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ECUMENISM IN INDIA

Introduction

In India at present there are three Catholic Individual Churches. They are the Syro-Malabar Church, the Malankara Catholic Church and the Latin Church. The original Church, founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle, was always in canonical communion with Rome. It is today known as the Syro-Malabar Church. It has more than three million faithful. This is one of the strong pillars of Syriac Christianity. The second one, the Latin Church began its existence with the arrival of the Western missionaries in India in the 16th century. The Malankara Catholic Church came into existence in 1930.

1. The Malankara Orthodox Church

In India, in addition to these three Catholic Churches, there is the Malankara Orthodox Church, one of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and also several Protestant Churches including the Anglican Church and the Lutheran Church. The original Apostolic Church in India came under the influence of the Western missionaries in the 16th century. Due to their undue interference in the life of the Church, there was a strong reaction to the Western missionaries. It resulted in the open protest known in history as the *Coonan Cross Oath of 1653*: The St. Thomas Christians made an oath that they would never obey the Western missionaries. As a result of the immediate intervention of Rome, many came back and accepted the Western missionaries but one group remained separated from them. This separated group eventually came under the influence of the Antiochene Syrian Orthodox Church. Slowly this new group abandoned their ancient East Syrian or Mesopotamian liturgical traditions and adopted the West Syrian Antiochene liturgical traditions and became a part of the Antiochene Syrian Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) Church. They came to be known here as the »Jacobite« Church or the *Puthenkoottukar* (people of the new allegiance). They may be now about 1.5 – 2 million.

There were several splits in this community. Due to the influence of the Anglican missionaries, about 6000 people left the group in 1836 and joined the Anglican Church. In 1876 the *Puthenkoottukar* came under the direct rule of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. It is in that year that the Syrian Patriarch came to India and held a Synod known as *Mulanthuruthy Synod* and enacted a few laws for the group. The group was known as Jacobite Church. He introduced the Antiochene Syrian liturgical traditions and the ancient East Syrian Liturgy was replaced by the West Syrian liturgy. The West Syrian script replaced the East Syrian way of writing and pronouncing the Syriac language. The community was made part of the Antiochene Syrian »Jacobite Church«. So the group, which separated in 1653 from the full and canonical communion with the Catholic Church, was forced to adopt the non-Chalcedonian tradition of the Syrian Orthodox. The Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, who had no authority and jurisdiction here in India, claimed temporal and spiritual authority over the separated group. In 1889 after long civil litigations, one group left it and they were known in the beginning as the Reformed Jacobites. They are now known as the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, an independent community. The Lutheran and Anglican missionaries influenced them. They use a mutilated Antiochene liturgy and their theology is Lutheran.

In 1912 there arose another faction in the »Jacobite Church« in India and they called themselves the Malankara Orthodox Church. In the Synod of Mulanthuruthy the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch managed to bring the major section under him temporarily. But the opposition to this imposition was gaining momentum in the Church. It came to a point of division with the arrival in India of the Syrian Orthodox (»Jacobite«) Patriarch Abdalla († 1915) in 1909 and the excommunication of the head of the community, Vattasseril Mar Dionysios in 1911. It resulted in the split into two groups »Jacobite« and Orthodox and led the church to unending quarrel and civil litigations. The Orthodox established a Catholicate here in 1912 with the help of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Abdal-Mesiha (+1915) from West Asia. Since then there is always civil litigations between these two groups. Except for a few years there were continuous civil litigations among them. And the fight in the civil courts continues even today. There were three major civil litigations: Vattippanakkes (1912-1928), Samudayakkes (1939-1959), Randam Samudayakkes (1975-). The matter of contention is revolving mainly around the authority of the »Jacobite« Patriarch of Antioch and the Catholicos of the Orthodox group.

2. Various groups

The various Christian groups among the ancient St. Thomas Christian Community in India: the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church (also known as *Pazhayakoottukar*)

The Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church – with the Antiochene Syrian Orthodox Church (also known as Puthenkoottukar)

The Malankara Orthodox Church – having a Catholicos, and being in continuous civil litigation with the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church (1912)

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church (separated from the Syrian Orthodox «Jacobite» Church in 1889)

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (since 1930)

There are also other minor groups separated from these groups such as:

- the Thozhiyur Church (1772): an independent Syrian church-5000 faithful;
- the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East (1908): 15000 faithful with the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV of Chicago;

- the St. Thomas Evangelical Church (1961): Separated from the Mar Thoma Church (there are two groups now in this community; altogether 25,000 faithful);

the Church of South India (C.S.I.) has a group of ancient Christians in one of their dioceses.

