These experts, it must be admitted, have little influence on the Church at large or on individual Christians in the parishes.

Thus the council of Chalcedon functions in the mind of Church at large in the West mainly in the very negative terms in which the decisive portion is articulated: Do *not* think of our Lord in this (Eutychian) or in that (Nestorian) way! For most people in theology and in the Church, this suffices. It

5. Cf. my analysis in “Warum wir Konzilien feiern—Konstantinopel 381”, in *Konzepte* (coll. essays), Munich (Chr. Kaiser), 1986 pp. 84–93.

could well be that the Western part of the Church in the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries held a very similar view. In any case, after the "interlude" of the 5th Ecumenical Council in 553 the Lateran Synod of 649 and indeed the 6th Ecumenical council of 680/81 in Constantinople seemed to have rehabilitated the decision of Chalcedon in much the same way. Thus the general impression in the West was (and is!) that, after the zig—zag of imperially advocated and ecclesiastically accepted decisions such as Chalcedon (451), the Henoticon (482) the Three Chapters (543)/4), the 5th Ecumenical Council (553), the rehabilitation of Maximus Confessor (649) and the 6th Ecumenical Council (680/81), *Chalcedon was eventually reaffirmed*. The average Western theologian has no difficulties with this general view although he may not be interested in the details.

The fascinating aspect of Professor Samuel's theological work is the fact that he is aware of such feelings of deficiency with reference to the ancient theological positions. This is brought out very clearly in the concluding remarks of his book on the relevance of the ancient texts for the Church today, especially the Church in an Indian context (pp.296-304). But this does not diminish his deep respect for the fathers and his conviction that their views, insights and positions are constitutive for a sound theology today. This is an admirable approach which sets a formidable example for theologians in East and West.

2. The Problem about the Term "Monophysitism"

Fr. Samuel upholds his critical assessment of the Council of Chalcedon. In doing so he not merely follows his Church's official teaching but he penetrates deeply into the history of the council, ponders the theological possibilities given at that time and comes up with an interpretation that ultimately suggests a denial of the council's theological statements. His

critique is subtle and defferentiated. He can think of a rapprochement of the main concerns of Alexandrian and Antiochian Christologies⁶. And indeed, there have been Ecumenical Consultations—even though unofficial—in Aarhus (1964), in Bristol (1967), in Geneva (1970) and in Addis Ababa (1971) at which Fr. Samuel's readiness for conciliatory discussions has been demonstrated⁷.

What is the main theological basis for the non-Chalcedonian critique of Chalcedon? The general label "Monophysitism"⁸ is all too vague. Fr. Samuel denies that his chief witness, Severus of Antioch, was a "Monophysite" in his Christology. His arguments are convincing. This leaves us with the historical question of how to classify the various groups after Chalcedon. A classification alone, however, will not bring about a cognitive gain in theological content. But it would be helpful to know how the major parties and groups constituted themselves theologically and how they were related to tradition and to the council of 451. It seems that earlier attempts at classifying, e.g. the division into (1) Chalcedonian (2) monophysites and (3) Nestorians, cannot stand up against the facts of the texts available. Moreover, the enormous emphasis on political and ethnic factors, stresses e.g. by Harnack, does not satisfactorily explain the emergence of the non-Chalcedonian Churches.

Ch. Moeller, D. B. Evans and S. Helmer⁹ have shown

6. Cf. R.V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*, London 1940.

7. The statements agreed upon there are reprinted in *Does chalcedon Divide or Unite?* (see FN 3), pp. 3-26.

8. Cf. e.g. W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, Cambridge 1972, and the book by Roberta C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug, and Jacob of Sarug*, London (OUP) 1976, praised by Frend, in a review in *Journ. of Eccl. Hist.* Vol. 28, 3, July 1977, pp. 319-20

9. S. Helmer, *Der Neuchalkedonismus, Geschichte, Berechtigung und Bedeutung eines dogmengeschichtlichen Begriffs*, Dissertation Bonn, 1962.

convincingly that a distinction between strict Chalcedonians (Moeller: *Chalcedonisme strict*''') and Neo-Chalcedonianism is necessary. The former stresses the integrity of the two natures in Christ (including Leontius of Byzantium who, however, contrary to F. Loofs' analysis of 1887, actually does not really belong here since he, in fact, taught that the subject of the Incarnation gave up his *hypostasis* in favour of a *tertium quid*); the latter emphasised the *enhypostasis* of the human nature of our Lord in the *hypostasis* of the divine Logos. They, e.g. John the Grammarian, claimed to maintain a position which Cyril of Alexandria would have advocated had he been alive at that later time. We will return to their concept later. In addition to these two movements one must distinguish the group represented by Severus of Antioch on the one hand and the real monophysites on the other.

