

REV. THOMAS KOONAMMAKKAL
Kottayam (Indie), SEERI

PROBLEM OF LATINIZATION: NO EXIT?¹

There is a tendency to blame European missionaries for all the troubles that befell the community of Mar Thoma Nazranis. For me personally, rather recent designations like Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, Syriac Orthodox, Orthodox Syriac, Independent Syriac Church of Thozhiyoor, Mar Thoma Church, Chaldean Syriac Church of Trichur etc. have no much theological, ancient historical and lasting ecclesiological sense. All the same I am deeply conscious of the fragmentation of the one, unique, apostolic and Catholic (neither Roman Catholic nor Antiochean) Church of All India. The very concept of communion was different in those early centuries. Communion with ecclesia was there, but not excluding any particular group since heresy versus orthodoxy as the basis of faith just did not develop among Mar Thoma Nazranis. This universally archaic apostolic ecclesiology of the apostolic age prompts one to say: they were in communion with all apostolic and catholic, orthodox and main stream communities though opportunities for contacts were almost always nil and hence communication and communion did not actually take place. It is a pity that so far none has realized the significance of this original communion that is universal and inclusive. A clergy centred doctrinal, hierarchical communion and organization is a gradual development. Development of doctrine was a slow and gradual process inspired by the fight between orthodoxy and heresy. Such a situation was foreign to the Nazrani community in India.

The groups mentioned above are all very recent products or vestiges of lingering colonization which is threefold: Romanization, Antiochianization, Protestantization and Orthodoxization. It is the story of divisions and disintegration of one of the most ancient, apostolic, original Nazrani community into many factions due to alien influences and interventions. When and how did these impoverishing names come into use tell a lot about the fragmentation of our one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. It is really shocking to observe that even in modern ecumenical climate some try to canonize these impoverished appellations as if they are unaware of the common history and original unity. These are the creation of past three hundred and fifty years. But Christianity in India has a history far behind and beyond that tiny span of life led by these hybrid Churches. None of these can claim to be the real

¹ Paper read in the Oriental Study Forum in 1992, updated and enlarged in 2017.

and only successor to the apostolic community of Mar Thoma Nazranis. It is only a contradiction in terms whenever such unlawful pretensions are set forth without any sense of history. Within the past hundred years three of these Churches have created three Catholicoi. Two Churches in communion with Rome have two Major Archbishops. None of these Churches dare to de-colonize the very nature of the present hierarchy and recreate the traditional Jathikku Karthavyan or Arkadiakon. Nor are these factions keen to come together and recreate the See of St Thomas and the Seat of Metropolitan and Gate of All India. It is a unique ecclesiastical head seen in India alone. It is a natural, original and apostolic tradition that developed in India alone. It is a pre-Nicene development whereas the role of four Patriarchs is a Roman and imperial development. The Persian and Indian Churches are beyond the boundary of this Graeco-Latin or Western hierarchical development.

Mar Thoma Nazranis were not Episcopal, but Congregational, Guru Yohend used to assert². Church is the People of God, the liturgical assembly and not a territory under a bishop. Territorial jurisdiction is a Western post-Constantinian development. Here one should concede the Episcopal nature of the Eucharistic assembly that constitutes the Church. It is clear from the Episcopos-centered Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Ignatius of Antioch. But for Ignatius Episcopos is Jesus Christ represented by the icon of local president of the Eucharistic assembly. One should not forget the gradual appearance of the role of Catholicos/Patriarch of Seleucia Ctesiphon in spite of the opposition by many fellow bishops. A bishop above the bishop is a gradually developed novelty in view of unity and uniformity. Only in A.D.410 the so-called ecumenical council was accepted by the Churches in Persia.