3. The Malankara Catholic Church (1930)

The Malankara Catholic Church came into existence in 1930, when the Holy Father Pius XI accepted an Orthodox community in India as a particular Individual Church in the Catholic communion and when Mar Ivanios an Orthodox Metropolitan accepted the Pope as the successor of Peter in Rome and expressed his willingness to enter into full and canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church. It was the daring decisions of these blessed men that made the full communion a reality. Mar Ivanios belonged to the Orthodox group under the leadership of Vattasseril Mar Dionysius.

4. Mar Ivanios († 1953)

Mar Ivanios as a priest of the Orthodox Church was a well-known scholar and a very learned man in the church with great influence. He was a teacher in the school first and later the Church History Professor at Serampore Protestant University. He had there the opportunity to read a lot of books about the Church of Christ and its mission in the world. He had ample time to reflect over the plight of his own separated, isolated, and marginalized church in India. He was thoroughly disappointed at its civil litigations and quarrels and very marginal existence. He was sorry that the church was not at all missionary oriented. He was convinced of the need of renewal in the church. So he resigned the teaching post at Serampore and started a monastic movement in a remote place in Kerala for men first and later for women. Through these monastic establishments he thought he could renew the church and rededicate it to the cause of Christ. He

realized the potentials of this church and the great waste of energy in the civil litigations with the brothers of the same faith, especially in a country where the Christians are only a very tiny minority. He realized the sin of separation and the scandal of division and the hindrance it makes against the missionary dimension of the church. He was saddened at the actual situation of his church.

He wanted to have an honourable existence for his church in the one Church of Christ to fulfil its God-given mandate in the world. He believed that it couldn't be achieved in its present existence as a separated, isolated church confined to a tiny part of India and in continuous conflict with the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch. So he wanted to regain the honourable position of the Apostolic Church in the one Catholic Church of Christ.

5. Bethany Monastic Movement

The first thing he did through the Bethany monastic movement was the internal renewal of the members of his Church. So he shared his ideal among his monks and started a reform movement through conventions and classes for the faithful. The Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysios encouraged him to renew the church. Mar Ivanios became a preacher in the church. He preached about the essential doctrines of the church and the need of intense sacramental and liturgical life and the mission of the church in the world, especially in the vast Indian subcontinent. There was enthusiastic listening to him and he formed a nucleus of devoted Christians committed to the cause of Christ and his Church. He kept them away from civil litigations. Eventually he started Bethany parishes, which were not under the Malankara Metropolitan. These parishes did not join any group in the civil litigations. Since both the Patriarch and the Malankara Metropolitan were in conflict, he thought his parishes should be free from litigations. This internal renewal worked as a chain movement

6. Dialogue with the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch

When Vattasseril Mar Dionysios lost his case in the civil court in 1923, he went to West Asia for a negotiated settlement and peaceful agreement with the Patriarch Mar Elias. But that attempt failed. On his way to Mardin in 1923, where the Patriarch was residing, he had an opportunity to talk about the possibility of a communion with the Roman Catholic Church. And when Mar Dionysios returned to India, he shared his ideas with others. In 1925 the Orthodox group ordained the second Catholicos. The See was vacant since the death of the first Catholicos in 1913. On May 1, the following day in 1925 Mar Ivanios was ordained as Bishop of Bethany. During the speech after his Episcopal ordination, Mar Ivanios made it clear that all the various factions of the an-

cient St. Thomas Christian community should become one Church as it was before 1653. He dared to assert that all are culpable in the sin of separation of this church. He made an appeal that all should work together for its reunion.

7. The Synodal Decision (1926)

In a Synod of the Orthodox Church at Parumala on November 1, 1926, Mar Ivanios was deputed by the other bishops to discuss the possibility of an eventual communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The participants were Moran Mor Baselios Geevarghese Catholicos (1925-28), Abun Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (1912-29) and Abun Geevarghese Mar Ivanios (1925-30). Vattasseril Mar Dionysius kept away from the discussions because of the civil litigations. But the Synod had his blessing and support. A certain Latin priest Fr. Ribeiro was very helpful in contacting the Roman Apostolic See.