If this is tenable, five movements (or sections of the Church) can be distinguished:

- the Antiochians or Nestorians who, at the latest, were outruled by the "Three Chapters", in 543 and by the 5th Ecumenical Council,
- the "strict" Chalcedonians,
- the Neo-Chalcedonians, notably John the Grammarian, who tolerated Cyril's *mia physis*-formula on the basis of a dyophysitic concept and who clearly delineated his position against the Nestorians, claiming support by Cyril in sketching his understanding of *enhypostasis*,
- the "Severians",
- the monophysites.¹⁰

10. See to the question of a classification S. Helmer, *op. cit.*, chaps. I-IV.; cf. also H. Stickelberger, *Ipsa assumptione creatur*, Bern (p. Lang), 1979, an interesting book on Karl Barth's use of the concept of *enhypostasis*; an excellent discussion of the patristic background is found in Paragraph 4.

Fr. Samuel discusses the development towards these positions in "Part Two" of his book. In his article on "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" he clearly defends Severus against the charge of monophysitism and demonstrates his faithfulness to Cyril of Alexandria. Julian of Halicarnassus, however, is shown to have taught docetism and monophysitism in maintaining that Christ in his incorruptible body had no involvement in the fallen state of the human race.

3. The Trinitarian Grounding of the Concept of Hypostatic Union

J. Lebon has said that the position of the Severian non-Chalcedonians should actually be called "pre-chalcedonienne" since it took its main point of departure from Cyril and from the trinitarian theology of the 4th century. It is true, however, that all parties claimed faithfulness to these highly respected sources of Orthodoxy, but for Severus this is true in the particular sense that his is an Incarnation-theology from beginning to end. "One incarnate nature" was for Severus not equated with *one ousia*. At this Point terminological differences are of some importance: while the Chalcedonians, in particular the Neo-Chalcedonians (John the Grammarian) took *physis* in the sense of *ousia*, Severus spoke of *ousia* in the original trinitarian sense and equated *physis* with *hypostasis*. The two *hypostasis* (*physeis*), however, did not co-exist, so to speak, before the Incarnation as if the human nature were co-eternal with the trinitarian *hypostasis* of the Son. Hence, Christ "of two natures" – a correct statement according to Severus – cannot possibly mean that before the Incarnation (the conception of the child Jesus) there existed–existed co-eternally or parallel – two natures. (Severus rightly criticizes the "symmetrical" use of language with regard to the "two natures" as if they were compatible entities.) The union of the natures was hypostatic, i.e., the divinity of the (trinitarian) Son comes together with everything that an individual

manhood connotes. Fr. Samuel quotes convincingly from Severus' *Philalethes* that in the Incarnation of the Word God the Son himself became incarnate by becoming one with individuated humanity and that this incarnate Word is a person.

However, the *oneness* of the Word and man in the hypostatic union is composite in the sense that neither Godhead nor humanity were deminished or lost. Nor were the two confused or mixed into some third entity, but the two natures are hypostatically united maintaining their respective properties.

Prof. Samuel at this point rightly asks why then the Severian section of the Church did not freely speak of "two natures". It was merely for the fear of coming too close to the Nestorian error of turning such concept into a doctrine of two persons. Thus the non-Chalcedonians for fear of Nestorianism speak of the "One Incarnate nature of God the Word" (meaning thereby "of two natures") while the (neo-) Chalcedonians for fear of Eutychianism speak of Christ "in two natures".

4. Conclusions

We must forgo a discussion on some interesting questions, such as (1) Why did the Severians not accept the 5th Ecumenical Council? (2) Why did the 6th Ecumenical Council speak of Severus' "impious" teaching? (3) What was the inner connection between monothelitism and the tradition of the Severians? These questions are connected with the open problems in the interpretation of Cyril of Alexandria whose authority was appealed to by most parties concerned.

