

benefitted considerably from a more detailed assessment of how the nexus between Catholicism and the regime operated. After 1945 the Church was eager to maintain that the tenacious manner in which it had promoted *Azione cattolica* in the inter-war years was evidence of its determination to protect Italian Catholics from the pagan pretensions of Fascism. But, as Dawes suggests, the Church had embarked from the 1870s on a determined mission to make Italy into a flagship of Christian civilisation; and far from constituting an impediment or threat to this goal, the arrival of Fascism, with its celebration of authority, hierarchy, faith and spirituality and its rejection of the materialistic values of both liberalism and socialism, provided the Church with what seemed an excellent instrument (though there were clearly some difficult moments, especially at the outset and again in 1931) for realising this long-held ambition. The paradox of the *Unione fra le donne cattoliche d'Italia*, Dawes concludes, was that it gave Italian women an opportunity to assert themselves in the public sphere through the active promotion of reactionary patriarchal values. The same was also true of the Fascist women's organisations. Rather than antagonistic, the relationship between Catholicism and Fascism might in many respects better be seen as one of mutual reinforcement.

UNIVERSITY OF READING

CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN

Christians in South Indian villages, 1959–2009. Decline and revival in Telangana. By John B. Carman and Chilkuri Vasanthia Rao. (Studies in the History of Christian Missions.) Pp. xvi + 242 + 14 ills. Grand Rapids, MI–Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014. £23.99 (\$35) (paper). 978 0 8028 7163 3
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Published works that engage with India's varied Christian communities have been increasing both in quantity and in prominence over the last twenty years. This is especially the case in the social sciences where there has been a post-millennial explosion of interest in this area. *Christians in South Indian villages, 1959–2009*, feeds into these recent developments, but also reengages the reader with a classic work of missionary studies: *Village Christians and Hindu culture*. This earlier work was part of a wider exploration of missionary activity that focused on reviewing those Christian congregations that are situated just to the north of Hyderabad. These congregations were all part of a then newly founded loose coalition of Protestant churches, known as the Church of South India (CSI). *Christians in South Indian villages* revisits, fifty years later, the site of the *Village Christians* study in order to explore how things have changed. In addition to returning to the CSI churches that featured in the original study, *Christians in South Indian villages* expands its horizons to consider both newly founded CSI churches in the area and the many Evangelical churches that have recently appeared. The study itself was carried out by two researchers with strong CSI connections (Carman and Rao) and with the assistance of eight students, all of whom are now themselves CSI ministers. This is not then a disinterested study and the work has a practical feel to it, but (in contrast to the 1959 study) this was not an official church project. In essence, this book is the published results of that study, augmented by the presentation of general, pre-1959, contextual information, which includes

both Indian history and the history of Christianity in India. The book is written in a clear and logical way that emphasises the presentation of information rather than the theorisation of developments. There are however serious attempts to organise the material and consider its practical implications. After the initial sections of the book have set the scene, through the presentation of a narrative history of both events in the region and beyond, the work turns (in chapter iv) to explore the specific findings of the two (1959 and 2009) studies. The work oscillates between the two time periods to explore the themes of healing (chapter x), inculturation (chapters viii and ix) and caste (chapter vii), before concluding with a consideration of future challenges (chapters xi and xii). The book also includes a very interesting collection of sermons, a glossary and some interesting photographs, which could have been both better reproduced and better incorporated into the work. This book connects well with *Village Christians* to provide valuable insight into how these communities have developed and changed. By focusing on small, village communities the work fulfils its admirable aim of bringing these seemingly peripheral communities to the centre of global debates about religion, identity and mission.

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