In his letters to Rome, Mar Ivanios argued for the preservation of the integral liturgical and canonical traditions of the Malankara Orthodox Church. He requested that the position of the Catholicos with the Synod should be recognized. In accordance with the ecclesiology of those days, the answer from the part of Rome on certain matters was negative. There was assurance regarding the acceptance of the authority of the bishops over their faithful and the preservation of the liturgical traditions. But there was no assurance regarding the acceptance of the Catholicos with his Synod. Mar Ivanios was very much saddened at it. However, he proceeded with the negotiations.

In the meantime in 1928 the Catholicos died and Vattasseril Mar Dionysios and Mar Ivanios installed in 1929 at Kottayam, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios as the third Catholicos with the name Moran Mor Baselios Geevarghese II. In 1929 there were only just two bishops who met in 1926 at Parumala in Synod: the third Catholicos and Mar Ivanios. That is why Mar Ivanios was repeatedly writing that Rome should recognize the position of the Catholicos. But the reply was not in the affirmative.

8. The Reunion of 1930

In 1930 September 20, Mar Ivanios entered into full canonical communion with the Catholic Church. Vattasseril Mar Dionysios, who won the civil litigation, did not follow. He continued as the leader of the Orthodox group. Since Rome did not take a positive attitude regarding the case of the Catholicos, the third Catholicos did not enter into the full communion. On the 20th September, five people entered into this communion: in addition to Mar Ivanios, his suffragan bishop Mar Theophilos of Bethany, Fr. John OIC, Deacon Alexis and a layman Killed Chaco. This was the historic reunion of 1930. Almost all the members of the Bethany Religious Order of both men and women and thou-

sands of faithful who came under the influence of Bethany followed them. Eventually all the people who came under the influence of Bethany renewal and Mar Ivanios entered into the Catholic communion. In 1932 Mar Ivanios visited Rome and the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy was established with Trivandrum as the Archdiocese and Tiruvalla as its suffrage diocese. Since then there was mass flow into the Catholic Church from the various factions of the Thomas Christian communities. It received the faithful from the Aconite Church, Orthodox Church, Mar Thomas Church, Church of South India, and Thozhiyur Church. It had also large numbers of converts from non-Christian communities. Mar Ivanios died in 1953 and was succeeded by Benedict Mar Gregorios (1953-1994) and the present Archbishop is Cyril Mar Baselios (1996-). It has at present four dioceses and seven bishops including the Archbishop and one Apostolic Visitor for the Malankara Catholics in North America and Europe (2001-). This Church has at present a Council of bishops with a Metropolitan- Archbishop. It uses the West Syrian Antiochene liturgy. There are at present more than 400.000 faithful in this community.

9. Reunion Movement

This ecumenical Movement is called the Reunion Movement. The Church in India since the time of St. Thomas, the Apostle, was one Church, having the same East Syrian liturgical traditions. A group of faithful separated itself from the full and canonical communion with the Catholic Church. So naturally when they entered into that ancient communion of 1653 years, it was reasonable for them to consider it as reunion. The relationship with the Syrian Orthodox church had only a history of a few hundred years, but that is not the case of the church as the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. It is true that down through the history it did not have close contact with all the churches of Christ. That does not mean that the church was not Catholic in the fullest sense of the word. It never said that it was not Catholic. It ceased to be fully and canonically Catholic when it entered into communion with the non- Chalcedonian Syrian Orthodox Church of West Asia and adopted all its anti- Chalcedonian traditions. Hence the ecumenical activity is a reunion with the ancient Apostolic Church of Rome. Since the separation took place only after 1653, it is clear that this ancient church was neither Chalcedonies nor anti-Chalcedonian. Even today in India this movement is known as the Reunion Movement (*Punaraikyaprasathanam*).

10. Characteristics of the Reunion Movement

The Reunion Movement had several special characteristics:

1. This is the unique ecumenical movement in the 20th century, which culminated in the full communion of a particular church with the Roman Catholic

Church. There were in the last century several ecumenical discussions both before and after the Vatican Council. But this is unique in establishing the canonical communion. Of course both the leaders of the Roman Church and of the Malankara Church were guided by the ecclesiology of those days. They cannot be blamed for not having the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council or the post Vatican developments. In the light of today's vision of communion there may be imperfection. But it was a praiseworthy attempt to bring two churches in full communion.