The tension between Severus and John the Grammarian is regrettable. Moreover, the intention behind the "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" and the *Enhypostasis* of the neo-Chalcedonians is of such subtle dimensions that Western theology can only wish to learn from both, Severus and the neo-Chalcedonians. Some Western authors have drawn attention to the enormous theological and epistemological implications of a christology which is based ultimately on Cyril and on the trinitarian theology of the 4th century, notably Athanasius. It was above all professor T. F. Torrance who has attempted to show that here lie the promising beginnings of a theology (or philosophy of science) which can overcome dualism. His thesis is that these theologians of the Incarnation have produced insights into the fallacy of cosmological and philosophical dualism that has only been fully unmasked in 20th century physics. Thus the all-embracing effect of the Incarnation not only permits thoughts such as H. Stickelberger maintains K. Barth had found helpful in combatting the anthropological idea of autonomous powers or authorities. It also permits new and most helpful concepts concerning the ultimate reconciliation¹¹ between forces and entities formerly thought of as being dualistically opposed to each other. I am not sure whether T. F. Torrance can rightly claim to find direct explications of such helpful theories in Cyril and the fathers who followed him. But it does seem to me that the non-Chalcedonians in particular hold some treasures which we are yet to discover. Fr. Samuel's life-long scholarly work is a tremendous contribution toward such discovery. His publications are of great ecumenical importance with respect to the relation between the ancient Orthodox Churches and the Chalcedonians. And the Western Churches can learn directly from this constructive discourse. Patristic scholarship can learn to re-assess the

11. See e.g. T. F. Torrance's book *Theology in Reconciliation*, London (Geoffrey Chapman) 1975.

movements traditionally labelled "monophysite". Moreover, theology in East and West can take up the challenge and re-visit genuine Incarnation-theologies of the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries in order to equip itself with powerful instruments for overcoming dualistic concepts in cosmology, anthropology and in political ethics.

Violence and Non-violence

Lukas Vischer

For many years, V. C. Samuel was an active member of the Faith and Order Commission. During this time he made many valuable contributions to the debate on the unity of the Church. I remember with special gratitude his participation in the dialogue between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox theologians which was arranged by the Faith and Order Secretariat in the years 1964-1970. V. C. Samuel was one of the outstanding figures in these conversations. He read several papers on controversial subjects and shared in the drafting of the agreed statements which resulted from the talks. He succeeded in presenting his own tradition with both dignity and openness. He inspired confidence.

When I think of V. C. Samuel three aspects stand out. Firstly, his deep *commitment* to the unity of the Church. He participated in the work of the Faith and Order Commission not only for the sake of the theological debate. He was driven by the concern for finding ways to overcome the scandal of divisions. Secondly, his modesty and readiness for *self-criticism*. He was free enough to speak openly about the shortcomings and the need for reform in his own Church and in so doing he was able to create an atmosphere of genuine exchange and friendship. For, how often the road to mutual understanding remains blocked because the partners seek to speak from a position of strength. Finally, I will remember V.C. Samuel as a person who consistently stressed the

servant role of the Church. He often reminded us that the key to any solutions in the ecumenical movement was the re-discovery of the diakonia of both Christ and the Church. He warned against the false prestige thinking of the Churches and their leaders. As we cease to take ourselves too seriously, God may grant us the gift of the communion in Christ.

As a gift for this 75th birthday I should like to offer to V. C. Samuel the English version of some considerations on power, servanthood and suffering. They may be appropriate to express my gratitude for his witness in the ecumenical movement.

What is the right approach to the question of violence and non-violence? Are we dealing here with a primarily ethical question? I become more and more convinced that ethical or even moralistic reflections cannot produce an adequate understanding of violence and non-violence. Aggressiveness, aggression and violence are not just aberrant forms of behaviour which could be rectified by pointing out the corresponding ethical or moral correlates. In the struggle against violence, therefore, it is not much help simply to formulate a list of principles, exhortations or imperatives. Aggressiveness, aggression and violence are among the constants of human existence we have to learn to live with. They have existed since the world began and will still be therewhen it ends. To live a human life means being involved in them, if not as triumphant victors but only as vanquished losers and victims. However we twist and turn, none of us can evade them.

To be sure, there are other factors, too, which check the destructive effects of aggression and violence. The legal system, for example, prevents outbreaks of violence from going unpunished. It does not, however, thereby eliminate aggression and violence as constants of human existence. With their characteristic primal vigour, aggression and violence will

surface again and again in new forms as well as in old, and often, indeed, just when it seemed they had been mastered and finally brought under control. We are even driven to the conclusion that the mechanisms whereby aggression and violence operate are, in certain respects, among the inescapable structures of human life in society. The only course left open to us, therefore, is to learn to deal with aggression and violence as constants within ourselves and around us¹.