India did not face such a situation of centralization. The role of the Episcopos/Presbyteros (Metran/Kashisha) remained apostolic and archaic. The Church of the Mar Thoma Nazranis of India developed its own style of hierarchy which is unique, apostolic and archaic. It did not face any doctrinal controversy, division or called a Synod unlike the Churches elsewhere. Doctrinal, abstract and theoretical speculations were least known to this rather isolated community, though their liturgical, biblical, canonical, spiritual books came from the East Syriac ambient. The role of the Episcopos was liturgical, spiritual and monastic. The wedge between hierarchy and laity did not exist. Temporal rule of the Church was in the hands of Palliyogam (coming together of representatives under the presidency of the Archdeacon, at national level; regional and local yogams were under elders or Qashishe). None of the above-mentioned post-colonial Churches is ready to go back to the original and pre-colonial structure. Nor are they eager and ready to balance the past with the future. Present-day divisions are unwanted historical anomalies and as such these need not confine us in to door-less, no-exit corners. Picture of the past should not be totally forgotten. Challenge of the future should reshape the present. Lu-

² Navajiva Parishath, Hendo Thirty Years After (Palai 1997).

xurious verbosity of so-called ecumenism is not enough, since it is a colonial and alien import.

Here I am not going to deal with the comprehensive story of colonial divisions or various groups. I come to the question of the very identity of the so-called Syro-Malabar Church to which I belong. At present I cannot dare to call it an oriental Church. It is only a Latinized version of an oriental Church. The ongoing process of Latinization has defaced it beyond recognition. The Latinizing missionaries have gone, but the process they started goes on even today. Syro-Malabar hierarchy is only a continuation of the Padroado-Propaganda hierarchy of bygone days. Latin religious congregations with antipathy towards Oriental Christians have established their branches which suck the very life-blood of Syro-Malabar Church. Most of these surrogate colonial imports have developed the techniques to train these born Syro-Malabar members to adopt the Latin culture and hate their mother church! How many Orientals become Latins! Not a single Latin becomes an Oriental! I know of one or two cases in which one of the former Archbishops of Varapoly and even an Italian Archbishop (working in the Congregation for the Oriental Churches!) insulting the two Latins who joined the Syro Malabar Church! And still we hear about ecumenism, dialogue, equality of rites and such empty talk!

One can find two stages in its Latinization: the first stage began in the sixteenth century and culminated by the second half of last century. The second stage began with the establishment of vicariates for a hybrid Syro-Malabar Church³ Even then two Latin rite foreign bishops were imposed on this Church by Rome. It was a very step-motherly attitude towards Oriental Christians. Rome should have known that Mar Thoma Nazranis are not the result of European missionary efforts. Rome should have erected an Oriental hierarchy in India before it created the Latin hierarchy for all India. Even today the all India jurisdiction is unjustly given to the Latin Church of India without any historical basis. This unhistorical anomaly must go. Rome has to give it back to its early and original owners. So, the Rome-sponsored ecumenical dialogue is meaningless and insincere. Justice delayed is justice denied. *Res clamat Domino!* Deep rooted Latin antipathy towards Eastern Churches is shocking. Otherwise who can explain the appointment of two Latin bishops for Oriental Catholics even in the year 1887 A.D. Mar Thoma Nazranis deserved a better treatment after the anti-Catholic Diamper of 1599 and the holy and heroic fights of Paremmakkal (1736–1799), Thachil (1741–1814), Kariyattil (1742–1786), Kudkkachira (c. 1815–1857) and Nidhirickal (1842–1904) who overthrew the co-

³ V.J. VITHAYATHIL, *The Origin and Progress of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy*, Kottayam 1980. See my *Syro-Malabar History and Traditions*, in: P. BRUNS, H.O. LUTHE (ed.), *Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden 2013, pp. 259–278. Through the establishing Latin hierarchy in India and taking over the all India jurisdiction Rome insulted the Mar Thoma Nazranis and this situation remains even today. Indian situation is a glaring contradiction of catholicity. O the tragic misery of Orientals in communion with Rome! Roman ecumenism means Latinization.

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lonial rule over the Church of India. They are our forgotten martyrs and real saints! If only they are recognized, remembered, celebrated and followed the very identity, existence and relevance of this Church come to maturity.