2. The initiative for communion came from within the Church. There was no external force or persuasion in this ecumenical endeavour. It was not the result of any missionary activity from the part of the Roman Catholic Church. From the time of the separation in 1653 the leaders of both the groups were earnestly trying to reunite the two factions of the ancient St. Thomas Christians. The reunion of 1930 is the culmination of these attempts.

3. Since this ecumenical activity was the fulfilment of God's will, God blessed it abundantly. It is very rich in vocations and missionary activity.

4. The conviction of Mar Ivanios and his prophetic vision that only the communion with the successor of Peter in Rome would bring about lasting peace and progress for the Malankara Church proved to be true. When Mar Ivanios began to reflect on the nature of the Church of Christ and its missionary dimension, he realized that isolated existence of separated groups is contrary to the will of Christ. United witnessing is far more fruitful than that of the tiny groups. History has proved that he was correct in his judgment.

5. The Reunion of 1930 was preceded by intense spiritual renewal in the Orthodox Church.

6. Only prophetic people can plunge themselves into the mystery of Truth and achieve such great things as the Reunion of 1930. When Mar Ivanios entered into communion with the Roman Catholic Church, he entered into communion with the whole Catholic Church throughout the world.

11. The Mission Today

Malankara Catholic Church as a bridge Church should continue its ecumenical activities more vigorously in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the post Vatican ecumenical developments. We have a new ecclesiology today. We have new problems. We are living in a world of constant change and rapid progress. The churches should be able to evaluate the global changes and interpret the Gospel according to the changed conditions of our times. There are vital and common world problems, which the world posits to every church. As the messengers of the Gospel, all the churches have a grave responsibility to answer these questions. The churches cannot evade them. We cannot solve those problems with the answers of the 5th century or 6th, or 11th or even of 19th century. We have no

time to repeat the outdated and obsolete terminologies. We cannot be the spokesmen of the past terminological quarrels. We have to overcome the past for the present and for the future. We have a common mission in today's world. We have to make the Gospel meaningful to the modern man. We have a tremendous message to give to the world, especially in a country like India where we have a pluralistic religious society, and Christian message is very little known. We have a grave responsibility to impart it concertedly to our fellow human beings. We have to explain to our fellow human beings why God appeared as Jesus in our midst. We must explain the meaning of Incarnation and Redemption to our fellow citizens in a language intelligible to them. The Christians here cannot continue their petit quarrels, or factions or differences based on purely accidentals or terminologies or even on the basis of authority in human terms.

The division among the Christians, especially the division in one and the same church, is a great scandal and hindrance to the Gospel. It is counterwitnessing. Christ, the New Adam came to reunite mankind in him, but the churches through their divisions are doing exactly the opposite. The Churches in India have to take this reality seriously. The Malankara Catholic Church has a great role in this. Since it is a united Church it has to continue its God-given mandate of uniting humankind in Christ. Today's world, especially India is demanding a new outlook and a new mode of operation from the part of the Christians.

12. The Missionary Dimension of the Malankara Catholic Church

Since its full communion with the Catholic Church in 1930, the Malankara Catholic Church entered into a vigorous missionary activity and it has borne ample fruits. This missionary dimension is given a top priority even today. The Malankara Catholic Church continues to preach the Good News to those who even now do not know the Unique Mediator of mankind and the Saviour of all. This Church is one of the living Churches among the Churches of the Syriac tradition. It is fully aware of its obligation to Ecumenism and the commitment to the needs of the whole Church. With the second Vatican Council and with the new awareness and ecclesiology, it works between the Orthodox and other churches of the St. Thomas Christian tradition, for a full and canonical communion as Churches. At the same time, even at this stage it does not refuse entry into the Catholic Church any individual who is convinced of his need to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. In God's abundant mercy, now the Malankara Catholic Church is in a position to send priests and sisters as missionaries to help other churches.

It is in constant contact with the other churches in Kerala. The leaders of the various Christian Churches take part in common programs and one often finds the leaders of the Orthodox Church sharing the platform with the leaders

of the Malankara Catholic Church even for very specific ecclesial functions. At present we have very close cooperation on the level of the laity, clergy and bishops. This cooperation is day-by-day increasing. The members of the Malankara Catholic Church take part in serious International Ecumenical discussions with the Orthodox. The existence of the Malankara Catholic Church is a sign for unity. The door is opened for the other churches to enter into full communion. The Malankara Catholic Church preserved the two basic ecclesiological principles, namely communion and individuality. It maintains the communion with the Roman Apostolic See. It stands for the individuality of the Malankara Church as a particular church in the Catholic communion.