1. Two Comparisons

To illustrate the distinctiveness of Jewish and Christian thinking in this area, let me begin with two comparisons. Firstly between the story of Cain and Abel and the story of Romulus and Remus; and, secondly, between the (unfairly) less well-known biblical story of the death of Jephthah's daughter, and the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

A. Cain and Abel - Romulus and Remus

The two stories indicated by these two pairs of names display—at first sight at least—many similarities. Each tells of two brothers who fall out. One brother slays the other and in both cases, the murder is connected with the founding of a city.

Strife between brothers is the expression of a tension with deep roots in human nature. Brothers feel threatened by brothers. As they try to succeed in life and to realize their potentialities, one stands in the other's way. There is rivalry

1. Rene Girard, *Des Choses cachees depuis la fondation du monde*, Grasset, Paris, 1978.

and strife between them. To achieve the goal he has set himself, one brother has to eliminate the other. Once he is alone and able to fend for himself, the way is clear for the 'founding of a city'. The removal of the awkward duality creates the condition, the *sine qua non*, for an unimpeded development of the surviving brother's potentialities and plans. Power is now in a single pair of hands. From now on, there is only one person making the decisions.

We turn first to the story of Romulus and Remus. The brothers are the twin sons of Mars and Rea Silvia (a Vestal Virgin). In every culture, twins have always been considered an uncanny phenomenon. The duality at the birth already allows a presentiment of the coming strife. Romulus and Remus are thrown into the Tiber. But a she-wolf tends and suckles them and they grow to manhood. They both desire to found a city. They have recourse to omens and the flight of birds. Romulus goes to mount Palatine and Remus to mount Aventine. The omens favour Romulus, who sees a flight of twelve vultures, twice the number seen by Remus. Romulus founds his city on mount Palatine but Remus rebels against this and ridicules Romulus by leaping over the walls. Romulus kills Remus and now the men rally round Romulus on mount Palatine. The city grows, largely because of a successful stratagem involving the capture of Sabine women and their settlement in the city. After a successful reign, Romulus is snatched away into heaven before the assembled army.

The meaning of the story is clear. If the city is to be founded, Remus must be eliminated. The duality of two brothers cannot go on. The conflict for whose outbreak Remus is responsible must be settled at once if an orderly society is to emerge. Romulus was right to reject the ridicule of Remus. He emerges as the victor. Indeed, he proves to be a wise ruler. It is he, not Remus, who gives the city his name. Remus disappears from the scene into oblivion. The story is a classic illustration of the constructive potential of the use of

violence. What would have become of Rome had Remus not been slain?

Though in many respects similar, the story of Cain and Abel is quite different (Genesis 4). Abel was a shepherd and Cain a tiller of the soil. Both present themselves to God with their respective offerings. Abel's sacrifice is pleasing to God, whereas Cain's is not accepted. Whereupon Cain slays his brother Abel. God appears to him, reproaching him for shedding his brother's blood. God imposes His punishment on Cain while at the same time protecting him from being killed in vengeance for his crime. A little further on we are told that Cain's son built a city and gave it his own name, Enoch.

Wherein lies the difference here? It consists essentially in the fact that the biblical narrator is clearly on Abel's side. This is in striking contrast to the other story in which Romulus is not only presented as the victor but also as clearly in the right over against Remus. Remus has to die in order that the city may flourish. It is because the guilty brother is defeated that the conflict is so effectively ended. The guilt lay entirely with him and once the guilty party has been sacrificed the community can recover its peace, its balance, its reconciliation and continue its development. In this story, violence is shown in the best possible light. Violence operates constructively here. This is underlined in the sequel to the story: Romulus is taken up to heaven whereas Remus vanishes from the screen altogether.

Abel's destiny is different. Though slain, he is remembered as the 'righteous' one. Cain, on the contrary, falls under a curse. To be sure, his son founds a city. But this founding of a city is not regarded by the biblical narrator as a vindication of Cain's deed. The narrator knows that the city rests on violence. Unsparingly he shows that human society continues to be shadowed by the curse of the violence which brought it

into being. Indeed, the violence increases from generation to generation and only with difficulty is it kept within bounds. In contrast to this, Abel is presented by the narrator as the innocent victim. God affirms Abel by giving him descendants in an unexpected way. Adam is blessed with another son as a replacement for Abel, namely, Seth. Of Seth it is said, emphatically, that he was a son in Adam's own likeness, after his image. It is from him, therefore, that the authentic human line of descendancy stems. It is not without significance, as we shall see later, according to the New Testament witness, Jesus himself was of this lineage.