This paper is trying to question the lamentable and agonizing existence of the second stage of Latinization for which the Syro-Malabar Church is responsible. In creating divisions and a hybrid Church the missionaries share the blame; but in preserving the hybrid nature and continuing the Latinization I cannot apportion the blame. The sole responsibility rests on the shoulders of the local, native hierarchy. A Latinized hierarchy is all what we have today. All its members are more or less Latinized. Even the apparently Oriental ones among them are unaware of the real issue or incapable of intervention. Tragically they are marginalized by the brutal majority. The Latin religious congregations are only fishing in muddled waters! They only continue what their European forefathers did.

What kind of an ecclesial vision did we inherit with the second stage? It is only the continuation of the first stage. What type of episcopate, priesthood, theology and spirituality did we inherit in the second stage? It is only a Latin and colonial type. Our priestly formation is no more the same. Our Bishops are appointed by Rome since the meeting of 1599 at Diamper⁴. Why this change and novelty after so many centuries of a different custom? Who authorized this change? Menezes had no Petrine role to interfere in the affairs of an apostolic Church. Hence all what he did and started in the case of Mar Thoma Nazranis are illicit, invalid and questionable. Certainly these are not approved or accepted willingly by our forefathers who fought against Diamper. Were our forefathers heretics? Even if they had hierarchical links with East Syriac Churches were they heretics? The East Syriac Church did admit the primacy of Peter though it did sometimes claim the same. Its communion with the Church of Rome is not an issue at all when Ramban Sawma visited Rome in the 13th century⁵ Is not Rome responsible for the aftermath of Diamper? A reappraisal of the work of Padroado and Propaganda is necessary and Rome should show the courage and sincerity to review the past four centuries. Appointment of bishops over unknown fellow Churches, unheard of Churches all over the world, Apostolic Church of India, is not at all a privilege of Petrine prerogative. Is it not imposed by Menezes of Goa and usurped by Portuguese king without any apostolic, historical and canonical basis?

Until sixteenth century our Bishops came from the monasteries of the Church of the East. They were selected by the representatives of Mar Thoma Nazranis from the East Syriac monks. Even the Patriarch himself did not make the selection. In India a bishop was needed only for two reasons: to ordain priests and to consecrate the Church with this holy oil; every priest could consecrate the Church

⁴ J. THALIATH, *The Synod of Diamper* (OCA 152 Roma 1958).

⁵ E.A.W. BUDGE, *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China*, London 1928.

without oil. So at times Mar Thoma Nazranis had no bishops for long periods. Since 1599 they were forced to be under European, Latin bishops who did not belong to the East Syriac tradition. This entirely new situation is an invalid intrusion from outside, an alien conquest. They were all intruders with Roman support; they did not know the liturgy and the language of the people.

Are the Roman Popes authorized to delegate the nomination of bishops for another apostolic and oriental Church? This question becomes crucial since the Church of India was free from Roman jurisdiction for sixteen centuries since the apostolic days. Even if that is conceded, whether a Pope can delegate such an authority to a layman (a colonial ruler) is still unwarranted. In that case why did Rome continue to wait passively supporting its missionaries who are single-handedly responsible for the rebellion of 1653 at Mattancherry?⁶ But now on we have natives in Latin garments. Our priests are no more formed in Malpanates. Of course they got a higher education in Latin-style theology and they became good Latinizers! They lost their very identity and the sense of the Church; they lost touch with their own roots, liturgical spirituality, and Syriac theological world. For them to be a catholic means to be a Roman/Latin catholic! Even today they are mass products of Latin factories! Our lay people began to lose hold over the Church in general. Outbreak of democratic movements and adoption of party politics have disoriented the laity from its ecclesial style. As a result we cannot have a safe exit from this vicious circle.

I would like to point out a few aberrations that require no further comments.