13. Hindrance for ecumenism in India

1. The internal conflict in the Orthodox Church is a great obstacle for the effective dialogue and fruitful and meaningful decisions for an eventual communion with other churches. In almost every parish of the Orthodox Church, there is civil litigation among the members. The Orthodox Church is even now divided into two factions, the Catholicos party (Malankara Orthodox Church) having a local autonomous head and the Patriarch's party (Malankara Syrian Orthodox church) having the Antiochene Syrian Orthodox Patriarch as its head. As long as the faction continues, no effective step can be taken by either of the two groups. There is no serious doctrinal difference among them. Both the groups follow the same Antiochene liturgy. The whole question is regarding the authority in the church.

2. There are certain restrictions and limitations imposed upon the two Oriental Catholic Churches by other Catholics in India. The Oriental Catholic Churches are restricted to a tiny portion of India. They are not at present free even to look after the spiritual needs of their own faithful outside the restricted area.

3. In the ecumenical discussions the Eastern mentality and the historical background have to be taken seriously. If the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches were able to resolve their difference in Christology, the key point of difference for centuries, the administrative difference could also be settled with lesser difficulty. Every body should be ready to give and take. Easterners prefer to have their own way of government. Nobody has the doubt that the visible symbol of unity is needed. But the difference is regarding the nature of the exercise of that authority. There should definitely be a rethinking regarding this matter for the better future and full communion of tomorrow. The change of attitude and mentality of the Second Vatican Council should be received by all concerned. The post Vatican Ecumenical discussions have clarified that the Orthodox Churches are Sister Churches and their pastors are appointed by the Holy Spirit to look after a portion of the Church of Christ. The full communion should take a variety of shapes in the future. The future communion will not be merger of one church in another church, it may not be sub-

mission of one church to another church, but a mutual recognition of the Apostolic Churches as they lived in the first centuries. This communion will exclude any undue interference of one church, however big that church may be, in the day-to-day affairs of another church. It will be a communion in Christ and the Holy Spirit. It will consist in celebrating the one Eucharist together, and mutually recognizing the liturgical, spiritual, canonical and theological traditions of each church. It will be a communion of the churches preserving their diversities, but preserving the essential unity in faith and sacramental life and the divine authority, which they have received from the Apostles.

14. Conclusion

The Malankara Catholic Church celebrated the 70 anniversary of the Reunion Movement on December 27-28, 2000 at Tiruvalla, Kerala. It had a celebration of the Jubilee Year in November 19-21, 2000 in Rome. It was a wonderful and unique experience to express our communion with the See of Peter in Rome. The words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II still echoes in our ears:

„Your Church, beloved brothers and sisters, traces its origin to the Apostle Saint Thomas. You possess a very ancient liturgical tradition, which had its origin in Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. For more than sixteen centuries, your community remained in unbroken communion with the See of Peter. Then there was a series of difficulties, which interrupted that communion. But this century has been indelibly marked by the luminous figure of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, who found wisdom and sensitivity to the cause of Christian unity in my predecessor Pius XI, to whom he made an historic visit in 1932. I am pleased to know that the latest period of your Church's history has been a time of growth and vigorous Christian life. The establishment of the Major Seminary dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church, is a sign of your vitality. It offers great hope of further strength and consolidation in future”(Discourse in Trivandrum on 8th February, 1986).

Ekumenizm w Indii

Streszczenie

Według starożytnej tradycji chrześcijaństwo przywędrowało do Indii wraz ze św. Tomaszem Apostołem.. Pierwotny Kościół, założony przez niego, zawsze pozostawał w kanonicznej komunii z Rzymem. W wyniku różnych, nieraz bardzo skomplikowanych wydarzeń historycznych, pośród potomków Chrze-

ścijan św. Tomasza wykształciło się szereg różnych Kościołów: 1. Syro-Malabarski Kościół katolicki, 2. Jakobicko-Syryjski Kościół Ortodoksyjny, 3. Syro-Malankarski Kościół Ortodoksyjny, 4. Syryjski Kościół Martomicki, 5. Syro-Malankarski Kościół Katolicki. Ponadto istnieją jeszcze inne, mniejsze grupy, niezależne od wymienionych Kościołów: Kościół Tożjur (Thozhiyur Church) – niezależny Kościół Syryjski, liczący ok. 5 tys. wiernych; Chaldejski Syryjski Kościół Wschodu, liczący ok. 15 tys. wiernych; Ewangeliczny Kościół Mar Thoma – oddzielony od Syryjskiego Kościoła Martomickiego, liczący ok. 25 tys. wiernych; Kościół Indii Południowych.