This is something extraordinary, indeed quite unique in the history of human cultures: a tradition which, instead of glorifying success, sides with the victim. Violence is seen as a problem.

8. Jephthah's daughter and Iphigenia

These two stories reveal another of the mechanisms of violence. Both tell of a father who sacrifices his own daughter. Why? In order to emerge victorious from a clash of arms, the father has to offer a sacrifice. There is a price to be paid for victory. Victory has destructive consequences not only for the vanquished but also for the victor. The king has to sacrifice what gives his own existence its human quality. He has to sacrifice a daughter. The violence directed against others outside his community returns unexpectedly against himself. Victory is accompanied by the victor's loss and impoverishment.

But once again, how different these two stories are! Agamemnon, the father of Iphigenia, prepares to make war against Troy. Contrary winds prevent his fleet from setting sail. In order to depart, he has to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to Diana (Artemis). He agrees to do so and Iphigenia consents.

Diana accepts the sacrifice. The fleet sets sail and Troy is conquered.

The story of Jephthah the Judge (Judges 11:30ff.) follows a different pattern. Jephthah, too, embarks on a war. Before setting out, he vows that when he returns home victorious from the war he will sacrifice the first person he meets. The biblical narrator makes it quite clear that this sacrifice had not been required by God. Jephthah had made this vow quite voluntarily. By this vow, he had committed himself. He achieves the victory and it so happened that the first person he meets on his return home is his daughter who had hurried to greet her victorious father. So it is she he must sacrifice. Recognizing her father's dilemma, she consents to the sacrifice: 'My father, thou has opened thy mouth to the Lord. Do to me, therefore, what thou hast promised.' She knows that she will not escape the mechanism of violence already set in motion. But then follows that scene, that deeply moving scene, which opens up an unexpected vista.

She replied, "... But, father, grant me this one favour. For two months let me be, that I may roam the hills with my companions and mourn that I must die a virgin." "Go", he said, and he let her depart for two months. She went with her companions and mourned her virginity on the hills. At the end of two months she came back to her father, and he fulfilled the vow he had made; she died a virgin. It became a tradition that the daughters of Israel should go year by year and commemorate the fate of Jephthah's daughter, four days in every year' (Judges 11:37-40. NEB).

Where the narrator stands is especially clear from the conclusion of his story. Firmly if with great restraint, he sides with the daughter. He identifies with the victim, a girl who remains nameless and is commemorated only as 'Jephthah's

daughter'. The narrator's sympathies are with the daughters of Israel who for four days each year celebrate this unnamed girl and mourn the sacrifice that had to be paid for her Father Jephthah's victory. It is not primarily as the heroine who made victory possible that they mourn her but because she had to die a virgin to satisfy the demands of the victory of violence. By 'demonstrating' for four days each year, these pioneer 'women for peace' snatch this anonymous victim from the oblivion to which she was really meant to be consigned.²

Once again, a unique attitude : tradition which instead of glorifying success axiomatically sides with the victim. Violence is seen as a problem.³

II The Standpoint of Christian Faith

Do these two comparisons permit us to continue this line into the New Testament? What is the significance of the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ for aggressiveness, aggression and violence?

The first answer which suggests itself is obvious : what is

2. Phyllis Tribble, 'The Sacrifice of the Daughter of Jephthah', in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, vol. XXXVI Supplementary Issue, New York 1981; Elke Ruegger-Haller, 'Klage um Jiphtachs Tochter', in *Frauen entdecken die Bibel*, Freiburg 1986, pp. 44ff.

3. It is interesting to note how the text of Handel's oratorio *Jephthah* changes the story. Jephthah's daughter willingly offers herself as a sacrifice. 'Jephthah is victor! Israel is free! How small a price a life is for such deliverance!' God refuses this heroic sacrifice and commands Jephthah's daughter to serve Him as a virgin. The real intention of the story is thereby eliminated. The purpose of the oratorio text is to make the story more palatable but in actual fact it simply turns it into a justification of the mechanism of violence. Cf. G.G. Gervinus, *Handels Oratorientexte*, Berlin 1873, pp.344ff.

only hinted at in the two Old Testament stories is fully developed and radicalized to the limit. By his conduct and attitude, Jesus lays bare the mechanisms of violence in an almost unbearably unambiguous way. What is only momentarily illuminated in these two Old Testament stories is floodlighted by the life and death of Jesus. In the case of Jesus, moreover, it is no longer a question of a narrative in which the narrator takes sides but of a truth attested by the enactment of the central character's own life. The link between Abel, the victim of Cain, and Jesus, the victim on the cross, is indicated symbolically in the New Testament by the genealogy of Jesus which traces his ancestry back to Adam via Seth, the son born to Adam as replacement for Abel, and not via Cain.