- 1) Main feast of St. George's Church [at Lalam (New Church), Palai] is that of St. Francis Xavier. This is not an exceptional case. Throughout Syro-Malabar Church this is a very regularly found anomaly. Some may wonder what is wrong about such veneration of a saint from the Latin Church. But why should we dedicate a church to an oriental saint — indeed one of the most celebrated — and then forget the patron and bring in an occidental saint who brought in inquisition to our land? This is a very common practice in the Syro-Malabar Church. In Athirampuzha the Church is dedicated to Mary, but the main feast is that of St. Sebastian, a colonial and recent import. There is some radical misunderstanding and great anomaly as regards that kind of pseudo-spirituality and un-liturgical devotion. Why should one forget original and oriental saints and their spirituality and then bring in a later Latin substitute? The autocratic imposition of Sts Gervasis and Protasis as a substitute for Mar Sabor and Mar Proth by the meeting of Diamper is the classic example. What authority Menezes had to do away with two saints of another Church? Is the veneration of saints such a silly matter for the Latin bishops? Verdict of Diamper against the veneration of Sabor and Proth is a blasphemy to be corrected. Dedication of our churches to oriental

⁶ J. KOLLAPARAMPIL, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, Kottayam 1981.

saints is a serious demand. But we cannot substitute the liturgical spirituality with devotional spirituality. In this aspect past hundred and fifty years are practically the most intense period of Latinization and only last three decades saw some changes in this trend. But only a process lasting for a few hundred years will correct this wrong anti-theological trend.

- 2) Dedication of churches to non-oriental saints is leading to some un-liturgical elements such as increase of statues, veneration, novenas, feasts, superstitions etc. If you visit some parish churches, chapels etc. you will be pleased to see a bema and a Mar Thoma Sliva on it. But look at the altar! There will be a number of statues, most of them from the Latin tradition. We should minimize the number of statues from our churches. There should not be statues at all in the Holy of Holies, though icons can be tolerated to some extent. Some of our film-star-like statues should be removed from the sight of the worshipping community because these do not in any way help devotion. I can mention the case of two of such statues that caused distraction and scandal; consequently they had to be removed and kept out of sight (eg. Statues of Alphonsa and Chavara in 1990s kept at St Mary's Church, Lalam Old). More than a dozen statues are taken in procession in connection with the main feasts at Ramapuram, Kuravilangad, Palai, Cherpumkal, Muttuchira, Bharananganam, Aruvithura and in all such big Syro-Malabar parishes. Even in smaller parishes at least half a dozen statues is a common thing. Each year they add to their number and accuse non-Christians of idol worship! Superstitions, quarrels and court cases are also common in the case of way-side chapels, statues, etc. In 1994 I was shocked to see a very ugly statue of an unheard of Italian saint Caracciolo in the front of St. Theresa's Church, Malappuram (Ayamkudy)!
- 3) There are more than 64 churches and many chapels dedicated to Latin saints, in the eparchy of Palai established in 1950. All these 64 churches are built and dedicated to Latin saints within the last 100 years and no Latin missionary can be blamed for this kind of Latinization. 14 of them are constructed after 1992 (the year in which I read the original of this paper). Wither do we move? Where are our oriental saints? Is their spirituality irrelevant to our life? Are they not worthy of our imitation and veneration? If you dedicate all the churches to Latin or European saints, venerate all their statues, celebrate all their feasts, introduce their novenas, you are actually destroying the foundations of an oriental liturgical spirituality. Better let us join the Latin Church and adopt the Latin liturgy and spiritual traditions, which is essentially devotional. Multiplication of statues is anti-oriental; why can't we multiply icons?
- 4) Devotionalism and pietism are detrimental to our liturgical spirituality. In the chapel of the convent of Lalam Old there is a Mar Thoma Sliva on the bema; there is a second one on the altar. But behind the altar we find the statues of saints, Joseph, Theresa of Child Jesus, Theresa of Avila, Sebastian and another saint. Most of the convents have this pattern. Seminary chapels are no exception.

In some other places there will be huge crucifixes behind one or two Mar Thoma Slivas! See for example the huge crucifixes at Palai Cathedral, Bharananganam (St. Alphonsa Chapel). How can we mix Latin pietism with oriental spirituality? How can we mingle devotionism with oriental liturgy? I hope that I will not go too far if I were to mention *ladeenju*, benediction, *Te Deum*, way of the cross, rosary, processions carrying statues, and many similar Latin pietisms. At the same time I have to mention that we should not attempt to abolish everything altogether. A gradual but well-planned process of re-orientalization should start before the close of this century. (But to my great surprise it was preoccupied with the so-called Evangelization 2000! But now-a-days nobody is worried about that decade of wasted opportunities). After 400 years we may get an oriental Church. But two aspects need emphasis: we must start here and now; we must at least avoid the introduction of new latinizations.

