

Indian Christian View of God: Exploring Its Trajectory in 20th Century

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Abstract : Christianity is the largest religious tradition of the world. What makes Christianity a world religion is its characteristics of universality and particularity. Its universality and particularity are closely interrelated. Its universality is realized and embodied in its particularities and its particularity is recognized and legitimized through its universality. This paper focuses on the dimension of the particularity of Christianity in that it looks at the particularized ideas and discourses of Christian thinking in India in the 20th century and pays attention to the differing shifts and new shades of meaning in Indian Christian notion of God. Drawing upon the writings of select Indian theologians such as Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, Sundar Sing, A.J Appasamy, Raymond Panikkar, Amalorpavadass and George Soares Prabhhu, this paper delves into how the contexts—be it personal, political, historical or ecclesial—bear upon the way Indian theologians have conceived and constructed the notion of God in their work. Focusing upon how they responded to the signs of their time through their theological narratives, the paper argues that the religion of Christianity can sustain its universality only when it translates its key notions such as God into indigenous categories and local idioms and thus makes itself relevant to the people among whom it is spread. Monotheistic God of Christianity has to accommodate plurality of expressions if Christian idea God has to capture and convey everyone's experience of God. The case of Indian Christianity then reveals that a monolithic world religion will be experienced and recognised as truly universal only when it sheds its homogeneity and assumes a heterogeneous portrait through the acquisition of local idioms. Allowing culturally diverse idioms to influence theological categories is not inconsequential to—'accommodating differences and accepting diversities,' an issue we encounter within and beyond religious domains in our contemporary times.

Keywords : concept of God, heterogeneity, Indian Christianity, indigenous categories

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