But how is Jesus related to the problem of aggression and violence? Let me mention four points which, according to the gospel narratives, are distinctive for Jesus :

The way was open for Jesus to conquer by violence. He could have employed the mechanisms of violence for his cause. This is the significance of the story of his tempting by Satan. He is offered all the kingdoms of this world. The power of this world is placed at his disposal. But he chooses the way of love. This fundamental decision on the threshold of his public ministry is of special significance for our theme.

Jesus not only chooses the way of love but also practises it in his life. The sermon on the Mount states in words that love implies the renunciation of violence. Far more important, however, is the fact that the life of Jesus consistently exemplifies these words.

Not only Jesus' message but also his way of life and conduct have a disturbing effect. He provokes resistance. It is important to recognize this. For when the love as proclaimed in the Gospel is lived and practised, the result is not simply peace. Love provokes tensions. It has a disturbing effect

because it opposes violence. Above all it has disturbing effect because it unsparingly exposes the mechanisms of violence. When Jesus comes on the scene, he calls violence in question and deprives it of the legitimacy which it nevertheless claims. He take the side of the victims whom others have nevertheless considered to be guilty. By doing this, he gives those who exploit the mechanisms of violence a bad conscience. As we have already seen, the stories of Cain and Abel and of Jephthah's daughter are exceptions to the general rule. In stories, myths, legends and even laws, violence is usually glorified and legitimized as something positive and constructive.

Fourthly and finally, the most important point in the life of Jesus : he himself becomes the victim. The mechanism of violence which he exposed is turned against Jesus himself. He himself becomes the scapegoat. He does not only *side* with Abel and the daughter of Jephthah, he *becomes* Abel and the daughter of Jephthah. He died on the cross.

What we find in Jesus, applies also to his disciples. Discipleship simply means the willingness to make room in our own lives for the life of Jesus. What can be seen in the life of Jesus has also to be seen in the life of his disciples. In the works of Augustine we sometimes find the statement that the Church began with Abel—'righteous Abel'. This affirmation is of importance for our present context. The Church can no more be a descendant of Cain than could Jesus himself. When the Church is faithful and obedient to Jesus, it stands in the lineage of Abel. It is a community of men and women who believe in the power of love, who oppose violence and who side with its victims. It is a community of men and women who are also prepared to pay the price for this. The Church which stems from Abel will oppose the Romulus approach. For both the individual and the whole Church, therefore, the guinea question is how we can be faithful to this calling to the end. How is this vision of human relationships be translated into practice?

III. How Can We Break out of the Vicious Circle of Violence?

What Jesus teaches concerning violence and non-violence has always proved hard to understand. For it undoubtedly runs counter to our spontaneous human reflexes. But if it is difficult to even understand, how much more difficult it is when it is a case of following the example of Jesus' life ourselves!

Yet the fact is that the message of Jesus is more relevant and fundamental than ever today. Human society has changed. Its increased complexity has made it far more vulnerable. Tensions between individuals and, above all, between peoples and nations represent a far greater risk today. Every conflict can degenerate and bring in its train destruction of a kind and on a scale which is altogether disproportionate to the original occasion. Conflicts can no longer be settled, therefore, simply by letting the mechanism of violence churn on to its logical conclusion. The confrontation such a course invites can have consequences so far-reaching that we simply cannot 'afford' it. There is too great a risk that it will lead not to a solution but an ever-widening extension of conflict.

But how can the automatic mechanisms of violence be interrupted and overcome? Is the fear of no longer controllable damage and destruction enough? Such fear certainly establishes limits. It produces a reflex which can act as a deterrent to conflict. Both Cain and Romulus are compelled to be more cautious in the present state of society. They are forced to exercise greater restraint, knowing as they do that the action which suggests itself spontaneously to them has become appreciably more dangerous. They are 'condemned', so to speak, not to resort to the mechanism of violence because it involves too many risks in today's complex world. It would, however,

be an illusion to make this fear the basis of policy. It may block the mechanisms of violence for a while but it will certainly not abolish them. Sooner or later, the conflict will flare up for sure.