- 5) Our liturgical calendar is a tragedy without any comparison. What on earth are we doing with so many meaningless, un-theological, anti-liturgical, anti-ecclesial and unchristian compromises? Are we trying to restore and renew our liturgy, or are we attempting to turn a blind eye to the re-latinizing trend? If we cannot but take such an anti-ecclesial attitude why can't we ourselves join the Latin Church? How can we remain silent when our Church is being systematically latinized? It is said that nothing is harder than to tell the truth and to tell it at the face! Can we make a compromise when it is a matter of re-latinization of our Church? Feasts of Saints Francis de Sales, Thomas Aquinas, John Bosco, John Britto, Lourdu Mathavu, Cyril and Methodius, Catherine of Sienna, Joseph the patron of workers, Dominic Savio, Holy Qurbana, Sacred Heart, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Antony of Padua, Gervasis and Protasis, Alosius Gonzaga, John Fisher, Thomas More, Maria Goretti, Benedict, Karmela Mathavu, Joachim and Anna, Ignatius Layola, Alphonse Ligori, John Maria Vianney, Dominic, Lorence, Claire, John Berchmans, Miximilian Kolbe, Bernard, Pius X, Augustine, Gregory the great, Vincent de Paul, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Jerome, Theresa of Child Jesus, Guardian Angels, Francis Assisi, Queen of Rosary, Theresa of Avila, All Saints of November 1, All the dead of November 2, Martin de Porres, Leo the Great, Josephat, Albert the great, Christ the King, Francis Xavier, Ambrose, Immaculate Conception, John of the Cross, Stephen of 26th December, John of 27th December, Innocent Children of 28th December, Holy Family of 29th December — are these not providing ample evidence that we are following a Latin calendar and we are not yet able to introduce an oriental liturgical spirituality.
- 6) One of the most scandalous advertisements which attracted my attention took place in Kuravilangad where I saw notice describing it as “Lourdes of the East” In Lourdes the Marian apparitions took place in 1858. But the Marian apparitions of Kuravilangad happened in the first century A.D. and it is the first ever Marian apparition. This kind of comparison is the sign of inferiority complex from the part of Syro-Malabar Church. In Lourdes one could have written “Kuravilangad

of the West” which the European Church will never do. The criterion is always a Latin or European one as if Christianity were a European phenomenon. My public reaction and criticism prompted the parish priest to remove that notice board. In 2017 I hear about a series of celebrations in the name of Marian apparitions of Fatima which happened in 1917. The Syro-Malabar Church should have celebrated and publicized its own Marian apparitions which are the earliest in Christian history. But that Church is blind to see and utilize its own spiritual wealth and has become an international beggar! It has failed to canonize Paremakkal, Karriyattil, Thachil, Kudakkachira, Nidhiry, Placid, etc. Instead it has canonized all the Latinized ones who always stood for the Latinization! What a shameful predicament for an Oriental Church!

If we celebrate all the Latin feasts adopting Latin-style Scriptural readings for such feasts why can't we just adopt the Latin mass text and use Latin rite instead of following a semi-Latin rite? Hence one should say that this is a crime against our oriental, liturgical, theological, spiritual, ecclesial and catholic heritage; hence there is no scope for any kind of compromises in the long run. If we love the catholic heritage how can we make compromises that contradict the same concern? Only those whose loyalty is split can compromise truth.

We need not and should not adopt the devotionism of the Latin calendar. Our liturgical calendar is not based on any sanctoral cycle; for God's sake let us not make a sanctoral cycle. Let us not sacrifice the Trinitarian and Christo-centricism of our liturgy. Better the Latin liturgy than a latinized liturgy; better the Latin calendar than a latinized calendar. Better the Latin Church than a latinized Church. Half-heartedness of Orientals helps only in uprooting the very foundations of our Church. God forbid such unchristian half-heartedness towards the Church.

