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**The Vision of B. Upadhyaya**



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|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Trinity as Sat-Chit-Ananda in the Thought of the Indian<br>Theologian Brahmabandav Upadhyaya<br><i>K. P. Aleaz</i> .....         | 6   |
| The Church in Upadhyay's Vision<br><i>Evelyn Monteiro SCC</i> .....  | 18  |
| Constructions of National Space:<br>Tracing the Development of Upadhyay's<br>Nationalist Thought<br><i>V. Sebastian SJ</i> ..... | 38  |
| Indian Christian Approaches to Theologizing:<br>Lessons from the Seashore<br><i>P.T.Mathew SJ</i> .....                          | 56  |
| Christ, the Suffering God of the Sub-Continent<br><i>Jacob Parappally MSFS</i> .....   | 74  |
| Spirituality: An Indian Christian Perspective<br><i>T.K. John SJ</i> .....   | 83  |
| Being Christian and Artistic<br><i>Paul Kattukaran</i> .....   | 107 |
| Sacraments Viewed in Indian Christian Perspectives<br><i>Errol D'Lima SJ</i> .....   | 127 |
| Another Copernican Revolution!<br><i>Julian Saldanha SJ</i> .....  | 140 |
| Book Review .....  | 153 |

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## Editorial

In 2007 we celebrated the death centenary of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, a great patriot and a remarkable Christian. He was both a nationalist who worked for the total independence of India and a Christian thinker who dreamed of a Church which is truly Indian and genuinely Christian. This issue of Jnanadeepa is dedicated to the memory of this great son of the country and the Church.

There are three articles in the issue which deal with the thought of Upadhyaya. The first discusses his thesis that the Trinity is sat-chit-ananda. The author of the article denies the contention of critics that Upadhyaya's theology is largely neo-Thomism in Sanskritic disguise. Upadhyaya is of the view that the Vedanta conception of God and the Christian doctrine of God are the same. And he holds that Saccidananda is the Trinity. Hence it is possible for us to bring out new insights on the mystery of the Trinity from the Vedanta doctrine of Saccidananda. The second discusses Upadhyaya's vision of an Indian Christian Church. Upadhyaya feared that Christianity would remain a foreign cult and a religion repulsive to the people if it did not insert itself into the Indian mainstream. He was convinced that the Catholic Church, in order to gain acceptance in India, should strip itself of all that is European. It is the foreign clothes of the Catholic faith that have prevented Indians from perceiving its universal nature. Upadhyaya believed that we should all be Hindu-Catholics. The third deals with Upadhyaya's nationalist thought. An important factor in the development of his nationalism has to do with Hindu identity. Hindu identity is intrinsically related to national identity in the nationalist perspective of Upadhyaya. For him Hinduism is not a religion like Christianity, but rather a cultural ethos, a philosophy and a way of life. In opposition to British colonialism which seemed to lead to the disintegration of several aspects of Indian culture and identity, Upadhyaya sought to create a national identity based on a common Hindu heritage. Undoubtedly there are many elements of his nationalist thought which are open to criticism.

Included in this issue are four articles which seek to further Upadhyaya's theology and develop Indian Christian thought on life and reality. The first discusses Indian Christian approaches to theologizing. Generally speaking, there are two main orientations in contemporary theological discourse in India today: a socio-cultural orientation and a socio-political orientation. Both these streams are based on the constitutive dimension of Indian reality: poverty and religiosity. Both of them suffer from some serious deficiencies. In this article, the author endeavours to articulate the contours of an Indian theology from the perspective of the Mukkuva community inhabiting in South-Western coast of India. In doing this, he takes into account the latent dimensions of the religiosity of the people as well as their world-view. The second deals with an Indian Christian approach to Christology. The problem with Christology has always been that of confusing the identification of Jesus Christ with his identity. We may have to give up some of his identifications, which are culturally conditioned, in order that people may encounter his identity and be transformed. And nowhere does the identity of Jesus Christ become so universally felt and his inclusive transcendence become so real as in the struggle of the suffering millions of the subcontinent for a fuller life, for unfolding their God-given humanity. The third seeks to develop some Indian Christian perspectives on the sacraments. The author of the article contends that in perspectives that are truly Indian and authentically Christian sacramentality points to a way of life rather than a cultic action by itself. The sacred is so dispersed throughout the secular that a person rarely finds it possible to ignore one or the other. In fact, people are called to sense God's presence in both. The fourth deals with Indian Christian perspectives on spirituality. After pointing out the benefits and perils of spirituality, the author discusses the concerns of the 'spiritual' and the 'bodily'. To keep the balance between the concerns of both is a precarious task. Vigilance over any unilateral development can keep the balance. Understanding of spirituality in terms of moral force, soul force, seems to offer such a balance.

There are two articles included in this issue which are not directly related to its theme. The first deals with Christians and art. It contends that to be a Christian is to be an artist. If revelation in Christ and the response in faith to God constitutes the Christian existence, then one can speak of the artist-Christian. The second discusses the topic: Catholic colleges and social transformation. There is a serious problem

connected with the underlying assumption that education can transform society. As a subsystem of society education is subordinated to and largely conditioned by the socio-economic forces in society. All the same, it does possess a certain autonomy which, if actualized can lead to real changes in society.

Included in this issue is a review article on Philip Jenkin's book, *The Next Christendom*. The main contention of the author is: The era of Western Christianity has passed and the day of Southern Christianity has dawned. "Southern churches" or "South" are used to comprise the tri-continental countries of Latin America, Africa south of the Sahara, Oceania and Asia.

It is our hope that the articles published in this issue will encourage the readers to contribute to the progress of Indian Christian thought, and thus facilitate the emergence of a church which is truly Indian and genuinely Christian.

Kurien Kunnumpuram SJ  
Editor