Is it enough to appeal to common sense? Can the mechanisms of violence be rendered ineffective by an appeal to reason? It is undoubtedly important to understand how these mechanisms work. Precise knowledge is essential if we are to be able to halt and overcome them. In the final analysis, however, neither reason nor determination and will-power can conquer and control these mechanisms of violence. Konrad Lorenz's well-known book *On Aggression* is a disappointment in this respect. Lorenz provides, firstly, a persuasive analysis of aggression and violence in the animal and human kingdoms. But then he rounds off his argument by a strangely superficial final chapter entitled 'Avowal of Optimism'.⁴ After Lorenz's demonstration of the primal power of the mechanisms of violence, the last thing a reader expects is the homespun worldly wisdom and moral principles the author offers him in this chapter. The irrational aspect of violence has all of a sudden disappeared. Certainly rational reflection on the problems of violence can help to limit it but it will not touch the real nerve of its mechanisms.

What, then, remains? In my view, in the struggle against aggression and violence, the only effective way left is that which Jesus himself practised in his life. And this for the simple reason that he took the existence of the mechanisms of violence seriously to the very limits of their power. He did not treat the application of violence merely as a human 'caprice' which could be avoided by appropriate conduct. He did, indeed,

4. Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, tr. Marjorie Latzke, Methuen, London 1967.

summon people to love one another. He exposed the futility of the mechanisms of violence. Above all, however, he was prepared to put himself in the place of the victims of violence.

One further observation about how violence functions may be important at this point. The simplest reflex of violence is the removal of the rival who stands in the way of self-realization. People are obviously prepared to pay dearly to achieve this objective. To be victorious, they are ready to risk even their own happiness. But it is not only in a direct confrontation of this kind that violence finds expression. Its functioning is even more sinister. When it proves impossible to resolve a tension in the 'simple' way, the attempt is often made to resolve it by transferring the responsibility for it to certain individuals or groups. Someone is declared the scapegoat and excluded from society. The tension which has become intolerable for society is projected and externalized at a specific place. It thereby becomes concrete and manageable. Society needs this mechanism, this procedure, in order to be able to live. It needs scapegoats to relieve it of its tensions and conflicts. As long as it is ignorant of who is 'responsible' for the conflict, it is in turmoil and in danger of disintegration. Peace is restored to it once the scapegoat is driven out. This projection and externalization will often strike at prominent personalities. Anyone occupying a responsible position in political life, for example, must reckon in principle with the possibility of one day being made a scapegoat. But this projection can also strike at altogether unlikely and basically innocent people; they are often singled out as the guilty ones merely because they are 'different'.

The significance of the death of Jesus on the cross lies in the fact that he allowed himself to be made the scapegoat and by doing so assumed responsibility for dealing with violence and paying its price. The way of Christ includes this final consequence.

What does this mean for the Church? To my mind, it means firstly that the Church constantly keeps the cross of Jesus in view, assembles for worship and celebrates the memorial of Jesus. Rites and liturgical actions have always played an important part in the resolution of dangerous tensions. Instead of letting the mechanism of violence churn on inexorably to its logical end, it is transferred to the liturgical plane and represented in a rite. The more real the representation is felt to be, the more effectively it can replace the actual operation of the mechanism. The worship of the Christian community is the appeal to the Christ who died on a cross. Undoubtedly, a community which sings with conviction: 'O Christ, Lamb of God, Thou who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy upon us!' will to some extent at least be able to resolve its tensions and conflicts.

But the way of Jesus demands even more of the Church. If it wishes to be the Church 'since Abel', it must also follow the way of Jesus in practice. Here is the source of our great confusion and embarrassment. Is the Church today the Church 'since Abel'? Is every single one of us, am I, a member of this Church 'since Abel'? Barely so, even if we take part in demonstrations for peace. For the way of Jesus takes us a long way further than demonstrations.

IV. Love Versus Violence

But what form does the effort against aggression and violence take? Let me, in conclusion, suggest for consequences, corresponding to the four points I made earlier about the way of Jesus :

—Jesus was faced with the temptation to accomplish his mission within the mechanisms of violence. He rejected this temptation. If we are to be his disciples we too must

choose the way of love. Many people find this word 'love' too abstract, a pious word, an empty word. In our present context it means the decision to exist for fellowship and not to get involved in the competitive game. This basic decision must be accompanied by a striving for self-understanding. We must each of us come to a clear knowledge of ourselves. We must recognize that we are all individually involved in the mechanisms of violence and become aware of the violence and brutality operative within ourselves. This striving for self-knowledge is in the nature of an antidote to the mechanisms of violence, to help us to deal with the conflicts which constantly arise anew. I speak of a fundamental decision in favour of 'love' because this word expresses more than the word 'non-violence'. Love demands a positive effort whereas non-violence suggests it is simply a matter of renouncing violence. More, however is involved than the condemnation of violence and the renunciation of forms of behaviour deriving from it. Love is a movement towards others.