If at all we cannot but celebrate all the Latin saints there is no meaning in having our liturgical cycle. According to our liturgy Christ is at the centre of every liturgical celebration, and it should remain so. No saint can take that place in our liturgical calendar. If we celebrate saints — as we should, but only in the wider catholic and Christological context. Why can't we celebrate a few oriental saints so that our relations with our spiritual roots and links remain unbroken? Uprooted from our history we are lost and we lack goals and future.

Antony the Great is forgotten while Antony of Padua is celebrated. This is an un-theological way of latinizing our Church. The same is true when we celebrate the feast of Ignatius of Layola instead of Ignatius of Antioch and Thomas Aquinas instead of Aprem. Celebration of Gervasis and Protasis instead of Sabor and Proth is a crime against our forefathers who preserved our faith. Our Church has absolutely nothing to do with Gervasis and Protasis especially when no one knows much about them. But Sabor and Proth did play some crucial role in the evolution of our Church. It is high time that we reclaim these two saints who are still celebrated by our fellow Mar Thoma Nazranis.

Recently an eparch of our Church celebrated a Qurbana in connection with a funeral; it was a Sunday. For no pastoral reasons whatsoever he went to Bharananganam to celebrate Qurbana a second time out of his devotion. Holy Qurbana and its celebration should not be multiplied for devotional reasons. During a liturgical seminar at Mangalapuzha Seminary a Syro-Malankara bishop celebrated a private Latin mass only to take the daily stipend!

There is a chapel in a place called Pampoorampara, near Bharananganam in Palai eparchy. As usual there were many pilgrims since it was the last Friday of Great Lent (of 1990 or 1991?). During the Qurbana celebration there was a great down pour and terrible wind. The people were terrified. They approached the priest who was celebrating the Qurbana and requested: 'Father please stop the Qurbana so that we can pray!' For them Qurbana is no prayer at all! What kind of spirituality! What kind of Christianity is that? Orientals do not have no specialized spirituality because they have got 'Christianity' It is the life of Christ, life in Christ, life with Christ, life into Christ.

It is not a matter of ignorance alone. We have many oriental scholars and in a way they do excellent work. But we oriental scholars need to live according to our liturgical and Christian life. Selfishness, luxury, hypocrisy envy, half-heartedness, crookedness, greed for power positions or money, and countless other things should not be heard of among us. We cannot preach a gospel that we contradict with our life. We need a monastic approach and it is precisely what our Church lacks. A self-sacrificing love for the community is necessary.

An important agent of latinization among us is the religious community mixing Latin spirituality among us. Who can count all the religious congregations that originated in the Latin Church and follow the Latin traditions and still fill their group with so-called Syro-Malabarians! Almost all of them spread and grew here only during the past 100 years. Most of them follow a spirituality based on devotionism of the Latin Church. How can they contribute in fostering the oriental cause, I wonder. These mushroom movements need to be recast in to some new and oriental form. But time is not yet to speak of such a new start. Perhaps such a time will never come. How can we recast something Latin into something oriental? Unless and until we are able to stop the multiplication of latinized and latinizing religious communities our vocations will be lost in the sense that they do not help the re-orientalization of our Church. If only we can do one thing! That we do not allow new Latin congregations to take away our vocations from the bosom of our Church! The more we wait the more we become latinized. We should not invite new Latin religious communities into our Church. We should not foster the Latinitas of many of our own religious congregations. Perhaps some of them need to be recast since they are all modelled after Latin counter parts. But who will be able to accept this?