Przedstawiając relacje wyznaniowe na terenie Indii Autor skupił się zwłaszcza na ukazaniu historii i poczyniń Syro-Malankarskiego Kościoła Katolickiego. Kościół ten powstał dopiero w 1930 r., kiedy to papież Pius XI odpowiadając na dążenia zjednoczeniowe chrześcijan syro-malankarskich zaakceptował ich wspólnotę jako odrębny Kościół, trwający w unii z Rzymem, a ortodoksyjny metropolita Mar Iwanios wraz z kilkoma innymi biskupami uznali papieża jako następcę św. Piotra w Rzymie i wyrazili wolę przystąpienia do pełnej wspólnoty kanonicznej z Kościołem Rzymskokatolickim. Rozwijający się od XVIII wieku ruch zjednoczeniowy w łonie Syro-Malankarskiego Kościoła Ortodoksyjnego, który zaowocował powstaniem Syro-Malankarskiego Kościoła Katolickiego, nazwano ruchem unionistycznym. Autor wskazał na charakterystyczne cechy tego ruchu: jest to jedyne przedsięwzięcie o charakterze ekumenicznym w XX wieku, które zakończyło się pełnym zjednoczeniem Kościoła partykularnego z Kościołem Rzymskokatolickim; inicjatywa pełnej komunii zrodziła się wewnątrz wspólnoty Chrześcijan św. Tomasza, nie była zaś owocem zewnętrznych nacisków; sprawdziło się przekonanie Mar Iwaniosa, że tylko jedność z następcą św. Piotra w Rzymie przyniesie Kościołowi Malankarskiemu trwałą pokój i rozwój; unia z 1930 r. była poprzedzona duchową odnową w Kościele Ortodoksyjnym; odnowa ta była wyrazem przekonania, że unia z Kościołem Rzymskim, a zatem z całym Kościołem Katolickim, jest wielkim darem dla potomków Chrześcijan św. Tomasza i oznacza powrót do starożytnej tradycji.

W obliczu wielkich zadań misyjnych, przed jakimi stają chrześcijanie w wieloreligijnym społeczeństwie indyjskim, Autor wskazał na niedostatki chrześcijańskiego świadectwa, związane zwłaszcza z sytuacją ekumeniczną. Mimo, historycznie rzecz ujmując, niewątpliwych sukcesów na drodze zjednoczeniowych wysiłków, ekumenizm w Indii przeżywa również swoje trudności. Znaczącym obciążeniem jest na przykład trwający wewnątrz Syro-Malankarskiego Kościoła Ortodoksyjnego konflikt pomiędzy stronnictwem, które opowiada się za autokefalią i za odnowieniem urzędu katolikosa a stronnictwem pozostającym w jurysdykcji patriarchy syryjsko-ortodoksyjnego. Dla podkreślenia swej odrębności Kościół podlegający jurysdykcji patriarchy syryjsko-ortodoksyjnego nosi nazwę Malankarski Jakobicko-Syryjski Kościół Ortodoksyjny. Jedyłą przyczyną trwania podziału jest kwestia jurysdykcji i autorytetu

w Kościele, bowiem obie grupy zachowują w liturgii ten sam ryt antiocheński i wyznają tę samą wiarę. Wyrażając nadzieję na osiągnięcie pełnej komunii kościelnej przez potomków Chrześcijan św. Tomasza, Autor jest przekonany, że komunია ta winna polegać na uznaniu autorytetu apostołskiego Kościoła. Winna to być komunია Kościołów, które, zachowując swe własne tradycje liturgiczne, duchowe, kanoniczne i teologiczne, będą zjednoczone we wspólnej wierze, życiu sakramentalnym i uznaniu wspólnego autorytetu władzy apostołskiej.

Streszcz. ks. R. Porada