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Book Review: "The Santals, Anthropological-Theological Reflections on Santali and Biblical Creation Traditions"

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Book Reviews


As the author wished in his Introduction, the result of this scrutiny is likely to be helpful to a Christian understanding of the Santals - and also, perhaps, to a Santali understanding of Christian teaching. “The belief in the creator God has never been a problem with the Santals”, he avers, and it is “similar to the belief in the creator God of Genesis 1-3” (p.242).

The study will fall far short of effecting a reconciliation of differing conceptions of creation, however, in part because of its restricted focus – and also in part because of the author’s own position. Any Christian teaching about creation cannot be compressed within the first three chapters of Genesis but will be trinitarian in its development. And Dr Hembrom, while he adopts a Christian viewpoint at several points in the text, in his conclusion rejects it, preferring perhaps to stand somewhere between the traditions. “People of scriptures”, he writes, “know as little of God as the people of primal religion know about him/her” (p.243).

The author has not been well served by his publisher in two respects. For one, the book abounds in typographical errors. And the book’s dustjacket, while attractive, conjures up a stereotype of tribal personality: feathers, earrings, flowing hair, and red eyes proclaim the uninhibited “forest dweller”.

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