Now everywhere in our Church there is too much talk about Evangelization 2000. But our Church has forgotten to add its own dimension to this. In 1999 it will be 400 years since the latinizations of 1599 at Udayamperoor. Paremmakkal Mar Thomman Kathanar died in 1799 and hence it is his 200th anniversary. Malpan Placid J. Podipara was born in 1899 and so it will be his 100th birthday. Serious efforts should be made to remember all these in 1999. Why not call a Synod and officially reject Diamper? Our Church has to regain the spirit, courage, vision and ecclesial sense of our forefathers. All its members should be intellectually and spiritually prepared to celebrate this Jubilee year. We should be courageous enough to set apart the coming 400 years for the re-orientation of our church. This is the only way to compensate for the past 400 years of latinization. No talent should be wasted. All efforts should be towards this venture. No un-ecclesial compromise should be made. Our Church should be enabled to reclaim its roots, establish its links with all oriental Churches and foster communion with all Apostolic and Catholic Churches. This is a dream that demands courage, vision and prayer of many generations. We cannot sit back and relax when our Church is being impoverished by creeping latinization.

Recently there is a mania in the name of canonization process. We have to follow the oriental way as regards veneration of saints. Why should we follow the late Latin tradition in this matter? If at all we canonize, why can't we canonize a few Archdeacons of holy memory, Malpan Kariyattil, Paremmakkal, Kudakkachira, Nidhiry and Malpan Placid J. Podipara? Perhaps their courage, vision, holiness, heroic love and sacrifices for our Church do not mean anything to us?

Another example of latinization is the use of *Filioque* in our creed. Can anyone point out any oriental Church using this? No oriental Church — Catholic and Orthodox — has this phrase in the creed. So in the view of all other Orientals we are Latins! A few years ago even Lutherans wanted to remove *Filioque* from their creed. Today Latin Church is able to understand and accept the creed without *Filioque*. So we are better Latins than even the Latins themselves! Why this un-theological approach?

Unless we are able to shake the foundations of whatever that has been built during the past 400 years the latinization will go on and on. Many of our people will become nominal Christians; many others will join Jehowa witnesses, Pentecostals and similar Protestant sects. All these are already happening, as we all know very well. The only way to regain what is lost is to reclaim our liturgical spirituality and oriental Christianity.

SUMMARY

In this study the author reflects on the problem of latinization in the Churches derived from the ancient Indian communities of so-called St. Thomas Christians. He himself as a priest of the Syro-Malabar Church points on the heritage of the Indian Christians and painfully describes his Church as a latinized form of an Oriental Church. He recalls two stages of the latinization: in 16th and 19th centuries. However, for maintaining the final effects of this process he blames the hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church itself. As an exit from this situation he suggests the return *ad fontes* which in this case means the return to the liturgical spirituality and oriental Christianity.

Key words: St. Thomas Christians, Syro-Malabar Church, latinization, India.

Problem latynizacji: brak wyjścia?

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule autor pochyla się nad problemem latynizacji w Kościołach wywodzących się ze wspólnot chrześcijan św. Tomasza w Indiach. Sam będąc kapłanem Kościoła syromalabarskiego, wskazuje na bogatą spuściznę chrześcijan indyjskich i z bólem określa swój Kościół jako zlatynizowaną wersję Kościoła orientalnego. Przywołuje dwa etapy latynizacji: pierwszy z XVI w., drugi z połowy XIX w. Jednakże winą za trwanie jej skutków nie obarcza jedynie Rzymu, ale również samych członków Kościoła syromalabarskiego, którzy zachowują łacińskie formy pobożnościowe kosztem własnych. Autor jako drogę wyjścia postuluje powrót do źródeł, które w tym wypadku oznaczają duchowość liturgiczną oraz chrześcijaństwo orientalne.

Słowa kluczowe: chrześcijanie św. Tomasza, Kościół syromalabarski, latynizacja, Indie.

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THOMAS KOONAMMAKAL (1955), dr; Syro-Malabar priest acting in Kerala, India. He holds Masters degree in Syriac studies from Oxford Univeristy (1988) and doctorate from the same *Alma Mater* (1991). At present he is working as the professor od Syriac and Patrology in SEERI, Kottayam; Vadavathoor, Kottayam and Paurastya Vidyapitham in India. Author of ca 40 articles in English and ca 35 articles in Malayalam. Member of many international scientific societies.