—The second consequence is effort on behalf of the victims. If love were the generally observed rule, there would be no victims of violence. But the number of such victims is legion. The mechanisms of violence lead with inexorable regularity to the multiplication of victims. We constantly find ourselves in situations in which there are already victims. The way of Jesus leads us to their side. This duty of solidarity may sound obvious. In reality, however, it is much more difficult to fulfil. Reflex thinking tends to write off those who have already been victimized. What is the point of grieving over a hopeless or even already lost cause? The page must be turned. Abel is dead, Jephthah's daughter is dead. We cannot bring them back to life again. We may deplore what has happened but surely we must tend to the living? However persuasive this line of thought

may strike us at first, it is not one that the 'Church since Abel' can follow. It knows how easily someone who has perished can subsequently be pronounced guilty.

It knows how deep our instinct is to justify our own survival and how ready we are to 'explain' a past injustice. The 'Church since Abel' must support the victims of injustice. The daughters of Israel must mourn the daughter of Jephthah four days a year. Mourn her not just in the passive sense but in the sense of protesting against the violence which endlessly produces its victims.

One place where this support for the victims of violence must become especially concrete is in the struggle against torture. For a society which practises torture on human beings transgresses the limit it must under all circumstances set to the use of violence. It consents to the sacrifice of victims on its behalf. The struggle at this particular point can serve almost as a model for the total struggle against violence.

—Thirdly : anyone familiar with the mechanisms of violence knows that violence in the long run produces fresh violence. The effort of love, therefore, will always try to expose anew the springs and roots of violence. it is not just a matter of attacking the latest outcropping of violence. Violence is at work in a society long before it transgresses the provisions of the law and begins to disturb the general public. We must have sufficient imagination, therefore, not to concentrate exclusively on its symptoms but to dig down to its deeper roots. The struggle against violence does not begin when violence erupts but long before.

—Fourthly and finally, and quite indispensably: the 'Church since Abel' must accept the risk of becoming itself a victim. It is with trepidation that I say this, for what meaning can this statement have on the lips of one who lives as I do in a relatively safe situation? Am I ready to take this risk? The only thing that entitles me to speak of accepting the risk of becoming myself a victim is that this is implicit in the Gospel itself. Acceptance of this risk is a consequence of the Gospel. There is also the fact that in our contemporary world, bearing witness to the Gospel repeatedly results in Christians being put to death. Martyrdom has once again become a contemporary reality. What happened in the early centuries of Christianity is again being experienced today. Some would even go so far as to speak of this century as a century of martyrs. We think of such people as Martin Luther King, Archbishop Luwum or Archbishop Romero, to name just one or two. And how many nameless, anonymous victims would have to be included in the roll-call of contemporary martyrs!

One final remark. The biblical witness nowhere says that a world without violence can be achieved. We must always keep in mind the limits which have been set to human existence. There can be no fundamental alteration of the presuppositions of our social life. The generation which is growing up today may well have a clearer picture of the dangers threatening its survival. But that will not permit it to escape violence. Every 'avowal of optimism' is quickly disavowed by the facts. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude from this that the struggle against violence is pointless. Quite the contrary. Every single step we take in love has its own intrinsic significance. It is an omen of a world which is to be, 'the city which has foundations, *whose builder and maker is God*'. What we *now do*, however, is a sign which shines out and in doing so makes its own sense. Is that not sufficient an incentive to advance step by step?

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Honouring Dr. V. C. Samuel, one of the greatest theologians of Indian Orthodox Church, a number of well-known theologians and historians have contributed to this volume. Majority of the articles have reflected on the identity, history, theology and ecumenical relations of the Orthodox Church. This contains the latest thinking of these world-renowned writers on these subjects. Revolutionary thoughts, constructive reflection and detailed analysis are the specialities of this work. Above all it presents the multi-faceted life and thought of Dr. V. C. Samuel, whose deep ecclesial and theological understanding is reflected through his essays.

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