FROM OUR READERS

re: Recent Indian Studies of the Gospel of John: Puzzling Contextualisation

1) I have read with great interest your article on Recent Indian Studies of the Gospel of St. John: Puzzling Contextualization. I want to thank you for your painstaking article. I see you have gone through and thoroughly all the recent Indian literature on St. John. I also want to thank you for the kind treatment you have given to my The Promise of the Living Water... My The Word and the Spirit contains a number of chapters on Johannine themes though it is not specifically on St. John's writings. It is a book of biblical reflections. I wish you every success in your work! God bless and keep you!
Yours fraternally in the Lord Jesus,
Fr. Sebastian Karotemprel S.D.B.
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2) I appreciate receiving the "Exchange" of the December issue, 1980. It was particularly interesting to me as this issue focused on the Indian writings on the Gospel of John. I agree with your evaluation that some of the Indian Theologian have gone overboard on indiginisation forgetting the rich heritage of Christianity that comes to us for centuries through the west. While some writers have shown similarity of thoughts with the Indian Adivaita philosophy, they have failed to show the difference between the biblical and the Adivaita concepts on God. They are leaving too heavily on the Indian heritage than on the Christian. I trust that some day an unadulterated interpretation of Johns Gospel will emerge in India.
Sincerely yours,
John Thannickal
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I have had a quick look at Exchange no. 28 and your letter dated May 27, 1981, and I noted ... that the write-up did not cover Nigeria adequately. It's a pity that you did not have the necessary documents.
...I will send you by a separate mail copy of a booklet on "Continuing Role of the Church in Education". The bulk of the document arose from a Church Leaders' workshop on the subject in November/December 1972. It was brought up-to-date for a second reprint particularly with a paper incorporating the agreement with the Government of the then Western State of Nigeria.

Earlier on, as far back as 1960-62 the Churches in the Christian Council of Nigeria undertook a study on "Christian Responsibility in Independent Nigeria". The question of the control of schools was then under debate, and various positions were carefully examined.

In 1977-79, a new National Policy on Education and a New Federal Constitution were both under discussion. The issue of control of education was much in evidence. I will send you a photocopy of one or two articles on this. Early this year, Roman Catholic Archbishop Olubunmi Okogie won a court injunction against the UPN Government of Lagos State which tries to control all primary and secondary schools to the exclusion of voluntary agency proprietors.

It is significant that the 1972 document deliberately chose the phrase "the handing-over process". As a matter of fact, a number of Church leaders formally handed over their schools to the Government during the military era. This is true of the Churches on the western side of the Niger here. Unfortunately, some Governments subsequently over-acted; and some church groups similarly over-reacted.

The whole question of the control of education is now caught in political rivalries and tactics. The NPN which is in power on the Federal level speaks in favour of handing schools back to their proprietors, perhaps simply because the UPN which is the second strongest political party decidely stands for National control and universal free education.

The question which now arises is which schools are those who stand for handing over going to hand over to Church proprietors? The relatively few schools which existed before 1978-81, or the many more schools which have since been established? For example, Oyo State alone is said to have added over 400 secondary schools since October 1980. To sharpen the question: Are Churches interested in the management of schools or in the religious education of school children? If the Churches and the Governments take control of various numbers of different schools, who would take care of the religious education of the children in Government schools? The debate still continues.

...Yours sincerely,
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